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**WILLIAM SOUTHWELL (1736/7–1825):
ANGLO–IRISH MUSICAL INSTRUMENT INVENTOR
AND MAKER – AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE**

MARGARET DEBENHAM

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Digital archives consulted include: The National Archives, UK; Ancestry.co.uk; Newspaper Archive.com, The British Library 19th Century Newspaper Archive; Irish Newspaper Archives; Trove; *The London Gazette* on-line; Oldbaileyonline.org; Findmypast.co.uk; Familysearch.org. Londonlives.org; Irishgenealogy.ie.

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Her jointly authored paper with Professor George S. Bozarth, "Piano Wars: The Legal Machinations of London Pianoforte Makers, 1795-1806" in [*The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle Vol. 42 \(2009\)*](#). London: Royal Musical Association, pp 45-108, was awarded the Frances Densmore Prize, 2011 by the American Musical Instrument Society. Her most recent paper, jointly authored with historian Michael Cole, examines the life and work of three migrant craftsmen in London, Roger Plenius, Frederick Neubauer and H. B. Viator [Vietor] ("Pioneer Piano Makers in London, 1737—1774: newly discovered documentary sources" in [*The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle Vol. 44 \(2013\)*](#). Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 55-86). She is author of the 'Roger Plenius' entry in the *Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, 2nd edition.

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*Claire,
Kei and Dan*

For

*Robert,
Hannah, Matthew and
Alexander,*

the next generation ...

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Cover picture : Name board on a desk conversion of a five and a half octave square pianoforte by 'W^m. Southwell, Dublin' (© Courtesy of Tim Harding)

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William Southwell (1736/7–1825): Anglo–Irish Musical Instrument Inventor and Maker – an extraordinary life

... He was a man of powerful mind and distinguished himself as the improver or creator of several musical instruments... My recollection of him is shadowy, vague and therefore unsatisfactory; but the impression he left upon my young mind (for he died alas! before reason had well ripened with me) was that he belonged to a class of restless, energetic determined men, to whose “quick bosoms quiet is a hell”¹ – a man of temper unceasingly active and intellect proudly prodigious... (Charles Southwell, *The Lancashire Beacon* No. 8, [1849], 60; and *The Confessions of a Freethinker*, [ca.1851], 5-6)

This evocative first hand description from the pen of [Charles Southwell](#) (1814–1860), youngest and most controversial son of William, conjures up a vivid impression of this creative man, remembered today for his early innovations in the field of pianoforte design. Acknowledged as a creative genius by cognoscenti, William Southwell has not however achieved the widespread recognition merited by his influential work. Prodigiously active in his private life too, over a period of more than fifty years he reportedly fathered more than thirty children.²

For more than a century the received wisdom on William Southwell’s birth and death has reflected inaccuracies that appear to have first emanated from the writing of the American historian Daniel Spillane in 1892,³ further compounded by W H Grattan Flood in 1909,⁴ and consequently widely accepted by other writers. This misinformation is unfortunate, hindering, as it does, a fully informed assessment and understanding of William as an innovator in the design and development of pianoforte actions. According to these accounts, William was born *ca.* 1756 and commenced an apprenticeship in 1772 with the renowned German-born harpsichord maker, [Ferdinand Weber](#) (1715–84) in the city of Dublin. After setting up in business on his own account in Dublin *ca.* 1783, so the story goes, he moved to London on the advice of friends in 1794, opening a shop

in Lad Lane and taking out an English patent for his square pianoforte with additional keys. Later, it is claimed, William retired to his native Ireland in 1836 where he died in Rathmines in 1842. In fact he died in Gresse-street, St. Pancras, London, aged eighty eight, and was buried in St Pancras Old Church on 2 February 1825, a finding first reported in George S Bozarth and Margaret Debenham, "[Piano Wars](#)", 2009,⁵ which also places his birth year as 1736/7, some twenty years earlier than has been believed. Little wonder that subsequent searches for his birth in 1756 and burial in Ireland in 1842 proved fruitless.^{6 7} While it is indisputably true that he was in London in 1794 and registered his first English patent there from an address in Lad Lane, there is evidence that suggests he continued to commute between London and Dublin in subsequent years, spending time in each. It was not until 1803 that he left the Emerald Isle to settle permanently in England, as will be discussed.

Two family documents have provided valuable information as a basis for research. The first is a privately published memoir written by William's youngest son, Charles (1814–1860), *The Confessions of a Free Thinker* (ca.1851);⁸ the second a privately held family letter (see Appendix 1) written by [Frederick Southwell Cripps](#) (1855–1941), a distinguished civil engineer of his day,⁹ to his relatives in Tasmania in 1911 in which he recounts anecdotes told to him by his grandmother, [Frances Cripps](#), née Southwell, (1799/1800–1886) [hereafter Frances Cripps] about her father, William Southwell.¹⁰ As is almost inevitable with accounts transmitted orally through the generations in this way, investigation shows that some of the information given by Frederick Cripps has suffered from the 'Chinese whispers effect' and become distorted in the telling. Nevertheless it has provided a valuable basis for investigation and has helped to unlock previously unreported details of various strands of William's colourful history.

William Southwell's birthplace and parentage – an unresolved mystery

Despite strenuous efforts to trace William's birth, the author has been unable to locate firm information to establish his parentage. No clear connection with branches of either the aristocratic Southwell family¹¹ or other branches of the Southwell family in Ireland¹² has come to light. The search has been greatly hampered by the dearth of extant records in Ireland, much precious archival material having been lost to future

generations when the repository building of the Public Record Office in Dublin was destroyed by detonating explosives and fire in June 1922, along with most of the records, some dating back to the thirteenth century.¹³ However, an important clue to Southwell's early life is to be found in his daughter Frances's reminiscences:

'Her Father, she told me, worked himself up. He was apprenticed to Cabinet Making, and when quite young, made a beautiful model of a grand staircase. Then, he invented some pianoforte actions, and eventually started a factory for making Pianos.'¹⁴

Frustratingly, Frederick Cripps fails to identify William's Master or whether he was apprenticed in Dublin, London or elsewhere; presumably his grandmother did not go into that level of detail. However, if William followed the normal practice of the time, it is reasonable to infer that his apprenticeship to a cabinet maker must have begun *ca.* 1750 when he was aged fourteen and completed seven years later in about 1757 – *not* begun in 1772, as proposed by Grattan Flood. If William joined Weber in Dublin in 1772,¹⁵ it was as an adult aged thirty five, already a trained craftsman presumably wishing to adapt and refine his skills to the art of keyboard making – a situation that closely parallels that of his contemporary John Broadwood (1732–1812) when he left Scotland to join Burkath Shudi in London in 1761.¹⁶

This finding leaves us with further unresolved questions. Where was Southwell born? Where and with whom did he serve his apprenticeship? And what was the nature and location of his work from *ca.*1757 until 1772, when he reputedly joined Weber in Dublin? A newspaper notice placed in 1819 by [John Watlen](#) (1764–1833), proprietor of a London musical instrument establishment, with whom Southwell was closely associated during his final years,¹⁷ advertised: 'IMPROVED OBLIQUE AND CABINET PIANO-FORTES, by the Inventor [William Southwell], who has been upwards of fifty years inventing and finishing Piano-fortes'.¹⁸ The author's exploration of digital images of original eighteenth century records such as Marriage Allegations suggest that at that time the term 'upwards of' was consistently used to mean 'more than', rather than 'almost'. Assuming this is the case in this instance (rather than mere hyperbole on Watlen's part), it raises the possibility that Southwell might have been involved in the pianoforte making business since the late 1760s. Might he perhaps have joined Weber as a young journeyman before 1772, after first completing an apprenticeship in cabinet

making – a scenario which is entirely feasible, since Weber is recorded in business in Dublin from *ca.* 1748/9? Or could it be, one wonders, that William was apprenticed to a London cabinet maker and worked in England before later moving to Dublin to train with Weber?

Circumstantial evidence to link William with a firm of London furniture makers comes from his daughter, who, speaking of the family's time in London in the second decade of the 18th century, told her grandson, 'Mr. Trotter, the man who started and owned the Soho Bazaar, was a great friend of theirs.'¹⁹ [John Trotter](#) (1757–1833), a highly successful military contractor during the Napoleonic wars who later founded the Soho Bazaar in 1816 in his erstwhile military equipment warehouses in Soho Square, was a nephew and one time partner of the prominent Scottish-born cabinet maker. [John Trotter Snr.](#) (1713–1790).²⁰ Trotter Snr. was active in London for many years, from *ca.* 1744. For some years during the 1760s he was a partner of [George Smith Bradshaw](#) (1717–1812), the Master of [John Mayhew](#) (1737–1811)²¹ – later of the renowned house of Ince and Mayhew – and [Charles Smith](#) (–1767).²² Trotter is on record as having supplied furniture for the Countess of Kildare (later Duchess of Leinster) for Carton House in Dublin in 1759, thus demonstrating business dealings with the Irish aristocracy.²³ Mayhew, an exact contemporary of William Southwell, took as his apprentice – or perhaps employed as a journeyman – William Moore (–1815), who later crafted beautiful marquetry demi-lune tables in Dublin during the final two decades of the eighteenth century, reminiscent of the style made fashionable by Robert Adam in London during the 1770s.²⁴ The design of Southwell's elegant bespoke demi-lune pianofortes made in Dublin, for example that owned by Alec Cobbe and displayed at Hatchlands echoes this style. Unfortunately no known extant examples are marked with the date of manufacture, though they are sometimes attributed to the mid to late 1780s. (For images and an informative explanation of the unique technical features of these instruments, see Michael Cole, '[William Southwell – Inventor & Musical Instrument Maker](#)'). In this context, it is particularly interesting too that Moore, whose name has often speculatively been linked to Southwell, placed an advertisement in Dublin in 1789 in which he states he is now making pianofortes in addition to furniture:

Inlaid Furniture—plain [*sic*]; ditto—Pianoforte and Harpsichord Manufactory

W. Moore respectfully informs the nobility and gentry, he has removed from Abbey-street to Capel-street, No. 47, where he carries on the cabinet making business in general...²⁵

As will be discussed later, new evidence has emerged that confirms the two men were at least acquainted.²⁶ These various connections (see Appendix 2) led the author to investigate the possibility that Southwell might have been apprenticed to John Trotter (or another well regarded cabinet maker) in London and that he [Southwell] and John Mayhew (Moore's master) were acquainted as young apprentices there at that time.²⁷ However, despite extensive searches, to date no firm evidence has emerged to support this hypothesis.

Frances Cripps told her grandson her father was Irish and, as we shall see later, [John Watlen](#) (his final employer) would refer to him in 1811 as 'an Irish gentleman of great mechanical genius';²⁸ therefore the likelihood is that he was born somewhere in Ireland. This does not however preclude the possibility that earlier generations of his family might have originated elsewhere – as, for example, was the case for Nicholas Southwell's wife, Martha Fazakerley, whose father, [W^m.] Frederick Fazakerley, hailed from Fazakerley, near Liverpool, Lancashire and later moved to Dublin.²⁹ For this reason the author conducted searches to explore whether earlier generations of the family might also have had roots in England and at some point migrated to Ireland.

Two intriguing lines of enquiry emerged. One interesting Southwell branch can be traced back to Womborne, on the Staffordshire-Worcestershire border – and later in nearby Shropshire, a line of religious dissenters, sturdily independent of heart and mind. The patriarch of the clan is said to have fought in the English civil war (1642–51) on the side of Cromwell. The innate characteristics of certain members of this line, as identified from contemporary records, have resonance with the convictions of William Southwell, as described by his son Charles:

From some cause or other so great was his [William's] contempt and hatred of priests that if by any chance one of the tribe found his way into the house he would say, 'Fanny (my mother's name was Fanny), *see to the money drawer and lock up the cupboards*'. 'Robbers'

was the term he usually applied to them, and never missed an opportunity to indulge a joke at their expense. Like the writer of these Confessions, who in this respect decidedly is ‘a chip off the old block’, he hated with intensest hatred the pack of hungry wolves who, in the name of their imaginary *wolf* God, devour the sheep they profess to guard.³⁰

A descendent of this Shropshire line was one [John Southwell](#) (*ca.* 1736–1788), a peruke maker of the parish of St Martin Orgar in London, active there *ca.* 1760–1787, father of the explorer Daniel Southwell (1776–97) and the well regarded cabinet maker, [John Aylward Southwell](#) (1763–1847). The second branch includes a skilled cabinet maker in Liverpool, also named [William Southwell](#) (1768–1852), who may have been related to our William. More information relating to these branches is provided in the ‘Other Southwell branches’ section of this website. However, to date no firm connection with either line has been established.

Activities in Dublin, 1776 – 1794

The first documented evidence of William Southwell’s possible presence in Dublin identified by the author is the name ‘William Southwell’ as a signatory (alongside a large number of Dublin citizens) on a Loyal Address to the King in 1776 made by ‘Gentlemen, Clergy, Freemen, Freeholders, Merchants, Traders, Manufacturers and other Citizens of Dublin’ at the time of the Declaration of American Independence.³¹ However, since the occupations of the signatories are not given it cannot be stated with absolute certainty that this was the William under discussion here, rather than another of that name in the city at that time.

The first fully confirmed sighting is his entry in *Wilson’s Dublin Directory* in 1783,³² in which he is listed as a harpsichord maker at 26, Fleet-street, Dublin, thereby establishing that he went into business on his own account not later than the closing months of 1782 (when the directory would have gone to press) – and before Weber’s death in 1784. He remained at this address until 1786. The burial of a ‘Mrs Southwell’ of Fleet-street, Dublin [frustratingly no forename given] is recorded in the parish register of St Mary’s Church on 22 February 1778; thus it seems likely that he was already living in Fleet-street at this time (though possibly still working for Weber) and that this entry records the death of his first wife. However, an alternative possibility is that the lady

may have been his mother – or step mother, given his much younger brother Nicholas' birth year, *ca.* 1760.³³

If William was indeed widowed in 1778, it was not to be long before he re-married. In 1780 a Dublin marriage bond records the marriage of William Southwell and Ann Dowlan [Doland].³⁴ The name 'Dowlan' is most probably the result of a scribe's mishearing of 'Doland', since the latter is the name recorded in a legal document dated 1799 relating to their son [Henry](#) (1783–1866), stated there to be William's fourth son, as his mother's maiden name.³⁵ The baptism of a daughter, Harriot [*sic*], appears in the parish records of St. Thomas Church, Dublin in 1784.³⁶

The year 1784 also marks the earliest identified contemporary evidence of a performance given on one of William's instruments. An advertisement for a performance of Orpheus and Eurydice at the English Opera-House, Capel-street in *The Freeman's Journal* on 10 June 1784 announced:

In Act 3d, Mrs Billington will accompany one of her
Airs on a very capital Celestina Harpsichord, made by the
Celebrated Southwell of this City.³⁷

No further information on the construction of this instrument has emerged, though, from its name, it seems possible it included the 'Celestina stop' invented by [Adam Walker](#) (1731– 1821) who had strong Dublin connections at this time.³⁸

Dublin directories reveal that William moved from 26, Fleet-street to 70, Marlborough-street, probably towards the end of 1786 since he is listed in *Wilson's Dublin Directory* as a harpsichord maker at the latter address from 1787–91.³⁹ Rachel Webber [*sic*], widow of Ferdinand is listed in the same publication as a harpsichord maker at No. 71 in 1786, so was at that time active close by. William then moved to 86, Marlborough-street in 1792, where he was to maintain a business presence until 1802, as will be discussed below. It may be significant that the year 1792 also marks the first occasion on which we find him specifically listed as both a harpsichord *and* pianoforte maker. In May 1792 he placed the following advertisement in *The Freeman's Journal*:

Music

WILLIAM SOUTHWELL

Has finished and ready for inspection, one of his much
admired GRAND ORGANIZED PIANO FORTES;
His last improvement on the small Piano Forte has been
found on trial superior to any thing ever yet attempted; it
enables the performer to play with more expression, and adds
much to the brilliancy and sweetness of the tone.
Marlborough-street. ⁴⁰

This notice is of particular interest for two reasons. Firstly it reveals that Southwell was making some form of combined instrument (a fact previously unreported) – given the name, most likely a combined organ-pianoforte. A firm family connection with organ building is later confirmed by the partnership of Nicholas Southwell with one Stephen White, trading as ‘Southwell and White, organ builders, Liverpool and London’, from an indeterminate date until its dissolution in 1820.⁴¹ Nicholas is subsequently listed in Liverpool trade directories as an organ maker as well as pianoforte maker.⁴² However, the possibility that the instrument might have been a combined harpsichord-pianoforte cannot be completely discounted, given that William himself appeared in Dublin directories from 1783–1792 only as a ‘harpsichord maker’, and subsequently (1793–1801) as a ‘harpsichord and pianoforte maker’ – never as an organ builder. In this connection, it is worthy of note that ‘a Patent Grand Piano Forte and Harpsichord, which has the fine Effect of Two Instruments in one Body or Case’ would later be offered for sale by Longman & Broderip in London in January 1795, less than two months after Southwell had entered into a licensing arrangement with them, permitting them to manufacture and market square pianofortes made to the design of his seminal 1794 patent.⁴³ Note in particular the word ‘Grand’ in the title, leading the author to consider the possibility that Southwell might have made a similar deal with them to market his ‘Grand Organized Pianofortes.’ No further supporting evidence has emerged however, and this question remains open.

Secondly, the similarity in wording of William’s descriptions of his improvements on the small pianoforte to that of a advertisement he later placed in Dublin in November

1794 (see below and note 51) suggests that these may have been among the first constructed to his design 'with additional keys', in advance of his seminal 1794 English patent, which will be discussed later. (For an appraisal of the novel technical aspects of Southwell's innovative designs see Michael Cole '[William Southwell – Inventor & Musical Instrument Maker](#)')

The following year Southwell advertised pedal harps and an intriguing newly invented instrument he termed a 'Dolce Flauto' played with keys.

PEDAL HARPS, &c.

Southwell, ever anxious that any thing Musical shall not escape him, has now in his hand a number of PEDAL HARPS, which he is determined to have finished in the first stile, and at the same time paying every due attention to tone, &c. The mechanism of the Pedals, which is justly considered a masterly piece of workmanship, he hopes will bear the most critical inspection; and to render the above more perfect, has invented a little Instrument, which he calls a Dolce Flauto, played with keys; the tones are as sweet as the finest Flute, consequently is particularly adapted to accompany the Harp, and will serve as a standard to tune it by. What renders it more valuable is, that there is no possibility of its going out of tune, except injured by accident. One of them and a Harp is ready for inspection; – likewise a grand organised Piano Forte, which for tone, elegance, and variety of stops, &c. stands unrivalled. The very great demand for his improved Piano Fortes obliges him to apologise for some disappointments. – No. 86, Marlborough-street.⁴⁴

In 1798 William was to file a patent for the design of a harp which seems likely to have been similar to that described in this advertisement.⁴⁵ The exact nature of the Dolce Flauto is not known.⁴⁶

By 1793 William Ware of Belfast, who also had a relationship with the firm of Broadwood in London since at least 1778,⁴⁷ was acting as an agent for the sale of Southwell instruments. An advertisement placed in the *Belfast Newsletter* in July

announced that he has for sale a new PIANO-FORTE made by Southwell, Dublin that had a 'Swell Lid'.⁴⁸

With Europe in turmoil at the time of the French Revolution and increasing unrest in Ireland within the Catholic community, in 1794 William took his invention across the water to London where he applied for an [English patent \(No. 2017\)](#) from an address in Lad Lane, London.⁴⁹ The received wisdom holds that he established a shop there; however, the author has found no mention of his name in the Land Tax records at this location at this time, so possibly he was using a temporary 'convenience address'. Alternatively he may have rented a workshop in the area so that the premises would be listed in his landlord's name rather than his own. As soon as the patent was granted he sold sole rights for its manufacture in England to Longman and Broderip of Cheapside, who agreed to pay him half a guinea for each instrument made. At first sight this appears an astute business move on his part, but sadly for William, within a short time he was to find himself embroiled in the bitter disputes relating to the licensing rights to his patent following the bankruptcy of Longman and Broderip.⁵⁰

However, back in Dublin at the end of the year 1794, the future seemed rosy and proceeding according to plan for our hero. On 20 November 1794 he placed an advertisement in *The Freeman's Journal* which records his arrangement with Longman and Broderip and at the same time clearly demonstrates his intention to continue production of his new 'pianofortes with additional keys' in Dublin on his own account.

BY THE KING'S ROYAL PATENT.

SOUTHWELL'S

NEW IMPROVED PIANO-FORTES.

Sweetness of tone, sensibility of touch, and simplicity of construction were the Patentee's grand-objects, which, to the astonishment of all the Professors, both of this and the sister kingdom, he has fully accomplished, by means singularly adapted to the purpose, viz. The introduction of a So-novent in a part of the instrument, heretofore unnoticed, has an amazing effect. The perpendicular Dampers, without springs, are of such various utility, that it is impossible to have a Piano-Forte in perfection on any other construction.

The Harp Stop over the Strings, and the very curious manner in which the Additional Keys are added, by which the compass of the instrument is enlarged without increasing [*sic*] the dimensions, and [*sic*] only some of the advantages which this newly-improved instrument possesses over others. The size of the Piano-Forte is not enlarged by way of forcing out tone, but rather under the usual extent, whether with the additi-*[sic]* Keys or not and that the Public may have equal convenience in London as in Dublin of procuring these instruments, SOUTHWELL, sole Patentee, has appointed LONGMAN and BRODERIP, of Cheapside and the Haymarket, London, on certain specific conditions, to manufacture and vend the same for 14 years; by whom all orders will be attended to in London and by SOUTHWELL, The Patentee, at his his [word repeated] house, No. 86, Marlborough-street, Dublin, and nowhere else → N. B. A new HOUSE to LET, in Hume-street, Stephen's-green – Apply as above.⁵¹

This advertisement is interesting in two other respects. Firstly, here he has coined the novel term 'sonovent' to describe the delicately carved fretwork sound vents backed with silk in the triangular space at the back right hand corner of the soundboard, which, along with the two similarly carved fretwork vents at each end of the nameboard, became a striking hallmark of his instruments. A desk conversion of a Southwell square manufactured at this time (owned by Tim Harding) is inscribed 'Wm. Southwell, Dublin' on the nameboard, notably without the addition of '& Son', which was to appear in subsequent years until 1802. Attached to this instrument case there is an original 'flyer' which repeats the text of the above advertisement almost verbatim, suggesting that this instrument was made within a short time of the English patent being granted (Figure 1). Unfortunately the serial number in the centre of the nameboard roundel is so worn that it is no longer legible.⁵² Secondly, William advertised a house to let in Hume-street, which he had constructed on this site, seemingly as an investment.⁵³



Figure 1: Flyer attached to a desk conversion of a Southwell square pianoforte, ca. 1794, inscribed 'Wm. Southwell, Dublin' on the nameboard. (© Tim Harding, reproduced by kind permission).

No further advertisements placed directly by Southwell himself have been located in Dublin during the latter half of the decade. However, two placed in the *Belfast Mercury* in 1796 by a 'Mr Murdoc' cite Mr Southwell's endorsement of the quality of his work.

A CARD

MR. SOUTHWELL, PIANO FORTE-MAKER, &c. Dublin, –recommends Mr. MORDOC, (who has done business for him a long time) as a person very capable of Tuning and Repairing Organs, Piano fortes, &c....⁵⁴

Each of the extant examples of square pianofortes 'with additional keys' known to the author from Southwell's Dublin workshop between 1794 (the year he was granted his English patent) and 1802⁵⁵ bears hand painted stylised images of the lion and unicorn surmounted by a crown on their nameboards (see, for example, Figure 2), as also do two upright square pianofortes made to his 1798 patent design.



Figure 2: Nameboard of a five and a half octave square pianoforte by Wllm. Southwell & Son, 1798. (Courtesy of David Hunt: photograph by Margaret Debenham)

At first sight this would seem to indicate that Southwell's political sympathies lay with the English crown. However, these symbols do not appear on four examples of earlier five octave Southwell squares known to the author, which have nameboards that differ from each other and are more individual and freeform in style. Nor do they appear on the Croft Castle pianoforte, (see Cole, '[William Southwell – Inventor & Musical Instrument Maker](#)') which, it has been suggested, may be one of the earliest examples of Southwell's five and a half octave model. Arguably incorporating these symbols could

have been no more than an astute way of publicising his English patent rights, with an eye to attracting the market of British aristocrats and upper class citizens in Dublin. However, as will be discussed later, according to first-hand testimony of his daughter Frances, in *ca.*1803 Irish rebels set fire to his house in Dublin ‘because they thought he was not on their side.’⁵⁶

The earliest recorded serial number for a piano by ‘Willm. Southwell *and Son*’ is No. 1617, held in the Cobbe Collection at Hatchlands Park, an unusual example since it has evidence of an altered lid, which it has been suggested may be the result of a factory alteration of an earlier five octave model.⁵⁷ The earliest *dated* example known to the author (Figure 3) that similarly bears the joint names is a five and a half octave square (No. 2031) signed and dated by a workman March 9th 1798 on the side of a key. In this instance the ‘& Son’ refers to William’s son John – a partnership which was to endure until 1802.⁵⁸



Figure 3: Square pianoforte (No. 2031) by Willm. Southwell & Son, dated ‘March 9th 1798’ (Courtesy of David Hunt. Photograph by Margaret Debenham.)

Southwell the commuter: 1794 – 1803

Back in London, Longman and Broderip lost no time in offering to the public pianofortes made to William’s new design. On 31 January 1795 they announced:

LONGMAN and BRODERIP respectfully recommend to the Musical World a new Patent Piano-Forte, with additional Keys, Harp-stop, and new Patent Dampers, which, from the superiority of its construction, possesses a brilliancy of tone far exceeding any Instrument ever before offered to the Public.⁵⁹

Barely a year later, an advertisement placed on 7 January 1796 indicates that already they had become painfully aware that William's 1794 design was being copied by other makers in breach of his patent rights.

HARMONIC PIANO FORTES.

THE Musical Dilletanti are particularly requested, by LONGMAN and BRODERIP, to be cautious in respect to the places where they may apply for the purchase of Mr SOUTHWELL's new invented Patent Piano Fortes with additional keys, as those manufactured and sold by them at their respective Houses, No 26 Cheapside, No 13 Haymarket and No 141, Tottenham-court road, are universally allowed to be infinitely superior in point of tone, touch and quality, to those which are attempted to be offered to the Public, under the Idea of the same invention and improvements, yet differing widely in their actuating principles.⁶⁰

For a full and detailed account of the complex legal wrangling that ensued over the patent rights in subsequent years see George S. Bozarth and Margaret Debenham, ['Piano Wars', 2009](#).⁶¹

It appears that William was spending a considerable amount of time in London during this period, leaving his son John to manage the manufacturing business in Dublin. In 1798 he took out another innovative [patent \(No. 2264\)](#),⁶² this time for an upright square pianoforte and, in the same application, [a harp](#), this time giving his address as Broad Court, St. Martin in the Fields. Again there is no sign of his name in the Land Tax records for Broad Court in 1798, so perhaps this was another convenience address for

patent purposes, though conceivably he might have been a sub-tenant of one of the three occupants listed in that location – Jos^h Wateridge, ‘Winter & Hay’ and Jn^o. Burnham. By serendipity, the original patent specification handed in for enrolment on 6 December 1798 and personally signed and sealed by William Southwell is extant in the holdings of The National Archives, Kew, providing us with [a rare example of his signature](#).⁶³

In connection with this patent, a very interesting flyer preserved on a Southwell square piano dated 1802 has recently come to light (Figure 4)⁶⁴ which reveals the fact that William had entered into an arrangement for production of this new model with Clementi and Co. similar to that of his earlier agreement with Longman and Broderip. The details appearing on the flyer include the dimensions, ‘Height 4 feet 6 inches; depth 1 feet 6 inches; Withe [*sic*] 5 feet 1 inch. A transcription of the text that appears below the image of an engraving of William Southwell’s 1798 patent drawing is given below.

The Construction of the New Patent Microchordon is entirely different from any Instrument ever before offered to the Public; & from the Simplicity of the action & truth of Mathematical Measures it possesses an excellent Touch & Tone & keeps perfectly well in Tune – This Invention has received the decided Approbation of the most eminent Professors: & the agreeable Variety afforded by the occasional Introduction of the Drum & Triangle particularly in Military Movements, Waltzes, Rondos Reels &c. renders it a valuable acquisition to the Musical World.

LONDON

Printed by Muzio Clementi & Co. No. 26 Cheapside

The above Instrument was invented by Mr. Southwell of Dublin, and is called

A CAMERACHORD

[In a Ribbon] King’s Royal Patent

Southwell’s New Invented Camerachord

OR

CHAMBER PIANO-FORTE to be had only of THE PATENTEES

86 Marlborough Street DUBLIN or Longman Clementi & Co.

London

Price with additional
Key[sic] 35 Guineas

with Drum and Triangles
44 Guineas Do’

with Six Octaves
38 Gui.s.



Figure 4: Flyer attached to a Southwell square piano (No. 2283), dated 10 July 1802. This advertisement relates to a different type of instrument, which he termed a 'Camerachord', constructed to the design of his 1798 'upright square' patent. (© Image reproduced by kind permission of the private owner, Warwickshire).

The reference to 'Longman, Clementi and Co.' tells us that this part of the text must have been written *before* the dissolution of the partnership between John Longman (brother of James) and Clementi on 28 June 1800.⁶⁵ However, the name of the printer is

given as 'Muzio Clementi & Co.', indicating that this printing took place *after* this date. Supporting evidence that this model was indeed offered for sale by Longman, Clementi and Co. is found in an advertisement placed by the firm in October 1799.⁶⁶ The square pianoforte to which this flyer is attached is dated by a workman, Geo. Cooke, on the side of a key July 10, 1802, which infers that the upright square model was still in production at this time. The text also provides confirmation that Southwell was still manufacturing instruments on his own account in Dublin in 1798. An example of the case of an upright square pianoforte made in Dublin to this design (minus its action) is extant and was held in the Mobbs Keyboard Collection at Golden Bay, New Zealand until 2020.

In about 1797/8 at the age of sixty William took another wife, Frances (*ca.* 1783–1847) – a young girl of 16.⁶⁷ It is perhaps significant that Charles Southwell was later to observe in his *Confessions of a Free Thinker*:

But though a Sampson in intellect, like Sampson my poor father had not always strength enough to resist temptations spread for him by the fair sex; and the Bible hero shorn of his locks was not more impotent than *he* sometimes was under their influence. He loved woman heartily as every man should, but his love was not always tempered with discretion.⁶⁸

Frances is said by their daughter, also named Frances, to have been 'the daughter of a London hairdresser', which suggests he met her there while living in the capital.⁶⁹ No formal record of a marriage ceremony has been located, but Frances went on to bear him at least seven children.⁷⁰ If the union was ever formalised in church, it would appear he committed bigamy, since a legal document relating to his son Henry's apprenticeship to the Dublin Attorney Sobieski Kildahl in 1799 states that 'he is the son of William Southwell of Marlborough-street in the City of Dublin Gentⁿ and Ann Southwell, otherwise Doland his wife.'⁷¹ Another extant original document in the same set is a sworn statement dated 5 April 1799 (personally signed by William Southwell and witnessed in Dublin), that he was the father of Henry Southwell and that his son was of 'full age of sixteen years', therefore born in 1783.⁷² This document thus confirms William's presence in Dublin at this time.

Further evidence that he continued to be active in Dublin is found in *Wilson's Dublin Directory*, 1801, where he is again listed as a Harpsichord and Piano Forte maker at 86 Marlborough-street. Confirmation that this indicates no mere token presence comes from a newspaper notice placed by an influential group of Dublin cabinet makers in February 1802, seeking skilled workmen to come over from England to join their workforce.

CABINET MAKERS WANTED

In the CITY of DUBLIN,

By the undersigned PERSONS carrying on the
CABINET-MAKING BUSINESS.

A NUMBER of INDUSTRIOUS WORKING MEN in the above Line, who will, instantly on their Arrival in Dublin, be put into constant and ample Employment, at the Rates now payable in London by the Book of Cabinet Prices of 1797,⁷³ or by any other New Book of Rates which shall hereafter become the Standard in London, with the Benefit of English Money as now paid in Ireland; viz. 1s. 8d. in the Pound.

Every Man who brings with him a good Chest of Tools, shall be paid THREE GUINEAS for his Expences, on Application to:

Robert Mallett	John Gillington
John Davis	George Jennings
Robert Morgan	N. Southwell
John Mack	William Southwell
John Wandsford Wright	Henry Eggeso
William Bradshaw	James Flood
John Young	John Preston
Richard Mc.Owen	Nathaniel Preston
Christopher Dougherty	William Warren
Hall Kirchoffer	Robert Gibton
St George Campbell	John Evat
John Gardiner	William Moore ⁷⁴

Observe that not only William and 'N' Southwell but also William Moore are among this illustrious group of craftsmen, indicating that they were at very least acquainted. The group also includes the renowned Irish furniture makers John Mack, Robert Gibton and John Gillington whose pieces are greatly prized and command high prices at auction today.

Meanwhile however, back in London there were ominous rumblings of trouble brewing for William Southwell. On 24 March 1802 James Longman and three of his creditors brought a case against John Longman (James' brother), Clementi and Co. in the Court of Equity, seeking redress for monies that Longman claimed were due to him from sales of square pianofortes made by the firm to Southwell's patent design.⁷⁵ In a move which may be reasonably interpreted as an attempt to protect his assets when anticipating possible financial hazards ahead, on 1 June 1802 William executed a legal deed in Dublin, ostensibly retiring from the business – though as we shall see in fact he was destined to continue to work for many years to come. The deed, which interestingly gives two addresses for the Southwell premises in Marlborough-street, No. 86 and No. 34 (the latter being the address of the firm found in following years), terminated his existing partnership with his son John and in its place established a new partnership between two of his sons, John and Francis, and his brother Nicholas. In return the new firm contracted to pay William a premium on each instrument sold. In the case of square piano fortes this was to be two pounds; for harpsichords three pounds; for flat Grand Pianofortes four pounds and for upright Grand Pianofortes five pounds. It is worthy of note that both flat and upright Grand Pianofortes are mentioned in this legal document, suggesting that both were made by the house of Southwell – later confirmed by auction advertisements placed in 1819 and 1823 that included Southwell Grands.⁷⁶ The nameboard of a square pianoforte manufactured shortly after this deed was executed clearly illustrates the change of name of the firm (Figure 5). The left hand section of the ribbon reads 'Piano forte', the central section 'Southwells' and the right hand section 'Makers', and the address given below is '34, Marlboro St. Dublin'.

Also in the same year (1802) William sold the title to the houses he had built in Hume-street, Dublin to another son, [Thomas](#) (1782–) at that time a Lieutenant in the 46th Regiment of Foot,⁷⁷ probably the eldest son of his union with Ann[e] Doland.



Figure 5: Nameboard of a Southwell square pianoforte (No. 2283) made in Dublin, signed and dated 'July 10 – 1802' on a key by a workman 'Geo^e. Cooke' (© Image reproduced by kind permission of the private owner, Warwickshire).

Played out against a background of increasing unrest and rebellion in Ireland that would ultimately lead to the Act of Union in January 1803 and the disbanding of the Irish Parliament, in London events were moving apace.⁷⁸ James Longman and his creditors continued to press home Longman's claims against Clementi and his partners and it is apparent that at this point Southwell was by this time coming under increasing pressure from Clementi & Co. to assert his rights by taking action against those allegedly constructing instruments that blatantly used elements of his design.⁷⁹ Consequently, on 8 March 1803, Southwell, perhaps at their insistence, filed a complaint against John Broadwood and his son James Shudi Broadwood in the Court of Equity, this time giving his address as 3, Duke's Court, St Martin in the Fields.⁸⁰ The Broadwoods' response was swift and ruthless. Their skilled lawyer managed to interpret a part of the patent specification in such a way that meant it could not be fully defended.⁸¹ Though no record of a judgement in the case has been located, testimony by Clementi and Co. in a later case concerning the disputed rights makes it clear that Southwell pragmatically decided to retreat in the face of the Broadwoods' opposition and the escalating costs involved, only too aware that by then a number of other makers were openly copying his design.⁸²

It seems William must have returned to Dublin, perhaps metaphorically to lick his wounds, shortly before the Irish rebellion led by Robert Emmet took place on 23 July 1803. Certainly the family were in Dublin at about this time since one of Frances [Southwell] Cripps most vivid childhood memories was of being carried from the house on her father's shoulders as a small girl after the rebels set fire to their house – a very frightening scenario and one that strongly suggests that the rebels believed that Southwell's sympathies lay with the Protestant ascendancy rather than the Catholic majority.

At the age of 3 she was carried away from their house on her Father's shoulders, she recollected looking back and seeing the house in flames, it having been set fire to in one of the Irish Rebellions, because they thought he was not on their side. This was in Dublin. They ran for their lives and went into a Hotel which they found occupied by the rebels enjoying themselves. They fled to Liverpool.⁸³

According to Frances (as told to her grandson), after fleeing to Liverpool in the wake of the fire, the family then started up again in business, first in Liverpool and then in London. The *Liverpool Directory* for 1805 contains the first known confirmation of the Southwell business operating in that city, with an entry for Nicholas, 'J' and 'F' Southwell (the three new partners in the business established by the Dublin deed of 1802), musical instrument makers, Duke-street. A year earlier, in 1804, a William Southwell is recorded at a different address in Liverpool, 1, Case-street – a residential area of substantial houses.⁸⁴ Possibly this is the address where William installed his family at this time, after the flight from Dublin. Certainly his wife [partner] Frances was in Liverpool in this year, since census returns for 1851 and 1861 give their son [William Southwell Junior's](#) birth place as Liverpool, 1804.⁸⁵

It can be confirmed from other sources however that John Southwell remained in Dublin. He is recorded as a music seller and publisher at 17, North Earl-street ca. 1803–1806.⁸⁶ And on 5 June 1804, now said to be of Marlborough-street, along with one James LaPrelle of Abbey-street he signed a Bond in the sum of £100 as a guarantor for his brother Henry on the occasion of his entering the Honourable Society of the Kings Inn of Court, Dublin after completing his apprenticeship with Kildahl, evidence of a close

connection between LaPrelle and the Southwell family. This assumes particular significance when one discovers that LaPrelle is recorded as being a cabinet maker at 48, Capel-street from 1787–1794, next door to William Moore’s premises at 47, Capel-street, his address from 1789–1810. Moore is listed at 48, Capel-street in later directory entries from 1810 through to 1814, the year of his death. One wonders if LaPrelle and William Moore may have had some form of co-operative working relationship for a time; however, no further evidence to support this possibility has emerged to date.

Life after Dublin: the Liverpool and London years, 1805 – 1825

Despite the trials and tribulations of William’s relationship with James Longman, it seems he maintained – or re-established – amicable relations with Francis Fane Broderip in subsequent years. An advertisement placed by Broderip and Wilkinson in May 1806 announced that their new musical publications were available from ‘Messrs Southwell, Duke-street, Liverpool’⁸⁷ and also ‘their piano-fortes with additional keys’. Augustus Leukfeld of Tottenham-street, London had been under an exclusive contract to supply Broderip and Wilkinson with five and a half octave pianofortes made to the Southwell patent since 1801,⁸⁸ so one may deduce that those supplied to Southwell and Co.’s Liverpool shop [by Broderip and Wilkinson] would have come from Leukfeld’s workshop.⁸⁹ After Broderip’s death in 1807, Wilkinson took over his business⁹⁰ and, not later than 1808, established his own close relationship with William Southwell in London, as we shall see.

On 8 April 1807 William filed yet another [patent \(No. 3029\)](#), this time for a full upright cabinet pianoforte with an action that worked in front of the soundboard.⁹¹ A major advantage was that it was no longer necessary to cut through it [the soundboard] to allow hammers or dampers access to the strings, thus creating a stronger, more stable instrument in which the strings go down to the ground. His address in the patent rolls is given merely as Dublin, indicating that he was still returning to Ireland from time to time. With the advent of the Act of Union in 1801, patent law was now applicable across the whole of the United Kingdom and it was no longer necessary to use an English address for this purpose. James Shudi Broadwood was later to claim in 1838 that Southwell’s design was based on a sketch he had given to Southwell in 1804.⁹² Perhaps

some form of informal out of court settlement may have taken place after the acrimonious court case in 1803; however, the author has located no firm evidence to support this hypothesis.

In this context it is however interesting that in 1807–08 the Broadwood out-letter books⁹³ record correspondence which documents a business relationship between the Broadwoods and Southwell's son Henry (1783–1866), now practising as a recently qualified solicitor in Dublin.⁹⁴ It appears they were referred to Henry by a Mr Galbraith of 2, Locke-street, Dublin, whom the Broadwoods had initially approached for help in obtaining settlement for a bad debt on 28 November 1804.⁹⁵ Two letters addressed to Southwell at 18, Westmoreland-street, Dublin (Henry Southwell's address) on 11 December 1806 and 2 January 1807 concern another matter, a debt owed to them by William Ware of Belfast (an agent for the sale of both Broadwood and Southwell instruments and to whom Broadwoods had lent money).⁹⁶ In a letter dated 5 February 1807 they make reference to Henry's father, [William Southwell]:

5th February 1807

[in margin:] Southwell [then:] Mr Attorney Dublin

In 1803 we sent Mr Ware a copy of the then / standing account which acc^t. we now send you / and to which we have added the Interest up to / this Time and also given him credit for the sum / received since = You will observe a difference between / this and the Acc^t. before transmitted you and the Articles / Octob^r. 12/99 on the Credit side and October 26 /99 on / debit side were omit^d. because enter^d against each other in / a [crossed through] ~~the~~ [then] Retail Ledger and were never posted to Mr Wares / proper account = We told your father you might give up the Interest [crossed through:] ~~as we~~ [then:] on his pay^t & the Principle as / we considered him a Poor Devil – but if he troubles / us by Law expenses we will not. Enclosed we send a / Copy of a Letter rec^d. from Mr W. acknowledging the Debt / Dated Jan^y 12th 1807.⁹⁷

The exact meaning of the reference to 'your father' here is unclear. Do they mean they consider William Ware a 'poor devil' – or are they referring to William Southwell? Without knowing the exact context, it is tantalisingly ambiguous. What it *does* establish however is that they must have been in communication with William [father of Henry Southwell] at this time. Further evidence to support this comes from another letter

written a few months later on 19 October 1807, recorded in the Broadwood letter book, which suggests some form of discussion had occurred.

—with regard / to Mr Ware’s bond when Due you will please deduct / one half for the trouble and expenses you may have/ incurred agreeable to the promises made Mr Southwell [Sn^r]⁹⁸

From Charles Southwell’s testimony in *‘The Confessions of a Free Thinker’* we learn that by the time William Southwell died in 1825 more friendly relations had resumed between the houses of Broadwood and Southwell, since, at that time two of Southwell’s sons were already employed by Broadwoods and Charles, the youngest, was, he tells his readers, taken on at this time by the firm, ‘out of respect for my father’.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, not later than 1808 Nicholas Southwell established a manufactory presence at 49, Rathbone Place, London (backing onto Gresse-street) in addition to his premises at 99, Duke-street, Liverpool. A square pianoforte dated 1808 and held in a private collection bears both addresses on the nameboard.¹⁰⁰ Another example offered for sale by Piano Auctions in 2010 also clearly shows both addresses (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Nameboard of a square pianoforte offered for sale by Piano Auctions, London in 2010 (reproduced by kind permission of Richard Reason)

Investigations of the Land Tax records for Rathbone Place reveal one Robert Bill at this London address from 1807. The *London and Country Directory*, 1811 lists him as a ‘patent pianoforte manufacturer’, giving his addresses as 16 and 49, Rathbone Place – the latter appears to have been the workshop address, the former his residence. He is reported to have made pianofortes of a novel design ‘without temperament’ under an 1808 patent granted to William Hawkes of Newport Shropshire’.¹⁰¹ On 2 April 1809 an advertisement placed in Hawkes’ name advertised for sale:

A GRAND PIANO-FORTE, improved upon the same principle as his Organ, so highly approved of, after a critical trial, by many of the most Eminent of the Profession, and may be seen at No. 49, Rathbone-place Oxford-street, any day between the hours of Eleven in the Forenoon and Four in the Afternoon; – Besides the superiority of harmonic perfection in this instrument (in which those harsh and disagreeable tones to the extent of five flats, and as many sharps, termed wolves, are done away). The application of the Patent Springs to the strings, so celebrated for keeping stringed Instruments in tune, is an acquisition of great importance, as the thumping of unskilful Performers cannot injure or put them out of tune....¹⁰²

What, if any, may have been the nature of the relationship between Hawkes and the Southwells remains a question yet to be resolved. At some time between 1811 and 1813 Bill moved to 5, Berner's Mews, a few blocks away,¹⁰³ where he remained until 1820. This is particularly interesting in the light of Frances Cripps reporting to her grandson that the family had had premises in Berners-street.

They then lived in Werners [Berners] Street, Oxford Street, and many are the stories Grandma told me of the great people she met while living there with her Father.¹⁰⁴

The author has identified evidence from contemporary advertisements, Land Tax records and directories that William Southwell and his family were in fact resident at 11, Gresse-street from 1811 until his death in 1825.¹⁰⁵ However, given the earlier connection to 49, Rathbone Place, the fact that at some point between 1811 and 1813 Robert Bill moved to a workshop at 5, Berner's Mews, backing directly onto Berners-street, may be significant. One wonders whether this may have become the London workshop of Southwell and Co (headed in England by Nicholas) and that Bill had continued to work for the firm there, though this remains unproven.

Returning to the year 1808, on 21 June Wilkinson and Co., late Broderip and Wilkinson,¹⁰⁶ placed an advertisement for a new design of cabinet pianoforte, for which they had acquired the manufacturing rights from William Southwell.

A PIANO FORTE on a new and improved Construction. –WILKINSON and Company, late Broderip and Wilkinson, No. 13 Hay-Market, beg to inform the No-

bility and Public in general, that they have received his Majesty's royal Letters' patent for a Piano Forte on an entirely new construction, called a New Patent Cabinet Piano Forte. – The superior qualities it possesses are a brilliancy of tone[sic] unequalled by any Piano Forte, united with a peculiar delicacy and facility of touch. The simplicity and strength of its construction prevent the possibility of its being out of tune so frequent as any other Instrument. – From the peculiar application of the Pedals, it is particularly adapted for executing with unprecedented effect, either Vocal or Instrumental Music, at the same time the elegance of its form, combined with a complete conveniency for Music Books, &c. renders it as a piece of furniture far superior to any Piano Forte ever made. –Dimensions –Height 5 feet 6 inches –Breadth 3 feet 6 inches –Depth 1 foot 8 inches.– N.B. Wilkinson and Company, the Proprietors of the above patent Piano Forte, being fully persuaded of the superiority of its standing in tune over all others, engage to keep those sold in town in tune and repair for Twelve Months, free of expence – It may be necessary to add, that the Cabinet Piano Fortes are finished under the immediate inspection of the Inventor W. Southwell, at their Manufactory, No. 3, Windmill-street, and at No. 13, Hay-Market. ¹⁰⁷

An illustration of this type of model appeared in *Ackermann's Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures, &c* Vol.7 February 1812, see: ['Hand-colored print of cabinet upright piano titled "Messrs. Wilkinson & Wornum's Upright Patent Pianaforte'](#) [sic] (reproduced in Wikipedia).

Yet again we find William re-visiting his strategy of maximising the return on his inventive efforts by licensing manufacturing rights to others rather than taking on the burden of the costs of manufacture for himself – an approach with which many modern entrepreneurs could identify. However, this time he varied his tactics slightly, since he was personally employed in supervising the production process in Wilkinson's workshop. One must remember that he was now about 70 years old and supposedly retired, but with an ever growing young family to house, feed and clothe, doubtless he would not

have been able to afford to cease work. A number of agents across England placed advertisements for the Wilkinson [Southwell] cabinet pianos at this time, including Ralph Guest of Bury St Edmunds, J. Hardy of Hull and S. Ball of Ipswich,¹⁰⁸ suggesting that Wilkinson had inherited a good distribution network from the old Broderip and Wilkinson partnership.

During this period too Robert Wornum (1780–1852), was working as a foreman for George Wilkinson¹⁰⁹ and would have had ample opportunity to observe Southwell's techniques and methods at first hand. Wilkinson and Wornum were to become partners in 1810 – a relationship destined to be cut short by a disastrous fire that destroyed their new premises at 315 Oxford-street (though leaving 11, Princes-street intact) in early October 1812.¹¹⁰ Wornum's involvement with Southwell assumes particular significance in the light of another of the stories told to F S Cripps by his grandmother.

When quite young and while living in London, she remembers Wornum coming to work for her Father as a poor boy. He was half starved, so she often took him meals down, herself. He afterwards stole one of her Fathers idea (patents) and became one of the big Pianoforte makers of London. I think the firm still exists—at any rate Broadwoods does.

This is another example of a tale that must have become twisted in the telling. Since Frances was not born until about 1800, at this time Wornum was already a young man in his late twenties, not a boy. It is possible that, looking back with hindsight in her old age, Frances might well have used the term 'boy' in the loosest sense. When one becomes advanced in years, age can become relative. It is however likely she would have encountered Wornum during the years he worked alongside her father in the Wilkinson workshop from 1808 – *ca.* 1810.

The idea to which Frances referred may have been the sticker action first introduced in Southwell's upright square patent of 1798, which, as John Watson notes in his description of a vertical piano by Robert Wornum Junior held in the Colonial Williamsburg Collection,¹¹¹ was an idea adapted for use by Wornum in his 'improved upright pianoforte', patented on 26 March 1811 (No. 3419). The model is sometimes referred to as the 'Unique', as is borne out by a label found on a Wilkinson and Wornum upright instrument in the Colt collection giving 'DIRECTIONS FOR THE NEW PATENT UNIQUE

PIANO-FORTE'.¹¹² Since this label bears the address 315, Oxford-street and 11, Princes-street the instrument must have been made before the fire destroyed the premises in 1812.

In the light of Frances' story, the wording of an advertisement placed personally by William Southwell in *The Observer* on 27 September 1812 assumes new relevance, suggesting, as it does, that William did indeed lay claim to being the inventor of 'unique pianofortes'.

PIANO FORTES – By the King's Royal Patent. –

Amateurs, Professors &c. of the Piano Forte are most respectfully informed that they can be supplied with real UNIQUE PIANO FORTES, upon simple and permanent principles, totally different from any thing hitherto submitted to the Public, with drawers in front, or other conveniences for music, at the option of the purchaser, and six octaves of keys, will stand in playable tone for six months, touch and tone unequalled. Has likewise for Sale a Specimen of his much admired Cabinet Piano Fortes, for which he obtained His Majesty's Letters Patent, but with such very essential improvements, as will make it a valuable acquisition to the purchaser. –To be seen at the Patentee's W. Southwell, No. 11, Gresse-street, Rathbone-place, from eleven to five o'clock; and at Mr J. Balls, Piano-Forte-maker, No. 27, Duke-street, Grosvenor-square.¹¹³

Later, in 1819 John Watlen, with whom Southwell was associated from 1813 until his death in 1825, would refer to him in an advertisement as 'the Inventor of the additional Keys, the upright Dampers, the Cabinet Pianoforte, the Harmonic Pianoforte, the Oblique Pianoforte', thus lending weight to this possibility.¹¹⁴ The above advertisement is interesting too in its reference to Southwell cabinet pianos being available at the premises of [James] Ball, indicating that a rift may have occurred between Southwell and Wilkinson and Wornum by this time. The disastrous blaze which destroyed the Wilkinson factory, started accidentally by a candle dropped by the wife of an employee,¹¹⁵ took place two weeks *after* this advertisement was placed and therefore the split in the working relationship cannot have happened as a result of the fire.

1811 - 1825: Southwell's oblique pianoforte and John Watlen

Not later than 1811 William Southwell took up residence at 11, Gresse-street, Rathbone Place in the parish of St Pancras, as is evidenced from directory entries, Land Tax records and advertisements he placed personally for individual instruments he had constructed.¹¹⁶ A close neighbour at No. 13 was George Dettmer, whose name appears as the occupant of No. 7, Gresse-street from 1799 until 1803 – and probably until 1809.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately there is a gap in the extant Land Tax records, but from an advertisement placed in July 1809 we learn that Dettmer's son William had recently moved to larger premises, 50, Upper Marylebone Street.¹¹⁸ Also at around this time, the Lancastrian born portrait painter James Lonsdale (1777–1839), then living at 8, Berners-street, painted Southwell's portrait, which he exhibited in Liverpool in 1813.¹¹⁹ Sadly, despite extensive enquiries, the author has been unable to locate the present whereabouts of this portrait. One lives in hope that it may yet surface from obscurity.

From his address in Gresse-street William filed yet another [patent \(No. 3403\)](#),¹²⁰ this time for the accurately – though somewhat inelegantly – named 'Piano sloping backwards', which was to be marketed as 'the oblique pianoforte', a much updated variation on the design of his upright square of 1798. With a case only four feet six inches high and five feet five inches wide, this was a neater instrument than the tall uprights of other makers still in production at this time. A particular advantage was that it did not need to be placed against a wall and it was low enough for a singer to be able to be seen and to project their voice over the top of it. It is interesting to note that on the same day John Trotter, proprietor of the Soho Bazaar (whom, it may be recalled, was said by Southwell's daughter Frances to have been a great friend of their family) also filed a patent for a [novel pianoforte keyboard \(No. 3404\)](#).¹²¹ The patent drawing is skilfully executed and one wonders if Southwell may have had a hand in its preparation.

As we learn from a notice which appeared in a London newspaper in December 1811, an 'Irish gentleman of great mechanical genius' (who is fully confirmed from later advertisements to be William Southwell) sold the manufacturing rights for this latest design to John Watlen ¹²² of 5, Leicester-square:

The new Patent Grand Oblique six octave Piano-forte, so much admired and spoken of for its many excellent qualities, particularly those of standing in tune and elegance of form, is not Mr. WATLEN's invention (of Leicester-place), but that of an Irish gentleman of great mechanical genius, for which he paid him 500 guineas.¹²³

Watlen was to become a prolific advertiser over the following decade and it is thanks largely to his unwitting testimony we can glean that Southwell had yet again repeated his strategy of selling manufacturing rights to his inventions to another maker. His wordy outpourings reveal that William acted as a superintendent of his [Watlen's] workshops from the commencement of the manufacture of the oblique pianoforte until at least 1823 – and by inference right up to the time of his death in 1825.

From the outset of the launch of this new model, Watlen's newspaper notices and advertisements are extravagant in their claims for its features. On 31 October 1811, a notice placed in *The Morning Chronicle* claims

The new Patent Oblique Six-octave Piano-forte, of Watlen's, Leicester-place, is now esteemed superior to all others for its many excellent qualities. An amateur of high respectability says that it will supersede all other Grand Piano-fortes, and Mr C.W, a Professor of great eminence gave it his unequalled approbation, but thought it too cheap at forty five guineas....

Moving on to the closing years of the decade in 1819 we find a notice placed by Watlen (by then of No. 13, Leicester-place) which has particular relevance to our story:

To THE MUSICAL WORLD. – ADVERTISEMENT. He is yet alive and at work, aged 81 – Wm SOUTHWELL, the Inventor of the additional keys, the upright Dampers, the Cabinet Pianoforte, the Harmonic Pianoforte, the Oblique Pianoforte, which is the last, and certainly the best, particularly the new Improved Oblique Pianoforte; it has as fine a tone as any Grand Pianoforte, and a much lighter touch; its elegant form and its moderate price will in time supersede all other Pianofortes. ...¹²⁴

Another notice placed in the same year is most interesting,

IMPROVED OBLIQUE AND CABINET
PIANO-FORTES, BY THE Inventor, who has been upwards of fifty years inventing and finishing Piano-fortes; every judge must own that the tones and touches are unequalled; the elegant form of the Improved Oblique, the compact size suits either palace or cottage. Price 45 to 75 guineas.¹²⁵

As discussed earlier, the phrase ‘upwards of fifty years’ in the business takes us back to the late 1760s, thus raising the possibility that Southwell may have already been involved with inventing and finishing Piano-fortes for several years prior to his oft cited commencement date with Ferdinand Weber in Dublin in 1772.¹²⁶

Watlen’s advertisements for the oblique piano forte continued to be placed at frequent intervals through to 1823 and indicate that the model was made and sold in large numbers, which makes it all the more surprising that no known working examples have survived, with the exception of a case converted into a display cabinet, sold at auction in 2009.¹²⁷ In 1815 he announced he had supplied an oblique pianoforte to The Duchess of Angouleme (eldest child of Louis XVI of France and Marie Antoinette), who was then resident for a short period at The Retreat, Battersea;¹²⁸ and eight years later in 1823 he proudly proclaimed that his client list for this model included the Royal Families of France and the Netherlands and the Duchess of Clarence.¹²⁹

In 1821, by now well over 80 years old, while still involved with Watlen, William took out yet another [patent \(No. 4546\)](#), for an improved cabinet pianoforte, this time for a back check, designed to catch the hammers, thus preventing them from rebounding against the strings, another novel design which would be adopted and is in use to the present day.¹³⁰

Southwell’s family life in London

During these final years in London, so Frances Cripps told her grandson, William was deeply involved with the London theatre scene and often wrote reviews of productions.

... many are the stories Grandma told me of the great people she met while living there with her Father. Kemble, Keane and Macroedy [*sic*] the Actors, and all sorts. Her Father, she said, had the entry to all theatres and Concerts and used to write criticisms.

A connection with the world of theatre is also suggested by the involvement of some of his children. [Francis W. Southwell](#) (ca. 1774 –), one of William's sons of probably his earliest marriage, became well known in his day as a composer of popular airs and orchestral pieces both in Dublin and London, though he cannot be considered to be of the first rank. It is interesting to note that Bartlett Cooke, the Dublin music dealer and father of Tom Cooke (1782–1848), published one of F W Southwell's compositions in Dublin. Tom Cooke moved to London in 1813 and was active in the Theatre Royal in London, both as singer composer and conductor, during the same period when two of Southwell's children, Henry F and Maria, are on record as performing there; and a notice in *The London Gazette* in 1818 relating to the bankruptcy of Cooke and his Dublin partner Michael Brennan as music sellers in Dublin and London, makes reference to their former solicitor Henry Southwell of Dublin.¹³¹ [Henry F Southwell](#) (ca.1798–1841), confusingly given the name Henry despite the fact that he already had a half brother named Henry,¹³² became an actor first in Dublin and then a leading man at Drury Lane in London during the early 1820s, before being recruited by Francis Courtney Wemyss to join his theatre troupe in Philadelphia in 1827. [Maria Southwell](#) appeared as a singer in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in 1826 and the English Opera House, and followed her brother to Philadelphia by 1829, ultimately marrying a Mr Golden and settling in the USA.

William's family life too took another dramatic twist during the Gresse-street years. His youngest son Charles (1814–1860) claimed that his mother, whom he names as 'Fanny' in his *'Confessions of a Free Thinker'* married his father, said to be 'upwards of seventy' – therefore after 1807.

I am the youngest of thirty-three children, all begotten in the regular legal way by one father, who, to borrow a scriptural mode of expression, went in unto three wives, most evidently the last of whom was my mother. She had kindled the flame of love in the breast of my father while residing with him in the capacity of servant ...

... When upwards of seventy he married my mother (a buxom, and some who knew her say, handsome lass of twenty), which to my less courageous intellect appears a bolder stroke than any prudent person would make for the handsomest of young wives. 'Wives are old men's nurses', and rather in the capacity of nurse than wife did my mother act towards my father for many years before his death. Up to the period of my birth, and I believe two or three years after, they cohabited together; but my birth (though not, like Glo'ster, born with teeth) cost my mother agonies so acute and distressing that she vowed never again to bear children. . .

At the time of Charles' birth in 1814, William was seventy seven years old – a startling thought. Charles' statements are confusing, since his description of his birth suggests that he was his mother's first child. Additionally, when one examines the logistics closely (see note 133) it seems most unlikely that his mother, 'Fanny', could have been one and the same person as Frances, mother of Frances [Southwell] Cripps.¹³³ If another marriage ceremony did take place – and the author's searches have drawn a blank (with the exception of a marriage on 21 May 1820 between a William Southwell and Frances Ann Say at Christchurch, Newgate-street, for which only a Bishops transcript of the register survives [therefore minus the original signatures of bride and groom]) – it must again have been bigamous since his wife [partner] Frances, with whom he had been since *ca.* 1798, was very much still alive at the time. Since her children were still living in the family home in London, one possibility is that there may have been an unorthodox 'ménage a trois' operating within the Southwell household during the 1810–1820 decade.¹³⁴ A telling comment in Charles' introduction to his memoir accounts provides a possible clue:

Persons of either sex with whom during my past life I have had associations, tender or otherwise, will not for obvious reasons appear in these Confessions under the names they bear or have borne. But though names may be false all the facts will be true and it is with facts not names the reader has to deal. Were it otherwise I should shrink from gratifying a prurient curiosity by laying bare family secrets, or wounding the delicacy and honourable pride, whether of families or individuals. I do what I will with my own reputation; I feel myself warranted in doing so, but no one can be warranted in torturing, or wantonly sporting with, the feelings of others. For these reasons then, if no

other, these *Confessions* will not give the real names of persons, except where I am fully satisfied there is no occasion to suppress them.¹³⁵

In the light of this statement, a likely explanation seems to be that 'Fanny' was a pseudonym he adopted for his mother in his memoir, rather than her real name.

In January 1818, William's daughter Frances married Thomas Cripps at St Pancras Old Church, her father signing as a witness at the ceremony. Relating her history, her grandson Frederick reported:

As to Grandmother running away from Boarding School to be married, I have always heard the same thing. I think she told me herself that she married the Purser of an East Indiaman. She said she would only have him on condition he gave up going to India. So he afterwards had one of the Margate Boats, a steamer taking people down the Thames from London to Margate. She told me, she went with him and remembered the Steamer being burnt to the water's edge, he being the last to leave the ship, which he jumped from into the cold water, thereby causing a severe illness. What he did after that I do not know. I also understood that Grandma was only about 16 when she ran away with him. ...

... Oh, I remember Grandma telling me her Father (Old William Southwell) "cut her off" and would never see her after she ran away to be married.¹³⁶

At the time of her marriage in 1818, Frances was about eighteen years old, so if Frederick's account is accurate, she must have co-habited with his grandfather for some little while *before* the marriage. And if William did indeed cut her off after the marriage, he was present at the ceremony. Presumably he needed to give permission for the union, since she was a minor at the time. The reason for William's abandonment of his daughter is unknown. It can however be reported with certainty from a letter written by Frances to her son William in Tasmania in 1861 that she enjoyed a close relationship with her mother, who at some unidentified date went to live near to her in Brighton, where she [Frances senior] worked first as a nurse and then as a servant and where she died in 1847.¹³⁷

Frances [Southwell] Cripps' full brother, [William Southwell Junior](#), who was also to distinguish himself in the field of pianoforte making, was born in Liverpool in 1804,

according to the 1851 and 1861 census records, and by the time of his father's death in 1825 was employed by the firm of Broadwood as a pianoforte maker. It seems probable that he had been trained by his father at a younger age than the normal fourteen years for an apprentice (as did sometimes happen), since William Junior married at the young age of eighteen, which he would not have been free to do had he still been serving an apprenticeship. Unlike his father, he was to remain faithfully married to the same wife, Elizabeth, for 58 years until her death in early 1880. He survived her by less than six months.

Having remained actively in harness to the end, William Southwell died, aged eighty eight, on 24 January 1825, as reported in a death notice placed by his brother in the *Liverpool Mercury* on 4 February 1825.

On Monday, the 24th ult. at his house, in London, at an advanced age, Mr. Wm. Southwell, piano-forte manufacturer and brother of Mr. Nicholas Southwell, of this town. He possessed splendid abilities, as a mechanic, and was the inventor and patentee of that well-known improvement in piano-fortes, *the additional keys*, besides numerous improvements in piano-fortes in general¹³⁸

His son Charles paints a graphic picture of his final hours.

On the bed of death, as in the haunts of his life, his haughty soul, like that of the late Richard Carlile, towered above pigmy theologians; and how little he dreaded the King of Terrors was manifest to all who were with him at that trying hour. He died with a jest in his mouth, for the lower extremities having mortified some hours before 'the spirit took its flight', and one of the nurses (an uncommonly nice woman) having tried to rub life into his dead limbs, he said, with the peculiarly expressive twinkle of the eye I can never forget, '*Ah, you may do that now, but let me tell you it would not have been safe to do it a little while ago*'.

Thus departed this life William Southwell, defiantly unconventional to the last. Flawed in judgement and unlucky in his business liaisons, he was nevertheless an extraordinarily gifted man whose inventive genius and seminal influence in the field of pianoforte design are deserving of wider approbation and acclaim. His is a story worthy of the telling!

¹ Here Charles Southwell makes reference to Lord Byron's poem *Childe Harold*

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

(Lord Byron, *Childe Harold*, Canto III. St. 42, verse XLII)

² According to his daughter Frances' account, as told to her grandson, William married three times and fathered 32 children – and Charles Southwell claims 33. (Letter from Frederick Southwell Cripps to his cousin William Cripps in Tasmania, 1911– in private family possession – copy consulted by kind permission of David Cripps; and Charles, Southwell, *The Confessions of a Free Thinker* [London, ca 1851], 6)

³ Daniel Spillane, *History of the American Pianoforte: Its Technical Development, and the Trade* (New York, 1890), xi, 34–5, 38.

⁴ W. H. Grattan Flood, "Dublin Harpsichord and Pianoforte Makers of the Eighteenth Century" in *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 39 (31 March 1909), 144–145

⁵ The information on the parish register entry which records William Southwell's death was first reported in George S. Bozarth and Margaret Debenham "Piano Wars: the Legal Machinations of London Pianoforte Makers" in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, Vol. 42 (2009), London: Royal Musical Association, 70-71 (hereafter referred to as '*Piano Wars*'). Unequivocal confirmation that this is the William Southwell in question appears in a notice of his death placed by his brother Nicholas (*The Liverpool Mercury*, [715], 4 February 1825) – see p.35 and note 138.

The vital clue that led to the discovery of William's true place and date of death came from Charles Southwell's comment that he was aged eleven and a half when his father died in London (*The Confessions of a Free Thinker*, 13). The year of Charles' birth, established as 1814 from records of his age at date of death (forty six) in New Zealand in 1860, prompted the author to undertake searches of the London parish registers in the St. Pancras area for the year 1825, where the record of William's death was

located in both the parish register and burial fees book of St. Pancras Old Church. (First reported in Bozarth and Debenham, *'Piano Wars'*, 2009, 70–71 and Figure 9).

⁶ In 1982 the distinguished Irish lawyer and historian Terry de Valera contributed much valuable new information relating to Southwell's activities (Terry de Valera, "Two Eighteenth-Century Musical Instrument Makers," *Dublin Historical Record* [1982/3], 36/41). His findings included an extant fragment of the 1821 census which gives the age of Southwell's son Francis as 47, thus establishing a birth year of 1774; and the existence of an important Memorial of a Deed of Partnership executed in Dublin on 1 June 1802 (Registry of Deeds in Dublin: book No. 551, pages 111–12, memorandum No. 362400) – mistakenly reported as dated 1 June 1804 by de Valera – in which William handed over control of his Dublin business to a new partnership between his brother Nicholas and two of his sons, John and Francis. (For a full transcription of this legal document see Bozarth and Debenham *'Piano Wars'*, 2009, Appendix 5). However, although de Valera rightly suspected Grattan Flood's chronology was incorrect, despite wide ranging searches of both Irish and English records his attempts to identify William's place of birth and true place and date of death proved unsuccessful.

⁷ See also Alec Cobbe's informative article on Southwell and his instruments (Alec Cobbe "Beethoven, Haydn and an Irish Genius: William Southwell of Dublin" in *The Irish Arts Review Yearbook* 13 (1997), 70–77).

⁸ First published in a local news sheet, *The Lancashire Beacon*, 1849, which (with some additions) he later published privately as a short book, *The Confessions of a Free Thinker ca. 1851*, in London. Charles had by that time become a prominent figure in the 'Free Thought' movement. He attained fame (or perhaps more accurately, notoriety) when he was prosecuted for blasphemy for his article "The Jew Book" in 1841. As it transpired, he became the last person in England to be tried for this 'crime'.

⁹ Frederick Southwell Cripps was a grandson of Frances Cripps, née Southwell (1799–1886) and great grandson of William Southwell. Born in Worthing, the eldest son of Frederick Cripps (son of Frances), a tailor, he was a distinguished civil engineer of his day, author of several influential papers and with many patents in the field of gas and water engineering to his name.

¹⁰ Letter from Frederick Southwell Cripps to William Cripps, Hobart, Tasmania, 22 January 1911 (first cited in Bozarth and Debenham, *Piano Wars* (2009). For a transcription of this document see Appendix 1.

¹¹ The aristocratic line of Southwells in Ireland can be traced back to their arrival from England in the 1600s and include the distinguished Sir John Southwell (+1680); Sir Robert Southwell (1635–1702), Secretary of State for Ireland; and Sir Thomas Southwell (1665–1720), a member of the Irish Privy Council (1710). Sir Thomas is well remembered for his acceptance of Palatine refugee families fleeing from

Catholic attacks from France at his estate, Castle Matrix. He was raised to the rank of Baron in 1717. Later descendants include Sir Thomas Southwell junior (1698–1766), 2nd Baron, Governor of Limerick, member of Irish Privy Council (1726); and Sir Thomas George (1721–80), 3rd Baron, 1st Viscount (1776). (A brief summary of the lineage of this family may be found in [‘Vicount Southwell’](#) (Wikipedia, accessed 15 July 2013))

¹² There were non-aristocratic families named Southwell in Dublin during this period too. When he died in 1729, a wealthy usurer named James Southwell left £431 in his will to St Werburgh’s Church to provide a clock and peal of six bells for its tower. Reports of his death, including certain of his bequests, appeared in the *Weekly Journal* 193 (London), 1 February 1729. Later, in mid century, a medical doctor and male-midwife, Thomas Southwell, was mentioned in the *Proceedings of the Dublin Obstetrical Society* in 1742 for an outspoken published response to Fielding Ould’s *Treatise of Midwifery*. He [Thomas Southwell] issued a major publication, *Medical Essays and Observations* in 1764 and is recorded in practice in Abbey Street in 1766–68.

¹³ [The National Archives of Ireland](#), (Wikipedia: accessed 2 May 2013).

¹⁴ F S Cripps letter, 1911.

¹⁵ The date of Southwell’s commencement with Weber, 1772, is that handed down in the literature, but with no sources cited to support this information.

¹⁶ David Wainwright. *Broadwood by Appointment: a History*, (London, 1982), 28; Michael Cole *Broadwood Square Pianos* (Cheltenham, 2005), 5-6. Additionally, a news snippet from an 1840s newspaper many years after his death suggests a link between a relative of John Trotter Snr. and John Broadwood as young apprentices in Scotland. ‘Mr Broadwood, the celebrated piano-forte make, London, and the late Mr Trotter, cabinet-maker, Princes-street, Edinburgh, were at one time fellow apprentices to the village wright at Innerwick, in the east of Haddingtonshire’ (*The Leeds Mercury*, 16 December 1843). John Trotter was one of a large number of children of Alexander Trotter and Jean Steuart of Castlesheill, Berwickshire and branches of this line became highly regarded cabinet makers in Edinburgh.

¹⁷ See pp 24–27. John Watlen was to employ William Southwell in his manufactory to supervise production of oblique pianofortes made to the design of the latter’s 1811 patent for a ‘pianoforte sloping backwards’ from 1813 through to at least 1823. This is fully documented in a number of newspaper advertisements placed by Watlen.

¹⁸ *The Morning Chronicle*, 11 October 1819. Another advertisement placed by Watlen at the beginning of 1819 states:

PIANO-FORTE MANUFACTORIES, Nos. / 13 and 58, Castle-street. –J WATLEN informs the Pub- / lic, that his Piano-fortes are manufactured there; and that a / very large assortment of second- / hand and new ones may be seen / at his Warehouse, 13 Leicester-place. Also the improved Pa- /

tent Oblique, invented by that ingenious artist, W. Southwell, who invented the Cabinet, and finishes J. Watlen's Piano-fortes / in his unique style. The Oblique is certainly the best of Southwell's. Productions, and surpasses every other Piano-forte now in / use; its general qualities are such as will stand the minutest in- / spection; references can be given to 100 people of the first con- / sequence who have bought them. (*The Morning Chronicle*, 28 January 1819,1)

It is perhaps significant that at about this time Robert Bill vacated the premises at 5, Berner's Mews – see also note 103.

¹⁹ F S Cripps letter to his cousin in Tasmania, 1911. John Trotter filed a patent application (No.3404) on 4 March 1811, the same day that Southwell filed his application for his 'piano sloping backwards (No.3403) – and they are consecutively numbered (see also p. 25).

²⁰ John Trotter of Frith-street was a liveryman in the Joiner's company in the City of London. Three of his apprentices are recorded in the Apprenticeship Stamp Duty records, John Hill (1745); Julius Stewart (1753); and Samuel Betts (1754), but since he was in business for many years after this time there would undoubtedly have been others.

²¹ John Mayhew, son of William Mayhew, dyer and Susanna was born 13 June 1737 and baptised 26 June 1737 in the parish of St Mary, Stratford Bow. He was buried 18 May 1811 at St. James, Piccadilly (records accessed via Ancestry).

²² The dissolution of the partnership between Smith, Smith-Bradshaw and Trotter is recorded in *The London Gazette* (10411), 21 April 1764, 3 – a previously unreported fact, identified by the author.

Whereas the partnership between Messrs Charles Smith, George Smith Bradshaw, and John Trotter, which for some Years has been carried on at the Upholstery and Cabinet Warehouse in Portugal Street (late Lincolns Inn Playhouse) was by mutual consent of all Parties dissolved on the 18th Day of September last.

This notice is therefore given that the said George Smith Bradshaw and John Trotter have no longer any concern in the said joint Business, but that the same is now carried on by the said Charles Smith on his own and separate Account.

Those indepted [*sic*] to the late Partnership are desired to pay such Debts to the said Charles Smith; and whoever has any Demands on the said Partnership by applying to Mr. Smith on the Premises will be paid the same

Chas. Smith

G.S. Bradshaw

John Trotter

²³ A letter written to the Countess of Leinster by her sister exists which refers to two chairs being made for the Countess at Carton House by J Trotter of Frith Street, Soho, London in some detail (The Knight of

Glin and James Peill *Irish Furniture: Woodwork and Carving in Ireland from the Earliest Times to the Act of Union* (New Haven, 2007), 129, citing Brian Fitzgerald, ed., *Correspondence of Emily, Duchess of Leinster (1731–1814)* (Dublin, 1949), 1:194).

²⁴ Moore is first found in business in Ireland in Waterford in 1779 (The Knight of Glin and James Peill, *Irish Furniture* [2007], 163). In 1782 he advertised from his premises in Dublin:

THE INLAID CABINET WAREROOM

William Moore most respectfully acknowledges the encouragement he has received, begs leave to inform those who may want Inlaid work, that by his close attention to business and instructions to his men, he has brought the manufacture to such perfection, to be able to sell for almost one half his original prices; as the greatest demand [is] for Pier-Tables, he has just finished in the newest taste a great variety of patterns, sizes and prices, from three guineas to twenty; Card tables on a new construction (both ornamented and plain) which appear like small Pier Tables, which every article in the inlaid Way, executed on shortest notice, and hopes from his long experience at Messrs. Mayhew and Ince, London, his remarkable fine coloured woods, and elegant finished work, to meet the approbation of all who shall please to honour him with their commands. (*The Dublin Evening Post* on April 16, June 6, and July 11, 1782, cited by The Knight of Glin and James Peill, 2007 *Irish Furniture*, 163)

²⁵ *The Dublin Evening Post*, 19 December 1789, cited by The Knight of Glin and James Peill (2007) *Irish Furniture*, 165.

²⁶ The names of William and 'N.' Southwell and William Moore all appear in an advertisement in 1802 placed by Dublin cabinet makers recruiting skilled workers from England and Scotland (see note 74).

²⁷ The author's on-line searches of the Apprenticeship Stamp Duty records and City of London Freedom records (via Ancestry.co.uk) have revealed no immediately likely matches for William Southwell. However, since Masters were not required to pay stamp duty on apprentices who were assigned by the common or public charge, such apprentices are not recorded in the former. For example, even though John Mayhew is on record from later contemporary sources as having been apprenticed to George Smith Bradshaw, his name does not appear in the *Apprenticeship Stamp Duty* records; and the full range of apprenticeship records of the City Livery companies are not yet available on-line.

²⁸ See note 123.

²⁹ The notice of the death of Nicholas Southwell's sister-in-law, Jane Fazakerley, at his home in Duke-street, Liverpool states that her father was John Frederick Fazakerley of Fazakerley, and latterly of Dublin (*The Liverpool Mercury* 25 April 1828). The notice of his wife Martha's death in 1831 states that she was the daughter of 'the late Mr. Wm. Frederick Fazakerley, of Fazakerley' (*The Liverpool Mercury*, 7 October 1831) The difference in forenames between the two notices perhaps means that his full name was 'William John Frederick Fazakerley'. A marriage between a John Frederick Fazakerly, schoolmaster, and

Jane Crawford took place at the Church of St Michan, Dublin, 9 February 1771, which may be that of Martha's parents. ([Irish Genealogy](#) accessed 14 July 2013).

³⁰ Charles Southwell *The Confessions of a Free Thinker* (1851), 6.

³¹ *The London Gazette* (11629), January 6–January 9 1776. A second loyal address in 1785 also lists William Southwell among the signatories (*The London Gazette* (12,614), January 18–22, 1785, 37).

³² *Wilson's Dublin Directory*, 1783.

³³ The burial record of Nicholas Southwell in St. James cemetery, Liverpool in 1832 gives his age as 72, thus establishing a birth year *ca.* 1760. The parish register of St. Bartholomew the Great, London records the baptism of a William Nicholas Southwell, son of Mary Southwell (no father's name is given) on 22 April 1763 – the only example of a Nicholas Southwell located by the author in baptismal records of this period.

³⁴ Marriage Licence Bond of William Southwell and Ann Dowlan (*Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records and Keeper of the State Papers in Ireland. Dublin, Ireland* [Alexander Thom & Co., 1895–1899]); accessed via Ancestry.com; 6 June 2012).

³⁵ In 1799 Henry Southwell, a son of this marriage, was apprenticed to the Dublin Attorney Sobieski Kildahl of North Earl-street, the same street in which Henry's brother John had a music publishing and selling premises. His mother's name is given as 'Ann Southwell, otherwise Doland.' Since this spelling appears on a legal document it may be regarded as accurate; it therefore appears that her name in the Marriage Bond [Dowlan] was written incorrectly – a quite frequent occurrence, as the author has discovered from other genealogical records. (Edward Keane, P. Beryl Phair and Thomas Ulick Sadleir, *King's Inns Admission Papers, 1607–1867* (Dublin, 1982), 458; original documents extant in the King's Inn Library, Dublin).

³⁶ Baptism of Harriot (sic), daughter of William and Anne Southwell, 9 May 1784 (Raymond Refausée(ed) *The Register of the Parish of St Thomas Dublin 1750 to 1791* [Dublin, 1994], 70).

³⁷ *The Freeman's Journal*, Dublin, 10 June 1784,1 (with thanks to Irish Newspaper Archives, <www.irishnewspaperarchives.com >).

³⁸ Adam Walker first appears in the membership of the Dublin Society in the early 1770s. From 1783 – 1800 he is listed as an Honorary Member.

³⁹ *Wilson's Dublin Directory* lists him as a harpsichord maker at this address 1787 – 1791.

⁴⁰ *The Freeman's Journal*, 17 May 1792, 1 (with thanks to [Irish Newspaper Archives](#)). A similar advertisement followed a few days later on 24 May 1792.

⁴¹ *The London Gazette* (17,654), 25 November, 1820, 2199:

Liverpool, November 6 1820. The Partnership existing between us the undersigned Nicholas Southwell and Stephen White, carrying on business as Organ-builders at Liverpool, in the County of Lancaster, under the firm of Southwell and White, is this day dissolved by mutual consent. As witness our hands. Nichs. Southwell, Stephen White.

A barrel organ by Southwell and White survives in an Australian collection

‘RESIDENCE OF NORM GESCHKE, 42 Andrew Street. (1) Roll-operated mechanical organ, B. Frank Pitt (26-note). (2) Barrel organ, B. c.1802-1832 Southwell & White, Liverpool & London. 4 ranks, 18 notes, triangle, drum.’ (J. Maidment, *Gazetteer Victorian Pipe Organs* 2nd ed., 2004)

⁴² Nicholas is listed as an ‘organ and piano forte mfr. and music seller, 110, Duke-st., Hanover-st.’ in the *History, Directory, and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster, 1821*; and ‘organ builder’ in *Gore’s Liverpool Directory, 1824*.

⁴³ *Stuart’s Star and Evening Advertiser*, 16 January 1795.

⁴⁴ *The Freemans Journal*, 7 May 1793, 1 (with thanks to Irish Newspaper Archives).

⁴⁵ A part of William Southwell’s patent No. 2264.

⁴⁶ It may have been some form of small keyboard instrument, but without further information one cannot be sure. (The author wishes to thank Michael Cole for his observations on this instrument.)

⁴⁷ Michael Cole, *Broadwood Square Pianos* (2005), 44.

⁴⁸ *The Belfast Newsletter* 23-26 July 1793. Ware later advertised a Fine Ton’d NEW PIANO FORTE’ by Southwell, Dublin for sale in *The Belfast Newsletter* 9 December 1800.

⁴⁹ The National Archives, UK, C210/47. An image of the original 1794 patent drawing is reproduced on this site under licence (by kind permission of The National Archives Image Library), together with the author’s transcription of Southwell’s specification. The author wishes to thank Robert and Vivien Southwell for their kind assistance in undertaking searches on her behalf to locate Southwell’s patents in the Patent Rolls at The National Archives, Kew.

For more information on William Southwell’s licensing arrangement with Longman and Broderip and the legal actions relating to the rights to his 1794 patent, see Bozarth and Debenham ‘*Piano Wars*’ (2009). After the Act of Union in 1801 it would no longer be necessary to take this step in order to obtain an English patent; in the earlier years one needed to be resident in England for this purpose.

⁵⁰ For a full account of the legal proceedings relating to these disputes see Bozarth and Debenham ‘*Piano Wars*’ (2009).

⁵¹ *The Freeman’s Journal*, 20 November 1794; repeated 21 February 1795 (with thanks to Irish Newspaper Archives). A typographical error occurred in the first advertisement, where the word ‘and’ appears in line

13 instead of 'are'. This is corrected in the second advertisement, which concurs with the wording of the flyer in Figure 1.

⁵² The author thanks Tim Harding for kindly providing information on this instrument case and flyer.

⁵³ William was to sell [or make over] the leases of this and an adjacent property to another of his sons, Thomas (1782–) who was commissioned into the army and was probably the eldest of his sons by Anne Doland.

⁵⁴ *The Belfast Newsletter*, 16 September 1796, 3. A similar advertisement appeared in the same publication on 11 November 1796.

⁵⁵ 1802 was the year in which William Southwell ceded control of the Dublin business to the new partnership between his brother Nicholas and sons John and Francis. A later extant piano of 1808 is badged more simply 'Royal Patent Southwells Dublin and London'.

⁵⁶ See note 83.

⁵⁷ The author wishes to thank David Hunt for kindly providing information about this instrument.

⁵⁸ From the legal Deed of Partnership executed on 1 June 1802, in which William signed over his Dublin business to two of his sons, John and Francis, and his brother Nicholas for certain consideration, it becomes clear that the '& Son' in question was John, since this initial 'father-son' partnership was dissolved as part of the same transaction. We may safely deduce that his son John went into partnership with him sometime after the end of 1794 and not later than 1798, the date of the first firmly dated piano which bears the inscription '& Son' on the nameboard.

⁵⁹ *Stuart's Star and Evening Advertiser*, 16 January 1795.

⁶⁰ *True Briton*, 7 January 1796,1. A second similarly worded advertisement appeared in *The Oracle and Public Advertiser*, 1 February 1796. A slightly different advert with the names of Longman and Broderip removed, presumably at the behest of their assigns, appeared in *The Times*, 3 February 1796. The culprits in the frame here were most probably Culliford Rolfe and Barrow, who were embroiled in a court dispute with Longman over the matter (see Bozarth and Debenham, '*Piano Wars*' [2009], 58 n.39; 61-63)

⁶¹ Bozarth and Debenham, '*Piano Wars*' (2009), 65.

⁶² The National Archives, UK, C210_65_001; 002; 003. An image of the original patent drawing is reproduced on this site under licence, by kind permission of The National Archives Image library.

⁶³ The National Archives, UK, C 217_90_001. This image of William Southwell's original signature is reproduced on this site under licence (by kind permission of The National Archives Image library). In

addition to his original signature on this 1798 patent document, two other matching extant examples have been identified. The first appears on his signed declaration that he is the father of Henry Southwell on the Dublin Inns of Court documents relating to the latter's apprenticeship with Sobieski Kildahl in 1799 (see also note 72); the second is his signature on the Memorial of the Dublin Deed of Partnership, 1802 which terminated his partnership with his son John and established the new partnership between his brother Nicholas and sons John and Francis.

⁶⁴ The author gratefully acknowledges the kind assistance of the private owners of the square piano to which the flyer is attached, including the information that it is signed by a workman, Geo. Cooke and dated July 10, 1802 on the side of a key.

⁶⁵ See Bozarth and Debenham, *'Piano Wars'* (2009), 84. Charles Southwell refers to his father as inventor of the 'Camerichord' – the only other similar reference to this name located by the author. (Charles Southwell, *The Confessions of a Free Thinker* [1851], 6)

⁶⁶ BY THE KING'S ROYAL PATENT
A New-invented INSTRUMENT, called
MICROCHORDON, being a small, elegant, upright
PIANO-FORTE, with Drum and Triangle (ad libitum) ...
...It is now ready for inspection at Longman, Clementi and
Cos. No. 26, Cheapside.. (*The Star*, 25 October 1799,1)

⁶⁷ For a man of his advanced age to take a wife of such tender years seems quite inappropriate and distasteful. However, William was not alone amongst pianoforte makers of this era in doing so. In 1779, Arnold Frederick Beck, already twice widowed and by then at least well into middle age, took as his wife the fifteen and a half year old Rose Ann Shudi, a minor and daughter of Joshua Shudi (deceased), harpsichord maker and nephew of Burkat Shudi the elder. That he did so with the full consent of her widowed mother, Mary Shudi, is recorded in the Marriage Allegation Bond filed in advance of their marriage and signed by both Beck and Mary Shudi, dated 7 September 1779 (accessed via Ancestry.co.uk, 28 April 2012).

⁶⁸ Charles Southwell, *The Confessions of a Free Thinker* (1851), 6. Both Charles Southwell and Frances Cripps independently claimed that their father had been married three times. Frances states he had thirty two children; Charles states thirty three, going out of his way to proclaim they were all legitimate, though it is difficult to believe this could be true. William does however appear to have maintained a relationship with each 'wife' over a number of years, fathering a new family in each case.

⁶⁹ F S Cripps letter, 1911, recounting his grandmother's memories. Interestingly, a known descendent of the Southwell Shropshire line investigated by the author was a well known peruke maker in the parish of

St Martin Orgar in the City of London at this time. One of his sons was John Aylward Southwell, a cabinet maker, and another was the explorer Daniel Southwell whose correspondence with his mother and his uncle, the Revd. Weedon Butler, is preserved as a valuable historical resource at the British Library. Though it is tempting to presume a connection between William and this family, for the present this remains no more than suggestive.

⁷⁰ The author has located seven children of this union – Henry Francis (1798–1841); Frances (1799–1886); William Junior (1804–1880); Matthew (1805–1893); Edward (–1827); Maria (ca. 1805–) and probably Isabella (1813–), who was brought up by her half brother, Henry William (1783–1866) in Dublin. There may be others, as yet unidentified. No baptismal records have been located, probably because William Snr. was so greatly opposed to organised religion, making identification dependent on other primary source records, including census returns and contemporary newspaper and magazine reports.

⁷¹ It will be recalled that a Marriage Bond recorded this marriage in Dublin in 1780. A burial of an ‘Anne [sic] Southwell’ aged seventy three is recorded in the parish register of St Audoens, Dublin on 5 February 1827, possibly Ann Doland Southwell. However no firm evidence to confirm that this was the same lady has been found. Henry Southwell was apprenticed to the Dublin attorney Sobieski Kildahl, on 5 April 1799, as reported earlier. Most confusingly in some cases William re-used children’s names with each new wife [partner].

⁷² One of the set of original extant documents relating to Henry Southwell’s apprenticeship in the archives of the Inns of the Kings Bench, Dublin.

⁷³ *The Prices of Cabinet Work, with Tables and Designs, Illustrating the Various Articles of Manufacture, Revised and Corrected by a Committee of Master Cabinet Makers* (London, 1797).

⁷⁴ *Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post*, 25 February 1802 and 11 March 1802; and *The Caledonian Mercury*, 27 February 1802 and 1 March 1802.

⁷⁵ Bozarth and Debenham, ‘*Piano Wars*’ (2009), 67 and 84 (Document 13)

⁷⁶ *Registry of Deeds, Dublin, Book No. 551*, pp. 111–12, Memorandum No. 362400 (first transcribed and reported in full in Bozarth and Debenham, ‘*Piano Wars*’, 2009, Appendix 5, 96-98). Further corroborative evidence that Southwell ‘Grands’ were indeed made is found in two advertisements for such instruments placed by auction houses in *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 11 February 1819, 1: and 11 April 1823, 1.

⁷⁷ *Registry of Deeds, Dublin*; Deed dated 13 February 1802.

⁷⁸ Ireland was now governed by the laws of England, one consequence of which was the rapidly escalating discontent on the part of the Catholic majority in Ireland, which was to culminate in the bloody but short lived Irish rebellion initiated by Robert Emmet in June of that year.

⁷⁹ The National Archives, UK, C13/46_002. Bill of Complaint, 23 Jan. 1804 by James Longman's creditors, Styan, Hovil, and James, and his Executrix, Frances St. John (cited by Bozarth and Debenham, '*Piano Wars*', 2009, 75 and 85).

⁸⁰ F S Cripps, 191, reporting his grandmother's stories, touches on this event:

One patent was infringed by the great firm of Broadwoods, London. He attacked them and had the greatest Lawyer of the day, Sir Thos. Erskin [*sic*], to fight for him. The trial lasted three years and in the end he lost. The expense of this—bringing witnesses over from Ireland, year after year, etc—upset his business and he eventually, although he was reputed to be very rich at one time, gave up the Dublin business, started again in Liverpool, and finally in London.

This is another example of a story having become distorted in the telling. It was not Erskine who represented Southwell but William Cooke and there is no evidence to suggest that he [Southwell] continually brought witnesses over from Ireland. Nevertheless it *is* quite true that he sued the Broadwoods, and the facts might have remained buried had the clue contained in this letter not been thoroughly investigated. (See also Bozarth and Debenham, *Piano Wars* (2009), 85 (Document 18).

⁸¹ See Bozarth and Debenham, '*Piano Wars*' (2009), 69.

⁸² See Bozarth and Debenham '*Piano Wars*' (2009), 75.

⁸³ F S Cripps letter, 1911

⁸⁴ 'It was also around 1745 that Clayton Square was laid out by Sarah Clayton – her brother-in-law was Thomas Cases after whom the adjacent Cases Street is named' <<http://bdaugherty.tripod.com/liverpool/history.html>>, accessed 12 February 2011.

⁸⁵ William Southwell Junior (1804–1880) was to establish himself as a foreman and key employee of Broadwoods, to whom he assigned the rights to his patent for a design modification for the grand piano in 1837, known as the 'Victoria Grand'. His three sons, William Henry, Frederick and Edwin, achieved acclaim in their own right in a quite different field, as portrait photographers in Victorian London (see [Southwell Brothers: Photographers Royal](#)).

⁸⁶ I M Hogan *Anglo-Irish Music 1780–1830* (1966), 7. A few years later in 1809 John's brother, Francis (F W) Southwell advertised an improved model of pianoforte for sale from 34, Marlborough-street, Dublin 'at the sign of the King's Head', providing evidence of the firm's continuing activity from this address in later years. John Southwell is listed in *Wilson's Dublin Directory* at 34, Marlborough-street from 1815 through to 1821.

⁸⁷ *The Courier*, 9 May 1806, 1.

⁸⁸ Bozarth and Debenham, '*Piano Wars*' (2009), 75

⁸⁹ It is clear from advertisements placed by Nicholas Southwell in *The Liverpool Mercury* between 1811 and 1820 that he was both manufacturing instruments on his own account and buying in instruments from Clementi and Co. during those later years. Earlier Liverpool newspapers are not yet available on-line, but one may surmise that a similar situation may have existed from 1804, when the Southwells first arrived in Liverpool.

⁹⁰ Henry Broadhurst Wilkinson. *Souvenir of the Broadhurst Wilkinsons*, (Manchester, 1902), 22. See also note 106.

⁹¹ Patent No. 3029. The National Archives, UK C66/4065. Although this patent is recorded in the indices of The National Archives, the author was unable to locate the original drawing and specification in the patent rolls. A copy of the engraving of the drawing and transcription of the specification published by the Patent Office, printed by George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode (1856) is included on this site, for completeness.

⁹² Henry Fowler & James Shudi Broadwood. *Some Notes Made by J. S. Broadwood, 1838, with Observations & Elucidations by H F Broadwood* (London, 1862).

⁹³ Surrey History Centre, Broadwood letter books. The author wishes to thank Robert and Vivien Southwell for kindly undertaking searches of these records on her behalf.

⁹⁴ See also note 35.

⁹⁵ Out letter book from the office of John Broadwood. Item ref 2185/JB/6/1/1, Surrey History Centre.

⁹⁶ Out letter book from the office of John Broadwood. Item ref 2185/JB/6/1/1, Surrey History Centre.

⁹⁷ Out letter book from the office of John Broadwood. Item ref 2185/JB/6/1/1, Surrey History Centre.

⁹⁸ This 'S' is very similar to the 'S' of Southwell in the margin at the beginning of this copy letter – but might also be a 'J' so this abbreviated word could be Snr or Jnr. However, it seems much more likely to be Snr, given the previous allusion to 'your father'.

⁹⁹

...At this critical period my father died at the advanced age of eighty eight, and out of respect to his memory I was admitted into the firm of Broadwood and Sons, Piano Forte Manufacturer, where two of my brothers were then employed. They designed to make a Tuner of me; but having got it into my head that working at the bench was more manly and becoming than the lighter and (most people think) genteeler occupation of tuning, I resolved . . . to achieve so desirable an object . . .

(Charles Southwell, *The Confessions of a Free Thinker*, 14).

¹⁰⁰ The author wishes to thank Michael Cole for kindly providing information about this instrument, seen during the course of his own researches.

¹⁰¹ Specification of the Patent granted to William Hawkes of Newport in the County of Salop, Esquire for 'Improvements on musical-keyed Instruments of twelve fixed Tones' in *The Repertory of Patent Inventions*, Vol. 8 (1808), 248–9. Also referred to in *The Monthly Magazine or British Register*, Vol. 29 (1810), 116.

¹⁰² *The Observer*, 2 April 1809, 1.

¹⁰³ Robert Bill is listed in the *London and Country Directory*, 1811 as a pianoforte maker at 16 and 49 Rathbone Place. He first appears in the Land Tax records for 49, Rathbone Place in 1807. (In 1806 the premises is listed as empty). In 1811 his name is given as the occupant of No. 49, which is specifically listed as a 'Workshop'. The records for 1812 are unfortunately missing from the database (inferring they have not survived). From 1813–20 he is listed as the occupant of a workshop at 5, Berner's Mews.

¹⁰⁴ F S Cripps letter, 1911.

¹⁰⁵ Land tax records commencing 1813 though to 1824 record the Southwells at 11, Gresse-street, under various initials. Confirmation from William himself that his address was 11, Gresse-street is found in a number of contemporary newspaper advertisements for individual instruments offered under his own name, for example, *The Observer*, 27 September 1812, 1; *The Morning Post* 24 March 1814,1; *The Morning Post*, 20 January 1813. Additionally he is listed in *The London and Country Directory*, 1811 at this address.

¹⁰⁶ George Wilkinson took over the business on his own account following the death of Francis Fane Broderip in May 1807, paying out his late partner's share to his widow, and, after her death later that year, to Broderip's son, John (his surviving executor). The final instalment was paid on 22 November 1807. (H F Broadhurst Wilkinson *Souvenir of the Broadhurst Wilkinsons* [Manchester, 1902], 22 (first reported in Bozarth and Debenham, '*Piano Wars*', 64).

¹⁰⁷ *The Morning Chronicle*, 2 August 1808.

¹⁰⁸ *Bury and Norwich Post*, 17 August 1808; *The Ipswich Journal*, 13 May 1809; *The Hull Packet and Original Weekly Commercial, Literary and General Advertiser*, 31 October 1809.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Wornum became Wilkinson's partner in 1810, at the time of the move to the Princes-street premises, (H F Broadhurst Wilkinson, *Souvenir of the Broadhurst Wilkinsons*, 24).

¹¹⁰ H F Broadhurst Wilkinson, *Souvenir of the Broadhurst Wilkinsons*, 25. An advertisement placed in *The Times* shortly afterwards records that the Princes-street part of the premises survived:

MESSRS. WILKINSON and WORNUM embrace / the earliest opportunity of acquainting their numerous/Friends, and the Public in general that that part of their pre-/ mises situated in Princes-street, Hanover-square, having been / preserved from their late calamitous Fire / is now

open for the / exhibition and sale of those Piano-fortes happily also preserved from injury (*The Times*, 13 October 1812).

However, it is evident from Henry Broadhurst Wilkinson's account that this proved insufficient to save the business as a viable entity and the partnership was dissolved in the following year, after which time the two former partners would continue in business independently on their own account.

¹¹¹ John Watson, *Changing Keys: Keyboard Instruments for America 1700–1830* (2013), 75

¹¹² C F Colt and A Miall, *The Early Piano* (London, 1981), Plate 14, 57-59.

¹¹³ *The Observer*, 27 September 1812, 1.

¹¹⁴ *The Morning Post*, 12 February 1819.

¹¹⁵ H F Broadhurst Wilkinson, *Souvenir of the Broadhurst Wilkinsons*, 25.

¹¹⁶ See note 113. Other advertisements placed by William personally appeared in *The Times*, 28 December 1812, 1; *The Morning Post*, 24 March 1814; and *The Morning Post*, 16 November 1814, 1

¹¹⁷ Land Tax records.

¹¹⁸ *The Morning Post*, 26 July 1809, 1.

¹¹⁹ 'Portrait of Mr. W. Southwell, the inventor of the Patent Square Piano Forte, with additional keys' by James Lonsdale of 8, Berners Street, London (Edward Morris and Emma Roberts, *The Liverpool Academy and Other Exhibitions of Contemporary Art in Liverpool 1774–1867: A History and Index of Artists and Works Exhibited* [Liverpool, 1998], 39).

¹²⁰ The National Archives, UK C54/8881 (An image of the original patent drawing is reproduced on this site under licence, by kind permission of The National Archives Image library)

¹²¹ The National Archives, UK, C54/8887 (Images of the original patent drawings and associated description are reproduced on this site under licence, by kind permission of The National Archives Image library. Photographs courtesy of Robert Southwell)

¹²² Watlen had previously been employed by Corri and Sutherland in Edinburgh in the 1780s. He later opened his own business, at 17, Princes-street, Edinburgh and then 13 North Bridge-street. After going bankrupt there in 1798 he moved to London and started over again, moving around several addresses and taking a partner named Cobbe before setting up again on his own account at 5, Leicester Place in 1807, until 1818 when he moved to 13 Leicester Place (see John Watlen Timeline).

¹²³ *The Morning Post*, 9 December 1811, 3. The use of the word "Grand" here must be a newspaper error. In two later advertisements Watlen correctly suggests that the oblique 'upright' "supercedes" grand

pianos. An obliquely strung 'upright' has longer strings and so may be thought better than a (short) grand. An obliquely strung grand at that period would not make sense. (My thanks to David Hunt for this information – private communication).

¹²⁴ *The Morning Post*, 12 February 1819. Another advertisement in the same year gives the location of the manufactory as 13 and 58 Castle-street and offers:

‘the improved patent Oblique, invented by that ingenious artist W. Southwell, who invented the Cabinet, and finishes J. Watlen’s Piano-fortes in his unique style. The Oblique is certainly the best of Southwell’s productions and surpasses every other Piano-forte now in use; its general qualities are such as will stand the minutest inspection; references can be given to 100 people of the first consequence who have bought them’.

A later advertisement in 1823 states that the oblique pianofortes ‘having always had the advantage of the inventor ... to superintend his manufactory’ (*The Times*, 25 September 1823).

¹²⁵ *The Morning Chronicle*, 11 October 1819, see also note 18.

¹²⁶ *The Morning Chronicle*, 11 October 1819.

¹²⁷ A display case converted from one of these instruments was sold by JS Auctions, Bodicote, near Banbury in 2009.

¹²⁸ *The Morning Post*, 10 July 1815, 1.

¹²⁹ *The Morning Chronicle*, 23 January 23, 1823, 1.

¹³⁰ The National Archives, UK. C54/9970. My thanks to David Hunt for his observations on the longevity of this modification – private communication).

¹³¹ *The London Gazette* (17,468), 8 August 8, 1818. For more details see Henry Southwell’s timeline.

¹³² According to her age at date of death, William’s daughter Frances’ birth year was *ca.* 1800. Census returns variously give her place of birth as Middlesex, London, Lancashire and Chester, suggesting that she may have been born at the port while her mother was in transit between London and Dublin at the time.

¹³³ Since Frances, mother of Frances Cripps, died at the age of 64 in 1847 we may deduce her birth year was 1783. Since Charles states his mother (‘Fanny’) married his father when he was over seventy years of age (therefore not earlier than 1807 – and probably several years later, given that Charles was not born until 1814), *her* birth year cannot be before 1787. Frances (daughter of William and Frances) was born *ca* 1800, when ‘Fanny’ (mother of Charles) would have been not more than thirteen years old and therefore too young to have been her mother.

¹³⁴ As is confirmed by her death certificate (copy held by the author, courtesy of David Cripps) Frances Southwell died in Brighton in 1847 aged sixty four from a fall down some stairs. A letter from Frances Cripps to her son William in Tasmania in 1861 (in private family possession) after they had been out of touch for many years, confirms the circumstances. She recounts the story of her mother's death when she [her mother] was working as a servant in Brighton, in domestic employment, close to her daughter's family home.

¹³⁵ Charles Southwell *The Confessions of a Free Thinker* (1851), 2.

¹³⁶ A privately held family letter written by Frances Cripps to her son, William Cripps (then in Tasmania) in 1861.

¹³⁷ Death certificate of Frances Southwell, 1847 (copy consulted courtesy of David Cripps).

¹³⁸ *The Liverpool Mercury*, 4 February 1825.

Part II.

Nicholas Southwell (ca. 1760 – 1832), pianoforte and organ maker, Dublin, Liverpool and London.

Nicholas Southwell (ca. 1760–1832) may be positively identified as the much younger brother of William Southwell (1736/7–1825) from contemporary documents. Firstly, he is named as William’s brother in the Dublin Deed (dated 1 June 1802), by which he [William] formally retired from his Dublin business, handing over control to two of his sons, John and Francis, and his brother Nicholas, the three new partners of Southwell and Co.¹ From the information in this document, it is clear that Nicholas had been active in the business for some years previously in Dublin. As is the case for William, despite extensive searches, it has not proved possible to establish his parentage;² however, the record of his burial in Liverpool in 1832, aged seventy two years, establishes a birth year of ca 1760. Given the large age difference between the two, it seems likely they were half brothers, with different mothers.

We next hear of him in Liverpool, where is on record as being active as a pianoforte and organ maker from a number of addresses in Duke-street from 1805 until his death in 1832. He is first listed in the 1805 *Liverpool Directory*, as a musical instrument maker in Duke-street, along with his nephews ‘J. and F.’³

Not later than 1808 he established a manufacturing presence at 49, Rathbone-place in London – an address shared with Robert Bill, as is evidenced from the address shown on the nameboard of a pianoforte sold at auction in 2010, though no detailed information on his activities in the metropolis has emerged.⁴ However, a number of advertisements identified by the author in *The Liverpool Mercury* from 1811 onwards provide useful information about his business there. One such notice placed in July 1811 reads:

BY THE KING’S ROYAL PATENT
Newly improved
PATENT PIANOFORTES
N SOUTHWELL

Impressed with gratitude to the ladies and Gentlemen of Liverpool and its environs, for the flattering encouragement he has hitherto received, begs to return them his sincere thanks, and respectfully solicits their inspection of the different PIANO FORTES, now for sale, at his Manufactory, 99, Duke-street, Liverpool.

He requests, particularly, to mention his lately improved Patent SQUARE PIANO FORTES, with six turned feet, crescent drawers in front, and gilt ornaments. His newly invented ELLIPTICAL DITTO, with eight feet, crescent drawers, &c. particularly adapted to stand occasionally in the centre of a room: an advantage highly desirable in musical parties. The rich and elegant exterior of these instruments is their least recommendation, as they possess a most brilliant, sweet and full tone, uniting a power and delicacy, rarely to be found in a Square Piano Forte. The touch is extremely light, sensible and quick.

N.S. is lately appointed principal Agent for the sale of Messrs. Clementi and Co.'s recently improved PIANO FORTES (of which he has now an elegant assortment, with six-and-a-half Octaves, carefully selected by himself from their extensive manufactory in London) and also to superintend and keep in order, any PIANO Fortes, of their make, that have been, or may in future be sole in Liverpool and its vicinity, being the only person in this part of England qualified as a manufacturer to do so. It is his intention to visit London, twice at least, every year, when he will have an opportunity of personally selecting and forwarding to those who may favour him with their orders, the best Instruments, both from his own manufactory, and Messrs. Clementi and Co.'s.⁵

This advertisement is of particular interest in two respects. Firstly, his elliptical square pianos appear to be of a novel design. They have the rounded corners of the type most often attributed to the house of Dettmer (close neighbours of William Southwell in

Gresse-street), raising the question of whether there may have been possible collaboration between the two firms. However, Nicholas states that his instruments have eight feet, which by inference suggests they have two keyboards facing each other, a novel feature that perhaps echoes William Southwell's much earlier demi-lune pianofortes. Sadly no examples of this type of model made by Nicholas are known to have survived. Secondly, the advertisement establishes the existence of a close business relationship between Nicholas Southwell and Clementi and Co. at this time.

In another notice placed the following year, Nicholas advertised for sale examples of 'the new invented Piano Forte, called the Celestina, manufactured by Messrs. Clements [*recte* Clementi]', which 'for richness of tone, simplicity of construction and elegance of appearance, is allowed to be superior to anything of the kind ever before offered to the public'. Whether this was a square or upright instrument is not stated and the author has been unable to identify any further references to it in advertisements placed by Clementi and Co. themselves.⁶ Several years later in 1817 Nicholas announced:

...In particular, he wishes to introduce to their notice A SUPERB CABINET PIANO FORTE, which he has just completed. Of this elegant Instrument he has no hesitation in believing that he may be permitted to say, that in the taste of the ornaments. The diversity of its powers, and in the sweetness, fullness and richness of its tone, it surpasses any hitherto offered for the approbation of the Public. THE CABINET PIANO FORTE was originally the invention of his Brother, Mr. Wm. Southwell, of London, Patentee; but he trusts he shall not be deemed arrogant in remarking, that he has subsequently so improved this admirable Instrument, that he has combined strength and delicacy in the melody, and increased the facilities of light, expressive, and rapid execution. The exterior has been exquisitely finished in the best Chinese stile, by Messrs. Smith and Mason, artists

of the first celebrity, from London.⁷

Here we find evidence that Nicholas had been working on refinements to William's upright cabinet pianoforte design. It is also of interest that he names the artists responsible for the decorative embellishments of the case. The author has identified two London japanners of these names who appear a likely fit for Messrs. Smith and Mason – George Smith, cabinet japanner, 33, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, London and John Mason, next door at No. 32, both listed in *The London and Country Directory* of 1811.⁸

In 1820 a notice in *The London Gazette* announced the dissolution of the partnership of Nicholas Southwell and Stephen White, organ builders of Liverpool, the first intimation of Southwell involvement in this field located by the author.

The Partnership existing between us the undersigned Nicholas Southwell and Stephen White, carrying on business as Organ-builders at Liverpool, in the County of Lancaster, under the firm of Southwell and White, is this day dissolved by mutual consent. As witness our hands. Nichs. Southwell, Stephen White.⁹

Two advertisements for a Mr. White, Organ Builder, No. 24, Cumberland-street, Middlesex Hospital [London] appeared in the press in 1802 and 1805, but with no mention of Southwell.¹⁰ However, in this context it is noteworthy that there is in Australia an extant example of a barrel organ by Southwell and White, Liverpool and London.¹¹ After the dissolution of the partnership in 1820 Nicholas is listed in Liverpool directories as an organ builder as well as a pianoforte maker until 1829.

Family life

Though no record of the marriage has been located, later sources reveal that Nicholas Southwell married Martha Matilda Fazakerley sometime before 1793 (the birth year of their eldest daughter, Caroline), when presumably the family were still resident in Dublin.¹² From death notices for Martha's sister Jane in 1828 and Martha herself in 1831 we learn that their father was [Wm. or J^{no}.] Frederick Fazackerley of Fazackerley [near Liverpool], 'latterly of Dublin'.¹³ This suggests that when the Southwells fled to Liverpool

after their house was set on fire by Irish rebels in 1803, they were returning to a place where they had friendly family connections.

Nicholas and Martha had a large family of at least five sons and three daughters¹⁴, a number of whom were born after the move to Liverpool. Sadly most died when quite young and Nicholas was survived by only two, a son Robert and a daughter [Julia](#). Robert, his youngest son, was lost at sea shortly afterwards,¹⁵ leaving only Julia, who a year before her father's death had married Isaac Yehiel Lopes, a merchant from Jamaica of Jewish descent. Isaac Y Lopes, a much older man, is on record as having been a slave owner and who had probably left Jamaica in the wake of the slave rebellion of 1831.¹⁶ After his death in 1849¹⁷ Julia and her daughters sold up in Liverpool and are next found living in Staffordshire in the 1851 census. The reason why they should have moved to this location is puzzling. It is though the area where some descendants of the [Womborne line of Southwells](#) were living, leading the author to conjecture that Julia may have taken her children to settle near to relatives; however, no evidence to establish a clear connection has been identified.

It is however Nicholas' eldest daughter [Caroline](#) (1793–1828) who is of most interest in the context of the Southwell story. In June 1817 she married the renowned flautist, Charles Nicholson Junior, in Liverpool. It appears she remained based in that city for a number of years after the marriage, while her husband travelled around the country giving recitals. In 1822 she advertised her services as a piano and harp teacher from her father's Duke-street premises. However, after Charles' appointment as the first Professor of Flute at the Royal Academy, the couple moved to London and by 1824 are found living at 12, Caroline-street, Bedford Square.¹⁸

The couple had three children, one son and two daughters, of whom the second died in infancy, followed to the grave not long afterwards by Caroline, who died in July 1828. Brilliant flautist though he was, it seems Charles was profligate with money and contemporary newspaper reports record that when he later died in 1837 he left his two young children and elderly mother destitute and in dire straits. To their credit, his musical colleagues rallied round and arranged a benefit performance in aid of the family, attended by more than a thousand people.¹⁹

Nicholas Southwell died in 1832, only a year after the death of his beloved wife, to whom he was clearly devoted,²⁰ and was buried in St. James Cemetery, Liverpool.²¹

¹ *Registry of Deeds, Dublin, Book No. 551*, pp. 111–12, Memorandum No. 362400 (first transcribed and reported in full in Bozarth and Debenham, *Piano Wars*, 2009, Appendix 5, 96–98). Other sources include an advertisement for a cabinet pianoforte made by Nicholas states: ‘THE CABINET PIANO FORTE was originally the invention of his Brother, Mr. Wm. Southwell, of London, Patentee’ (*The Liverpool Mercury*, 3 January 1817); and a notice in *The Liverpool Mercury* in 1825 announcing William’s death specifically mentions that he was the ‘brother of Mr Nicholas Southwell of this town’. (*The Liverpool Mercury*, 4 February 1825).

² A record of the baptism of a William Nicholas Southwell, son of Mary (no father’s name given) appears in the parish register of St Bartholomew, near the Royal Exchange, London on 22 April 1763 – the only record of a child of this name at this time located by the author.

³ Liverpool Record Office report on searches requested by the author, 2005.

⁴ See Part 1. “*William Southwell*, 19–20.

⁵ *The Liverpool Mercury*, 5 July 1811.

⁶ *The Liverpool Mercury*, 24 July 1812; and 31 July 1812.

⁷ *The Liverpool Mercury*, 3 January 1817.

⁸ *The London and Country Directory*, 1811.

⁹ *The London Gazette*, (17,654) 25 November 1820, 2199.

¹⁰ *The Morning Post and Gazetteer* (10,489), 19 May 1802; and *The Morning Post* (11,521), 20 July 1805.

¹¹ J. Maidment, *Gazetteer Victorian Pipe Organs* 2nd ed., 2004.

¹² Caroline’s birth year is identified by her age at date of death in 1828. She was thirty five.

¹³ The notice of the death of Nicholas Southwell’s sister-in-law, Jane Fazakerley, at his home in Duke-street, Liverpool states that her father was John Frederick Fazakerley of Fazakerley, and latterly of Dublin. (*The Liverpool Mercury*, 25 April 1828). The author has located a marriage of a John Frederick Fazakerly [*sic*], schoolmaster, and Jane Crawford at the Church of St Michan, Dublin, 9 February 1771, which may be he ([Irish Genealogy](#) accessed 14 July 2013). The notice of

Nicholas' wife Martha's death in 1831 states that she was the daughter of 'the late Mr. Wm. Frederick Fazakerley, of Fazakerley.' (*The Liverpool Mercury*, 7 October 1831). The inconsistency in the forename may be a scribe's error – or perhaps his forenames also included William.

¹⁴ Children of the marriage located by the author in parish registers etc. are:

- Caroline (1793–1828)
- Francis (1799–1819)
- William (1801–1806)
- Elizabeth (1807–1816)
- Julia (1809–1870)
- Henry (– 1828)
- Amelia (1812–1830)
- Philip (1816–1816)
- Robert (1816–1833)

¹⁵ Robert, youngest son of Nicholas Southwell., died on 28 April 28, 1833 "at Rio Grande, in the 18th year of his age" (*Liverpool Mercury*, 20 September 1833).

¹⁶ *Slave Registers of former British Colonial Dependencies, 1812-1834* (accessed via ancestry.co.uk, 26 June 2012).

¹⁷ A notice of Isaac Y. Lopes' death, aged fifty seven, appeared in *The Liverpool Mercury* 17 April 1849.

¹⁸ Sun Fire Office (The National Archives, UK. MS 11936/497/1016730).

¹⁹ *The Morning Post*, 3 July, 1837.

²⁰ A notice in the *Liverpool Mercury* reads:

‘to attempt to delineate her virtues is as vain as to deplore her loss; but who can say to the heart of the mourner be still,—who dares measure the tears of the afflicted, or put a shackle on the tongue, when it speaks the worth of the lost and loved one? Her virtues were not merely the virtues of a sect or sex,—they were universal; her talents too were of an uncommon order,—they were solid as well as shining’ (*Liverpool Mercury*, 7 October 1831).

²¹ A brief announcement of his death appeared in *The Liverpool Mercury*, 21 September 1832:

‘Died . . . Yesterday morning, at his house in Duke Street, Mr Nicholas Southwell.’

His burial is recorded in the burial Register of St. James Cemetery, Liverpool (1832), entry no. 1857, 233.

Appendix 1:

Transcription of Frederick Southwell Cripps's Letter to William Cripps (1911)

Original text

Margaret Debenham comments

Jan 22nd 1911

Dear William,

I owe you a letter in reply to yours of the 15th. I have not heard from your Solicitor, nor has Mr Gates written me on the subject since he wrote to say all had been settled and that he had forwarded the money to you or your Solicitor. I am anxiously awaiting a letter from you to say it has been received and that all is now settled satisfactorily.

As Mrs. C. (my stepmother) gave way, I rather hope your Solicitor received the money before writing to Mr. Gates, so as to avoid any possible re-opening of the question.

As to Grandmother running away from Boarding School to be married, I have always heard the same thing. I think she told me herself that she married the Purser of an East Indiaman. She said she would only have him on condition he gave up going to India. So he afterwards had one of the Margate Boats, a steamer taking people down the Thames from London to Margate. She told me, she went with him and remembered the Steamer being burnt to the water's edge, he being the last to leave the ship, which he Jumped from into the cold water, thereby causing a severe illness. What he did after that I do not know. I also understood that Grandma was only about 16 when she ran away with him.

I have heard my Father say that his Father furnished the Brighton hospital and met his

- Frederick Southwell Cripps' grandmother, Frances Cripps (née Southwell), was born *ca.* 1800 and therefore sixteen years old in 1816. Her marriage to Thomas Cripps took place on 31 January 1818, when she was seventeen/eighteen, which suggests they had co-habited for a little while before the marriage.

- The story is confirmed by a report

death by falling off a ladder. So if this is the same man I presume he took to building or furnishing buildings in some way.

My Father has also said that they sprung from Horsham in Sussex. But I can never get any precise information from him, on the subject. He used, to speak of how he lost his Father when quite a child, and that he told his Mother not to worry as he would look after her. How she had a dressmaking business on the Grand Parade, Brighton—a carriage trade, meaning only swell people were customers.

Oh, I remember Grandma telling me her Father (Old William Southwell) “cut her off” and would never see her after she ran away to be married. She used to tell me stories of her early life when I was about 16 or 17 years old, as I often used to spend an evening with her—at least once a week. It may interest you to know some of the things she told me.

At the age of 3 she was carried away from their house on her Father’s shoulders, she recollected looking back and seeing the house in flames, it having been set fire to in one of the Irish Rebellions, because they thought he was not on their side. This was in Dublin. They ran for their lives and went into a Hotel which they found occupied by the rebels enjoying themselves. They fled to Liverpool

Her Father, she told me, worked himself up. He was apprenticed to Cabinet Making, and

in the *Brighton Gazette* in 1841. Thomas Cripps died on 2 April 1841

- William Southwell Senior was a witness at his daughter Frances’ marriage to Thomas Cripps at St. Pancras Old Church in 1818. His signature appears in the parish register. Why he should have “cut her off” is a matter for conjecture.
- The timing of this event is consistent with the Irish Rebellion led by Robert Emmet in 1803.
- According to the census returns for 1851 and 1861, William Southwell Junior, son of William was born in Liverpool in 1804.
- The Southwells’ Liverpool shop is listed at various addresses in Duke-street, Liverpool in trade directories from 1805 –1829.
- Assuming the normal starting age

when quite young, made a beautiful model of a grand staircase.

Then, he invented some pianoforte actions, and eventually started a factory for making Pianos.

He had a shop in the principal street in Dublin. He invented many things and patented them in connection with Pianos, etc.

One patent was infringed by the great firm of Broadwoods, London. He attacked them and had the greatest Lawyer of the day, Sir Thos. Erskin[sic], to fight for him. The trial lasted three years and in the end he lost.

The expense of this—bringing witnesses over from Ireland, year after year, etc—upset his business and he eventually, although he was reputed to be very rich at one time, gave up the Dublin business, started again in Liverpool, and finally in London.

They then lived in Werners [Berners] Street, Oxford Street, and many are the stories Grandma told me of the great people she met while living there with her Father. Kemble,

of 14 for apprenticeships, William's apprenticeship in cabinet making would have begun *ca.* 1750, but his Master remains unknown.

- This statement is true.
- It is true that William brought a case against Broadwood for infringement of his 1794 square pianoforte patent in 1803. He was not however, represented by Erskine, but by William Cooke (1757-1832). Nor did the trial last three years, it was over very quickly.
- This statement may be the result of a conflation of the time taken by the series of cases brought by James Longman and his creditors against Longman, Clementi and Co., and the Southwell v. Broadwood case.
- It is true that the Southwells moved first to Liverpool (not later than 1805, according to the Liverpool trade directory); and to London (not later than 1808 when a newspaper advertisement confirms that William Southwell was supervising the manufacture of cabinet pianofortes made to his 1807 patent design in Wilkinson's London workshop).
- Contemporary records establish that the family lived at 11, Gresse-street, a few blocks away from

Keane and Macroedy [*sic*] the Actors, and all sorts.

Her Father, she said, had the entry to all theatres and Concerts and used to write criticisms.

She often went with him, and remembers going to hear Jenny Lind sing the first time at Drury Lane Theatre. The crush was so great she was lifted off her feet and carried on the heads of the people into the building.

She also went every night for a fortnight when Kemble gave his concluding performances on the stage, when he acted a different thing every night.

Mr. Trotter, the man who started and owned the Soho Bazaar, was a great friend of theirs.

When only about 7 years old she was at Boarding School in Liverpool, and when in bed one night, heard a noise in the chimney, presently a man came down (they were big chimneys in those days, because boys had to climb them to sweep them), walked across the

Berners-street from 1811–1825.

- There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that they may have also have had a workshop in Berners Mews, backing on to Berners–street, 1812 – 1820.
- A strong theatrical connection is suggested by the activities of two of William’s children, Henry F. and Maria, who became performers at The Theatre Royal, Drury–lane and the English Opera House in the 1820s, and later in America.
- If Frances Cripps heard Jenny Lind sing it must have been on a visit to her brother William (or another family member) since Lind did not make her London debut until 1847. So this is another example of an account which has suffered from the ‘Chinese whispers’ effect.
- Kemble’s final performances on stage at Covent Garden took place in 1817, therefore this is quite possible, though unproven.
- John Trotter filed a patent for a novel type of keyboard on the same day on which William Southwell filed his patent for the ‘piano sloping backwards’.
- This claim remains to be investigated. The Liverpool newspapers pre-1811 are not yet on-line and the author has been unable to check out the hard copy records at the Liverpool Record

bedroom and downstairs. She then jumped out of bed and called the people up quietly. The burglars were shot in the front garden.

When quite young and while living in London, she remembers Wornum coming to work for her Father as a poor boy. He was half starved, so she often took him meals down, herself.

He afterwards stole one of her Fathers idea (patents) and became one of the big Pianoforte makers of London. I think the firm still exists—at any rate Broadwoods does.

Her father was married three times, had 32 children in all.

I think she was either the eldest or youngest of the last wife's. Of course her Father was an Irishman.

Office.

- Robert Wornum was foreman to George Wilkinson between 1808–1810, at the time when Wilkinson had purchased the rights to Southwell's cabinet piano patent of 1807.
- Southwell was supervising production of cabinet pianofortes in the Wilkinson workshop; therefore Wornum would certainly have had the opportunity to observe his work and methods.
- Wilkinson and Wornum became partners in 1810, a relationship which endured until shortly after their factory was burnt to the ground in October 1812.
- Only one formal marriage ceremony for William Southwell has been located, that is to Ann Dowlan [Doland] in Dublin in 1780.
- His sons John and Francis were already born well before this date, so there must have been a previous relationship.
- *Ca.* 1798 William Southwell began a relationship with Frances [maiden name unknown], (1783–1847), mother of another set of his children, including Frances [Southwell] Cripps, but no record of a formal marriage ceremony has been identified.

Her mother was the daughter of a London Hairdresser.

Her Father was in his 100th year when he died—never kept his bed until the last two days of his life, and wrote a letter to one of his Sons without spectacles the last day.

Grandma told me much of his many Sons. One was Mayor of Cork.

One was a good Actor—used to act with Macredy [*sic*]. Died in Jamaica in Soldiers clothes, in accord with a dream she had, which so preyed upon her mind that she wrote out and found it was true.

Two others were Photographers to Royalty—the best in London. It was in Baker Street.

Her Father was buried at Highgate Cemetery.

- Frances junior had a slightly older brother, Henry F. and is therefore more likely to have been the eldest *daughter* rather than eldest *child* of this union.
- The Cripps letter provides the only identified evidence of Frances senior's parentage as 'daughter of a London hairdresser'.
- This statement is an example of hyperbole, since William's age at date of death is recorded as eighty eight years in the parish burial register of St Pancras Old Church.
- There is firm evidence however that he was still actively at work as late as 1823, one/two years before he died in January 1825.
- No evidence has been found that any of his sons was ever Mayor of Cork
- The actor was Henry F. Southwell who left the London stage in 1827, first for America to join the theatre troupe of Courtney Wemyss and later to Barbados, where he formed a theatre group and where he died of a fever in 1841.
- The photographers in question, ['Southwell Brothers'](#) were Frances Cripps' nephews, sons of her brother, William Southwell Junior. They were William Senior's grandsons, *not* his sons.
- The tomb exists, but it is that of

Just inside the Gates may be seen a large tomb on which is inscribed "the family vault of William Southwell."

William Southwell Junior (1804–1880), Frances Cripps' brother, *not* her father

Now I think I have told you pretty well all I know of Grandma's early life and people. Perhaps it may interest Aunt, if you read it over to her, and it may touch some strings of memory in her own mind, which may be of interest.

As one good turn deserves another, I hope you will punish me with an equally long letter, telling me all you know of the family tree and history. Much of what I have written would of course appear trivial to the outsider, but when only little is known about those whom we can question no longer, that little assumes some importance in the eyes of those concerned. I think recent events have proved how desirable it is to ask: questions of those who may not long be with us.

Had I foreseen what trouble would arise over Aunt's affairs, I should have got more precise information from Grandma. Aunt Fanny was always very close. Any enquiries, she used to rebut with "children must not be inquisitive" and so forth.

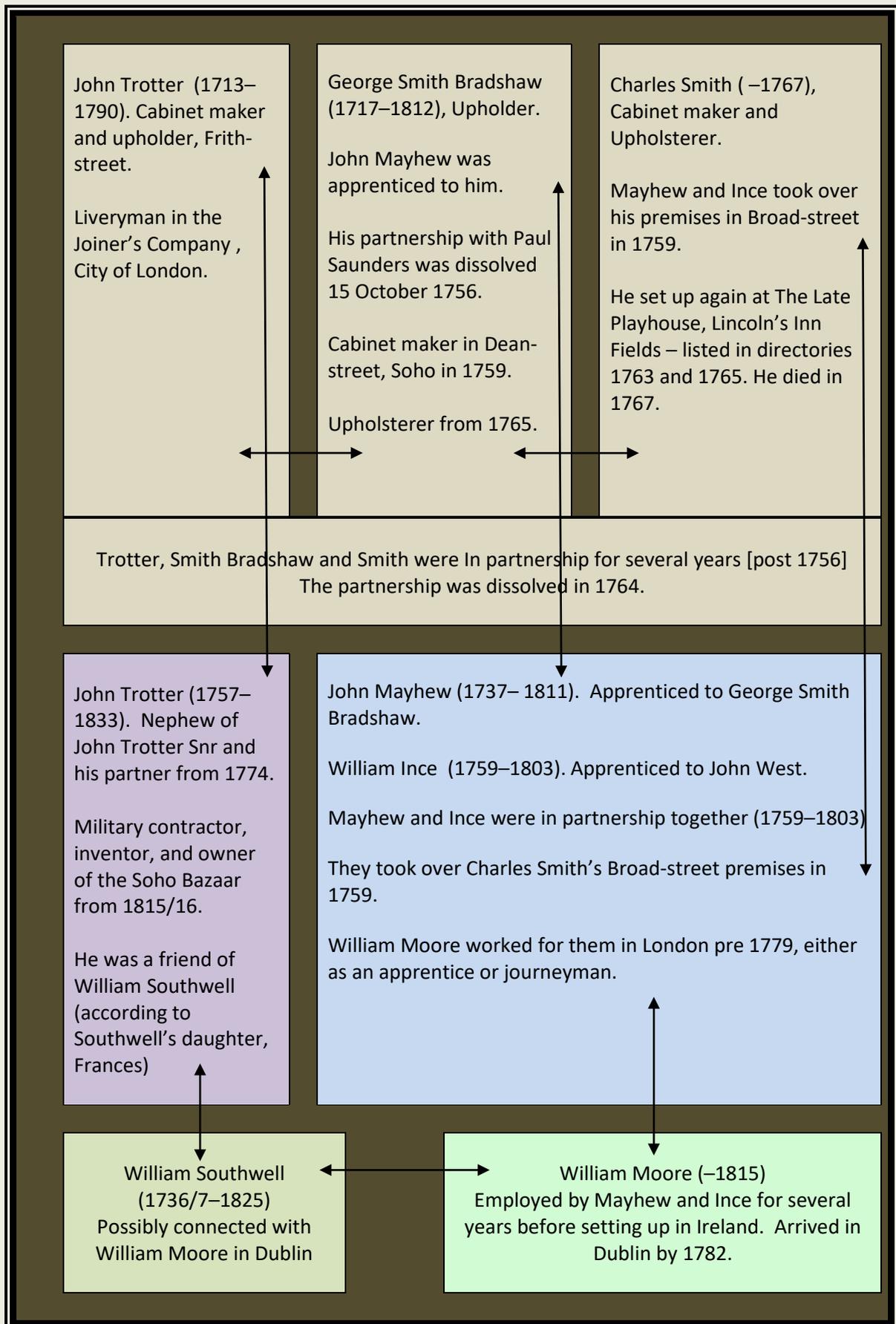
Your affectionate cousin,

Fredrk. Southwell Cripps

Mr. William Cripps,

101 Elizabeth Street, Hobart. Tasmania.

Appendix 2: Diagram of Connections between London Cabinet Makers





... Dan playing a Wllm. Southwell & Son square pianoforte,

Workshop of David Hunt, 2009

(photograph © Margaret Debenham)

SUPPLEMENT

The remaining content is derived from the various timelines etc. listed in the sidebar menu of Margaret Debenham's website prior to this 2026 edition.

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Author's Preface to the 2026 Supplement

This supplement to my article 'William Southwell (1736/7–1825): Anglo-Irish Musical Instrument Inventor and Maker - an extraordinary life' kindly hosted online by the Musical Instrument Research Catalog (MIRCat), includes Appendices drawn from the subsets of research findings previously provided via the various sidebars (Patents, Timelines etc.) currently found in the menu of my [William Southwell \(1736/7-1825\) Musical Instrument Inventor and Maker website](#). I have taken this step so that access to the research findings reported will be safely preserved for the foreseeable future once my personal website no longer remains active. Internal links to the appropriate Appendix are given at the appropriate points in the narrative.

In addition to the colleagues mentioned in my 2013 Acknowledgements above, I wish to add here my heartfelt thanks to John Watson and his colleagues both for their foresight in setting up this much needed new facility and for their invaluable help in working with me to provide a long-term home for my own various research findings. You are amazing!

Based on novel findings from contemporary records, the article presents a biographical account of William Southwell, active in Dublin in the final decades of the 18th century and in London from 1794. The fascinating story of his inventions and business dealings is set in the context of newly discovered aspects of his extraordinary personal life

Acknowledged as a creative genius by cognoscenti, Southwell has not however achieved the widespread recognition he undoubtedly deserves. A man ahead of his time, he adopted a modern entrepreneurial approach in a bid to capitalize on his pianoforte inventions. In 1794 he negotiated a deal with the firm of Longman and Broderip, granting them sole rights to manufacture square pianofortes made to his novel patent design in London – a strategy which was to cost him dear, in no small part due to the actions of the manipulative and duplicitous James Longman. Undeterred however, he went on to enter into arrangements with other London manufacturers, including Clementi and Co., George Wilkinson and, in the final year of his life, John Watlen.

Margaret Debenham

Ely, 2026

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William Southwell (1736/7–1825) Musical Instrument Inventor and Maker

Based on novel findings from contemporary records, the site presents a biographical account of the Anglo–Irish musical instrument maker, William Southwell, active in Dublin in the final decades of the 18th century and in London from 1794. The fascinating story of his inventions and business dealings is set in the context of newly discovered aspects of his extraordinary personal life



Upright Square Pianoforte (“Camerachord”), No. 59 by William Southwell, Dublin. Until 2020 this instrument was in the South Island of New Zealand, part of the former Golden Bay Keyboard Collection. It's whereabouts in 2022 are currently unknown. *Photograph © Kenneth and Mary Mobbs Collection, reproduced by kind permission of Kenneth Mobbs.*

Acknowledged as a creative genius by cognoscenti, Southwell has not however achieved the widespread recognition he undoubtedly deserves. A man ahead of his time, he adopted a modern entrepreneurial approach in a bid to capitalise on his pianoforte inventions. In 1794 he negotiated a deal with the firm of Longman and Broderip, granting them sole rights to manufacture square pianofortes made to his novel patent design in London – a strategy which was to cost him dear, in no small part due to the actions of the manipulative and duplicitous James Longman. Undeterred however, he went on to enter into arrangements with other London manufacturers, including Clementi and Co., George Wilkinson and, in the final years of his life, John Watlen.

- Michael Cole's appraisal of the technical aspects of [William Southwell's](#) work and his assessment of the importance of Southwell's inventions, available on his [Square Pianos](#) website, are of particular interest and recommended here as a valuable resource.
- More information on Southwell's difficulties in protecting his 1794 patent rights is to be found in the following publication: George S. Bozarth and Margaret Debenham. 2009. '[Piano Wars: The Legal Machinations of London Pianoforte Makers, 1795 – 1806](#)' in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* Vol. 42, Issue 1. London: Royal Musical Association, 45-108. This paper was awarded the American Musical Instrument Society's [Frances Densmore prize](#) in 2011.

1. William Southwell Timeline

- 1736/7 William Southwell was born. This is confirmed by his recorded age (88) in the burial register of St Pancras Old Church, London, 2 February 1825 (see 1825).
- 1750 According to reminiscences of his daughter, Frances, as told to her grandson, Frederick Southwell Cripps, her father was apprenticed to a cabinet maker and as a young man made a beautiful model of a grand staircase.
- 1757 Assuming he was the normal age of 14 when apprenticed, he would have completed his apprenticeship at about this time.
- 1760 Nicholas Southwell, brother of William was born, according to his age at date of death in 1832.
- 1772 The received wisdom from the published literature has been that Southwell became apprenticed to the renowned harpsichord maker Ferdinand Weber in Dublin in this year. However, he was then in his mid-thirties and already trained as a cabinet maker, therefore a more likely scenario is that he was seeking to apply - or develop - his skills to the art of musical instrument making at that time.
- 1776 The name 'William Southwell' appears as one of the signatories of a Loyal Address to the King by Dublin tradesmen, published in *The London Gazette* at the time of the American Declaration of Independence. This may be our man; however this cannot be confirmed for certain since no occupations of the signatories are given.
- 1778 The parish register of St. Mary's Dublin records the death of a 'Mrs Southwell' of Fleet-street, Dublin, possibly William's first wife – or alternatively his mother, or step-mother, given that his brother Nicholas was not born until ca. 1760.
- 1780 A marriage bond for William Southwell and Ann Dowlan [sic] is recorded in the Probate Record and Marriage Licence Index 1270-1858, Dublin.

A theatrical review of a performance of King Lear at The Theatre Royal, Crowstreet, Dublin (*The Dublin Evening Post*, 5 February 1780), waxes lyrical on the subject of musical interludes between the acts, performed on the Piano Forte and Celestinal harpsichord. The reviewer goes on to observe: 'To do justice, we must not forget that the Celestina was constructed by Mr. Southwell, a young

man whose great mechanical powers will, if encouraged, do honour to his country'.

1781 'Southwell, Harpsichord and Pianoforte Maker', placed an advertisement in *The Hibernian Journal*, 22-24 January 1781, stating that he was 'now carrying on said business in the most extensive manner' at No. 26 Fleet-street [Dublin]. He adds: 'He has lately invented a Method of adapting the CELESTINA or FORTE PIANO to the harpsichord (without the least consequent injury), which has met with universal Approbation'

1783 William appears in Dublin directories at 26 Fleet-street (1783–86).

1784 Southwell, once more terming himself 'Harpsichord and Piano Forte Maker', placed an advertisement in *The Hibernian Journal*, 19 April 1784, in which 'he informs the Nobility and Gentry that he has for the Convenience and greater Extension of his Business, removed from Fleet-street, to No. 70, Marlborough-street.

In June of this year, a concert notice in *The Freeman's Journal* states that the actress Elizabeth Billington accompanied herself on a Celestine harpsichord by 'The Celebrated Southwell of this city'.

Harriot [sic], daughter of William and Ann Southwell, was baptised in Dublin in this year.

In two similar advertisements placed in *The Hibernian Journal*, on 24 and 31 December 1784, Southwell states that 'he is now finishing some of his much admired grand PIANO FORTES, which for Expression, Fullness and Brilliancy of Tone have never been equaled in this or any other Kingdom'. Here we find firm evidence that Southwell was manufacturing grand pianos at this early date.

1787 William Southwell is listed in Dublin directories at 70, Marlborough-street through to 1791.

1789 In September Southwell announced that he 'has just finished his GRAND UPRIGHT PIANO FORTE' leaving its merits to be judged by 'the amateurs'. (*The Dublin Evening Post*, 15 September 1789)

In December, William Moore (whose name has often been tentatively linked to Southwell) placed an advertisement for both Inlaid Furniture and a Pianoforte and Harpsichord Manufactory, informing the public 'he has removed from Abbey-street to Capel-street, No. 47 [Dublin], where he carries on the Cabinet-Making Business in general'. (*The Dublin Evening Post*, 31 December 1789)

1790 In November of this year Southwell announced that he had considerably enlarged his workshop and augmented his number of men to cope with the demand, stating that 'persons have frequently waited nine and twelve months for his instruments' (*The Dublin Evening Post*, 9 November 1790). The final paragraph of this advertisement is of particular interest since he states that 'He has in his hands one of his much admired upright Piano Fortes, organized, price 130 guineas, and several [Deception Pier Table Piano Fortes](#), of both which he is the original inventor'. Southwell's descriptive term for the latter fits the construction of his surviving metamorphic half-moon table instruments, an example of which is [on show in the Cobbe Collection](#) at Hatchlands Park.

1792 In an advertisement in *The Freeman's Journal* in May of this year, Southwell offered for sale his 'Grand Organised Pianoforte'. He also claims that 'his last

improvement on the small Piano Forte has been found on trial superior to anything ever yet attempted; it enables the performer to play with more expression and adds much to the brilliancy and sweetness of the tone’.

From 1792–1802 he is listed in Dublin directories at 86, Marlborough-street.

1793 In May 1793 he advertised for sale:

- Pedal harps about which he claims ‘the mechanism of the Pedals, which is justly considered a masterly piece of workmanship, he hopes will bear the most critical inspection’
- A new instrument, which he called a ‘Dolce Flauto’, played with keys, and, he says, particularly adapted to accompany the Harp.
- His ‘much admired Grand Organised Piano Forte’.

1794 In this year he was granted an English [patent, No. 2017](#), for his five and a half octave pianoforte with additional keys, filed from an address in Lad Lane, London.

He licensed the rights to manufacture instruments made to this design to Longman and Broderip in London, while retaining the right to manufacture them himself in Dublin, announcing this fact in *The Dublin Evening Post*, 20 November 1794.

In the same advertisement he also advertised a recently built house in Hume-street, Dublin, to be let.

1795 Longman and Broderip began to make and market five and a half octave square pianos to Southwell’s design in London early in this year.

On 13 November James Longman and Frances Fane Broderip were committed to prison after being declared bankrupt.

1796 On 16 July 1796 William Southwell signed an agreement permitting James Longman and Frances Fane Broderip each to use his 1794 patent design individually.

On 2 November 1796 Longman and Broderip were released from prison. James Longman returned to the Cheapside business and Frances Fane Broderip to the Haymarket store, under the supervision of their assigns.

A Belfast newspaper notice placed in early November states that ‘Mr SOUTHWELL, PIANO FORTE MAKER &c., Dublin, recommends Mr MORDOC, (who has done business with him for a long time), as a person very capable of Tuning and Repairing Organs, Piano-fortes, &c.’ (*Belfast Newsletter*, 16 September 1796; repeated 1-11 November 1796). Evidence of Murdock’s activities in Ireland from 1780 - 1807 has been identified.

1797 On 28 March 1797 a notice appeared in *The Dublin Evening News* announcing the marriage of Mr Joshua Phythian Orme of Liverpool to Miss Southwell, daughter of Mr. Wm. Southwell of Marlborough-street. Her forename [Elizabeth] is confirmed in the Irish Probate and Marriage Licence index for that year. Later (in 1811) J P Orme and son were listed in a trade directory as mahogany brokers in Duke-street, Liverpool, the same street in which the Southwells’ Liverpool premises were situated.

1798 In November 1798 Longman and Broderip’s Cheapside business was sold by their assigns to John Longman (brother of James), Muzio Clementi & Co. The

new firm commenced trading as Longman, Clementi and Co. at Cheapside. The Haymarket side of the business was sold to a partnership of Frances Fane Broderip and Charles Wilkinson and continued to trade as Broderip and Wilkinson from that address.

William Southwell filed a patent ([No. 2264](#) – enrolled 6 December 1798) from Broad Court, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, for another novel instrument, an upright square pianoforte. He named it the 'Camerachord' and licensed the manufacturing rights in England to Longman, Clementi and Co., while continuing to manufacture it in his own right in Dublin. The patent also included a new design for a harp.

At about this time Southwell took a new wife [partner], Frances, said to have been 'the daughter of a London hairdresser'. It seems likely that William had met her during one of his sojourns in London.

1799 Henry F. Southwell (son of William Southwell's new wife Frances) was born ca. 1798/9. Strangely he was given the same forename as his half brother (see below), born 1783.

On 6 April 1799 Henry Southwell (1783 – 1866), who declared himself to be the fourth son of William Southwell and his wife Ann Doland [sic], was apprenticed to Sobieski Kildahl, a Dublin attorney. Henry was educated at Whyte's Grammar School and was a near contemporary there of Robert Emmet.

Since Ann [Doland] Southwell was alive at this time, if William formally married Frances in a church ceremony he clearly committed bigamy.

Two newspaper notices placed in this year provide clear evidence of considerable rivalry between William Southwell and Robert Woffington, of William-street, Dublin. Firstly, on 21 September 1799, Woffington advertised for sale 'VOCAL PIANO FORTES, very considerably improved', claiming to be the inventor. He goes on the state: 'a very inferior imitation of them having lately appeared by another name, he thinks it necessary to discriminate' (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 21 September 1799). Southwell swiftly responded. In a later edition of the same publication, on 10 October 1799 he placed a notice (which he dated 'London, Sept. 29 1799'), not only announcing the availability of his 'new invented Camerachord or Chamber Piano Forte, to be had at the Patentee's No. 86, Marlborough-street, Dublin or Longman, Clementi and Co.'s, London', but also directly challenging Woffington's claim: 'The great demand for the above instruments at 86, Marlborough-street, appears to have excited a considerable degree of uneasiness to a person who advertises what he terms "Vocal Piano Fortes", an invention of his which he says inferior imitations, under another name, have appeared, and against which he cautions the Musical Cognocenti' ... 'If the distinguished preference given by Proprietors, Amateurs, and The Public in general, to the several species of instruments made under the direction of Southwell and Co. has caused Envy to direct a shaft at their Camerachord, the insinuation will prove pointless and ineffectual. The favour they gratefully acknowledge to have long experienced will prove a sufficient guaranty against their bringing forth inferior imitations, and they can assure the public, those instruments, so much desired by persons of musical curiosity and taste, are, in Dublin, only made by them on original and perfect principles'... (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 10 October 1799).

- 1800 Frances, daughter of William and Frances – later the grandmother of Frederick S. Cripps - was born ca. 1800 (established by her age at date of death on her death certificate in 1886 at Brighton, Sussex).
- 1802 On 16 January 1802 Clementi and Co. placed the following advertisement in a London newspaper:

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, /Manufactured of SOLID MATERIALS, upon an IM-/PROVED PLAN, expressly for the EAST and WEST/ INDIES, by CLEMENTI and CO. No. 26, Cheap-/side. UPRIGHT GRAND PIANO-FORTES, with additional keys/ Horizontal ditto, with ditto./ New Patent Small Piano-fortes, with additional keys./ Patent ditto, without ditto./ common action ditto./ **Microchordon, or Small Upright Piano-fortes, with addi-/tional keys.**/New invented Patent Barrel Organ, with flageolet stop, double drum, &c. &c./ Ditto, with drum and triangle. / **Clementi and Co. having observed that Piano-fortes, &c. / made for this country, are not calculated to resist the effects/ of warmer climates, have lately manufactured the above Instruments, upon such secure principles, as to remove all doubts of their durability.** / N.B. A general assortment of Military Instruments, and every other article in the Musical Line. (*The Morning Post and Gazateer*, 16 January 1802; repeated in the same publication 19 January, 22 and 28 February 1802)

Microchordon was the name by which Clementi and Co referred to William Southwell's upright square pianoforte, made to the design of his 1798 English patent, which he himself called a 'Camerachord' – a the flyer about such an instrument attached to an extant Southwell square pianoforte dated 1802 is illustrated [here](#).

This advertisement strongly suggests that the firm was manufacturing this type of instrument in London under license from Southwell. However, the possibility that they were buying them in from the manufacturer for sale under their own label cannot be discounted absolutely.

On 25 February 1802, William and his brother Nicholas were among a group of influential cabinet makers, including William Moore, who advertised in *Trewhman's Exeter Flying Post* for skilled workmen to come over and work for them in Dublin.

On 18 March 1802 the discredited James Longman (together with three of his creditors) filed a Bill of Complaint against (John) Longman, Clementi and Co. concerning monies he alleged he was owed relating to square pianofortes made to Southwell's 1794 patent design.

On 1 June 1802 Southwell took steps to protect his assets, filing a legal Deed in Dublin, turning over his business there to two of his sons, John and Francis, and his brother Nicholas. This document gives two addresses for the business, 86, Marlborough-street and 34, Marlborough-street, the latter being the address of Southwell and Co. in subsequent years.

Just two weeks later, on 15 June 1802, Southwell placed a notice in a Dublin newspaper, giving his address as 34, Marlborough-st., in which he robustly refuted what he claimed to be false reports that he intended to quit Dublin for London: 'It having been very industriously circulated by some malicious person

or persons (as was on a former occasion) that I intended to quit this kingdom and carry on business in London, I think it is necessary to assure the Nobility, Gentry, and my Friends in general, that such is not, nor ever was my intention. To shew the falsity of such an infamous report, and in order to carry on the business in future more extensively, I have taken into the firm Messrs. N. and J. Southwell, persons of undoubted abilities, and regularly reared in that line'.(Saunders's Newsletter, 15 June 1802). It should be noted that Southwell's statement in this newspaper notice does not quite accord with the terms of the Deed he had so recently executed, in which he stated his intention to retire and in which he made over the Dublin business to Nicholas, John and Francis Southwell. For the full text of the Deed, see George S. Bozarth and Margaret Debenham. 2009. 'Piano Wars: The Legal Machinations of London Pianoforte Makers, 1795-1806', Appendix 5, in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* Vol. 42. London.

1803 On 17 January 1803, James Longman returned to his legal attack on Clementi and his partners with a revised Bill of Complaint.

On 8 March 1803 Southwell filed a Bill of Complaint against Broadwood and Son for alleged infringement of his patent design. The Broadwoods mounted a vigorous (if disingenuous) defense. (For more information on these legal proceedings see George S. Bozarth and Margaret Debenham, 'Piano Wars: The Legal Machinations of London Pianoforte Makers, 1795–1806' in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* Vol. 42 (2009). London: Royal Musical Association, 45-108).

The Act of Union, which ended the Irish parliament and united Ireland with England took place in this year.

On 28 June 1803 'Messrs Southwell' placed a notice in a Dublin newspaper stating:

'In order effectively to supply the numerous and increased demands for Piano Fortes, they have opened a manufactory 95, Duke-street, Liverpool (the first market in Europe for materials in their line) where, and at their house, 34, Marlborough-street, Dublin, their friends in any part of the United Kingdom, may (by order, as well as personally) instantly supplied with Piano Fortes of every description, made under their own personal inspection' ...

The advertisement further states:

...'a considerable portion of those [Piano Fortes] offered to the public as an improvement on Southwell's Patent, being but a miserable infringement on it. - The house of Clementi and Co. and that of Broderip and Wilkinson, London, are the only ones who have purchased the authority from the Patentees to manufacture on their plan ' (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 28 June 1803)

On 23 July 1803 the Irish rebellion led by Robert Emmet took place in Dublin. William and his family were forced to flee from the city to Liverpool after their house was set on fire by a rebel mob, because they thought he was not on their side.

- 1804 On 6 November 1804, in their answer to James Longman's latest Bill of Complaint, Clementi and Co. claimed that the innovations of Southwell's 1794 patent were in such general use that they were no longer bound by the patent restrictions.

Pragmatically, presumably realising it would be futile to continue to claim his rights at this point, Southwell did not pursue matters further.

- 1805 Nicholas, J[ohn] and F[rancis] Southwell appear as joint traders at 99, Duke-street, Liverpool in the Liverpool trade directory for this year.

Evidence that the new partnership of Southwell and Co was still also active at 34, Marlborough Street, Dublin in this year is to be found in an advertisement in *The Hibernian Journal* 12 June 1805 in which they announce their purchase of the rights to the invention of Helical Springs for use in Piano Fortes from Messrs Smyth and Litherland of Liverpool. They maintain that 'a Piano Forte with Springs, will be in better tune after twelve month's playing than any other after as many days.'

- 1806 In May 1806 Broderip and Wilkinson of Haymarket, London, advertised that their new musical publications were available from Messrs Southwell, Duke-street, Liverpool, along with their piano-fortes with additional keys, thus confirming a continuing connection.

From 1801 to this year, square pianofortes sold under the Broderip and Wilkinson banner made to Southwell's 1794 design were being manufactured under contract by Augustus Leukfeld, of Tottenham-street.

- 1807 In May Southwell was granted a patent (No. 3029) for an upright cabinet pianoforte, giving his address merely as Dublin.

In 1807 Nicholas Southwell is listed in Liverpool directories at 99, Duke-street, Liverpool.

An advertisement placed by Richard Taylor, music seller, in *The Chester Chronicle* on 20 November 1807 for Piano Fortes for sale includes 'No. 2 ditto [Piano Forte], a very powerful instrument with patent Helical Springs to preserve it long in tune (a great acquisition) additional keys, French frame and pedal - Thirty-six Guineas - Southwell.'

- 1808 William Southwell's fourteen year patent rights for his 1794 patent formally expired.

on 21 June 1808 the firm of Wilkinson and Co. announced that they had received letters patent for a cabinet pianoforte and that its manufacture was being supervised in their workshop by the inventor, William Southwell, at No. 3 Windmill-street and at No. 13 Haymarket.

By this year the Southwells had also established a presence at 49, Rathbone Place, London as well at 99 Duke-street, Liverpool (confirmed by the nameboard of an extant square piano).

Robert Bill, active at 49 Rathbone Place from 1807, is listed in the 1811 Post Office Directory as a 'patent pianoforte maker'. Possibly he shared a premises with the Southwells or alternatively worked for them as a journeyman.

1809 Francis W. Southwell, second son of William and primarily known as a composer, was active as a pianoforte maker in Dublin at the sign of the 'King's Arms', 34, Marlborough-street, Dublin in this year.

1810 George Wilkinson and Robert Wornum (now in partnership) took over the lease of No. 11, Princes-street, the premises which had formerly housed Joseph Merlin's Museum.

1811 William Southwell is found living at No. 11, Gresse-street from this year until his death in 1825. He is listed in the London and Country Directory (1811) and registered another patent (No. 3403) for a 'pianoforte sloping backwards', a type of upright, from this address in this year.

According to a newspaper notice placed in this year, John Watlen purchased the rights to this patent, said to be by 'an Irish gentleman of great mechanical genius'.

Also in this year, advertisements placed by Nicholas Southwell in Liverpool reveal that he was acting as an agent for Clementi and Co., especially mentioning their recently improved piano fortes with six and a half octaves. He describes a new invention of his own, 'an elliptical pianoforte', with eight feet, crescent drawers, &c, as well as lately improved patent square pianofortes.

The Cripps letter mentions a claim by Frances Southwell Cripps that Robert Wornum had stolen one of her father's ideas, which may refer to the patent registered by Wornum in this year (No. 3419) for a 'unique' upright.

1812 William Southwell personally advertised individual examples of his own pianos at 11, Gresse-street between 1812 and 1814. In 1812 these included what he termed 'Real Unique Pianofortes' with six octaves of keys as well as an improved Cabinet Piano Forte.

In the autumn of this year Wilkinson and Wornum's factory burnt down as a result of a blaze accidentally ignited by a lighted candle dropped by the wife of a workman.

1813 An Art exhibition in Liverpool included a 'Portrait of Mr. W. Southwell, the inventor of the Patent Square Pianoforte with additional keys', by James Lonsdale. Lonsdale hailed from the Lancaster area, but by this time was living in Berner's-street, London, just around the corner from the Berner's Mews workshop occupied by Robert Bill and close to Gresse-street.

1814 Charles Southwell, youngest son of William, was born. His father was 77 years old at the time.

In his '*Confessions of a Free-thinker*' (1851), Charles claims his parents were legitimately married. His mother had, he said, been a young servant girl in Southwell's employ. However, William's wife Frances was still very much alive at the time — as possibly was Ann Doland back in Dublin, since the death of an 'Anne Southwell' aged 73 is recorded in Dublin on 5 February 1827 in the parish of St. Audoens.

[Charles Southwell](#) was to become a well known figure in the Free Thought movement, achieving notoriety in his trial for blasphemy in England in 1842.

- 1818 Frances Southwell married Thomas Cripps, a ships purser, at St. Pancras Old Church, London. Her father, William Southwell, signed the register as a witness.
- 1819 Two auction sales in Dublin in this year advertised grand pianofortes by Southwell.
- John Watlen, placed an advertisement proclaiming that William Southwell, inventor of the additional keys, the upright Dampers, the Cabinet Pianoforte, the 'Harmonic' and the Oblique Pianoforte was still alive and at work and supervising production of his oblique pianofortes in his [Watlen's] workshop.
- 1821 William took out yet another patent (No. 4546) from Gresse-street, this time for improvements in the cabinet piano, including a back check to prevent the hammers from rebounding.
- 1822 William Southwell Jnr., son of William and Frances, married Elizabeth Cuming. William Jnr. later became a foreman and contractor for Broadwoods and was the inventor of the 'Victoria Grand Repetition Action' patent (no. 7424), which he sold to Broadwoods in 1837, the year in which Queen Victoria acceded to the throne, and which was named in her honour.
- He was the father of the three Southwell Brothers, William Henry, Frederick and Edwin, who became highly successful portrait photographers in Victorian London, trading as 'Southwell Brothers, Photographers Royal'.
- 1825 William Southwell Snr. died on 24 January 1825 in Gresse-street, London.
- Positive confirmation of the date of his death is found in a notice placed in *The Liverpool Mercury* on 4th February 1825, by his brother Nicholas, which reads: 'On Monday, the 24 ult. at his house, in London, at an advanced age, Mr. Wm. Southwell, piano-forte manufacturer, and brother of Mr. Nicholas Southwell, of this town. He possessed splendid abilities as a mechanic, and was the inventor and patentee of that well-known improvement in piano-fortes, the additional keys, besides numerous improvements in piano-fortes in general'.
- William's burial is recorded in the parish register of St. Pancras Old Church on 2 February 1825.

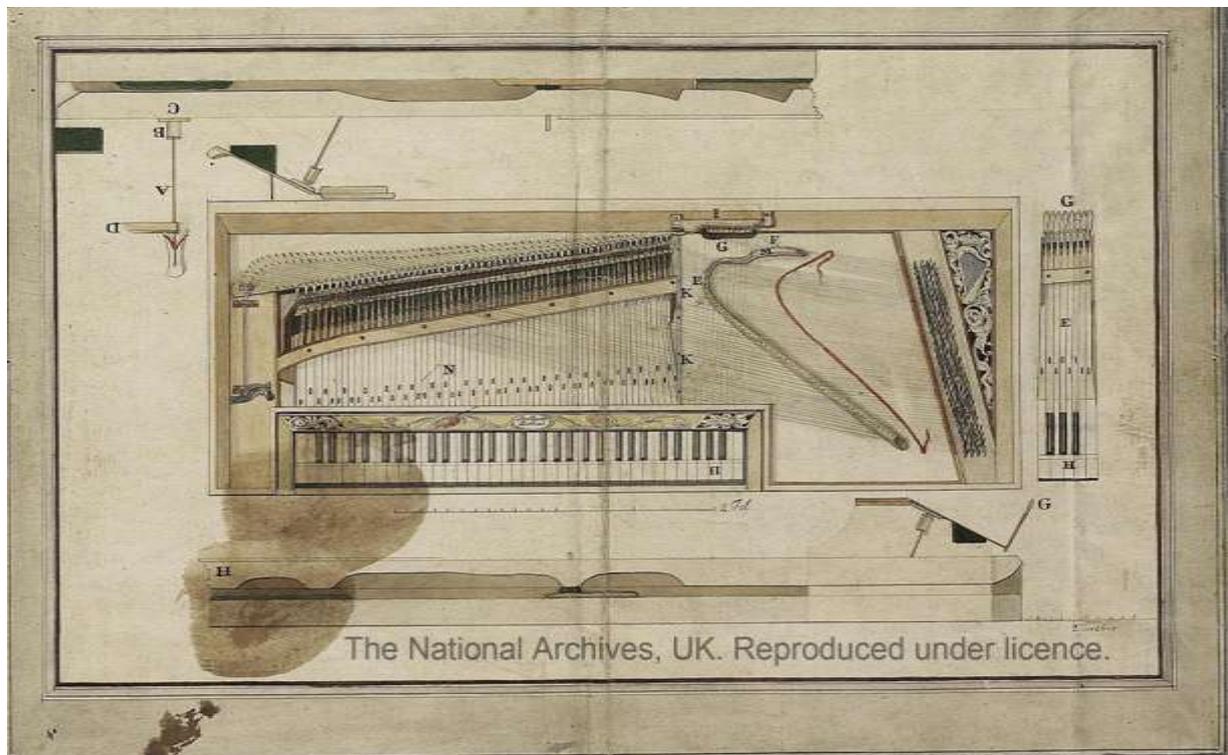
2. Patents

2.1 1794 Patent

William Southwell's Square Pianoforte Patent of 1794 (No. 2017)
The National Archives, UK, C210/47

Drawing

(First published in George S Bozarth and Margaret Debenham; 'Piano Wars: the Legal Machinations of London Pianoforte Makers, 1795-1806' in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* Vol. 42 (2009). London: Royal Musical Association, 56.)



Transcription of the Specification from the Patent Rolls

(Original line breaks indicated by '/')

Folio 1:

William Southwell Specification / of his invention / To all those to whom these
presents shall come / I William Southwell late of Great Marlborough / Street in the
City of Dublin in the Kingdom of Ireland but now / of Lad Lane London Musical
Instrument Maker Send Greeting / Whereas his most Excellent Majesty King George

the Third did / by his Royal Letters Patent under the Great Seal of Great Britain bearing / date at Westminster the Eighteenth day of October in the thirty fourth year of / his Reign gave and grant unto me the said William Southwell my Executors / Administrators and Assigns his said Majestys [sic] special license full power sole / privilege and Authority that I the said William Southwell my Executors / Administrators and Assigns and every of them by myself and themselves or by / my and their Deputy and Deputies Servants or Agents or such others as I / the said William Southwell my Executors Administrators or Assigns / should at any time agree with and no others from time to time and at all / times thereafter during the Term of fourteen years therein expressed / should and lawfully might make use Exercise and vend my Invention of / several Improvements in the construction of the musical Instruments called a / Piano Forte by which Improvements the Tones of such Instruments are / rendered more distinct and perfect and the Players playing on such / Instruments have a power to produce the Gradation of Tones from Piano to / Forte with Greater Effect than they were able at the then present to produce / the same and an additional number of Keys might be put to such / Instruments in a new manner upon a better construction than such Keys / could be put to Piano Fortes at the then present within that part of the / Kingdom of Great Britain called England the Dominion of Wales and / Town of Berwick upon Tweed in such manner as to me the said / William Southwell my Executors Administrators and Assigns or any of / them should in my or their Descretions [sic] seem meet In which said Letters / patent there is contained a provisoe [sic] that if I the said William Southwell / should not particularly describe and ascertain the nature of the said / Invention and in what manner the same was to be performed by an / Instrument in writing under my Hand and Seal and cause the same to / be enrolled in his Majestys [sic] High Court of Chancery within one Calendar / Month next and immediately after the Date of the said Letters patent / that then the said Letters Patent and all Libertys [sic] and Advantages / whatsoever thereby Granted should utterly cease determine and become void / and thing therein before contained to the Contrary thereof in any wise / notwithstanding as in and by the said Letters Patent Reference being / thereto had may more fully and at large appear / Now Know Ye that / in compliance with the said Provisoe and Letters patent I the said William / Southwell do hereby declare that the nature of the said Invention and / the manner in which the same is to be performed is particularly described / and ascertained as follows (that is to say) It consists first of

a new / mode of using the Dampers in Piano Fortes which new mode is as follows / a small wire marked A in the Drawing hereon written of the length of three /Inches [inserted:] a [then:] little more or less is at its Bottom screwed in a Button of wood / or other material marked B in the same Drawing about half an Inch high / little more or less which Button of wood is at its bottom Glewed [sic] or / otherwise fastened to a thin piece of Leather or other material and which / Leather or other material is at its bottom Glewed to the Key marked C / of the said Instrument near the Hammer End of such Key, the Damper / which is made of Wood or other material and lined with cloath [sic] or other/

Folio 2:

Material (but which Damper in itself is not new and the mode / of using which only is new) is fixed to the upper part of the wire / A This wire A passes between the Strings of each Separate note and / acts in a Slip of wood or Socket marked D which is fastened to / the Edges of the Back Block which Slip of wood or Socket has a / round hole covered with Leather (or other material) for the said / wire to act in so that the Damper is raised by the Act of playing / and the vibration is stopped by the Damper falling down on the / Strings by the weight of the Key. The Invention consists secondly in / a new manner of putting additional Keys to the treble of the /Instruments and upon a better construction than heretofore / used the additional Keys at that part of them where they are / touched and played upon by the finger of the performer / stand in the same line with the other Keys but they act in / another compartment of the Instrument under the Sounding / Board at E and occasion a new Order of Strings at F of / Hammers at G of Keys at H and of Pinblock at I these / Keys are Divided from the other Keys towards and at the / End thereof by a Partition under the Sounding Board. K. / they pass under, the Hole L is made in the Sounding Board /for the purpose of the Hammers which Strike the Strings / there freely playing up and down and the Bridge M over which /all the Strings of the said Instrument passes, is so constructed /as to carry both Orders of Strings and the Pinblock for such / Additional Strings is cut out of the back of the Instrument / for the purpose of not encroaching on the Sounding Board / The nature of this Invention and of these several Improvements / and in what manner the same are to be performed are / further particularly described and ascertained in and by / the Drawings or figures contained on this piece of parchment / and the Explanation and References above mentioned which refer /to the Drawings or figures – Letter A the

wire above mentioned / B the Button or piece of Wood, C the Key, D the Slip of Wood / or Socket which is fastened to the Pinblock, E Sounding Board, / F New Order of Strings, G Hammers, H Keys, I Pinblock, K / Sounding Board, L Hole, M the Bridge – The whole appearance / of the Instrument is drawn in the large Figure N.

In witness whereof /I the said William Southwell have hereunto set my hand and seal / the Third Day of November in the Year of our Lord one thousand / seven hundred and ninety-four /

Wm Southwell (L S)

And be it Remembered that on the same third day / of November in the year above written the aforesaid William Southwell /came before our Lord the King in His Chancery and acknowledged / the Specification aforesaid and all and every thing therein contained / in form above written. And also the Specification aforesaid was / stamped according to the tenor of the Statute in that case made / and provided –

Inrolled the Seventh day of / November in the year above written

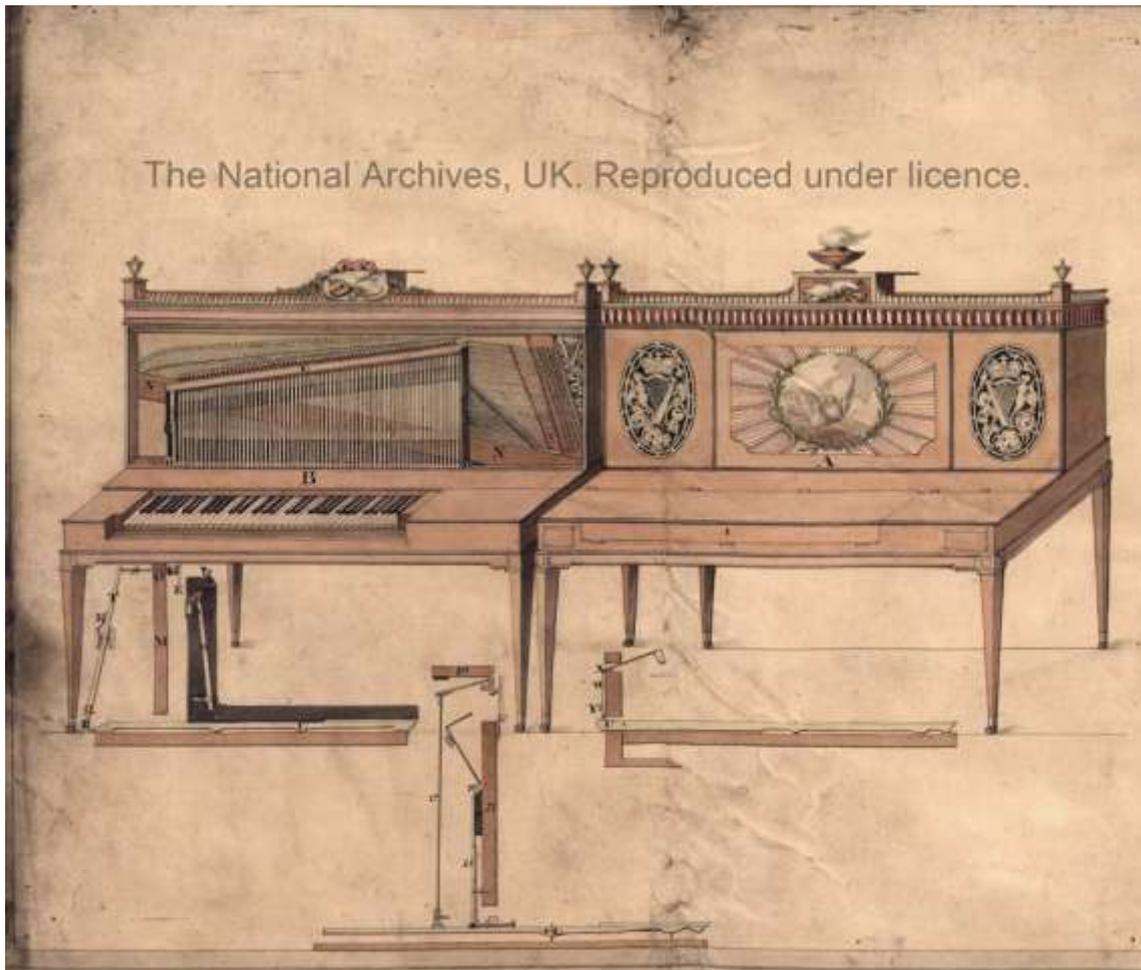
[In the left margin:] Jno Springer

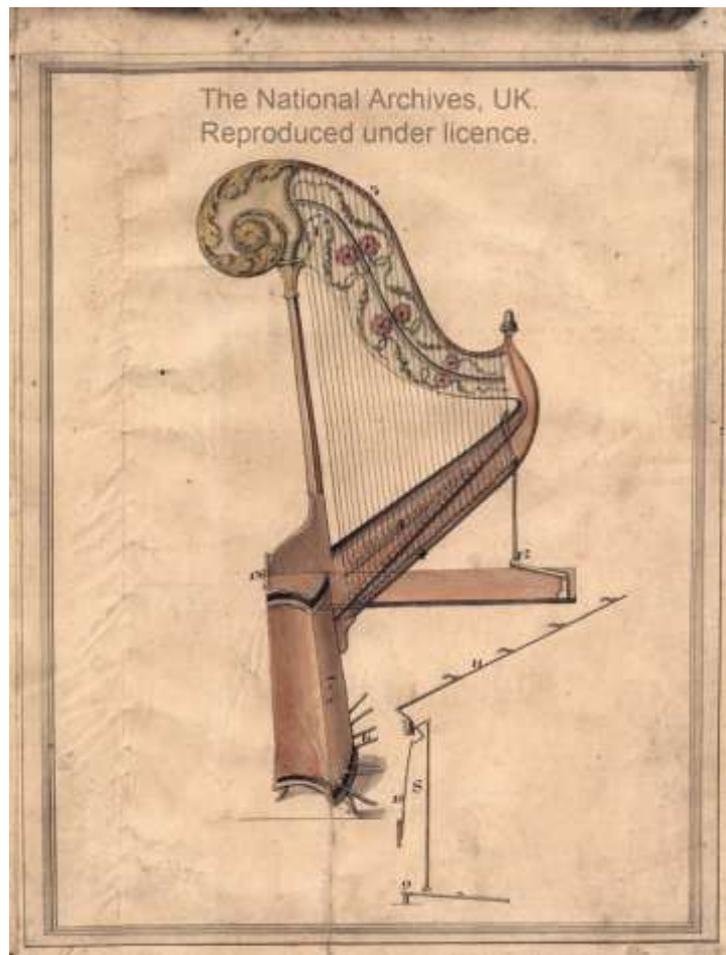
2.2 1798 Patent

**William Southwell's Square Pianoforte and Harp Patent of 1798
(No. 2264) The National Archives, UK, C217/90/3 and C210/65**

Patent Drawings, C210/65:

Pianoforte



Harp: Patent Drawing, C210/65**Signature and Seal of William Southwell on C217/90/3**

Transcription of the Specification

The National Archives, Kew: C217/90/3 – Original specification personally signed and sealed by William Southwell, dated 6 December 1798; text also repeated in the Patent Rolls, C210/65.

(Original line breaks are indicated by ‘/’)

To all to whom these presents shall come I William Southwell of Broad Court in the Parish of St Martin in the Fields in the County of Middlesex Musical Instrument–maker send Greeting Whereas His Most / Excellent Majesty King George the third Did by His Letters patent under the Great Seal of Great Britain bearing date at Westminster the eighth day of November in the thirty ninth year of His Reign Give and Grant unto the said William / Southwell His especial licence that I the said William Southwell during the term of years therein mentioned should and lawfully might use exercise and vend within England Wales and the Town of Berwick upon Tweed my Invention of / certain new improvements on the action and construction of Piano Fortes and other musical Instruments In which said Letters Patent there is contained a Proviso obliging me the said William Southwell by an instrument in Writing / under my hand and seal to cause a particular description of the nature of my said invention and in what manner the same is to be performed to be inrolled in His Majesty’s High Court of Chancery within one Calendar month next after the date of the / said recited Letters Patent as in and by the same (Relation being thereunto had) may more fully and at large appear Now know ye – that in compliance with the said proviso of the said William Southwell do hereby declare that my said Invention of certain / new improvements on the action and construction of Piano Fortes ~~ and other musical Instruments is described in the drawings hereunto annexed and the following description thereof as follows (that is to say) **A.** the Instrument at large **B** the section or front / view of the inside. **C.C.C** is a frame that the hammer and leader are fastened to which leader is fastened to the hammer with a leather joint or any other material by this means the leader so *[crossed out:]* constructed *[inserted:]* connected *[then:]* with the hammer has a tendency by its weight to bring back the hammer after the / stroke is given and for the convenience of putting on strings &c the before mentioned Frame **C.C.C.** turns down over the Keys with hinges marked **D.D.** a further description of the hammer and damper of the above instrument is described by a side view _ begin letter **E** which is

the / Key **F** is a button screw'd in the key to regulate the stroke of the hammer **.G.** the before mentioned leader to the Hammer **.H.** the socket for d.o
 _ **I** the hammer **.K** the strings it strikes **.L.** the damper _ **M.** a plank of wood [*inserted:*] about [*then:*] $\frac{3}{4}$ thick goes quite across the instrument under the strings – / and connects with the sound board _ **N.** in the above drawing is a piece of Wood glued over all on the direction of the strings which is intended as a further strength by this means a bottom or back is not necessary except to preserve the inside work. **O.** is where a hole is made for the / damper to go through **P.** is a button screw in the key and in its operation strikes against the wedge of the damper **Q** which gives its proper motion from the string **R** is a spring to bring it back _ **S.** is a small wire fastened to the lever **T.** _ a further description of a new method of adding / additional notes to square or Horizontal [*sic*] piano's [*sic*] _ the key is marked **U.** which goes through the back of the instrument where the letter **U.** is marked _ and raises a leader of wood **W.** which leader has a leather or other joint fastened at the tale [*sic*] end of the hammer **X.** and of such / a weight as to bring up the hammer without springs _ **Y** is a guide pin drove in the back and goes through a long hole in the leader _ Fig: 14 is the key of a new action of an upright piano _ 15 the leader to the hammer and hangs to it at fig 16 _ 17 is the leader to the / damper _ 18 is the damper which is hanged to the Belly piece _ 19 the Belly piece _ the strings 20 _ 21 the restpiece 22 is the piece where the hammers are fastened and Slides with the hammer to one string without the keys _ 23 is to slide forward to disengage it from the / hammer and by putting your feet on the peddal to raise the damper then you may take out the key as in common instruments _ description of a new invented harp _ described by fig: 1 is the Soundboard. 2 _ is the bridge _ which has holes board [*sic*] for the strings to / pass through and is board [*sic*] on a different direction so as to make the string fast in the whole _ 3 is a row of ivory pins for the string to fasten to _ 4 is the turning pins _ No 5 is the hooks connected with the mechanical work to produce the half notes _ 6 is the peddals [*sic*] / _ No 7 a door that opens to get to the springs and other parts of the iron work _ 8 is a sideview of the work of one peddal – 9 is where the end of the peddal turns on a centre to keep it to the half notes _ 10 a spring _ 11 is a streight [*sic*] bar or slip of brass where / the different cranks for producing the half notes is connected _ 12 is one key leader and hammer shewing the above may be played with Keys _ 13 is the centre of which the entire Keys &c^a turn round _ so as to play the harp as usual or can be taken off.

In witness whereof I the said William Southwell have hereunto set my hand and seal this sixth day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety eight

(Signed and Sealed) Wm Southwell

Taken and Acknowledged by the above named William Southwell this sixth day of December 1798 at the Public Office, before me John Simeon

Transcription of the Specification

Text as given in the specification printed by George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode (1856).

(Original line breaks indicated by ‘/’)

Pianofortes

SOUTHWELL'S SPECIFICATION

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME, I, WILLIAM
/ SOUTHWELL, of the City of Dublin, Musical Instrument Maker, send
greeting. / **WHEREAS** His most Excellent Majesty King George the Third
did, by / His Letters Patent under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom of
Great / Britain and Ireland, bearing date at Westminster, the Eighth day of
April, / in the forty-seventh year of His reign, give and grant unto me, the said
/ William Southwell, my exors [executors], admors [administrators], and
assigns, His especial license, full power, / sole privilege and authority, that I,
the said William Southwell, my / exors, admors, and assigns, during the term
of years therein mentioned, should / and lawfully might make, use, exercise,
and vend, within England, Wales, / and the Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, my
Invention of “**Certain Improve– / ments on a Pianoforte, which is so**
Constructed as to Prevent the Possibility / of its being so frequently
Out of Tune as Pianofortes now generally are, and / which he
denominates a Cabinet Pianoforte;” in which said Letters Patent / there
is contained a proviso obliging me, the said William Southwell, by an /
instrument in writing under my hand and seal, to cause a particular descript–
/ tion of the nature of my said Invention, and in what manner the same is to
be / performed, to be enrolled in His Majesty’s High Court of Chancery within
one / calendar month after the date of the said recited Letters Patent, as in
and by / the same, relation being thereunto had, may more fully and at large
appear. / **NOW KNOW YE**, that in compliance with the said proviso, **I**, the
said / William Southwell, do hereby declare that my said Invention, and the /
manner in which the same is to be carried into effect and practice, / are
described as followeth, that is to say:—

In Fig. 1 of the Drawing hereunto annexed, A, B, denotes one of the / wires of a pianoforte standing upright or nearly so; C, E, is a damper, having / its face at E in contact with the wire by virtue or in consequence of the action / of the small wedge piece D against a projection or protuberance on the back / of the said damper, which would otherwise hang perpendicularly by reason of / the liberty of motion allowed by the hinge joint at C; F is the head of the / hammer to be applied in striking the said wire; G is a block or stop against / which the hammer bears slightly, when in the state of repose, by the action of / a tender spring R; H is the place of contact between the connecting rod / L, H, and the tail of the hammer; I is a small block or piece glued or fixed / to the connecting rod, and serving to support the wedge piece D by means of / a tail of wire bent to right angle, and screwed or driven in to the side of the / wedge D; K, shews, by a side view, one of a sett [*sic*] of small round wooden / pins, covered with leather, between which the connecting rod plays easily, / while it is prevented from flying out of its place or receding from the string / by the outer end of a central wire, which, being screwed into the center of each / wooden pin, and is bended to a right angle and turned on one side over the / said rod; L, M, is a short lever moveable on its hinge or joint at M as to the / block S, and upon which said lever the rod L, H, stands, and is connected / therewith by a facing of leather glued to both, so as to serve as a joint / towards L; N is the grasshopper, constructed as usual, and O, P, is the key, / both which are drawn merely for the purpose of elucidating my present / description, since the same do not constitute any part of my said improvements. / In the said Fig. 1, all the parts are shewn in the state of repose. / In Fig. 2, where the same parts are denoted by the same letters, the key is / represented as pressed down, whereby the inner extremity of the same is / raised. The end of the grasshopper hath pressed up the connecting rod *l*, *h*, / which, by its pressure on the tail of the hammer, hath caused it to give the / stroke; and, at the same time, the wedge piece *d* hath risen and permitted the / damper *e, e*, to fall into the perpendicular position and leave the string at / liberty to vibrate on receiving the stroke. But on return of the key to its / former position of repose, as in Fig. 1, the hammer moves back to its position / against G, and the wedge piece D descends and presses the damper closely / against the wire.

Fig. 3 shews the same parts a little separated from each, in order that / the respective forms may be better seen and understood. / And I do properly place, dispose, and secure all the said parts, C, D, E, F, / G, H, I, J, K, L, M, and S, in a square frame movable on a joint or hinge at / bottom, so that its upper part shall be capable of advancing or receding with / respect to the wires or strings; and I do cause the said frame to continue (by / means of a spring) in the position necessary to keep the dampers and hammers / at the due distance for action, as herein-before described, excepting when the / dampers are to be thrown out of action, and in that case I press the said / frame to the due distance by means of a pedal regulated by a stop, and / constructed for that use and purpose.

And I do further declare, that from the situation or relative position of the / parts and apparatus herein-before described, I have rendered it unnecessary / to make any opening or perforation between the sound board and the pin / block or upper bridge, and that I do accordingly make the sound board of the / instrument entire, and without any longitudinal hole or perforation, as is / usually done, and that, in consequence of the said last-mentioned improve- / ment, the structure of the instrument becomes much more firm and unchange- / able, and the wires, being more effectually supported, are not so frequently out / of tune as happens in instruments of the common constructions.

In witness whereof, I, the said William Southwell, have hereunto set my / hand and seal, the Fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord One / thousand eight hundred and seven.

Wm SOUTHWELL. (L.S.)

AND BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the Fifth day of May, in the year / of our Lord 1807, the aforesaid William Southwell came before our said Lord / the King in His Chancery, and acknowledged the Specification aforesaid, and / all and everything therein contained and specified, in form above written. / And also the Specification aforesaid was stampd according to the tenor of the / Statute made for that purpose.

Inrolled the Fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord One thousand / eight hundred and seven.

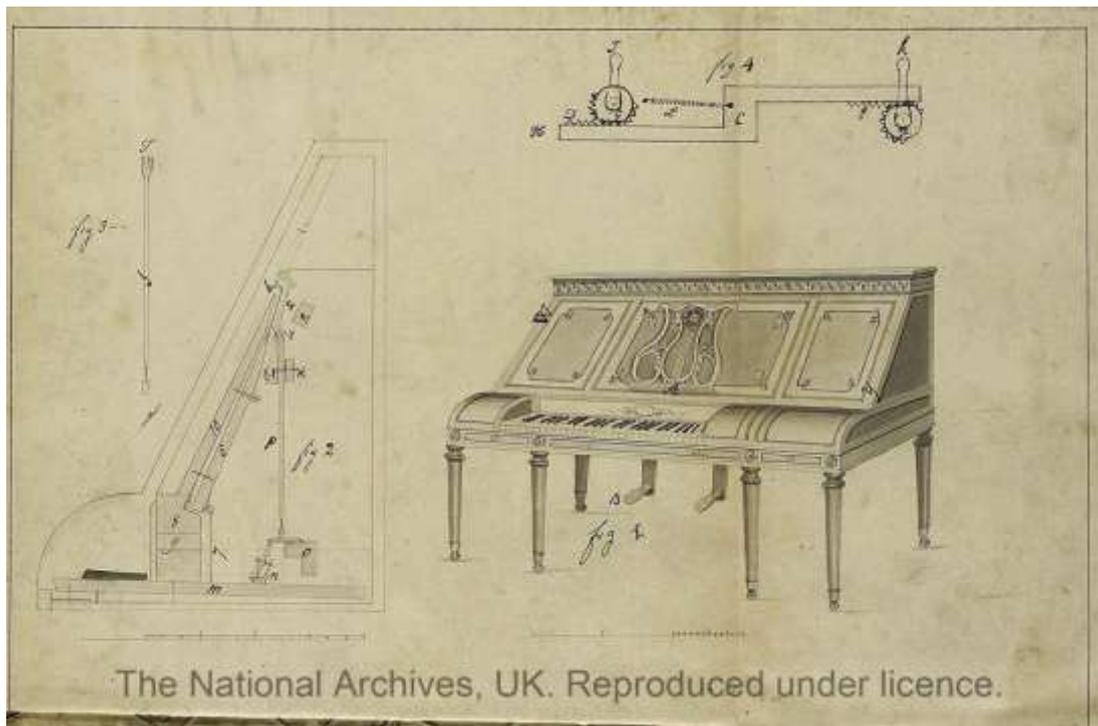
LONDON:

Printed by George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode
Printers to the Queen's most Excellent Majesty. 1856.

2.4 1811 Patent

William Southwell's Pianoforte Patent of 1811 (No. 3403) The National Archives, UK, C54/8881

Patent Drawing



Transcription

Transcription of the Specification from the Patent Rolls

(Original line breaks indicated by '/')

Folio 1

To all to whom *these presents shall come* / I William Southwell of Gresse
Street Rathbone Place / in the County of Middlesex piano forte maker send

greeting / Whereas his most excellent Majesty King George the / third did by
his letters patent under the Great Seal of / the United Kingdom bearing date
at Westminster the fourth / day of March in the fifty first year of our reign give
and / grant unto me the said William Southwell my exors / Admors and
Assigns his especial licence full [*inserted:*] power [*then:*] sole privilege / and
authority that I the said William Southwell my / exors admors and assigns
should and lawfully might / during the term of years therein mentioned make
use / exercise and vend within England Wales and the town / of Berwick upon
Tweed my invention of certain / improvements in the construction of a piano
forte / In which said Letters patent there is contained a proviso / obliging me
the said William Southwell by an / Instrument in writing under my hand and
seal to / cause a particular description of the nature of my said / invention and
in what manner the same is to be / be [*sic*] performed to be enrolled in his
Majesty's high / Court of Chancery within two calendar months / after the
date of the said writed letters patent as in / and by the same relation being
thereunto had may / more fully and at large appear Now know ye that / in
compliance with the said proviso I the said / William Southwell do hereby
declare that the / nature of my said invention and in what manner / the same
is to be performed are described and ascert- / ained by the drawings hereunto
annexed and the / following description that is to say -----

Fig 1 is the drawing of the Instrument and as / portability is one of its
improvements I shall first / state its size which may be varied according to /
circumstances – the height from the ground to the / top four foot six inches
the width five foot five / inches or thereabouts the depth only one foot / seven
inches the depth at top being no more than / about four inches gives
advantages that no other / instrument is possessed of from its oblique shape /
the advantages to the performer must be evident / the front of the Instrument
being so much away / from the face and the music Desk at Letter A at all /
times in a proper position to receive the book and with / a simple contrivance
hereafter described with the pedal / at the left foot B can turn down or up at
pleasure / The Book keepers by means of a plate of brass or other / material
marked C – fig four and at each end D E. Teeth / are cut to act on the two
wheels F & G which are / cut in teeth to fit the others and by means of about /

half an inch a straight motion which is produced by /

Folio 2

Pedal B fig 1 by the end of a lever or levers as / commonly used in pedal work pressing against Letter / H consequently the book keepers J K which are / connected with the wheels will turn out of the way / and by means of a spring L will return back when / you take your foot from the pedal . this work to / be fastened to the inside under rail of music desk / A. Fig 2 is the side view of the movement on one / key letters m n are key and grass hopper as / usual but I shall describe all parts new and old the / better to be understood Letter O the rail for levers / which in the action of the key raise a slender / conducting rod P which moves the hammer *[inserted:]* 2 *[then:]* the / string and when it returns back rests on a tail / R S is another view of the rod P. fig 3 It having / on its end at T a fork of wood covered with leather / or other soft material which fork on that end of / rod is made to fit the tail of the hammer at / U for the purpose of keeping it steady the / bottom end is screwed in a button as usual as / described in drawing fig 3 the damper which is / entirely new in its application I shall describe / with figures beginning first with fig 5, which / damper is made of wood and moves on a *[illegible word: ? centre]* / similar to a key as described in drawing fig 2 / a slender wire screwed in the end and on the / wire a bit of wood with soft cloth or other fit / material fastened to it which *[illegible word: ? comes]* against the / strings fig 6. The motion given to the damper / when playing is by a wire fig 7 with a bit of / wood at the upper end of the said wire being / driven into the Key gives as much motion as / is necessary to the damper when playing and / without adding any perceivable difference to the / weight of the Key. Figures 8.9 is a piece or / pieces of wood at the front of the Instrument / behind the name board for the purpose of / strength and also figure 10 is a board half an / inch thick or thereabouts which is fastened in / from the belly to the base and covers the / space from the long block down to the name / board leaving an opening only for hammer / and damper to pass through as described and / about one quarter of an inch from the string by / these advantages the instrument has much more / strength than other instruments and with thinner / wood consequently stands better in tune, the / new improvements and advantages are in / figure 1 and Letter A

the case and at fig 4 / letters C D E F G H J K L at figure 2 Letter / U and figures 5.6.7.8.9.10 and at figure / 3 letter T the last or case string takes its / direction [*inserted:*] from [*then:*] about W to Y and continues in same / manner as usual in other Instruments and its / oblique shape make it extremely convenient for / the tuner and putting on strings C+ C+. fig 2 / X is a slip of wood commonly called a ruler / lined with cloth or other soft material as / usual for the purpose of keeping the conducting / rod from flying back in playing C+ C+ the / ruler is fastened on in any way most convenient / so as to be easily and simply taken off it should / likewise take the same direction as the hammer / tail Z which is 3 or 4 inches or thereabouts / lower in the treble than the base [*sic*] In Witness / whereof I the said William Southwell have / hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty / ninth day of April in the Year of our Lord / one thousand eight hundred and eleven

William Southwell

[In margin] *Steele*

And be it remembered that on the twenty / ninth day of April in the year of our Lord 1811 / the aforesaid William Southwell came before our / said Lord the King in his chancery and acknow- / leged the specification aforesaid [*crossed through:*] and all and every thing / therein contained and specified in form above / written [*then:*] And also the specification aforesaid was / first duly stampd according to the tenor of the / statute made for that purpose.-----

Inrolled the thirtieth day of April in the year of / our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eleven

did by his letters patent under the / Great Seal of [*deleted:*] Great
 Britain [*then:*] that part of the United / Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland
 called England / bearing date at Westminster the fifth day of April in / the
 second year of his reign give and grant unto / the said William Southwell my
 Exors admors and assigns / his especial licence full power sole privilege and /
 authority that I the said William Southwell my exors / admors and assigns
 during the term of years therein / mentioned should and lawfully might make
 use exercise / and vend within England Wales and the Town of / Berwick
 upon Tweed my Invention of certain Improvements / on Cabinet Piano Fortes
 In which said Letters Patent / there is contained a proviso that if I the said
 William / Southwell shall not particularly describe and ascertain the / nature
 of my said Invention and in what manner the / same is to be performed by an
 Instrument in Writing / under my hand and seal and cause the same to / be
 inrolled [*sic*] in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery / within two Calendar
 Months next and immediately after / the date of the said Letters patent that
 then the / said Letters patent and all liberties and advantages / whatsoever
 thereby granted shall utterly cease determine / and become void as in and by
 the same relation being / thereunto had may more fully and at large appear.
 Now know ye that in compliance with the said / proviso I the said William
 Southwell do hereby declare / that the nature of my said Invention and the
 manner / in which the same is performed are particularly / described and
 ascertained in and by the drawings / hereunto annexed and the following
 description thereof / that is to say -----

The drawing is composed of all the different parts / of the action of one Key
 and as numbers of the / said part are not new it is only necessary to mark / the
 distinction by specifying the new parts only-----

Note: At this point the patent drawing is inserted into the Patent Roll, rather
 than being included separately, as is the case for the 1794, 1798 and 1811
 Southwell patents

Folio 2

First --- Letter A. marked on the plan or / Drawing is a sticker in front similar
 in appearance / to those in other Cabinet Piano fortes but very / preferable in

its advantages as it can be taken off and / put on in an instant by means of a small Screw and / steady pin which fixes it to the butt of the Hammer at / B going through a small piece of wood at C which / piece of wood and the sticker A are connected together / by a single leather joint, the said sticker A has at its / upper end a small [*deleted:*] space left [*then:*] part left square about / the sixteenth part of an inch which raises the / Hammer up with greater powers when power is given / to the key, there must be a small piece of cloth / or other soft substance in that part as in the / Drawing to prevent noise D. is a back sticker one / quarter of an Inch from the strings a little more / or less and on the end is put leather or other soft / material to prevent noise in raising the Damper E / at the same end is glued a block of wood F / to receive a wire G which is turned square at the / upper end to raise the check lever H, the said wire / works in a socket I to keep it steady and to / prevent noise it must be bushed with a soft / material the lower end rests as a dead weight on / the key guided by a rack or socket in the [*deleted:*] lower [*then:*] / leaver rail K with a piece of cloth or leather / stretched along the leaver rail it may be either / tacked or glued. ----- Another piece of the same / stretched along the top of the round pins L / with a fine tack in each of the said pins they / must be glued in round holes made in the / said Rail ----- When the key is put in / motion it raises the chock lever H and puts / down the other end of the check M and / receives the end of the hammer after the stroke / is given which completely prevents the hammer / from doubleing [*sic*] or rebounding against the strings / the said hammers may be longer than what / can be used in any other Cabinet Piano Fortes / by that means the blow is most powerfull [*sic*] / and clear ----- Letter N is a Ruler / going from side to side of the Instrument / and fastens to the uprights at each side by / bolts hooks and eyes or in any more convenient / manner so as to take off and on with ease / the said Ruler should have an Iron Bar either / back or front or any other method that may be / lighter to keep it from altering there should be / endwood groved [*sic*] in along the ruler where is to / receive a wire and is the [Illegible word: ? center] that the catch / acts upon -----the hole must be bushed / with cloth or other suitable material leather and / small wires screwed or otherwise fastened in at as / many parts are found necessary with a small / turn at the end to keep down the wire in the / grove [*sic*] which is

marked O in the drawing P. / is a piece of Lead to keep the lever always /
down at that end, the said lever to be three / eighths of an inch or thereabouts
wide which / leaves room for the fastenings between them / although in the
above description I have mentioned / certain sizes shapes and materials yet I
do not / confine myself as these may be varied at the / pleasure of the
workman and any other /
substituted that will effect the same end

In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand / and seal the fourth day of
May in the year / of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and twenty one.

-----*Wm. Southwell*-----

In margin: *Campbell*.

And be it remembered that on / the fourth day of May in the year of our /
Lord 1821. the aforesaid William Southwell came / before our said Lord the
King in his Chancery / and acknowledged the Specification aforesaid and / all
and every thing therein contained and specified / in form above written and
also the specification / aforesaid was stamped according to the tenor of / the
Statute made for that purpose-----

Inrolled the fourth day of / June in the year of our Lord / One thousand eight
hundred and / twenty one.

Transcription of the Abridged Specification

(Original line breaks indicated by '/')

A.D. 1837, August 24.—No 7424

SOUTHWELL, William.—“Improvement in pianofortes.”

The invention is applicable to grand, semi-grand, and square / Pianofortes. It consists in the introduction of a moveable tongue / with a spring into the butt of the hammer, the effect of which is / to enable the performer “ to repeat the blow with greater facility, / “ and thus to improve the touch in playing.” A second spring, / acting as a semi-check, prevents the hammer from rebounding / after a slight stroke and thus injuring the tone. When the / hammer is struck hard, the tongue spring holds it so as to enable / the player to repeat the blow without the necessity of the key / rising more than half the usual height.

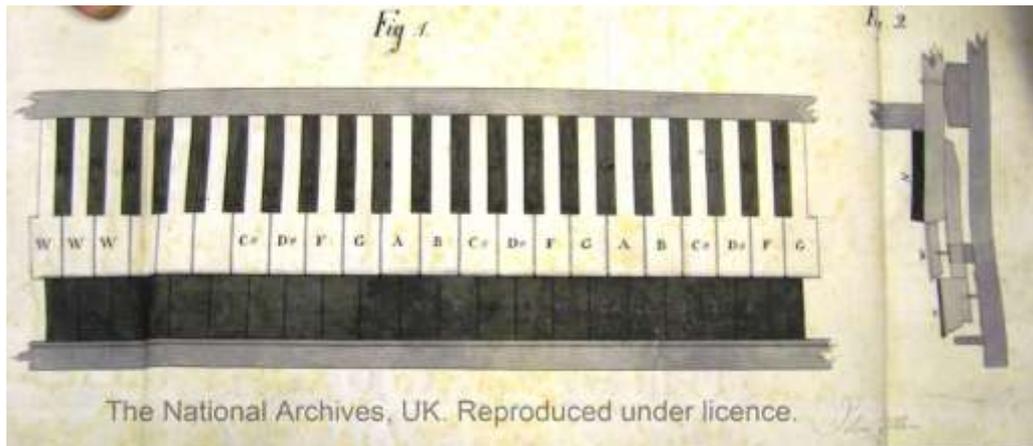
[Printed, 10*d.* Drawings. London Journal (*Newton's*), vol.14 (*conjoined series*), p.6.]

Abridged specification of William Southwell Junior's patent No 7424 (August 24 1837) in B. Woodcroft (1871) *Patents for Inventions. Abridgements of Specifications related to Music and Musical instruments A.D. 1694–1866*, 2nd Edition (London: Commissioner of Patents for Inventions).

2.7 1811 John Trotter Patent

John Trotter's Pianoforte Patent of 1811 (No. 3404)
The National Archives, UK, C54/8887

Patent Drawing



Document photographed by Robert and Vivien Southwell

Patent Description

The National Archives, UK. Reproduced under licence.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>The 12 buttons or regular notes in one range</i>	C	C _♯	D	D _♯	E	F	F _♯	G	G _♯	A	A _♯	B
<i>The common old arrangement of the keys in two ranges</i>	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C _♯	D _♯	E _♯	F _♯	G _♯
<i>The invention or my arrangement of the keys in 2 ranges</i>	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G

By which disposition of uniformly elevated keys in two distinct ranges every one and one note taken as a fundamental or key note together with the two succeeding notes ascending in the same range of keys and the five succeeding notes ascending in the other range and the octave to all the said notes comprising all the notes of that key in the major mode. And the same certain key note together with the one succeeding note ascending in the same range of keys and the five succeeding notes ascending in the other range and the octave to all the said notes comprising all the ascending notes of that key in the minor mode – by which constant uniformity it may be said that there are but one key shape and one key name to be learnt instead of 12 Keys Major and 12 Keys Minor as heretofore a very simplifying to the pupil.

John Trotter

Document photographed by Robert and Vivien Southwell

2.8 1831 W. Dettmer Patent (No. 5548) from *The London Journal* (1831)

No. XXXVIII [Second Series]

Original Communications

III.- ON W. DETTMER'S PATENT PIANOFORTE AND HARMONIC TEMPERAMENT

To the Editor of *the London Journal of Arts*

SIR, - As a lover of music, I am induced to request the favour of your inserting a few observations upon the above subjects in your valuable publication. The deficiency of all musical instruments, with fixed notes, to express the true sounds of the diatonic scale, especially in modulating from one key to another, has been universally observed, and generally complained of by practical musicians. In respect of wind instruments, such as trumpets, clarinets, flutes, &c. the uneven intonation produced by the almost unmanageable variation of the impetus and weight of wind given by the performer, adds greatly to the obvious inherent defect of these instruments; but in keyed musical instruments, having a regular blast of wind, such as the organ, the separate notes of which can be tuned through its octaves upon a system of harmonic temperament according to the skill and inclination of a practised operator, the defects of fixed notes may be nearly obviated.

The pianoforte and similar keyed instruments having fixed sounds, capable of being separately tuned, so as to exhibit an equal temperament throughout all its octaves, may (as well as the organ with twelve semi-tones or keys in each octave) be sufficiently well tuned for the practical purposes of the most delicate ear.

I have carefully attended to the effects of Mr, Loeschman's, and of other attempts to remedy the supposed defects of the scale of twelve semi-tones, without the least reference to the difficulty of execution, or the great cost of introducing additional tones, and am satisfied that upon a good system of tuning, there is produced a more agreeable sensation to the mind by the admixture of the major and minor concords upon a twelve-keyed instrument, than can be effected by increasing the number of the tones or keys, so as to represent all the actual sharps and flats of the scale.

All the instruments I have heard, with a large additional number of tones in the octave, are monotonous; the several keys and all the chords minor as well as major being equally harmonious; the modulation from one key to another is perfectly insipid. However good the supposed improvements may be in theory, practical musicians have not supported them, and after years of trial from Lord Stanhops's time, they have only served to elucidate the theorems of the philosopher.

It will be obvious from the foregoing observations, that the great advantage of the organ and piano forte over other instruments, having twelve fixed sounds to express all the note, that is rather all the natural flats and sharps that occur in the

octave is, that the several sounds (viz the pipes and strings giving the twelve semi-tones) can be separately and individually tuned, so as to form a combined system of temperament, producing the most pleasing effect to the ear. If that adjustment or temperament is altered to become unequal through the several octaves, the instrument ceases to be in good tune, although many of the chords taken may not be harsh to the ear, many others will become insufferable. Now the supposed improvement in Mr. Dettmer's patent, which is described as enabling the piano forte, "after having been properly tuned to be brought into unison with other instruments of a different pitch, by raising or lowering the tone of all its strings by a simple operation, instead of the trouble of tuning each string separately," is, in my humble judgment, any thing but an advantage, so far as the evenness of the adjustment or temperament is concerned. The patent is I believe worked by Mr. Tomkisson, the pianoforte maker, of Dean-street; at least I have there seen several instruments precisely answering the description of Mr. Dettmer's improvement. I have examined the effect of altering the tension of the wires "by simply moving the adjusting screws of the tension bars," by which means the blocks carrying the pegs are brought into a new position. The whole body of the strings is thus made sharper or flatter as may be required; and I candidly acknowledge, that this alteration of the general pitch of the instrument is a great accomodation to singers who understand little of music, and cannot alter their pitch so as to sing a piece in a different key to that written, or to others who are so highly finished in the art, and well gifted with accompanying hauteur, that they will not alter their pitch to the instrument and expect (as Madame Cantalini did) that an entire band should rather accompany their sweet voices in a different key to that in which the music is written, than accommodate their "song divine" to the pitch of the band.

Mr Dettmer's improvement is also accomodation to accompanying instruments, with fixed tones, which are themselves worse tuned than the piano after its new patent adjustment; and I will acknowledge that the instrument after such an adjustment, is not altogether out of tune, when any note is merely sounded with its octave. But the temperament of the instrument is altered in its several distinct octaves, and the adjustment of such equal temperament no longer continues the same throughout the entire scale of the instrument. This is a defect which may be remedied by the making of separate moving blocks to the several octaves.

It is therefore evident that the defect of unequal temperament is inherent in Mr. Dettmer's moveable block, for it gives an equal or nearly equal tension or relaxation of the strings throughout the instrument, although the bass strings are three to six times longer than a treble octave. By this operation, not only is the tension of strings altered unequally throughout the several octaves, but the same length is added or subtracted to or from the longest and shortest strings, to the evident disarrangement of the previous adjustment of the temperament in tuning.

I trust these few observations may prove conducive to the amelioration of Mr. Dettmer's ingenious invention, and not be unacceptable to such readers of your Journal as may feel interested in improvements connected with the delightful science of music.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours, &c.,

F.L.S.

Isleworth, April, 1831.

(*The London Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 1831. Vol. VII [Second Series].

London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper, 57-61.

3. Musical Associates

3.1 Adam Walker (1731–1821) and his patent ‘Celestina stop’

Timeline

1731 Adam Walker was born in Windermere, Westmoreland, one of a large family of restricted means.¹ Destined for greater things, he was to become an inventor and philosophic lecturer.

1772 Walker took out a patent for a ‘celestina stop’ for use with harpsichords, which he licensed to the firm of Shudi and Broadwood.² An extract from his patent reads:

The Celestina is a keyed instrument, shaped like a harpsichord, with one, two or more wire or catgut strings to a note. The tone is produced from those strings by one or more threads or bands of silk, flax, wire, gut, hair, leather . . . and the said threads or bands are kept circulating above or under the strings by a weight, spring, or traddle [sic], and being pressed 3–5 when in this motion against the strings by means of the keys . . . said thread or threads produce tones from strings as the bow of a violin.³

He was living in Manchester at the time of the filing of the patent for the Celestina.⁴ His connections with Dublin included membership of the Dublin Society beginning in 1770 and honorary membership of the same organization beginning in 1783, after he had moved to London.⁵

1783 An advertisement, placed in London in 1783 by D. (Daniel) and J. Walker, ‘Patentees for the Celestina Stop,’ described the invention thus:

The effects this Improvement produce on the Harpsichord, are, a continuation of tone, swell and diminuendo [sic], with the Piano and Forte by the pressure of the finger; hence the grand effects of the Organ, with the delicacy of the Musical Glasses, or Viol d’Amor are given to the Harpsichord, and a degree of musical expression superior to most instruments. It has the most enchanting effect as an accompaniment to the voice in pathetic or sentimental singing. It can be introduced as a solo instrument in the middle movements of Harpsichord Concertos, giving a pleasing relief to the ear with the most striking contrast.⁶

- 1789 His son Adam John Walker was born in Newry, County Armagh, in 1789.
- 1821 Adam Walker died.⁷ He was buried in Hayes churchyard. He executed his will on 13 June 1820 and it was proved in London 5 April 1821.⁸
- 1824 Describing the design of the Celestina after his father's death, Deane Franklin Walker, explained that the 'thread of silk' was 'touched with resin dissolved in spirit of wine' and that 'the keys being touched, the jacks, with small brass wheels on them, press the revolving silk against the wires, and thus draw out their tones the two ends of the silk band [being] finely sewed together'.⁹

¹ According to his obituary – see note 6.

² David Wainwright, *Broadwood by Appointment*. London: Quiller Press, 1982, 53 –55; Michael Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 93.

³ Extract given by Rosamond E. M. Harding, *The Piano-Forte*, 1933, 366.

⁴ *The Mechanic's Magazine, Museum, Register, Journal and Gazette* 46 (1,231), 13, March 1847, 260.

⁵ Samuel Watson, *The Gentleman's and Citizen's Almanack* [Dublin, 1770], 78, and [Dublin, 1783], 96.

⁶ *The Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* (736), 8 March 1783, 1.

⁷ His obituary, written by Sylvanus Urban, appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* Vol. XCI, February 1821, 182-3.

⁸ The National Archives, Kew, Prob 11/1642.

⁹ Deane Franklin Walker, 'Account of Mr. Walker's New Musical Instrument Called the Celestina,' *The Glasgow Mechanics' Magazine* 21, 22 May, 1824, 32.

3.2 John Watlen (1764–1833)

Music Seller and Musical Instrument Manufacturer:

Timeline

- 1764 John Watlen was born.¹
- 1780s He was employed by the music publishers Corri & Sutherland in Edinburgh during the 1780s.²
- 1796 By this year he was in business at 34, North Bridge-street Edinburgh, in partnership with one Stephen Moore. From this address he advertised:
- '... some very fine PIANOFORTES, with the New Invented Patent Springs, by the celebrated Stephen Moore'.³
- The partnership was short lived. A newspaper announcement of its dissolution appeared on 12 November 1796 – but with the address now given as No. 27, South Bridge.⁴ Moore placed an advert on his own account from 27, South Bridge in March 1797.⁵
- 1797 4 March 1797, John Watlen married Mary Megget, daughter of 'the late Archibald Megget, writer' in Edinburgh.⁶
- 1798 An auction sale of Watlen's bankrupt stock was advertised in Edinburgh.⁷
- 1800–1805 By this year he had moved south to London and started up again in business as a music seller and publisher, first at 3, Upper James-street, Golden Square; then at 19, Tavistock-street, Covent Garden.⁸

- 1806–1818 By 1806 he had changed address again to, 5, Leicester Place, Leicester Square where he remained until 1818.
- 1811 He purchased the manufacturing rights for William Southwell's 1811 patent for a 'pianoforte sloping backwards', which he marketed in subsequent years as the 'oblique pianoforte'.
- 1818 At this time his showrooms moved to 13, Leicester Place.
- 1819 He advertised the address of his manufactories as Nos. 13 and 58, Castle-street, mentioning that his workshops were supervised by William Southwell.⁹
- 1825 William Southwell died.
- 1827 John Watlen once more became bankrupt.¹⁰
- 1830 It appears he must have subsequently entered into partnership with a relative (possibly his son), since an announcement of the dissolution of the partnership of John Watlen and Alexander Ramsay Watlen of 28, Leicester Square was announced in *The London Gazette* on 1 January 1830.¹¹
- 1833 John Watlen died, aged sixty nine years, and was buried in the Church of St Anne's, Westminster, 2 October 1833. His address is given as 13, Leicester Place.¹²

¹ His year of birth calculated back from his age at date of death in 1833.

² Ian Maxted, *Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History*.

³ *The Edinburgh Advertiser*, 12 July 1796, 27.

⁴ *The Edinburgh Advertiser*, 12 November 1796, 330.

⁵ *The Edinburgh Advertiser*, 10 March 1797, 154. It seems Moore's business failed quite quickly and he returned to London, where he is found imprisoned for debt in the Fleet prison in 1801.

'Stephen Moore, formerly of St. Martin's Lane, in the County of Middlesex, afterwards of the South Bridge, Edinburgh, North Britain, and last of Bull Court, Upper Ground Street, near Black Fryars [sic] Bridge, in the County of Surrey, Musical Instrument Maker.' (*The London Gazette* (15382) 4 July 1801, 765.

⁶ Volume 5. The Register of Marriages. (Marriage) Midlothian: Edinburgh - Register of Marriages, 1751–1800 (accessed via ancestry.co.uk, 19 June 2013).

⁷ *The Edinburgh Advertiser*, 17 July 1798, 39.

⁸ Ian Maxted – see note 2.

⁹ *The Morning Chronicle*, 28 January 1819, 1.

¹⁰ *The London Gazette* (18359), 8 May 1827, 1018; and (18396), 14 September 1827, 1945.

¹¹ *The London Gazette* (18642), 1 January 1830, 9.

¹² Parish register of St Anne's, Westminster, 1833.

3.3 Stephen Moore Pianoforte maker, 1772 - 1803:

Timeline

- 1772 Stephen Moore (son of William and Elizabeth) was baptised on 20 December 1772 at Collier's Rents Independent Church, White Street, Southwark, according to an original entry recorded in the church register (RG4/4145, retrieved from Ancestry 30 January 2021)
- 1787 He was apprenticed to Francis Fane Broderip (of Longman & Broderip) on 12 March 1787 (IR1/33, retrieved from Ancestry, 30 January 2021)

[This evidence provides information that supersedes that previously reported by in 'Piano Wars' (2009) Bozarth and Debenham citing the published transcript of a database entry drawn from the records of the Spectacle Makers [London Livery] Company, that named the apprentice in question as 'William Moore, son of Stephen. Panton Street, Tailor'.]

- 1791 An entry in the marriage register of the parish of St James, Westminster records the marriage of one Stephen Moore, a minor, to Elizabeth Beake with permission of his father, William Moore - this being legally necessary in the case of minors. William Moore (presumably his father) and 'E Moore' were witnesses to the marriage.

In accordance with the Marriage Act of 1753, after this date all marriage ceremonies had to be conducted by a minister in a parish church or chapel of the Church of England to be legally binding. It required religious non-conformists and Catholics to be married in Anglican churches. For this reason it would not have been possible for Stephen to marry at Collier's Rents.

(See also 1801 for another marriage possibility and 1803 for information on Stephen Moore's will).

- 1796 On 12 July 1796 John Watlen placed an advertisement in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* stating that he had for sale 'some very fine PIANO FORTES with the New Invented Patent Springs, by the celebrated Stephen Moore.'

If, as was the norm at that time, he had served his full apprenticeship term of seven years, Moore would have been due to complete his apprenticeship in 1794. This advertisement provides evidence that by 1796 he had left London and gone into partnership with Watlen in Edinburgh. However, a notice placed in the name of both men and in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* on 12 November 1796, giving their address as No. 27, South Bridge, reveals that their Co-partnership lasted only briefly, having been dissolved by mutual consent on 16 November of that year.

- 1797 A lengthy advertisement placed by Moore in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* of 10 March 1797 provides evidence that he then continued business on his own account 27, South Bridge Street. A transcript is given below:

BY ROYAL PATENT
THE GRAND INSULATED FORTE PIANO
No. 27 South Bridge Street
STEPHEN MOORE

WHO had the honour of inventing and introducing into this country the PATENT SPRING FRAME is penetrated with the warmest gratitude to the Nobility and Gentry for the unbounded support he has experienced; and while he is so kindly upheld in the rugged path of envy and opposition he nourishes the hope of a continuance of this patronage, and assure them that it shall be his sole motive to obtain their esteem, and his highest ambition to deserve it.

The effects of the Spring Frame on the Grand Forte Piano and the finished elegance and lightness of its appearance are at once striking and beautiful. The great bearing and density of the Grand Forte Piano on its common Frame has a tendency to check the vibration similar to a mute on a violin. On the spring Frame, the tone produced is clear and brilliant, and while it rivals the powers of the organ, it possesses the enchanting and delightful

tones of the sweetest Flute. The beautiful TOUT ENSEMBLE can only be conceived by being heard.

A most striking advantage of the Spring Frame is the length of time which the instrument so suspended will stand in tune.

A Forte Piano belonging to an officer on board one of her late Imperial Majesty's ships when lying at the Nore, was put most completely out of tune by firing the gun; –by way of experiment, it was affixed to a spring Frame, and although one gun, which ran in within three feet of the Instrument was repeatedly fired, not yet a note of the Forte Piano was the least altered. The reason is obvious, the shock was lost in the springs, and when it is admitted that the least jar has a tendency to put a Forte Piano out of tune, the advantage of the Spring Frame must be striking indeed.

STEPHEN MOORE having the sole right of manufacturing the Spring Frame humbly hopes and trusts, that a combination against it will have no other effect with a generous and enlightened Public than to induce them to examine its merits.

STEPHEN MOORE takes the opportunity of gratefully informing his Friends that under their auspices he has been enabled to establish an extensive Manufactory of FORTE PIANOS in Edinburgh-that he hopes the prejudice generally entertained of London instruments having the pre-eminence will be done away when they are informed that S.M. served an apprenticeship to the First House in London (Longman and Broderip's) in that line and that nine out of ten of the journeymen Piano Forte makers in London are cabinet-makers from North Britain.–S.M. has made it his particular study to select and employ the choicest cabinet-makers in Edinburgh; and it will be no small pleasure to his numerous Friends to assure them that his instruments are in the highest estimation in London; and it will be the pride of his life to reflect that he has had the opportunity of reversing the scene for instead of London supplying Edinburgh with Piano fortes (which it has done for some years past to the amount of from Five to Eight thousands Pounds a year) the piano Fortes made under the direction of S.M. find at this time the readiest sale in London.

He will not presume to pay so ill a compliment to the Nobility and Gentry of this country, as to suppose it is necessary for him to add that those who most encourage the manufacture of this country are its best friends

S.M. begs likewise to state that, from the comparatively low wages give to workmen in this country, when compared with London, he is enabled to sell his FORTE PIANOS 25 per cent cheaper than the London instruments. It is certainly proper to add that the Spring Frame makes no difference in the tone of the Small Piano Forte as the bottom of that instrument is a solid block of common deal full three inches thick, which nothing could make vibrate.

The bottom of the Grand Piano Forte is only half an inch thick.–In respect to the standing in tune, the advantage is alike in both instruments.

The only objection which has ever been urged against the spring Frame by its most inveterate interested enemies, that the distance between the Springs is so great in the front of the Grand piano Forte as to endanger its bending is entirely done away by the addition of a fifth Spring in the middle.

Edinburgh, March 7, 1797

The original patent drawings of this invention are likely to be held the patent rolls for this period at The National Archives; however, locating them would require a personal visit to conduct an on the spot search through the rolls between 1794 and 1796, since these records are not as yet individually indexed or digitised. This provides an opportunity for those with an interest in this maker to conduct further research.

- 1799 Jenny Nex has reported on the contents of a pamphlet circulated by one Alexander Anderson in Aberdeen, said to be dated 1800, but which in the light of a newspaper notice placed by Stephen Moore (see transcript below) would seem must have first appeared towards the end of 1799. Anderson alleged that Moore served only three years of his full term of apprenticeship with Broderip and that during that time he was not employed in the manufactory of musical instruments or organ work. He also claimed that in a letter written to him by Frederick Augustus Hyde he was told that although Mr Moore lived at Haymarket with Messrs Longman and Broderip, he never received any lessons from Mr Clementi. Hyde referred the enquirer to Mr Watlen in Edinburgh for further information. (See: Jenny Nex 'Longman and Broderip ' in *The Music Trade in Georgian England* (2011) Ed. Michael Kassler. Farnham, Surrey:Ashgate, pp 34-36.

If indeed Stephen Moore married in 1791 while still a minor, this provides a possible explanation as to why he may not have been able to complete his apprenticeship (begun in 1787) in the conventional sense, since apprentices were not allowed to marry at that time. However, this does not preclude the possibility that he may have continued to train with Francis Fane Broderip in the Longman and Broderip workshops on a more informal basis, though at present this can be no more than educated speculation.]

Seemingly in response to this attack on his reputation and abilities, Moore placed the following notice in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* on 8 Sept 1799

In the Press and shortly will be published

AN APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC

On the Subject of the late Repairs of the Organ of St Paul's Chapel, Aberdeen, in which the Conduct of the Organist and his Friend, will be fairly and candidly stated and reviewed, and left for the decision of an impartial Public. Illustrated with Observations and Anecdotes by STEPHEN MOORE.

Mr Moore has in his possession a Letter (which will be introduced in the above work) in the Organist's own hand-writing, and which was sent to a gentleman (and through which means he obtained one of the letters he has been so invidiously circulating to M.'s disadvantage), which will tend to open the eyes of the public, and to place in a striking point of view this gentleman's real character, more than volumes written on the subject.

Mr. Moore cannot resist the impulse of taking the opportunity of presenting the public with the following Attestation of Messrs. URBANI and STABILINI, professional Gentlemen, who are well known to rank high in the Musical World.

"Having been requested by many respectable Gentlemen, to give our opinion, in writing, respecting the professional abilities of Mr STEPHEN

MOORE, we do this with the more confidence, as we have had every opportunity of knowing and examining them. Mr Moore resided constantly in Edinburgh for three years, and was esteemed by all judges as the best tuner of Keyed Instruments that ever was in Scotland. It would not be doing justice to Mr Moore to consider him in the light of a tuner only, we were witnesses of his founding a very extensive manufactory of Instruments in Edinburgh; the workmen of which, near twenty in number, were taught the mechanical part of the musical business, personally by Mr Moore, as they were all common Cabinet Makers, till so employed.

To our knowledge Mr Moore has repaired and tuned several Organs, and, so far from his abilities in that line being depreciated, we never heard them mentioned, but with the highest respect, before we came to Aberdeen. As professional men, we should not discharge our consciences were we not to add that, there is not a person in Great Britain, whom we could recommend sooner, or, who is, in our opinion, more capable of tuning and repairing all Keyed Instruments whatever than Mr Stephen Moore, as witness our hands

P. URBANI

GIVALAMO STABILINI

In consequence of the report that has been so industriously circulated, M. has found, to his great loss, that prejudices in other parts of the country are still entertained against him, from the story of the organ being imperfectly known. It is in Aberdeen, where the business has undergone a strict and full examination, and where malice can no more be called into action to his disadvantage. Mr Moore therefore takes the liberty of informing the Musical Inhabitants of Aberdeen, and its neighbourhood, that he has formed the resolution of taking up his constant residence in Aberdeen, and to follow his profession in all its branches, viz. Organ Building, Piano Forte Making, Tuning and repairing Musical Instruments in general – As his expences will be lessened by his residence being permanent, his charges for tuning will be unusually low, and he humbly looks forward to the patronage and support of an impartial and discerning public.

Orders received for S. Moore at Mr Robert Gibbs, Broad street.

It should be noted that Urbani and Stabilini both appear to have been established musicians of the time in Edinburgh. According to J. L Cranmer, Pietro Urbani was an impresario active in Edinburgh, a rival to Corri. However his ventures failed by 1806 and Cranmer reports that he died destitute in Dublin in 1816. Stabilini was a violinist and Cranmer reports that he later died of dropsy in 1816. (J.L.Cranmer, 2001. *Concert Life and the Music Trade in Edinburgh c. 1780 to c. 1830*. University of Edinburgh: Doctoral thesis. Downloaded 10 February 2021)

- 1801 Clearly Moore's sojourn in Aberdeen did not work out as he had hoped, since in July 1801 there is clear evidence that he was back in London and languishing in the Fleet Prison for debt (London Gazette 15382, p 765, 4 July 1801; and a second notice *London Gazette* 15385, p.795 7 July 1801)

Prisoners in His Majesty's Prison of the FLEET

Stephen Moore, formerly of St. Martin's Lane, in the County of Middlesex, afterwards of the South Bridge, Edinburgh, North Britain, and last of Bull

Court, Upper Ground Street, near Black Fryar's Bridge, in the County of Surrey, Musical Instrument Maker.

A newly identified entry in the prison records book provides more details on the dates of his incarceration and release and the reasons for his imprisonment. He was committed to prison on 24 January 1801 and was released on 6 August of that year [Note: release date incorrectly transcribed as 6 August 1802 in Ancestry] The names of his creditors are given as Archdale Wilson Taylor Esq., to whom he owed £36.15; and William Moore, to whom he owed £15. The handwritten record give no additional information as to how the debt was cleared. (The National Archives Kew, Surrey, England; Collection Title: *King's (Queen's) Bench, Fleet, Marshalsea and Queen's Prisons*: Miscellanea; Class: PRIS10; Piece: 156; retrieved Ancestry, 21 February 2021)

A few months later, there is a parish register entry of for a marriage between a Stephen Moore, bachelor, and Elizabeth Stacey at St Leonards, Shoreditch. Hackney on 27 September 1801 - only a month after his release from prison. This is intriguing since Stephen Moore's signature and that of one of the witnesses, William Moore, in the register, look very similar to those on the earlier marriage entry in 1791. So had Stephen's first wife had died the meantime? There is a burial record for an Elizabeth Moore on 2 October 1795 at the Spa Field Burial Ground, a Nonconformist burial ground, so this is a possibility. in those days young women quite often died in childbirth. However, in that case his status should have been recorded as 'widower' rather than bachelor and so for the moment remains unproven.

- 1803 Sadly, less than two years later, the death register of Collier's Rents Independent Church, White Street, Southwark (the Non-conformist church where he had also been baptised) records the death of Stephen Moore on 11 March 1803 and his burial on 17th March, aged 30 years, giving his address as St James Street.

He left a brief will, leaving everything to his wife, Elizabeth (*The National Archives*, Prob 11/1400 Image 45, transcript below)

Will of Stephen Moore.

In the name of God Amen.

I Stephen Moore pianoforte maker in Upper St James Street Golden Square being of sound mind do this twentieth day of December 1802 make and publish this my last will and testament in manner to following viz first I desire to be decently buried and I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Elizabeth Moore everything that I may be possessed of at the time of my death in the fullest comprehension of the words after paying my funeral expenses and just debts and Mr George Gilbert late of Hackney being my greatest creditor and the most intimately acquainted with all my engagements and affairs I hereby appoint him with Mr Thomas Hammond of Canterbury as Executors of this my last will and testament for witness thereof I submit my hand and seal this day and year first above written in the presence of Stephen Moore (LS) George Gilbert

24th October 1803

Appeared Personally

William Moore of the Heralds Colledge [sic] Doctors Commons Gentleman and William Bindon of Saint Andrews Court Holborn Gentleman and being sworn on the Holy Evangelists to depose the truth made oath that they knew and was well acquainted with Stephen Moore late of Upper James Street Golden Square in the parish of St James Westminster in the County of Middlesex deceased for some time before and down to the time of his death and that by means of having frequently seen him write and subscribe his name they are respectively become well acquainted with his manner and character of handwriting and subscription and that having now with particular care and attention having viewed the paper writing hereto annexed purporting to be and contain the last will and testament of the said deceased beginning thus In the Name of God Amen I Stephen Moore pianoforte maker of Upper James Street Golden Square ending thus subscribe my hand and seal this day and year above written in the presence of and thus subscribed Stephen Moore they those deponents say they both verily and in their conscience believe the names Stephen Moore so set and subscribed to the said will to be the proper handwriting and subscription of the said Stephen Moore deceased William Moore William Bindon Same day said William Moore and William Bindon now duly sworn to the truth of this affidavit before me S Parson Sner Pr for Jno Wills Not. Pnb

This Will was proved at London the twenty seventh of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and three before the worshipful Samuel <illegible word> Parson Doctor of Laws and Surrogate of the Right Honourable Sir William Wynne Knight, Doctor of Laws Master <illegible word> or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted by the oath of George Gilbert on of the Executors named in the said will to whom Administration was granted of all and singular of the Goods, Chattels and Credits of the deceased having been first sworn duly to administer power reserved of making the like grant to Thomas Hammond the other Executor named in the said will when he shall apply for the same.

According to a contemporary newspaper notice, the William Moore referred to in the sworn statement above married Miss Price, daughter of the Lord Mayor of London of the day, in 1803 so clearly he was very well educated and connected. (*Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*, 3 March 1803). It is intriguing to speculate what, if any, was his relationship to Stephen Moore, and/or whether he was one of the creditors named in the Fleet prison record. This provides a further lead for future research into the family background. No information on William Bindon, also named above, and George Gilbert, Executor of the will has as yet been identified.

3.4 Ferdinand Weber (1715–1784)

Jenny Nex and Lance Whitehead provide an informative biographical summary and appraisal of the life and work of Ferdinand Weber, organ builder, harpsichord and pianoforte maker (“The Stringed Instruments of Ferdinand Weber” in *Aspects of*

Harpsichord Making in the British Isles, The Historical Harpsichord, ed. John Koster [NY: Pendragon Press, 2010], ch. 5, 117–153). Weber is said to have been born in Borstendorf, Saxony on 6 May 1715 and to have served his apprenticeship as an organ builder with Hähnel in Meissen.

Interestingly, Nex and Whitehead report primary source evidence that demonstrates Weber was active in London between 1745–1748, his name appearing in the records of the German Lutheran Church of the Savoy as an organ builder in charge of the organ there and as a member of the congregation. They suggest that his move to Dublin did not occur until *ca.* 1748–49, when they found clear evidence of his presence in that city from a record of a payment made to him for repairing the organ of Trinity College Chapel, dated 23 June 1749. From their examination of his surviving Account Book,¹ they report evidence of his activities both as an organ builder and as a keyboard instrument maker, including ten harpsichords, seven pianos and one spinet.

A most unusual example of [a square piano signed by Weber and dated 1772](#) is extant in the Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Weber was based at 71, Marlborough-street, Dublin in the parish of St Thomas until his death in 1784. After his death, his widow Rachel carried on the business,² with the involvement of their son Thomas. After her death in 1789, Nex and Whitehead report, Thomas gradually relinquished his father's tuning and maintenance contracts to other organ builders, for example William Hollister.

¹ Jenny Nex and Lance Whitehead "A copy of Ferdinand Weber's Account Book" in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* (2000) Vol. 33, 89–150.

² Rachel Webber [sic], harpsichord maker, is listed at 71, Marlborough-street in *Wilson's Dublin Directory*, 1786. In 1787 she had moved to No. 75 until her death in 1789, after which her son Thomas appears at this address for a further two years.

3.5 G & W Dettmer Pianoforte-makers:

Summary 1775 - 1858

Founded by George Dettmer towards the close of the eighteenth century and continued by his son William, the house of Dettmer was active in London until 1848, when son William, by then of an age to retire, left England's shores and emigrated to Australia to join members of his family who had already settled there. William continued to be active in the industry as a tuner and instrument repairer in his adopted country until he died there in 1858.

The firm occupied premises at 7, Gresse-street, London from 1799 through to 1809, when William moved to larger premises at 50, Upper Mary-le-bone street, London. George, however, is still to be found in Land Tax records at 13, Gresse-street from 1811 - 1819, next door but one to William Southwell, who was situated at No 11 at that time.

The house of Dettmer became noted for its circular cornered square pianos, of which at least one handsome examples survives, a [highly decorated instrument sold at auction by DuMouchelles, Detroit in 2009](#). The nameboard of this instrument gives the address as 7, Gresse-street, indicating it was made before 1809.

George Dettmer died in Paddington, London in 1833, at the grand old age of 93. His son William died in Sydney, Australia in 1858. William's death notice, placed by his family, gives his age as 85.

Timeline

1740 To date, the author has been unable to locate the date and place of birth of George Dettmer, patriarch of this large family of pianoforte makers; nor has the record of his marriage been identified. However, the record of his burial in the parish register of St. James, Westminster in 1833 gives his age as 93, which suggests a birth year of ca. 1740 (see 1833 below). One may conjecture that George may have been a migrant craftsman who came to London from Germany seeking work, bringing with him his wife, but this remains unproven. A number of children born to the couple have been identified of whom several subsequently became active in the business, most notably William David.

1775 The first positively identified parish register entry for the family identified by the author is that of the baptism of William David Ditmer (sic) [Dettmer], son of George and Ann on 2 July 1775 at St Pancras Old Church, London (parish register, via Ancestry.com).

Though William Dettmer's age at the time of his death in Australia in February 1858 is given in two death notices as 85 years, which, if correct, would indicate a birth year of 1773, it is possible that he was not baptised until he was two years old. Children were not always baptised within a few weeks or months of their birth; occasionally one even finds entries in parish registers where parents had several children of different ages baptised in the same ceremony. Since compulsory civil registration was not introduced in the United Kingdom until 1837, it is problematic to establish a birth date unequivocally.

1780 George Thomas Ditmar (sic), son of George and Ann, was baptised 5 November 1780 at St Marylebone Church London (parish register, via Ancestry.com)

1784 Henry John Dettmer, son of George and Ann, was baptised at St Marylebone Church, 23 August 1784 (parish register, via Ancestry.com)

1787 William David Dettmer was apprenticed to Samuel Bury in the Tallow Chandler's Company, City of London.

The transcript of the original 1787 apprenticeship entry in the Records of London Livery Companies (ROLLCO) database records his surname as Dettmar and gives his father's forename as Christopher. At first sight this might seem to raise doubts as to whether this was the same person. However, the author has identified primary source evidence to confirm this was indeed the William David Dettmer in question, this being a City of London Freedom Admissions record made many years later in 1844 when William David finally claimed his Freedom of the City by servitude by virtue of his apprenticeship to

Samuel Bury (See 1844 for a full transcription and citation reference for this record).

For more information on Samuel Bury, musical instrument maker, including evidence of his early connections with George Goulding (later of Goulding and D'Almaine) in 1788 see Debenham 2014, 'Joseph Merlin in London, 1760–1803: the Man behind the Mask. New Documentary Sources' in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, Vol. 45, Issue 1, 130-163.

- 1795 Samuel Dittmar (sic), son of George and Ann, was baptised 7 January 1795 at St Pancras Old Church.
- 1797 William Dettmer married Mary Ann Betts (b. ca 1771) on 6 February 1797 at St Anne's Church, Soho.
- 1798 William Gotleib Dettmer, son of William and Mary, was baptised 14 January 1798 at St. Pancras Old Church.
- 1799 George Dettmer first appears in Land Tax records at 7, Gresse Street in 1799, co-incidentally the premises which had been occupied from 1773 - 1782 by Louis Lavigne Verel, then foreman to Joseph Merlin, and from 1782- 1790 by first Thomas and then John Prusserot, a carver and gilder (Land Tax records, via Ancestry.com).

For more information on Verel and his relationship with Merlin and on Prusserot, see Debenham 2014, 'Joseph Merlin in London, 1760–1803: the Man behind the Mask. New Documentary Sources'.

- 1802 George Dettmer, son of William and Mary, was baptised 11 July 1802 at St Pancras Old Church.

An advertisement placed in a Northamptonshire newspaper for an auction sale in this year included a Dettmer pianoforte with additional notes (*The Northampton Mercury*, 20 February 1802). So, one must ask, was the house of Dettmer already making instruments using aspects of the design of William Southwell's groundbreaking 1794 patent in contravention of his patent rights, before the Southwell v. Broadwood court case of 1803?

George Dettmer is listed in the Land Tax records in Gresse street in this year.

- 1803 Elizabeth Dettmer, daughter of William and Mary, was baptised 11 October 1803 at St. Pancras Old Church.
- 1805 Caroline Dettmer, daughter of William and Mary, was baptised 28 July 1805 at St Pancras Old Church.
- 1806 Robert Dettmer, son of William and Mary, was baptised 20 July 1806 at St Pancras Old Church.
- 1808 There is a record of a marriage of a George Dettmer to Elizabeth Reeves at St Pancras Old Church on 9 November 1808.

Probably this was the first marriage of George Thomas, b.1780, since the parish register declares him to be a bachelor. One of the witnesses to the marriage signed himself 'George Bullocke'; it seems likely he was the George Bullock listed in the 1811 London and Country Directory as a pianoforte maker at 5, Tottenham-place.

Two later marriage records for George T. in 1822 and 1834 show that in both cases that he declared himself a widower; however a comparison of the signatures in the three parish registers reveals some dissimilarities between the 1808 signature and the latter two so, though it is likely that all three marriages were for the same person, for the moment one cannot be certain.

William Dettmer took on an apprentice named William Farlow on 10 March 1808. (Board of Stamps: Apprenticeship Books, Series IR 1; The National Archives of the UK, Kew, Surrey, England, via Ancestry.com)

- 1809 William Dettmer's wife, Mary, died aged 38. She was buried 18 March 1809 in Westminster.

A few short months later, W. [William] Dettmer announced his removal from his manufactory at 7, Gresse-street to 50 Upper Mary-le-bone-street in a London newspaper.

W. DETTMER respectfully informs his Friends/ that he has REMOVED from his Piano-forte Manu/factory, No 7, Gresse-street, Rathbone-place, to more exten/sive premises, No. 50, Upper Mary-le-bone-street, Fitzroy-square/where he hopes the continuance of their favours. (*The Morning Post*, 26 July 1809).

On 29 November 1809 William Dettmer remarried at St Mary-le-bone Church. His new wife was named Phillis Harper, a widow.

A Dettmer family history website reports that William re-married, his new bride being Phillis Betts (Mrs Harper). Since William's first wife, Mary Ann, was also a Betts by birth, if this is indeed the case it seems likely the two were related, though this remains to be established.

- 1810 William Dettmer is listed in the Land Tax records in Upper Mary-le-bone-street.

- 1811 In this year George Dettmar (sic), cabinet maker, is listed in *The London and Country Directory* at 13, Gresse-street. William Southwell (occupation not given) is listed in the same directory at 11, Gresse-street, providing reliable evidence that they were close neighbours. Both also appear in the Land Tax records for Gresse-street in this year.

William Dettmar (sic) pianoforte maker, 50 Upper Mary-le-bone-street is separately listed in *The London and Country Directory* in this year.

- 1813 William Dettmer was named as an executor in George Astor's will (The National Archives, Kew: Prob 11/1550).

- 1815 Camille Pleyel wrote a letter to his parents from London on 3 April 1815 which includes references to George Dettmer, thus suggesting he was still active at this time, though whether independently or with his son is not clear.

I have seen George Dettmer; our wood is still here and I shall not send it until a new order comes...

... As for the oval pianos, Dettmer is practically the only one who makes them. His instruments are good, but he has no reputation. Broadwoods are the best known, then Clementi, Stodart, Wilkinson, Tomkinson (sic), etc. etc. (Rita Benton, 1966. *London Music in 1815*, as seen by Camille Pleyel, *Music and Letters* v 47 no.1, 36)

And on 23 May 1815 Pleyel wrote again:

This morning Mr. G. Dettmer came to deliver the bill of lading for the mahogany wood and a note for the various expenses for customs, transport of the wood, commission and brokerage the whole amounting to £4. 12s. 4d. sterling, which I paid him, in addition to the cost of the receipt. I presume you will be receiving the wood without delay and I urge you to dispose of it as soon as you can, if you can realise any profit from it. The purchase price was £55 and several shillings, to which must be added the £4.12s. which I paid today, plus the freight and the cost of the transport from Le Havre to Paris... (Benton, 1966, 40)

- 1816 Edward Dettmer, son of William and Phillis, was baptised 17 July 1816
- 1817 Charlotte Augusta Dettmer, daughter of William and Phillis, was baptised 30 November 1817
- 1819 In this year George Dettmer is still listed in the Land Tax records in Gresse-street, next door but one to William Southwell.
- 1820 An advertisement for square and circular pianofortes by 'G.W.Dettmer' of No. 50 Upper Mary-le-bone-street appeared in *The Morning Chronicle* in November of this year.

PIANOFORTES - G.W. DETTMER re/spectfully informs the Nobility, Gentry, merchants, Cap-/tains and others, that he now has on sale an elegant assortment of SQUARE and CIRCULAR CORNERED PIANO/FORTES, with and without drawers, six Octave, &c. which/ he will warrant of the best materials and workmanship, at his/established Manufactory, No. 50, Upper Mary-le-bone-street, Fitzroy-square. - N.B. A liberal Allowance for prompt pay/ment. (*The Morning Chronicle*, 17 November 1820.)

It is interesting that this advertisement bears the initials 'G.W.' rather than just 'W', though the address given is the one to which William alone had moved in 1809. One may surmise that George had re-joined his son, since he no longer appears in the Land Tax records in Gresse-street after 1819. Note also that the advertisement offers circular cornered pianofortes of the type reported by Pleyel in his letter to his parents in 1815.

A Sun Fire Insurance record for this year shows John Henry Dettner (sic) of 1 Upper Rathbone Place, turner, possibly the Henry, son of George and Ann, who was baptised in 1784.

- 1822 George Dettmer, widower, (b.1780) married Susan Payne at St. Mary Magdelene, Old Fish-street (*Pallots Marriage Index*).
- 1823 Caroline Dettmer (b.1805), daughter of William and Mary, married John Ashton Green in September of this year in Westminster. By 1839, John Ashton Green had died and Caroline, now in Australia, re-married Christopher W. May in Sydney, NSW - see 1839.
- 1824 John Dettmer, musical instrument maker, was reported bankrupt in *The London Gazette*.

Dettmer, John, formerly of Regents-Park, afterwards of Thornhaugh-Mews, afterwards of No. 11. William-street/Hamptead Road and later of No. 11, Field Terrace, Battle-Bridge, all in Middlesex, Musical-instrument Maker (*The London Gazette* 18080, 16 November 1824, 1900).

It appears that John Dettmer (probably Henry John, brother of William) later emigrated to Australia. See 1848, for evidence of his activities there.

- 1825 William Dettmer advertised that he had terminated his engagement with Messrs Goulding and Co., whom he had been supplying for the past 20 years.

PIANOFORTES

WM. DETTMER, PIANO-FORTE MAKER/ having terminated his engagement with Messrs./GOULDINGS and Co. (nearly the whole of whose PIANOS he/has supplied during the last Twenty Years), feels himself at/liberty to offer to the Professors, Amateurs and Dealers/Instruments of the best quality and materials, on unusually/low terms. The well-known character of Messrs. Gouldings and Co.'s Pianos render it unnecessary for him to say more in recommendation of his manufacture, than to assure those who may favour him with their orders, that he shall continue/the same exertions which he used for the last Twenty-five/years with so much success. W.D's extensive Stock of/well seasoned materials and large premises, enables him to/keep a good assortment of PIANO-FORTES always ready for/inspection. A very liberal allowance for cash, and all/Pianos purchased of W.D. if not approved of within three/months will be exchanged, free of expence, excepting the/Carriage./ N.B. Old Pianos taken in exchange. /Address No. 50, Upper Mary-le-bone Street, Fitzroy Square, London. (*Treuman's Exeter Flying Post* 20 January 1825).

This advertisement is interesting in a number of ways. Firstly it indicates that William Dettmer had been making pianofortes for sale under the Gouldings label since at least 1805. Secondly, Debenham's research has shown that Gouldings had a connection with Samuel Bury (to whom William Dettmer was apprenticed in 1787), as far back as 1788 when George Goulding advertised his music selling agency based at Bury's premises. For further information on this connection see Debenham, 2014 'Joseph Merlin: the Man behind the Mask', 21.

- 1827 On 30 August 1827 William Dettmer was granted a patent for 'certain improvements on pianofortes'

... The object of the patentee in adapting this invention to pianofortes, is to enable the instrument, after having been properly tuned, to be brought into unison with other instruments of a different pitch, by raising or lowering the tone of all its strings by a simple operation, instead of the trouble of tuning each string separately' (*Journal of the Franklin Institute*, 1831 Vol. VIII, p 256)

- 1831 In a [letter to *The London Journal of Arts and Sciences*](#) the contributor, identified only by the initials F.L.S, offered his observations on the practical application of William Dettmer's 1827 patent. From this the reader learns that instruments using this innovation were at that time being made by Mr. Tomkisson, pianoforte-maker of Dean-street.
- 1833 George Dettmer, aged 93 of Praed-street, Paddington, London, died; he was buried 28 April 1833 at St James, Westminster
- 1839 Caroline Green, second daughter of William and Mary Dettmer, remarried in Sydney, Australia to Christopher Watkin May in June 1839. (*The Sydney Herald*, 19 June 1839)

- 1843 George Thomas Dettmer (b. 1780) died, leaving his possessions to his second, possibly third wife, formerly Mary Ann Wales, and his two daughters, Rosina Amelia and Eloise Elizabeth (Will: The National Archives, Kew, Prob. 11/1980).
- 1844 Very belatedly William David Dettmer claimed his Freedom of The City of London by virtue of his servitude to Samuel Bury in the Tallow Chandler's Company (see also 1787 above). The original handwritten record of this event reads:

The first Court held on Tuesday the/19th day of November 1844 and in/the Eighth year of the Reign of/Victoria of the United Kingdom of/Great Britain and Ireland, Queen.

This day upon reading the humble Petition/of William David Dettmer, it appearing that the/Petitioner was bound as an Apprentice according to the Custom of this City to Samuel Bury Citizen and/Tallow Chandler of London by Indentures dated the/2nd day of January 1787 and duly served him the/full term of seven years according to the Covenants/therein contained whereby he had a right to the Freedom of this City in the said company of/Tallow Chandlers but for particular reasons prayed to be admitted thereto by virtue of his service/ and in the Company of Turners, it is ordered/that the said William Daniel [sic] Dettmer be admitted/into the Freedom of this City by virtue of his/Service and in the Company of Turners./Merewether (City of London Freedom Admissions Papers, held in The Metropolitan Archives; retrieved via Ancestry.co.uk)

- 1845 William Dettmer was declared bankrupt in London (*The London Gazette* 20435, 24 January 1845)
- 1846 The firm, now trading under the name of Geo. Dettmer and Son 'late of Upper Mary-le-bone Street', announced the opening of a new retail store at 27, Edwards-street, Portman Square, offering for sale instruments by Broadwood and Collard and Collard (*Daily News*, 20 December 1846)
- 1848 The firm of George Dettmer and Son, pianoforte makers, was listed in *The London Post Office Directory* at 20 1/2 Clipstone Street, as well as at Edwards Street.

It appears that at some point following his 1824 bankruptcy, John Dettmer (probable brother of William), had emigrated to Australia, as is evidence by an advertisement placed in a Sydney newspaper in that year.

NOTICE - JOHN DETTMER, Pianoforte/Tuner and Repairer, from the firm of/George Dettmer and Son, London, begs to/state that he will tune and repair at very mo-/derate charges, combined with punctuality and/prompt attention. 56 Pitt-street South (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 November 1848)

- 1849 William Dettmer emigrated from London to Sydney, Australia where his second daughter, Caroline, was already living with second husband, Christopher Watkins May. Surviving descendants in Australia report that he arrived on board the ship the Julindur, accompanied by two of his granddaughters, Elizabeth Ann and Adelaide Rose Jackson (children of his late daughter Elizabeth and her husband Dr John Jackson) who had been left orphaned in London.

Evidence from a contemporary Australian newspaper shows that William set up in business there at 51, Hunter-street.

PIANOFORTES

GEORGE DETTMER AND SON,/Patent Grand Cabinet and Square/Pianoforte Manufacturers (established fifty/years in London), beg most respectfully to/inform the gentry and public of Sydney and/its environs, that having had many years/practical experience enables them to tune and/repair in a superior manner. G. Dettmer and Son, having sent a considerable number of in/struments to the colony, solicit the patronage/of tuning and repairing them./ N.B. - Hammers recovered with the new/patent hammer cloth, which gives a more/ sweet and pleasant tone, and is far more/durable./ 51, HUNTER-STREET./ Orders received at Mr. Aldin's Tobacconists, George-street. (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 May 1849).

- 1851 William is to be found trading under several variations of the family name quite inconsistently in a number of Australian newspaper advertisements over the next several years; these include 'George Dettmer and Son'; 'G. Dettmer and Son'; 'George W. Dettmer' and 'Wm. Dettmer' (various contemporary Australian newspaper advertisements).

One advertisement placed in this year states that he had been in the trade for 'upwards of 50 years', providing further corroborative evidence that his partnership with his father, George, had begun during the first decade of the century (*The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 12 November 1851)

- 1858 William Dettmer died at the home of his son-in-law Christopher W. May at Tempe, near Windsor, Australia on 20 February 1858, aged 85.

DETTMER - February 20, at Tempe, near Windsor, at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. C.W.May, after a lingering illness, Mr. William Dettmer, many years a pianoforte manu-/facturer, Marylebone-street, London and for the last nine years in this colony, aged 85 years. (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 March 1858)

DEATH OF MR. DETTMER - This gentleman, well known in Maitland and Newcastle as a pianoforte tuner, departed this life on the 20th [illegible word] at Tempe, near Windsor, at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. C.W. May. Mr Dettmer had reached the advanced age of eighty-five. He was an excellent tradesman and was, moreover, distinguished for his good humour and other estimable moral qualities. Mr Dettmer, when young, stood on Blackfriar's Bridge, London and saw the first batch of convicts pass over on their way to found this colony. Many people in Maitland and elsewhere will regret the untimely demise of this cheerful and agreeable old gentleman. (*The Bathurst Free Press*, 13 March 1858)

3.6 [Robert] Murdock

Timeline

Brief information on the activities of [Robert] Murdock in Ireland identified by Debenham between 1780 and 1807 is presented in the timeline below. In the newspaper advertisements reported the author noted a number of variations of his name, including Murdock, Murdoch, Mordoc and Murdoc; the most likely explanation for these spelling discrepancies is that they are the result of typesetting errors based on an aural mishearing of his name. Note his clearly identified connection with William Southwell, established by the notice placed in 1796.

- 1780 A notice placed in *The Dublin Evening Post*, 29 January 1780 advertised the services of 'Mr Murdock' for tuning and/or repairing Chamber and Barrel Organs, Harpsichords, Piano-fortes, &c. at Mr Lee's Music Shop, No. 70, Dame-Street or No. 11, Trinity-Street. In March of the same year Murdock advertised that 'he will engage to make any of the above instruments as good as any made in London, and on as reasonable terms' (*The Hibernian Journal*, 20-22 March 1780).
- 1785 Apparently Murdock moved away from Dublin for a time between 1781 and 1785, since an announcement placed in *The Dublin Evening Post*, 11 January 1785 states that he had arrived there in order to commence business. Interestingly he continues 'As he has worked with the first Makers in London, flatters himself by his abilities and punctuality, to give every satisfaction to those who may honour him with their commands'.
- 1796 In this year we find a 'Mr Mordoc' in Belfast. A newspaper notice states that 'Mr SOUTHWELL, PIANO FORTE MAKER &c., Dublin, recommends Mr MORDOC, (who has done business with him for a long time), as a person very capable of Tuning and Repairing Organs, Piano-fortes, &c.' (*Belfast Newsletter*, 16 September 1796). This notice was repeated in a later edition of the same publication, 1-11 November 1796, this time with his name spelt 'Murdoc'.
- 1805 On 19 January 1805 a notice appeared in *The Hibernian Journal* advertising 'a remarkable fine toned large Chamber organ, worth 100l [pounds] to be raffled at the house of Robert Murdoch[sic], Gloucester-place, Gloucester-street' [Dublin]. It also states that his house is to be let and that Murdoch continues to tune and repair Piano Fortes, Church, Chamber and Barrel Organs in Town and Country. Given the similarities in his areas of work, it seems this is the same person as the Murdock/Mordoc of the earlier notices and here we learn that his given name was Robert.
- 1807 From an advertisement placed in *The Dublin Evening Post*, 27 August 1807, it seems that Murdoch had only temporarily let his house in 1805, since his address is given here as 7, Gloucester-place, Dublin. He states that he is travelling around undertaking work in different locations - Drogheda, Dundalk, Newry and Armagh are mentioned. He also once more advertises 'Lodgings to be let'.

3.7 Robert Woffington Organ-builder, Harpsichord and Pianoforte-maker, Dublin:

Summary: 1774 – 1819

Robert Woffington was an organ, harpsichord and pianoforte maker, active in Dublin in partnership with William Gibson in Grafton-street from 1775 - 1778 and then on his own account at 9, William-street from 1778 until his death in 1819. Until now, information about his life and activities has been sparse. However, thanks to newly available digitised primary source materials, Debenham has been able to establish that he became a Freeman of the City of Dublin by service in the Joiners Guild in 1774. Assuming he was apprenticed at the usual age of fourteen in 1767, it follows that he was born about 1753. There is also evidence from contemporary newspapers that he became a prominent member of the Guild and was Master in 1789. Moreover, he was politically active; for example, in 1780 he was among a group of members of the Corps of Dublin Volunteers to form a breakaway group calling themselves the Corps of Independent Volunteers in protest against the Corps' refusal to make an address of thanks to Henry Grattan for his conduct in parliament.

In 1799 he advertised his 'Vocal Piano Fortes', accusing another unnamed maker of copying them. This was firmly refuted by William Southwell in a newspaper notice shortly afterwards, thus demonstrating that rivalry existed between the two firms.

A newly identified advertisement for the sale of Woffington's stock in trade placed by his Executors in 1819 firmly establishes the year of his death. An entry for his will appears in an Irish Index of Wills in 1820, but sadly the will itself has not survived. There is evidence from trade directories and advertisements that the firm continued to be active until ca. 1835, presumably run by one or more of his sons.

Eight instruments from his shop are known to survive today. They include a harpsichord (said to be in Japan); a chamber organ, a mechanical organ and an upright harpsichord combined with a pipe organ (all held at The National Museum of Ireland, Dublin); two upright pianofortes (one in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the other at Finchcocks Museum, Kent which sadly has recently closed) (Darcy Kuronen, *Newletter of the American Musical Instrument Society*, Vol.37 No. 3, Fall 2008, 11-12). More recently two square pianofortes have been identified, the first in a private collection, London; the second in a private collection, Australia.

Timeline

ca.1753 Probable birth year of Robert Woffington. Since he became a Freeman by service in 1774 (see below), it follows that his apprenticeship commenced seven years earlier in 1767, at the age of about fourteen years

His parentage remains unknown. However, at least two Woffingtons were active as organists in Ireland earlier in the century. A Robert Woffington was organist of St Mary's Dublin in 1735 (UK and US Directories 1680-1830, Ancestry.co.uk); and a John Woffington was appointed organist at Armagh in 1752 and in 1758 placed advertisements in which he stated he was 'late organist of St. Michan's Church, Dublin' and trained at St Jame's Westminster under Dr

Croft (website of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh). It seems probable that Robert was related to this line.

- 1774 A surviving nineteenth century printer's gallery which never reached publication lists almost 6000 men admitted to the Freedom of the City of Dublin between 1774 - 1820. It includes the name of Robert Woffington who became free by service in the Joiners Guild in 1774. Unfortunately, the record does not include the name of his Master; however, clearly, he [his Master] must have been a Freeman of this Guild. (Source: *Freemen of Dublin City, 1774-1824*, accessed via Findmypast.co.uk)

[In the past it has been suggested that Woffington was apprenticed to the harpsichord maker Ferdinand Weber, but for the moment this remains unproven. The record of Woffington's Freedom admission raises the question of whether or not Weber was eligible for membership of a Trade Guild, as a German craftsman who settled in Ireland? Vivien Costello tells us that under the 1662 Act to Encourage Protestant Strangers, Huguenots received special concessions to become Freemen of Dublin (Vivien Costello, 2007. 'Researching Huguenot Settlers in Ireland,' *BYU Family Historian*: Vol. 6, Article 9). But did this apply to other foreign settlers too? Further research is needed to investigate this issue.]

- 1776 By this year Robert Woffington had been taken into partnership by William Gibson, who is perhaps best remembered today for his beautifully crafted guitars and citterns. An example of a guitar from his shop, dated 1765, is held in the musical instrument collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Interestingly, John Rogers lists William Gibson as a joiner and cabinet maker at College Green, Dublin 1769-74 (Appendix 1: "A *Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century Irish Furniture Makers*" in *The Knight of Glin and James Peill*, 2007. *Irish Furniture*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 283). Rogers also tells us that Gibson became a Freeman of the City of Dublin as a Carpenter in 1760, was elected Warden of the Joiners Guild, 1769-70 and Master from 1772-74. Mary Pollard cites evidence that he was also active as a music publisher at College Green, 1768-1774 and solely as a musical instrument maker at 6, Grafton-street from 1775-1790. (*A Dictionary of Members of the Dublin Book Trade 1550-1800*, 2001: 237). For more information on Gibson's activities as a musical instrument maker, see *The Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, 2014 Vol.2, 428.]

A notice in *The Hibernian Journal* in October of this year signed by a group of employers, cabinet makers and Freemen of the Joiners' Guild in Dublin, including Gibson and Woffington, makes interesting reading. They complained that 'the journeymen of our Trade have entered into an unlawful Combination and quit their work':

WE, the Subscribers, principal Employers of the Cabinet-makers of the City of Dublin, with great Concern find that the journeymen of our Trade have entered into an unlawful Combination, and quit their work; and being informed that many industrious Men would most willingly return to their Work, if they were not deterred by the Threats of some among themselves. In order therefore to encourage the well inclined Journeymen Cabinet-makers of this City, or Country or other good Workmen as may

be inclined to come hither from England, Scotland, Germany, or elsewhere, we hereby engage to give constant Employment and the highest Encouragement, and we will protect every Person in our Employment by every lawful Means; ...

... N.B. If the Workmen who have left their Work unfinished do not immediately return and finish it, they shall be proceeded against as the Law directs; and we hope our Customers will not countenance such combining Journeymen, but kindly indulge until we are supplied with Workmen (*The Hibernian Journal* 23-26 October 1776)

Among more than forty signatories of this notice we also find Hall Kirchoffer and Richard McOwen, whose names also feature in the 1802 advertisement placed by a group of cabinet and musical instrument makers, including William and Nicholas Southwell, seeking workmen from the mainland.]

- 1778 In August 1778, having dissolved his partnership with William Gibson, Robert Woffington announced he was continuing in business on his own account as an organ builder, harpsichord and pianoforte maker at No. 9 William-street.

ROBERT WOFFINGTON, Organ Builder, Harpsichord, and Piano-forte-Maker, continues Business solely on his own Account (the partnership of Gibson and Woffington being dissolved) in William-street, No.9, the House formerly occupied by the late Mr. Deane. Where he has now for Sale several of these Instruments, and, entreats the Command of the Nobility and Gentry, whose many Favours he thankfully acknowledges. (*The Hibernian Journal*, 31 July- August 3 1778)

- 1779 A notice placed in a Dublin newspaper in the Autumn of this year records the growing disquiet felt by the local Musical Instrument-Makers at recent imports of instruments, which they believed would threaten their livelihood and that of their workmen.

DUBLIN, OCTOBER 16, 1779

The Musical Instrument-Makers of this city being assembled to take into Consideration the late importation of Organs, Harpsichords, Piano-fortes, Guittars, Violins, Flutes, &c. &c., sent from the London Warehouses, to different Shopkeepers, on Commission, the following Resolutions were unanimously agreed to.

Resolved. That the late Importation of Musical Instruments for Sale, (a Thing never before practised in this Kingdom) is in direct Opposition to the general Associations, and if not prevented in future, will evidently tend to the Destruction of our Business, and to the Injury of Joiners, Carpenters, Smiths, Founders, &c. &c. to whom we give employment.

Resolved, That in order to co-operate with the Wellwishers of this Country, and to stop this new and destructive Importation, we are determined, and have bound ourselves to each other, not to tune, string, repair or put in Order, any foreign Musical Instruments that may now be on sale, or shall be imported at any Time hereafter.

Resolved, That these our Resolutions be inserted in the public Papers: And, we hope, the same Spirit of Patriotism, which induced the Nobility and Gentry, to protect other Manufacturers, will also extend to this, as we

are determined, that nothing will be wanting on our part, to bring it to the greatest possible perfection.

Signed by Order T. PLUNKET, Secretary. (*The Dublin Evening Post*, 21 October 1779)

- 1780 A notice placed in *Saunders's Newsletter*, 26 April 1780 reported on the refusal of the Committee of the Corps of Dublin Volunteers to make an address of thanks to Henry Grattan for his conduct in parliament and that in consequence a certain number of persons had withdrawn from the meeting and had resolved:

That Henry Grattan Esq. has merited the utmost Approbation of every Friend of this Country. Resolved unanimously that we cannot, confident with the Feelings of Freeman, and Citizens of a free Country, associate any longer with Persons possessing Minds and Dispositions so much the reverse of our own. But we hereby engage to retain our Arms and continue as a Corps of INDEPENDENT VOLUNTEERS READY TO EXERT OURSELVES in Defence of our Country when Occupation shall require.

Among the signatories of this statement we find the name of R. Woffington.

[Further background information about Henry Grattan, Anglo-Irish Statesman may be found in an article [here](#).]

- 1785 Five years after the first stirrings of disquiet at the importation of musical instruments (see 1779), A notice placed by Felix McCarthy in *The Dublin Evening Post*, 1 January 1785 reports the following resolutions made at a general meeting of the Musical Instrument Makers of the City of Dublin on 1 December 1784, chaired by William Castles Hollister and signed off by William Gibson, Sec.

Resolved:

- That the different makers in this kingdom are qualified to supply every demand in that business, and on as reasonable terms as any that can be imported.
- That if Musical Instruments be imported from other countries, it will tend to destroy the different manufactories of that business in this kingdom.
- That any person who will tune, repair, or put up Instruments, knowing them to have been imported since the first day of September last, must be considered as an enemy to the trade of this country.
- That we bind ourselves to each other (neither personally nor by those in our employ) not to tune, repair, or put up any Musical Instrument, that shall appear to have been imported since the first day of September 1784.

In summary, it goes on to say that the working Musical Instrument Makers assure the Nobility and Gentry of this kingdom that 'every exertion in our power shall be used to rival the manufacturers of other nations' and concludes by thanking the patriotic Nobility and Gentry 'who by their laudable exertions discourage importation'.

This notice is interesting, revealing as it does the high level of anxiety felt by the body of Irish musical instrument makers of the day at the threat posed to their livelihood by imported instruments. It suggests that the number of imports had

escalated to a considerable extent since 1779. This is an area that merits further research.

1788 *The Freeman's Journal*, 4 October 1788 reported that:

'Yesterday an excellent organ made by the celebrated Woffington, was erected in the chapel of the Augustinian Friars in Creagh-lane; the first which has been introduced into any chapel here'.

1789 A notice was placed in *Saunders's Newsletter*, 20 January 1789, on behalf of the Corporation of Joiners in the City of Dublin, thanking Archibald Hamilton Rowan for his conduct 'in the Cause of the unfortunate Mary Neal'. It was signed by Robert Woffington, Master and Southwell Maclune and Robert Mallett, Wardens.

JOINERS-HALL, QUARTER DAY, JAN 13 1789.

The following ADDRESS was unanimously agreed on to be preferred.

To ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN Esq.

SIR. The Corporation of Joiners of the City of Dublin, admiring the Virtue and Public Spirit, which has eminently distinguished you in the Cause of the unfortunate Mary Neal, and wishing, in common with our Fellow Citizens, to express their Approbation of real Worth, entreat your Acceptance of their sincere and hearty Thanks for your Exertions; and whilst they lament that there could, in the highest Ranks of Life, be found Persons to countenance Acts so injurious to Morality and Society, they revere your Conduct, Sir, on that occasion as Noble as Manly. To the Approbation of a good Conscience (that greatest earthly Happiness) they consign you, and may you long live the Protector of Innocence.

ROBERT WOFFINGTON, Master

SOUTHWELL MACLUNE, ROBERT MALLETT, Wardens.

Hamilton Rowan's response was also published:

GENTLEMEN,

I RECEIVE with Gratitude, the marks of Approbation with which your respectable Guild, and my benevolent Fellow citizens have honoured my conduct, in the cause of Mary Neal; but I cannot avoid shrinking back when I consider that I have only done what is the duty of every Man towards the unfortunate. I know that the calumnies with which this persecuted child was overwhelmed, were chosen to procure, and fixed upon to palliate, an Arrest of Justice. I was therefore obliged, notwithstanding the Reluctance a private individual must feel in taking such a step, to appeal to the Public on her Behalf. I am happy to find that the virtuous part of my Fellow Citizens join in Condemnation of such conduct, as injurious to Society, and totally repugnant to Morality. I am, Gentleman, Your very obedient humble servant ARCHIBALD HAMILTON ROWAN. (*Saunders Newsletter*, 20 January 1789)

For a useful summary of Archibald Hamilton Rowan's involvement in the case of Mary Neal see: the Wikipedia article documenting his life. Mary Neal's case appears to be an example of abuse of a minor that sadly has resonance with the issues of child abuse found in our modern day world.]

In July of the same year a further notice published by the Corporation of Joiners and signed by Robert Woffington, Master and Southwell Maclune and Robert Mallett, Wardens, supported a resolution of the Guild of Merchants to the following effect:

That we will not vote for any Person or Persons to represent us in the Common Council of this city, who will not first take and subscribe the following declaration: That is returned into the Common Council of this city, we will not vote for any Police Commissioner, or Divisional Justice to be Chief Magistrate, or Representative in Parliament for this city...

These notices provide evidence that Woffington had achieved a position of high standing in the Joiners Guild and also serve to illustrate the politically active stance being adopted by the Guild under his leadership.

In October Robert Woffington advertised for 'working Men of this Business' to join his firm, with the proviso that 'None will be accepted but those of a sober and industrious habit' (*Saunders Newsletter*, 13 October 1789)

- 1790 A beautiful example of an upright pianoforte by Woffington held at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston has been tentatively dated to this year.
- 1795 A news item in Saunder's Newsletter, 5 November 1795 reports on the results of an Election conducted by the Corporation of Joiners for two Common Councilmen to represent them for the ensuing three years. The five candidates included Robert Woffington, who was not however elected. This finding demonstrates that he still maintained a very active role within the Guild at this time.
- 1799 In September 1799 Woffington advertised his 'Vocal Piano Fortes' for sale.
- TO THE MUSICAL COGNOSCENTI
- VOCAL PIANO FORTES, very considerably improved, may now be had of the inventor only, Robert Woffington, William-street, Dublin. They will be found to possess ever desirable quality, and may be had with or without the accompaniments of the Tambourine and Triangle, additions peculiarly his own, and never before accomplished. The advertiser would not trouble the public with this address, but that a very inferior imitation of them having lately appeared by another name, he thinks it necessary to discriminate. Piano fortes of every description, at all times ready for sale. (*Saunder's Newsletter*, 21 September 1799)
- [See William Southwell's timeline for 1799 for his response to this advertisement, which reveals clear evidence of the existence of rivalry between the two men.]
- 1803 A Dublin auction sale by Mack and Gibton on 3 February 1803, includes a grand piano by Woffington, providing evidence that he constructed this type of instrument too. (*Saunder's Newsletter*, 3 February 1803)

In April of this year Woffington advertised:

ROBERT WOFFINGTON'S LONDON and DUBLIN, PIANO FORTE and ORGAN WAREROOMS, No. 9, William-street, are now assorted with a great variety of those instruments, where at once may be seen the productions of the best makers in England and Ireland, which he intends

to sell at a FAIR PRICE and trusts they will be found at least equal in merit to those offered for sale elsewhere, at much more advanced prices, and for which advance, value is not nor cannot be given. (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 14 April 1803)

It seems that following the Act of Union, which came into force in 1801, pragmatism had won the day and Woffington had decided to sell instruments imported from London as well as those made locally. The reference to London appears to refer to the fact that he was importing instruments made there for sale in Dublin - the author has located no evidence to suggest that he had actually opened an establishment in London.]

1806 An auction sale by A. Davis, 23 Lower Ormonde-quay included a pianoforte by Gibson and Woffington (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 18 October 1806). This must date from before 1778 when their partnership was dissolved and demonstrates that Woffington was making pianofortes from the very earliest stages of his career.

1807 A news item in *The Freeman's Journal* about St. Andrew's Church, Dublin in March of this year describes the organ, built by Woffington thus:

The organ, built by Woffington, is on a very large scale, has sixteen stops, and near one thousand pipes. Amateurs who have tried it are of opinion that for its size, compass and tone, it will be one of the finest instruments in the kingdom, and its grand exterior, presenting three fronts, is worthy of the situation. (*The Freeman's Journal* 4 March 1807)

In June of this year a notice placed by Woffington himself advertised:

The organ, formerly in St. Andrew's Church, and now in Eustace-street Meeting-house, to be sold on very moderate terms. - apply to Mr. Robert Woffington, No.9, William-street. (*Dublin Evening Post*, 20 June 1807)

Presumably this was the previous organ that had been removed from St. Andrew's to make way for a new one, as described in the March advertisement.

1808 Woffington, now describing himself as an organ builder, advertised for sale Patent Pianofortes 'lately imported from the first makers in London' as well as Church, Chamber and Barrel Organs. (*Dublin Evening Post*, 17 November 1808).

Two further advertisements placed in 1811 and 1813 echo this theme. He was by then selling piano fortes by 'eminent London makers' and at the same time advertising finger and barrel organs, presumably from his own house.

1819 Robert Woffington died, as is evidenced by a notice of the sale of his stock placed by his Executors at the end of June that year.

ORGANS AND PIANO FORTES TO BE SOLD At and under the First Cost By Order of the Executors of the late Robert Woffington, At the Organ and Piano Forte Ware-Rooms, No. 9, WILLIAM STREET.

A number of Barrel and finger organs of different descriptions, large Organs, particularly adapted for places of Public Worship, or small ones fit for private houses; also a few chosen Piano Fortes of the best London makers. The Executors being obliged to dispose of the Stock in Trade as soon as possible offer the above articles for Sale at and under First Cost.

Persons having occasion for Organs for places of worship have now an opportunity of accommodating themselves to the greatest advantage, as the Organs now on hand are of the very best description, and will be disposed of on the most reasonable terms ever before offered to the Irish Public. (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 29 June 1819)

1820 The Ireland Diocesan and Prerogative Wills & Administration Indexes 1595-1858 (Findmypast.co.uk) contains an entry for Robert Woffington, organ builder, dated 1820.

The author has been informed by an Archivist at the National Library of Ireland that the will itself has not survived, so unfortunately its terms remain lost for posterity.

1821- The firm continued to exist at 9, William-street until ca. 1835, trading as Robert Woffington, organ builders and presumably run by his one of his sons.

3.8 Longman Broderip & Clementi

The story of William Southwell's business relationship with Longman and Broderip (later followed by Longman, Clementi and Co. and then Clementi and Co.) is related in Debenham's co-authored paper with Professor George Bozarth '[Piano Wars: the Legal Machinations of London Pianoforte Makers, 1795–1806](#)' (2009) in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* Vol. 42. London: Royal Musical Association, 45-108. ISSN 1472-3808.

Abstract

In the years 1801–6 a series of lawsuits were filed in various London courts involving many of England's top piano manufacturers. Swirling around a lawsuit by the Anglo-Irish piano inventor William Southwell against John and James Shudi Broadwood for infringement of his seminal 1794 patent were actions involving the opportunistic James Longman, his brother John Longman, his partner Francis Fane Broderip, and his successors, Muzio Clementi & Co., as well as George Astor, the firm of Culliford, Rolfe & Barrow, August Leukfeld, and George Wilkinson. In this article the authors reconstruct the issues and outcomes of these legal actions and their ramifications for William Southwell, who emerges as a victim of his own inventive success, and the nascent English piano industry. We draw upon the original court papers, as well as a family memoir of Southwell, the parish record of his burial in 1825, the 1802 partnership agreement of Southwell & Co., contemporary newspaper notices, prison records, apprenticeship records, the wills of several of the makers, and newly located original drawings and descriptions for patents by Southwell (1794) and his son, William junior (1837), held at The National Archives, Kew.

Two further articles by Debenham relating to the later activities of James Longman are available, see 3-9 and 3.10 below:

3.9 ‘131 Cheapside: The Longman Connection’ Margaret Debenham (2011).

Summary

The story recounted in this article is a sequel to that described in Debenham's co-authored paper with Professor George Bozarth, ‘Piano Wars: the Legal Machinations of London Pianoforte Makers, 1795–1806’ (2009). The evidence presented provides new insights into the history of James Longman in his final years, in particular focusing on his relationship with John Longman of 131, Cheapside. Primary source materials consulted include original court case documents, newspaper and magazine notices, directory entries and wills.

[It is important to note that the John Longman of 131, Cheapside was a young kinsman of James Longman and *not* the same person as James’ brother John of Milborne Port, who was in financial partnership with Clementi for several years, following the Longman and Broderip bankruptcy]

This paper is available for free download on the MIRcat site.

3.10. ‘131 Cheapside: The Longman Connection: Postscript’ Margaret Debenham (2012)

This short paper presents a summary of information to supplement that discussed in Debenham (2011) *131 Cheapside: The Longman Connection*. The sources reported include:

- a newspaper advertisement dated February 1802, relating to the business of ‘Longman and Co.’ at 131, Cheapside
- a Sun Fire Insurance Company record for Richard Hovill, cooper of Wapping, dated 1801
- a death notice for Dr Barton of Berners Street in June 1801.

These records highlight connections between James Longman, his kinsman John Longman [of 131, Cheapside], Richard Hovill and Dr Joseph Barton of Berners Street.

This paper is available for free download on the MIRcat site.

3.11 John Byrne Pianoforte-maker, Dublin:

A square piano case advertised by George Kidner Auctioneers & Valuers of Lymington, Hampshire for sale by auction in March 2017 bears a striking resemblance to the exterior of extant instruments with additional keys made by the house of Southwell in Dublin in the second half of the 1790s.



Square Piano Forte case by Byrne: (Image reproduced by kind permission of George Kidnerauctioneers)

Sadly nothing now remains of the piano forte action in this conversion. Only the nameboard survives, which clearly shows the makers name as 'Byrne' and with one of the two fretwork 'sonovents' still intact.



Name board of Square Piano Forte by Bryne (reproduced by kind permission of George Kidner, auctioneers)

Summary

It appears likely that this instrument was copied from Southwell's 'pianoforte with additional keys', (patented in London in 1794). However, as may be noted in the above image, the design of the fretwork sonovent is different from that seen on extant Southwell instruments and the decoration on the nameboard is somewhat simpler in style.

So who was Byrne? Little has been known of his life and work to date; however, Debenham has identified a number of contemporary newspaper advertisements and reports relating to his activities as a piano forte maker in Dublin between the years 1795 and 1824. These include firm evidence that in the year 1814 John Byrne of Ship-street, Dublin was taken to court by Clementi and Co. of London for making and selling fraudulently badged piano fortes using their name. And in 1820 a John Byrne, also of Ship-street, was reported to be in the employment of Mr. Southwell, piano forte maker of Marlborough-street, Dublin, thus providing an intriguing later link with the house of Southwell. [It should be noted that the Mr Southwell mentioned in this latter report must refer to John Southwell, son of William Southwell Senior, who is listed in *The Commercial Directory of Scotland, Ireland and the four most Northern Counties of England* in 1820-21 and 22 in business at 34, Marlborough-steet Dublin where his occupation is given as 'music dealer, pianoforte maker and pianoforte dealer.].

More detailed information about these findings is presented in the timeline below.

Timeline

1795 An advertisement placed by Bell [a Dublin auction house] in August 1795 includes 'a Piano Forte, made by Byrne' (Saunders's Newsletter, Dublin, 19 August 1795)

1802 Byrne himself placed two advertisements in this year that not only provide information on his address at that time but confirm that he was indeed making Piano Fortes with additional keys. An extract is given below.

PIANO FORTES/ BYRNE, Piano Forte Maker, 35, Fleet-street, has for/ sale Piano Fortes, with additional Keys, made by himself of the best materials, which on inspection will/ be found to excel in tone and workmanship to any offer-/ed for sale in this City. (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 24 February 1802; repeated 1 March 1802)

1805 From an advertisement placed in this year, we learn that Byrne's forename began with 'J' - see extract below:

PIANO FORTE/ To be sold reasonable, an excellent toned instrument,/ with additional keys, made and finished in the best/ & neatest manner, with the latest improvements. Inquire/ of J. Byrne, 35, Fleet-street, near Westmorland-street. (*Hibernian Journal*, 6 June 1805)

1807 In 1807 J. Byrne placed an advertisement announcing his change of address, which suggests that by this time his business was growing and attracting a wider clientele.

J.BYRNE, PIANO FORTE MAKER

RETURNS his sincere acknowledgement for past fa-/vours, informs the nobility, gentry and his friends/ he has for convenience of carrying on business more ex-/tensively, removed from No. 35 Fleet-street to No. 15,/ Great Ship-street, where he is assorted with the newest/improved Piano Fortes, which will be found on inspecti/on equal to any manufactured. Ladies and Gentlemen/ by applying to the above will meet the most agreeable terms./ N.B. Repairing and Tuning done on the shortest no-/tice in town and country./ Unfurnished Lodgings which are very extensive and/convenient. A neat Back House to let. (*Saunders's Newsletter*, 26 September 1807)

1814 In July of this year a newspaper notice placed by Clementi and Co., states that they were commencing court proceedings against three Dublin firms, including John Byrne of Ship-street, whom they accused of making and/or selling instruments fraudulently badged using their name. The existence of this advertisement was first identified by I M Hogan (Ita Margaret Hogan 1966. *Anglo Irish Music 1780 - 1830*. Cork University Press, 107). However Hogan did not give the full text, now located by the author, and this is quoted in full below:

PIANO FORTES/ Whereas, it has been discovered that some/obscure Persons in Dublin, have lately made Piano/ fortes, and put upon them the names of respectable Houses in/ London, as if manufactured by them.

And whereas several auctioneers and others have been in the/habit of selling these spurious Instruments, thereby grossly de-ceiving the Public, to the material injury of the said Houses.

Notice is hereby given, that Actions at Law are commenced/ on the part of Messrs. Clementi and Company, Cheapside/ London, against M. Larkin, Grafton-street, Thomas Kelly, Clarendon-street, John Byrne, Ship-street, and Others; and/ that any person hereafter detected, making use of the Name of/ Clementi and Company upon any instruments not manufactured/ by them, will in like manner be immediately proceeded against.

The Friends of Messrs. Clementi and Company are hereby/ respectfully apprised of this dishonest and disgraceful practice, and/ are recommended, in purchasing their instruments to apply to/ the regular and respectable Music Sellers, rather than expose/ themselves to be thus imposed upon by needy and designing men.

Dublin, July 8 1814. (*Freeman's Journal* 13 July 1814)

It is interesting to note that Byrne's advertisements in earlier years suggest that he was selling pianos badged using his own name, even though probably copying Southwell's design. Additional evidence to support this is provided by the surviving name board on a square piano case in George Kidner's auction sale of 2 March 2017, which clearly bears the name Byrne. Presumably it proved tempting to badge instruments fraudulently using the names of established London makers, notably Clementi, in order to obtain a higher sale price.

According to I M Hogan (1966) John Byrne of Ship-street, pianoforte maker, appeared in Dublin trade directories from 1814 through to 1824.

- 1820 On 25 September 1820 an intriguing report appeared in a Belfast newspaper relating to the conduct of the Princess of Wales (by then Queen Caroline, although she was never crowned) on the ship *Leviathon*, based on the first hand testimony of one John Byrne who had been employed on board as a cabin-joiner. At the time this report was published Byrne was said to be in the employment of Mr Southwell, piano forte maker, Marlborough-street [Dublin]. The report provides evidence of a firm connection between John Byrne and the house of Southwell - as well as making fascinating reading in its own right in the context of the history of the royal family at that time. A transcription of the text is given below:

THE QUEEN

The person (says Carrick's Morning Post,) who/ filled the situation of cabin-joiner, on board the/ *Leviathon*, during the time the Princess of Wales/ continued on board the ship, is now in Dublin. His name is John Byrne: - He is in the employ-/ment of Mr. Southwell, piano forte-maker, Marl-/ borough street. We have obtained from Mr./ Byrne, his "recollections" of the conduct of the/ Princess, during her stay on board the ship, and/ shall give his account in his own words:-

"The situation of cabin-joiner, gave me an/ opportunity of being well acquainted with many/ of the transactions that occurred in her Royal/ Highness's cabin. It was part of my duty to en-/ter the cabin in which she slept, at an early hour/ in the morning, to raise the blinds, and also at/

night to lower them. At any of these early/ hours that I so entered, I never saw M. Ber-/ gami; but in subsequent parts of the mornings, I/ have frequently seen him there engaged generally/ in writing for her Royal Highness.

"Her Royal Highness's demeanour towards all/ those persons whose duty brought them near her/ person, was most condescending; on several oc-/ casions she called me familiarly "her son", as she/ did several others, when she required them to per-/ form any trifling service for her. I was the per-/ son who made the alterations in the cabins, which/ she desired at her first coming on board, and I/ was the person who found and returned an ele / -gant seal belonging to her, which was lost in/ the cabin, which her Majesty will not fail to re-/ collect, should any circumstances remind her of it.

"I have never seen or heard of the least mis'/ conduct, or any improper familiarity attached/ to her Majesty, during her stay in the Leviathon;/ and I am willing to prove this, and such other/ facts as I know to be true" (*The Belfast Commercial Chronicle*, 25 September 1820; also reported in *The Times*, 26 September 1820)

For those interested to learn more of the background history relating to this story, a digitized copy of a contemporary account of the trial of Queen Caroline in London in 1820, is available on-line for download at the following link:

<https://archive.org/details/importantandeve00caroog#:~:text=The%20important%20and%20eventful%20trial,%22adulterous%20intercourse%2C%22%20with%20Bartolomo%20Bergami&text=Lccn,2005565254>

1824 There is an entry John Byrne, piano, at 15 Great Ship-street, Dublin in *Piggotts Directory, 1824*, the last mention of him located by the author. His date of death presently remains unknown.

3.12 John Isaac Hawkins

Biographical Timeline 1772 – 1854

Summary

John Isaac Hawkins (1772-1854) was born in England, but spent a number of years in America, arriving there *ca.* 1790 when about eighteen years old, before returning to work in London in 1803. He was destined to return to America in his final years and died in New Jersey in 1854. Although a prolific inventor in several fields during the course of his working life, sadly he appears to have profited little financially from his innovations. Throughout his life he was a follower of the Swedensborgian religion, having been brought to this faith by his father, who had converted in 1785 and in consequence was expelled from the Methodist church by Wesley at that time.

In the field of musical instrument making, as a young man John Isaac Hawkins was responsible for the design of an upright pianoforte in America first

constructed ca. 1800, with strings that extended vertically towards the floor, so preceding [William Southwell's cabinet pianoforte](#), patented 1807, by several years.

Hawkins also designed another ambitious musical instrument which he called a Claviole, the first of which he constructed and completed while still in America in 1802. In summary, he described this instrument as a keyed instrument, with gut strings, made in form of a book-case, or chamber organ, which imitated wind as well as stringed instruments. He returned to London in the year 1803 and, according to his own later testimony in 1845, he constructed two further such instruments there, the first being completed in 1806.

Evidence from contemporary newspaper sources now reveals that he opened a manufactory to make and sell his upright pianos in London in 1805. However, by 1807 the business had foundered and he was made bankrupt. He went on to work in other fields, including sugar refining (see 1827 for further information relating to this activity) and manufacturing pens with gold nibs tipped with iridium for strength.

However, it appears he never abandoned hope of developing and profiting further from his Claviole. Writing in 1845, he floated plans to travel through Europe and America, exhibiting the instrument at concerts and giving lessons on its construction to musical instrument makers 'willing to pay him for the results of his long experience'. In reality these plans were no more than a pipe dream.

In 1848 he returned to America hoping to take advantage of what he believed would be a more congenial environment for his endeavors, but this too proved to be a forlorn hope. He died in Elizabethtown, New Jersey in 1854, a poor and lonely man, with only his young third wife for company.

Timeline

- 1772 John Isaac Hawkins was born 15 March 1772, the son of Isaac Hawkins (a Taunton watchmaker and local Methodist preacher) and his wife Joan. His elder sister Anna was born 13 December 1769. (Obituary of J I Hawkins in The Annual Report of the Institution of Civil Engineers, 1865-66 and R.F. Tafel, 1877 *Documents concerning the Life and Character of Emanuel Swedenborg*, Vol II Part 3-in some bindings Part 2 Note 239. London: Swedensborg Society, British and Foreign
- [See 1788 for the siblings later baptism into the Swedenborgian faith in London).
- 1783 Isaac Hawkins Senior settled in London with his family (Tafel, 1877)
- 1785 In about this year Hawkins Senior was converted to the Swedenborgian faith by his friend and fellow Methodist preacher, James Hindmarsh. In consequence he was expelled from the Society of Methodists by Wesley (Tafel, 1877)
- 1788 Both John Isaac Hawkins and his sister Anna were baptised at the Friar Street Swedenborgian Church, in London on 15 June 1788 (Piece 4239, Friar Street, Blackfriars, 1787-1837)
- 1790 John Isaac Hawkins is reported to have left England for America at around this time and entered the college at Jersey [later to become Princeton University] initially to study medicine, but soon changed his course to study 'more mechanical pursuits', devoting attention to 'perfecting the mode of removing

chemical and mechanical impurities from water, by filtration in contact with charcoal' (Obituary of J.I. Hawkins in *The Annual Report of the Institution of Civil Engineers, 1865-66*)

His elder sister, Anna, married William Thompson, churchwarden of St. James's, Clerkenwell, and a master-manufacturer of coal measures and coal shovels. According to the memoir of her youngest son Samuel (b.1810), she went on to bear 11 children before her husband died in the year of Samuel's birth (S. Thompson *Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the Last Fifty Years: an Autobiography, 1884, Ch.1, note 1*). J.I. Hawkins was later to play an influential role in Samuel's upbringing.

1797 Hawkins married (or co-habited with) with Anna Burton in America from about this year. She was born in 1775, according to her age at date of death (information given in her obituary - see 1838)

1799 Hawkins made the first bow for his new invention, the key fingered viol (Claviola or Claviole), while living in Bordenton, New Jersey (J.I. Hawkins 1845 'The History and Resusciation of the Claviole, or finger-keyed Viol' in *The Mechanics' Magazine, Museum, Register, Journal*. Ed. J C Robertson Vol XLIII [5 July-27Dec 1845], p123. [The spelling of 'Bordenton' here is that given in Hawkin's article, though from later sources it appears the correct spelling is 'Bordentown']

1800 On 13 November 1800 his father registered an English patent on his behalf 'for an Invention applicable to Musical Instruments, the Principles of which are also designed to be applied to other Machinery' (*The Repertory Arts, Manufactures, Agriculture* No. XLIII Second Series. Dec. 1805).

See Michael Cole, 1998, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*, pp 263-6 for more information on the specifications listed in Hawkins' patent. Interestingly he observes that Hawkins was never a musical instrument maker as such, but an engineer who with youthful enthusiasm proposed to revolutionize the design of the pianoforte, though he had little practical experience in the field. In consequence, to quote Cole, ...'Hawkins attempted far too much and paid too little attention to essentials. He introduced so many innovations all at once that something was sure to give trouble, and did'...

A letter dated 11 February 1800 from Thomas Jefferson to his wife Martha describes an upright forte piano which he would proceed to buy from Hawkins for the use of his daughter.

... a person here has invented the prettiest improvment in the Forte piano I have ever seen. it has tempted me to engage one for Monticello, partly for it's [sic] excellence & convenience, partly to assist a very ingenious, modest & poor young man, who ought to make a fortune by his invention. his strings are perpendicular, so that the instrument is only 3. f. 4. I. wide, 16. I. deep, and 3. f. 6. I. high. it resembles when closed the under half of a book case, & may be moved, by it's handles, to the fire side. he contrives within that height to give his strings the same length as in the grand fortepiano, and fixes his 3. unisons to the same screw, which screw is in the direction of the strings and therefore never yields. it scarcely gets out of tune at all, & then for the most part the 3. unisons are tuned at once. the price of one with 5 octaves is 200. D. with 5¹/₂ octaves 250. D.

(Citation: From Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, 11 February 1800,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 29, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-31-02-0311>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 31, 1 February 1799–31 May 1800, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004, pp. 365–366.]

1802 On 13 April 1802 Thomas Jefferson wrote to Hawkins regarding the Forte piano he had purchased regretting that it would not stay in tune and asking if he might return it to have the defect remedied, offering to bear the cost of transportation from Washington to Philadelphia for this purpose.

(Citation: To Thomas Jefferson from John Isaac Hawkins, 21 April 1802,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified March 30, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-37-02-0236>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 37, 4 March–30 June 1802, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 301.]

Hawkins replied on 21 April and said he would be happy to deal with this, but that he required payment of \$40 to cover his costs. He also intimated that he expected to leave for London ‘in a few weeks’, saying that he had been left property there by a relative.

(Citation: To Thomas Jefferson from John Isaac Hawkins, 21 April 1802,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified March 30, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-37-02-0236>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 37, 4 March–30 June 1802, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, p. 301.]

Images of an extant example of a [Hawkins forte-piano \(No. 6\)](#) made in America in 1801 are available on the website of the Museum of American History, Washington, DC.

On 17 June 1802 Jefferson wrote to Hawkins saying he had shipped the piano to him for repair. He mentions the Claviolle which was due to be exhibited and that he could be interested in trading in his piano for a Claviolle if one were available.

(Citation: "From Thomas Jefferson to John Isaac Hawkins, 17 June 1802,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified March 30, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-37-02-0501>.

[Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 37, 4 March–30 June 1802, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, pp. 613–614.])

According to his own account of the history of the Claviolle, Hawkins gave a concert on his newly constructed instrument in Philadelphia 21 June 1802, which featured music composed by himself. It also featured a performance on his 'patent portable grand piano', which he later claimed to be 'the grandfather of the present Cabinet, Piccolo, and other pianos with short upright strings' (J.I. Hawkins 1845 *The Mechanics' Magazine*, p123)

He exhibited his Claviolle at Mr Peale’s Museum in that city for a short time from 23 June 1802, before preparing for his forthcoming trip to Europe (Hawkins, 1845, *Mechanics Magazine*).

News of the invention of this novel instrument had reached England by August of this year. A short newspaper report in a provincial newspaper reads:

A Mr Hawkins, of New York, has constructed/ a new musical instrument, which he calls a claviol./ The music is produced from gut strings by a re-/ fined horse hair bow, and is played with finger-/ keys like the harpsichord.

The tones which this/ instrument produces are stated to possess the sweet-/ ness of the Harmonica, the richness of the violin,/ and the grandeur of the organ. (*Hampshire Chronicle*, 16 August 1802)

- 1803 On 8 June 1803 Hawkins wrote again to Jefferson asking for permission for a Mr Uri K Hill to take his likeness in profile with one of his 'patent physicnotraces', for publication in America and Europe. He added that he expected to sail for England in about two weeks and intends to set up a manufactory for Clavioles, promising to send the first perfect one to his order.

(Citation: To Thomas Jefferson from John Isaac Hawkins, 8 June 1803," Founders Online, National Archives, last modified March 30, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-40-02-0377>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 40, 4 March–10 July 1803, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013, pp. 501–502.]

Evidence that Hawkins patented the design of a polygraph in America and sold the rights to Charles William Peale, artist, inventor and director of the American Museum in Philadelphia before his return to England is reported in the findings of a project conducted at Cambridge University. Thomas Jefferson is reported to have used the machine for more than twenty years and carried on a lengthy correspondence about how it might be improved.

Writing in 1845, Hawkins recalled that in June 1803 he left Philadelphia to travel to London, having dismantled and packed away the Claviole to await his return. He arrived in London in August 1803 (Hawkins, 1845. *Mechanics' Magazine*, p124)

The church register of the Swedenborgian Church, Friar Street, London records the baptism of Anna Hawkins (his American wife) on 28 August 1803. Her date of birth is given as 6 November 1775 and her parents are named as David and Catherine Burton.

- 1805 Two newspaper advertisements placed in a London newspaper in this year reveal that Hawkins had opened a manufactory there to make and sell his upright patent pianofortes. The first of these reads:

HAWKINS' PATENT PIANO-FORTE/ distinguished from all others, by spiral strings and/ metallic frames. Their decided superiority for sweetness of tone and delicacy of touch is acknowledged by all amateurs/ and judges of music. The strings being stretched in a metal/ frame by screws, on a new plan, effectually prevents the In-/ strument going out of tune by the changes of the atmosphere;/ and their spiral form affords a fine mellow bass in a small/ compass. the increasing demand has induced the Patentee/ to open an Additional Warehouse, for the better accomodation of the Public. No 33, Golden-square, where they may/ be supplied with every variety, as well as at No.4, Dalby/ Terrace, City Road.

The second gives more detail on the dimensions of his cabinet model.

PIANO-FORTES with SPIRAL SPRINGS / J I HAWKINS has now completed a few of these/ Instruments without valves, but the same in other respects/ as those which have already received the most unqualified ap/ probation of amateurs and professors of the first rank. No/ change of weather can ever put these Piano's [sic] out of tune;/ and his Grand Pianos are in the form of a cabinet of only 44/ inches in height, 40 in breadth, and

from twelve to 18 inches/ deep. – No. 4, Dalby Terrace, City Road, near the New/ River. (*The Morning Post* 3 June 1805)

According to his own testimony in an account given on the history of his development of the Claviole, he began to manufacture the first instrument made to this design in this year (Hawkins 1845, *Mechanics Magazine*, p124.)

1806 Hawkins says he completed building his first Claviole in London this year (Hawkins, 1845 *Mechanics Magazine*, p 124)

1807 Hawkins became bankrupt. An advertisement in *The Public Ledger* on 1 June 1807 attempted to persuade readers that developing instruments made to his Claviole patent would make them a great deal of money as an inducement to purchase the patent rights, both English and American.

TO THE MUSICAL WORLD – An Opportunity of realising immense Wealth.

THE CLAVIOLE. – The Amateurs of Music/ have not an opportunity of viewing the grand desiderat- / tum of the Musical World, for the past ages. The above Instru- / ment, invented by Mr John Isaac Hawkins, and which has been/ twelve years occupying the chief of his time at an immense ex- / pence, is now finished, and a Patent is secured. This instrument/ being played by a Piano-forte, the performer gives the power of/ a full Band, combining the force and expression of the Violin/ with the sweetness of the Musical Glasses, and grandeur of the/ Organ. It is a keyed Instrument, with gut strings, and is made/ in form of a book-case, or chamber organ; it imitates wind as/ well as stringed instruments.

As the ingenious but unfortunate Inventor is a Bankrupt, the/ Patent, which includes sundry valuable improvements on the/ Piano-forte, and other Musical Instruments, will be SOLD by/ AUCTION, by Order of the Assignees, at the Patentee's house,/ No. 4, DALBY TERRACE, City-road, near the New River/ on TUESDAY, THE 16TH June.

At the same time will be sold Twelve of the Patentees elegant patent Grand and Square Piano-fortes, with spiral strings, and me- / tallic frames. Also, the only Claviole ever finished. The Sale/ will begin at Eleven o'clock. This first Lot will be the English/Patent, and the second lot an American Patent for the same./ Either of these Inventions, in the hands of an active person, with adequate means to give them publicity, must prove an inexhausti- / ble source of wealth. The advantage of a monopoly of an In- / strument possessing the powers of the Claviole, and which cannot/ go out of tune, must be obvious to every one. The Piano fortes/ are peculiarly adapted for the export trade to the East or West/ Indies, the moisture or dryness of the atmosphere having no ef- / fect upon them. They have lately received the most marked/ approbation of persons of the first rank, and convincing proofs/ will be communicated at the time of sale of their superiority over/ all others.

They will be on view at Mr. Hawkin's house, Dalby Terrace, on 8th, 10th, 12th and 15th June instant, from Twelve till/ Four o'clock. The Patentee will attend to give all requisite ex- / planations... (*The Public Ledger*, 4 June 1807)

There is resonance here with the development of Plenius' Lyrichord during the 1740s, he having been persuaded by his backer, Charles Cope's assertions that it would make them both very rich if fully developed. (see: Margaret Debenham and Michael Cole, 2013: 'Pioneer Piano Makers in London, 1737–1774: newly discovered documentary sources' in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* Vol. 44 Issue 1, Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 55-86) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14723808.2012.761771>

An announcement placed in *The London Gazette* on 11 July 1807 states that John Isaac Hawkins would be granted his Certificate of Bankruptcy unless due cause is shown to the contrary by 2 August 1807.

- 1808 On 1 June of this year a short news item in *The Scots Magazine* announced that:

Mr J.I. Hawkins, of Titchfield- street, has established a museum for/ the reception and exhibition of useful/ mechanical inventions and improve- ments. Although his own inventions/ constitute the leading feature of the/ exhibition, yet it is not exclusively/ confined to these, for the inventions/ and improvements of other are and/ will be introduced. In the list which/ he gives of those that are now exhi/ biting, or in preparation, may be no- ticed the following curious contrivan- ces: a cock, by which a servant can/ draw no more liquor than is ordered;/ - a machine, to be towed across a river, which will in the same moment/ draw on paper, to any reduced scale,/ the exact shape of the bottom; shew- ing at one view, the depth of water/ in every part, together with the width of the river; - a violin to fold up for/ the pocket; - artificial ears to assist the deaf, which can be worn out of sight/ without inconvenience. (*The Scots Magazine*, 1 June 1808. p445)

An auction notice placed by William Abbott and Mr Blades in London includes 'a patent Claviolle by Hawkins' (*The Morning Post*, 20 June 1808)

- 1809 On 29 April 1809, a notice placed in *The London Gazette* announced that the Commissioners in a Commission of Bankrupt in the case of John Isaac Hawkins would meet to make a Dividend of his Estate and Effects on 3 June 1809.

An advertisement placed in *The Morning Advertiser*, 2 June 1809 for an auction sale to be held on 7 June by R Needham of Broad-street, Royal Exchange includes:

a valuable Assortment/ of curious and useful Musical Instruments and inventions/ from Hawkins's Museum, No 79, Great Titchfield-street,/ sold to ascertain damages against a Merchant, for not ful- filling his contract'. It also states 'The whole may be viewed on Mon-/day and Tuesday, and morning of sale, when a Gentleman/ will attend to perform on the claviolle, from eleven to three/ o'clock.

On 2 November 1809, Hawkins took out a Patent for ' a certain Instrument, Machine or Manufacture, applicable in Mechanics as a Balance or Equipoise' (*The Repertory of Arts, Manufactures and Agriculture* Vol XVIII – Second Series, 1811, P199-203)

- 1812 According to his own account in *The Mechanics Magazine*, 1845 p.126, on 22 June 1812 Hawkins published a prospectus for a proposed 'Millechord Claviolle, or thousand stringed Viol.', extract as follows:

...to be constructed with one thousand gut strings, the tones produced by rosined horsehair bows, and artificial fingers, acted on by four sets of finger keys and eighty pedals, together with barrels of large dimensions, which, with the bows, will be turned into machinery, giving the full power and variety of a band of two hundred performers.

The instrument will yield the perfect sounds of the violin, viola, violincello, double bass, harp and organ; will closely imitate the flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, fife, flageolet, union pipes, horn, trumpet, bugle horn, musical glasses, celestina, eolian harp &c., as well as produce sounds entirely new and peculiarly delightful; and will scarcely ever be out of tune.

The prospectus goes on to say that the estimated cost would be £4,200 which he proposed to raise by subscription shares with a projected completion of the following spring - and suggested that there would be a huge profit for the shareholders on their investment.

Clearly this was a wildly ambitious and unrealistic proposition. It demonstrates too that Hawkins must have failed to sell the patent rights in the 1807 auction sale.]

The text of the prospectus also states that he had made a claviole with sixty-six gut strings and one set of finger keys in Philadelphia ten years earlier; a second in London, six years earlier and a third two years earlier.

Writing in 1845, he observes that because of pressure of work on other engineering projects, he did not have time to promote this prospectus and so nothing more was done with it at that time (that is to say in 1812).

1813 A notice for a forthcoming auction sale to be held 16 July 1813 by Mr H. Phillips of 73 New Bond-street reveals yet another attempt to sell Hawkins Claviole

By Mr H. Phillips, at this Great Room, No 73, New Bond-/street, on Friday next, July 16.

HAWKINS'S PATENT CLAVIOLE, a curious/ Grand Muscial Instrument, to produce the effect of a/ band of violins, violas, violincellos, and double bases, as well/ as close imitations of flutes, clarionets, flageolets, horns, &c. to-/ gether with the full power and grandeur of the organ (*Morning Post* 14 July 1813)

Apparently once more the instrument remained unsold since in the autumn of 1813, Hawkins himself took a claviole to Brighton where it was initially exhibited in the Auction Mart, St James-street and then in a room at the Marine Library. He again proposed opening a subscription book on his return to London, giving his address as his Essence of Coffee Manufactory, No. 70 Great Titchfield-street, Marylebone, but it seems this never materialised in practice (Hawkins, *Mechanics Magazine* 1845, p127).

From the later wry observations of his nephew Samuel Thompson, we may glean that the above premises must also have been the site of a sugar refinery and that Hawkins borrowed money on a number of occasions from his sister Anna, both for this and other purposes, she having been left a substantial settlement on the death of her husband in 1810.

...Also, he borrowed my mother's money, to be expended for the good of mankind, and the elaboration of the teeming offspring of his

inexhaustible inventive faculty... (S Thompson, 1884 'History of a Man of Genius' in *Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer*, Chapter 2)

From Hawkins own comments relating to his sugar refining activities, written in 1827 and published in 1828, it appears that he had worked in collaboration with E C Howard, inventor of an important sugar refining process, in the years leading to Howard's death in 1816 (*Reportory of Patent Inventions*, 1828 - see 1828 for full reference and further details).

- 1818 In this year Hawkins appears in *Johnstone's Commercial Directory* at 79, Titchfield-street, London, with his occupation given as 'Essence of coffee manufacturer'.
- 1819 An extensive description of Hawkins' Claviolle is found in Abraham Rees' *The Cylopaedia*, Vol. 14 published this year. A plate illustrating the design of the instrument appears in *The Cyclopeadia*, Plates Vol III, Plate XIV
- 1822 The first mechanical pencil that had a mechanism that propelled the lead and whose lead could be replaced was patented in 1822 by Sampson Mordan and John Isaac Hawkins in Britain. Mordan changed business partners a few times until, in 1837, he decided to start manufacturing mechanical pencils alone in his "S.Mordan & Co." company. (*History of the Mechanical Pencil - Inventor of Mechanism*)
- Hawkins is listed as a Patent Agent in *Pigot's London Directory* in this year.
- 1824 According to his later obituary (published in 1865, 11 years after his death) John Isaac Hawkins was elected as a member of the London based Institution of Civil Engineers on 27 April 1824 (*Minutes of Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers*, 1855-6, Vol XXV, p.512). Interestingly his address in the list of elected members in 1824 gives his address as 355, Forth Street New York at that time, though other evidence strongly suggests he was still in London.
- 1825 An announcement in *The Hereford Journal* on 7 December 1825 reports the granting of a patent to John Isaac Hawkins of Chase Cottage, Pancras Vale, Middlesex 'for improvements on certain implements, machines or apparatus, used in the manufacturing of books, whether bound or unbound'
- 1827 Writing in 1845, Hawkins reports that in 1827 he went abroad for some years and before leaving removed all the strings off the instrument [Claviolle] to prevent their breaking in his absence. He goes on to say that after his return to England he had postponed re-stringing it with the intention of adding two important improvements (i) the means of tightening the horsehair when rendered slack from frequent pressure on the strings (ii) placing 18 of the bass notes under the power of the feet by introducing foot pedals.
- His nephew Samuel Thompson recounts in his autobiography that in about 1825 Hawkins had been selected by the Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria to design and superintend the first extensive works erected in Vienna for the promotion of the new manufacture of beet-root sugar and from there went on to Paris to perform the same duties for the French government (S Thompson, 1884 *Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer*, Chapter 2)
- 1828 An article by Hawkins in *The Reportory of Patent Inventions* described a number of improvements he made to the third patent of the process of refining

sugar taken out by Charles Edward Howard in 1814, introducing his remarks thus:

OBSERVATIONS - Having given Mr. Howard's three specifications entire, with such observations as the respective subjects appeared to require for elucidation, and for showing the present practice of the new process, I think it a duty I owe to myself to point out some of the improvements and modifications that I invented and introduced into the sugar houses: for the most part during Mr Howard's life, and by his particular request...

Having described his improvements, he concludes:

- 1834 Magene Daniels, 1980, reports that in this year Hawkins developed a successful method of embedding small pieces of iridium in the tip of a gold pen, thus creating a pen with a durable and smooth writing point. He sold his first pen in London in 1834 and in 1835 sold his business to a Cleveland entrepreneur, Aaron Porter. In due course Porter imported the manufacture of the pen to the United States and by mid-century the USA was the world leader in gold pen manufacture. (Maygene Daniels 1980. 'The Ingenious Pen: American Writing Implements from the Eighteenth Century to the Twentieth' in *The American Archivist*. Summer 1980)
- 1838 Anna Hawkins, wife of John Isaac, died and was buried 15 July 1838 at St Pancras Church. Her obituary casts light on the origins of their relationship, as well as her later life in London

'She was a native of the United States of America, where Mr. H. married her forty years ago. He was intimately acquainted with her for three years previous to her marriage, and judged her to be a suitable match for him in every way, except that of her religious creed, she being a member of the Calvinistic Baptist persuasion. In order to undermine this ground of disunion of minds, Mr. H. put in her way some of the writings of Swedensborg, which after two years, seemed to make a little impression. He then presented her with the Treatise on Conjugal Love, and requested her serious perusal of it, and candid opinion of its contents. She expressed approbation of the greater part; upon which he made proposals of marriage, and they were accepted. But she did not formally recede from the Baptist church until she was driven away by the persecutions of the bigoted part of her friends; upon which she clung to her husband, and became an open professor of the New Church verities.' (*The Intellectual Repository and New Jerusalem Magazine*, 1838-39 Vol. 5, pp 277-8)

Less than two months after his wife's death, on 6 September 1838 Hawkins remarried. His bride was Alice Hogan, a widow. According to a family history site compiled by members of the Hogan family, Alice Hogan (nee Reynolds) was born in 1798, daughter of Captain Richard Reynolds R.N. The site also states that there were five children of the Hogan marriage, all baptised together at the Swedensborgian Church on 18 Dec 1831, thus providing evidence that she was of the same faith.

- 1839 Hawkins marriage to Alice Hogan was destined to be short lived. She died in 1839 and her burial is recorded at St Andrews Holborn 5 July 1839
- 1843 John Isaac Hawkins is listed as a steel pen maker at 20, Judd Place, New Road London in the *Post Office Directory of London* in this year.

1844 On 14 February 1844 Hawkins was married for the third time to Emma Amelia Dickson in Warnham, Sussex. Later accounts of his final years in America suggest that she was a very young girl at the time, possibly young enough to have been his granddaughter.

1845 In this year Hawkins is listed as a gold pen maker at 26 Judd Place W., New Road in the *Post Office Directory of London*.

In his article dated 13 August 1845 recounting the design and invention of his Claviole, Hawkins mentions that he was at that time contemplating travelling with it through Europe and America, exhibiting it at concerts and giving lessons on its construction to musical instrument makers willing to pay him for the results of his long experience in order to recoup some of the financial investment he has made in its development (Hawkins, 1845 *Mechanics Magazine*, p131). Sadly it is clear from subsequent events that this was a mere pipe dream, destined never to materialise in reality.

1848 Hawkins is listed as a Civil Engineer at 30, Charles Square in the *Post Office Directory of London*.

According to his later obituary (*Proceedings of Civil Engineers*, 1865-6) he returned to America in the autumn of this year, with the hopeful intention of perfecting several inventions there. An extract from a farewell letter written at the time reads:

The creator has constituted me an inventor, and I consider every useful invention given to me, as a commission from Him in trust, for the benefit of mankind; and I should deem myself guilty of a breach of that trust, were I not to use every reasonable exertion to carry the same into effect, as long as it can afford me due support. Society is now enjoying many comforts and conveniences from my inventions, while I have great difficulty in procuring common necessaries.

1850 There is firm evidence that Hawkins returned to live in Bordentown, New Jersey, America.

He made his will there on 22 July 1850 (four years before his death), a simple document in which he describes himself as a Civil Engineer and Everlasting Pen Maker. He left all his estate to his wife Emma Amelia. (Probate Records, 1794-1902 [Essex County, New Jersey]; Author: New Jersey. Surrogate's Court (Essex); Probate Place: Essex, New Jersey; accessed via Ancestry, July 2017).

1854 Hawkins died in Elizabethtown, New Jersey, 28 June 1854, lonely and penniless, with only his young wife to look after him. (J B Gilder, 1880. *Bordentown and the Bonapartes* in *Scibner's Monthly* Vol. 0021, Issue 1 [Nov. 1880]; and S Thompson, 1884 *Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the Last Fifty Years: An Autobiography*. Chapter 1 note 1) His will was proved on 6 July 1854, with probate granted to his widow, Emma Amelia (Probate records, 1794-1902 - see 1850 for full reference).

3.13 Plenius, Neubauer and Viator

Pioneer Piano Makers in London, 1737-1774

The journal-published article by Margaret Debenham and Michael Cole (2013) cited below presents novel findings from contemporary primary source documents that illuminate the life and activities of three pioneer keyboard makers in London, namely Roger Plenius, Frederick Neubauer and Herman Viator.

Margaret Debenham and Michael Cole, 2013: 'Pioneer Piano Makers in London, 1737–1774: newly discovered documentary sources' in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* Vol. 44. Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 55-86..

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14723808.2012.761771>

Abstract

The most historically significant and widely influential pianoforte designs, both for use in public concerts and for domestic music making, first appeared in the later 1760s, mostly as the work of immigrant German-born craftsmen working in London. But their work was preceded by a handful of pioneering instrument makers whose lives have been largely unreported until now. In this paper the authors report on the life and work of three such immigrant craftsmen who made pianofortes and related instruments in London in the period 1740–65. Two of them, Roger Plenius and Herman Viator, met with great personal misfortunes, while the other, Frederick Neubauer, crowned his career with a great triumph which has never been widely reported, though unhappily not one of his instruments is known to survive. The authors' findings are drawn from newly located contemporary newspaper notices and original manuscripts held at *The National Archives, Kew* and the *Bancroft Library*, London.

3.14 Joseph Merlin in London, 1760 - 1803

The journal-published article by Margaret Debenham (2014) cited below presents novel findings drawn from contemporary primary source materials that illuminate the life and activities of Joseph Merlin in London from 1760 until his death in 1803.

Margaret Debenham, 2014. Joseph Merlin in London, 1760–1803: the Man behind the Mask. New Documentary Sources in *The Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, Vol. 45, Issue 1, 130-163. Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group,. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14723808.2014.888175>

[As of February 2026, the two articles described in 3.14 and 3.15 above are available for reading and/or downloading free of charge by kind courtesy of the publishers]

Abstract

Joseph Merlin (1735–1803), 'Ingenious Mechanik', musical-instrument maker and flamboyant showman, is perhaps best remembered for his Museum in Princes Street, London, with its scintillating displays of automata and

extraordinary inventions. Two newly identified sets of Court documents, *Nicholl v. Merlin*, 1779 and *Merlin v. Celsson*, 1779–81, now provide insights into previously unknown aspects of his business dealings and personal life. The former concerns a dispute over a house that Merlin commissioned to be built in 1776, the latter a violation of his 1774 combined harpsichord-pianoforte patent rights. Material relating to Lavigne Verel, his musical instrument foreman from 1773 to 1781, is also reported. Amongst other novel findings, perhaps the most surprising is Merlin's marriage in 1783. Contemporary primary-source material consulted includes original manuscripts held at The National Archives, UK, the Scone Palace Archives, Parish Registers, Land Tax and Apprenticeship records and numerous contemporary newspaper advertisements and notices.

4. London Connections

4.1 John Trotter Senior (1736–1790):

Timeline

- 1713 John Trotter Senior was born in Castelsheill, Berwickshire in 1713, one of eleven known children of Alexander Trotter and Jean Steuart, including Archibald (b. 1717), Thomas (b. 1716) and William (b. 1719).
- 1747 According to Clive Edwards, Tom Trotter [John's brother] and Robert Young were in business together in Edinburgh in this year.¹
- 1749 A newspaper advertisement records him in business at Frith Street, Soho in this year.²
- 1752 John Trotter Senior married Anne Locke (–1759), by whom he had four children, none of whom followed him into the business.
- 1755 Alexander Trotter (1755–), eldest son of Archibald Trotter (one of John's brothers) was born.³
- 1756 John Trotter (1756–1833), second son of Archibald was born. He was later to become a partner of his uncle John and a highly successful military contractor, and later a close friend of William Southwell senior.
- 1759 A letter from the Countess of Leinster's sister exists which refers in some detail to two chairs being made for the Countess at Carton House by J Trotter of Frith Street, Soho, London.⁴
- 1761 John Broadwood aged 29 (therefore born ca. 1732) arrived in London to seek his fortune. He is said to be the eldest son of the village "wright" or carpenter of Oldhamstocks in the Lothian Hills, south of Edinburgh.⁵

Over eighty years later a historical 'snippet' column of the *Leeds Mercury* in December 1843 reads as follows:

Mr Broadwood, the celebrated pianoforte maker, London, and the late Mr Trotter, cabinet maker, Princes-street Edinburgh, were at one time fellow apprentices to the village wright at Innerwick, in the east of Haddingtonshire.⁶

- 1764 The dissolution of a partnership between Charles Smith, George Smith Bradshaw and John Trotter was reported in *The London Gazette*.⁷
- 1773 By this year John Trotter Senior (the cabinet maker) had bought the estate of Horton, at Epsom in Surrey. This is proved by an entry in the parish records for that year.⁸
- 1785 John Trotter occupied 5 Soho Square from 1785–90.
- 1787 In this year Anne Trotter (daughter of John Senior) married her cousin Robert Trotter, who by this time had become Postmaster General of Edinburgh.⁹
- 1790 John Trotter Senior died – a very wealthy man. His will was proved on 4 July 1790.¹⁰

¹ Clive Edwards *Turning Houses into Homes; A History of the Retailing and Consumption of Domestic Furnishing* (Ashgate, 2005).

² *The London Daily Advertiser*, 30 October 1749.

³ Archibald Trotter (another brother) had three sons: John (1756–) – who would later become a military contractor and was a close friend of William Southwell Senior; Alexander (1755–); and Coutts (1765–). Alexander Trotter was to become paymaster for the navy and was to become publicly discredited with Lord Melville in 1805. He retired to spend the remainder of his life on his estate at Dreghorn.

⁴ The Knight of Glin and James Peill, *Irish Furniture: Woodwork and Carving in Ireland from earliest times to the Act of Union*, New Haven, 2007, 129.

⁵ History of Broadwood website: www.uk-piano.org/broadwood/history.html

⁶ *The Leeds Mercury* Saturday, 16 December 1843.

⁷ *The London Gazette* (10411), 21 April 1764 p3.

⁸ Surrey History Centre, Woking, Collection ref: 3132. EPSOM, ST MARTIN: ADDITIONAL PARISH RECORDS 1770-1899. Series ref: 3132/2/VESTRY. Additional rate for legal costs of hearings concerning common rights, 1770-1772. Complaint about illegal enclosure of common by John Trotter Esq. of Horton, 1773. http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=IxMAAAAAMAAJ&dq=John+Trotter+Soho+Squa re&source=gbs_summary_s&cad=0 Accessed 12 March 2008.

⁹ Robert Trotter, Post Master General of Edinburgh - see www.victorianweb.org/previctorian/letters/trotter.html

¹⁰ The National Archives, Kew. PROB 11/1194. The main beneficiaries were his eldest son James (to whom he left his estate at Horton in Surrey), his son John (in the armed forces – not the military contractor, who was his nephew); and his daughter Ann (still Trotter as her husband is named as Robert Trotter).

4.2 John Trotter Junior (1756/7–833), Military contractor and founder of the Soho Bazaar

Timeline

- 1756/7 John Trotter, second son of Archibald (b. 1717) and nephew of the London cabinet maker, John Trotter senior was born.
- 1774 He joined his uncle in London in 1774 and soon became a partner in his firm.
- 1787 He offered to warehouse military stores in his own warehouses and in consequence established a lucrative business as a government supplier.¹
- 1803–1815 As a military contractor during the Napoleonic Wars he was in charge of all government stores, which made his fortune.²

- 1805 In common with William Southwell, Trotter had a very inventive turn of mind. One invention was for a steam engine,³ another a frame knapsack⁴ and yet another a curvilinear saw,⁵ for which he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Society of Arts in 1805.
- 1807 His position vis-a-vis his government contract was regularized when he was appointed to the office of storekeeper-general.⁶
- 1811 He filed a patent for a novel design of pianoforte keyboard on the same day on which William Southwell filed his patent for a ‘pianoforte sloping backwards’ – the two are consecutive entries in the contemporary index of patents. The two men were said to have been great friends, according to the testimony of Southwell’s daughter Frances, as told to her grandson, Frederick Southwell Cripps.
- 1815/6 After the war, when the warehouses became redundant for military equipment, Trotter had the bright idea of converting them into a ‘bazaar’, known as the Soho Bazaar, where individuals (mainly women) could rent stalls by the day to sell individually made items, plants etc. This business proved very successful and another money spinner for the already wealthy Trotter.
- 1833 John Trotter is said by family tree sources to have died at Connaught Place in London; however, parish records show that he was buried in the parish church of South Mimms on 13 September 1833 (near to his country estate, Dyrham Park).⁷

The close connection between John Trotter Junior and William Southwell in London, as related to her grandson, by his daughter Frances, raised the possibility that he might have been apprenticed to the cabinet maker John Trotter Senior in London. Although no evidence to date has been found to support this hypothesis, it is reported here for completeness.

¹ J K Laughton, rec. Andrew Lambert: ‘John Trotter’ *Dictionary of National Biography*.

² Laughton, *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³ Thomas Ewbank, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of Hydraulic and Other Machines for Raising Water* (New York: Bangs, Platt & Co., 1850), 289.

⁴ Mike Chappell, *British Infantry Equipments, 1808–1908* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1999), 11–13.

⁵ William Nicholson, ‘Description of a Curvilinear Saw, invented by John Trotter, Esq., of Soho Square, from whom the following communication was received’, *Journal of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and The Arts* 17 (London: W. Stratford, Crown Court Temple Bar, 1807): 334–36.

⁶ Laughton, *Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁷ Parish Register of South Mimms church, 1833, p98 (accessed via ancestry.co.uk).

5. London Cabinet Makers

George Smith Bradshaw (1717–1795), Paul Saunders, tapestry maker (ca. 1724–1771), Charles Smith (–1767) and John Mayhew (1736–1811)

Timeline

- 1751 Paul Saunders was admitted to the freedom of the Upholders Company.
- 1756 A notice placed on 26 October 1756 announced the dissolution of the partnership between ‘Messrs. Bradshaw and Saunders, Upholders and Cabinet Makers’ [confirmed to be George Smith Bradshaw and Paul Saunders from earlier advertisements identified by the author]:
- ‘We beg leave to inform the Nobility and Gentry, who for the future we may either of us have the Honour to serve, that the Business will continue to be carried out as usual, by Mr Bradshaw in Greek Street, Soho, and by Mr. Saunders in Soho Square, the corner of Sutton Street, on our own and separate accounts. And whoever has any Demands on the said Partnership, are desired forthwith to bring their Accounts to Mr. Mayhew at Mr. Bradshaw’s’.¹
- 1759 John Mayhew went into business with William Ince in Broad-street, Soho, taking over the former premises of Charles Smith, who was said to be ceasing this line of business.
- A newspaper advertisement placed by the partners this year states that John Mayhew served his apprenticeship with Mr Bradshaw.²
- 1763 Charles Smith is listed as an upholder at The Late-Play-House, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London for this year and again in 1765.³ At some point, perhaps immediately after vacating his Broad-street premises, he entered into a partnership with John Trotter Senior (of Frith-street) and George Smith Bradshaw.
- 1764 The dissolution of the partnership between Charles Smith, George Smith Bradshaw and John Trotter is reported in *The London Gazette* in April of this year.⁴
- 1767 Charles Smith died. An auction sale of his stock in trade at his great warehouse, the Old Playhouse in Portugal-street, Lincoln’s-Inn-Fields included many high quality items of furniture, carpets and household linen.⁵
- His will, proved on 2 March of this year, includes an instruction to his executors to give five guineas to George Smith Bradshaw and John Trotter to purchase rings in his memory.⁶
- 1769 George Smith Bradshaw of London, upholsterer, is listed as a Freeman of the Borough of Lancaster in this year, indicating a close connection with this north western area of the country, near to Liverpool.⁷
- 1771 Paul Saunders died.⁸

- 1779 William Moore, a former employee (possibly apprentice) of the firm of Mayhew and Ince⁹ in London is said to have set up in business in Waterford, Ireland in this year.
- 1782 William Moore advertised inlaid furniture from his premises in Dublin.¹⁰
- 1790 John Trotter Senior died.
- 1812 George Smith Bradshaw died, age 95 at Pershore, Worcestershire.

¹ *The London Gazette* (9628), 19 October 1756, 2.

² *The Public Advertiser*, 27 January 1759.

³ *Kents Directory*, 1763.

⁴ *The London Gazette* (10411), 21 April 1764, 3.

⁵ Appendix 1: *The Soho Tapestry Makers, Survey of London: volumes 33 and 34: St Anne Soho* (1966), 515-520.

⁶ The National Archives, Kew: PROB 11/927.

⁷ T W B Kendall and T Cann Hughes (1935), *The Rolls of the Freeman of the Borough of Lancaster 1688–1840*. George Smith Bradshaw had taken over control of the business of his kinsman, William Bradshaw, as early as 1743 when the latter purchased the manor of Halton, near Lancaster, and retired there. George Smith Bradshaw was named by William Bradshaw as one of his executors in his will, proved in 1775 (The National Archives, Kew: PROB 11/1008).

⁸ Paul Saunders will, The National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/970.

⁹ In 1782 Moore placed an advertisement in which he ‘hopes from his long experience at Messrs. Mayhew and Ince, London, his remarkable fine coloured woods, and elegant finished work, to meet the approbation of all who shall please to honour him with their commands’. (*The Dublin Evening Post* on April 16, June 6, and July 11, 1782, cited by The Knight of Glin and James Peill, 2007, *Irish Furniture*, 163).

¹⁰ See note 9.

6. Other Southwell Family Members

6.1 Charles Southwell (1814–1860)

Timeline

Charles Southwell (1814-1860), youngest and most controversial son of William Southwell (1736/7–1825) became well known in his day as an outspoken champion of ‘Free Thought’, both as a public speaker and as a writer. When in Bristol in 1841, he achieved notoriety after writing an article entitled ‘The Jew Book’ in the magazine *The Oracle of Reason* (of which he was the publisher and editor), in which he attacked what he regarded as ‘biblical depravities and inconsistencies. In consequence he found himself on trial for blasphemy the following year, sentenced to serve a year in prison in Bristol jail and fined £100.

He later wrote many papers relating to Atheism and a selection of these along with publications on his life and work is set out in the [Bibliography](#) below.

Brief information on the more personal key events in his life, based on his biographical account in his privately published book *The Confessions of a Free Thinker*, supplemented by new findings identified by the author during the course of her research, is given in the Timeline below.

1814 Charles Southwell was born in St. Pancras, London, youngest son of William Southwell (1736/7–1825), musical instrument inventor and maker, and his final partner ‘Fanny’.

1825 His father, William Southwell Senior died aged eighty-eight and was buried at St Pancras Old Church. Charles says that he was eleven and a half years old at this time. He began work at the Broadwood factory as a trainee finisher, having turned down James Broadwood’s offer of training to become a tuner.¹

1826–1830 He soon followed in his father’s footsteps in rejecting Christianity, having read a copy of Timothy Dwight’s Sermons, lent to him by a fellow workman.²

He confesses having led a somewhat dissolute life during his teenage years, living on the edge of poverty and refusing the offer of a home with one of his brothers, being totally unwilling to have any limits placed on his freedom of movement.

1831 Charles Southwell married Mary Seaton (not ‘Seaford’, the thinly disguised pseudonym he gave her in ‘Confessions’) at St Pancras Old Church on 23 July 1831.³ Within a very short time he discovered she was seeing an old flame and she defiantly told him she ‘only married him for a convenience’. His pride deeply wounded, he left her and a few months later began an affair with her aunt (aged thirty three) who tried to persuade him to marry her bigamously, promising not to give him away. Fearful of the consequences of being found out however, he refused. However, they nevertheless co-habited for six months.

Learning that his wife had become depressed and was very sick he agreed to take her back and she recovered. Shortly afterwards, both her parents died.

- 1832 At this time he opened his first bookshop in Westminster, specialising in radical socialist literature. It started to do well, he claims, but his wife once more became very sick and the bookshop failed for lack of attention. Soon afterwards his wife's illness became terminal and she died. [The author has been unable to establish the exact date of Mary's death, but it was most likely in 1833, given the length of time Charles mentions he had spent living with her aunt].
- 1835 Charles joined a branch of the British Legion and fought in Spain on the side of Queen Isabella against the Carlists for two years. He became very sick and returned to England in 1837.
- 1837 He recounts how he arrived in London penniless in this year and turned for help to his brother William, who he says, was 'at that time a foreman and contractor working for Broadwood'. Being a kindly man, William welcomed his prodigal brother warmly and took him into his home. Charles returned to work in the Broadwood factory, but soon became involved with Robert Owen's Socialist Missionary movement, first in London, then in Birmingham. He quickly became well known as an eloquent and impassioned speaker.
- 1839 Interestingly, in the light of his family history, an article in *The Times* on 29 October 1839 records his involvement in heated discussions on the subject of the unjust abandonment of wives, after an Owenite Lecture in London.⁴
- 1841 Whilst in Bristol editing a new Socialist publication, *The Oracle of Reason*, Charles wrote a blistering anti-semitic article "The Jew Book". He was charged with blasphemy and sent for trial.
- 1842 In January 1842 he was tried and convicted of blasphemy in Bristol, fined £100 and sentenced to a year in prison. He reports that he served thirteen months in Bristol jail and then returned to London.⁵
- 1843 The Holyoake archive at the Bishopsgate Institute holds a handbill for dramatic performances of '*The Merchant of Venice*', '*Hamlet*' and '*The Spitalfields Weaver*', hosted by the Rational Society in celebration of the liberty of Charles Southwell at the Rotunda, Blackfriars Road (7 March 1843).
- Refusing to return to editing *The Oracle of Reason*, instead Charles became editor of a new publication *The Investigator*, which however quickly foundered.
- During this year he embarked on a lecture tour in Scotland.
- 1844 In 1844 he took some premises in Charlotte Street, Blackfriars-road and gave lectures there. However, 'after some time' he found the premises were very unhealthy, sold the business and became the lessee of the 'Canterbury Theatre'. This venture was also short lived and he returned to London to manage a lecture hall at Blackfriars.
- According to James Secord, during this period he had lived with a married woman named Mrs Gordon (formerly Mrs Rowen).⁶ This information presumably comes from the writings of Thomas Paterson, whom Charles accuses in '*Confessions*' of having made a 'foul attack' on his second wife.⁷ In the same publication he later refers to having been with his wife for five years at the time of her death in 1849. In a [unpublished] letter to Holyoake in 1845 he made reference to her thus:

‘Give my best wishes to Mrs. H. and don’t forget to tell my old friend Nockles Mrs. S and I often wish he were safely ensconced in the Paragon drinking our splendid tea and coffee’.⁸

Based on this evidence, it appears he must either have remarried, or at least professed to be married, by that time.

- 1849 Though the author has been unable to locate any record of a marriage between the couple, she has identified and obtained a copy of the death certificate of Jane Southwell (wife of Charles Southwell, Gentleman), who died of cancer of the uterus at Webber-street, Blackfriars-road in January 1849.⁹ This provides clear confirmation that Jane had taken his name and they had been living together as man and wife. When referring to her death, in *Confessions*, Charles says ‘we lived together and for each other, more than five years, when death snatched from me the dearest friend and kindest companion I ever knew’.
- 1851 In *Confessions*, Charles says ‘Since her death, [his late wife] I have loved, do love another more intensely than I could love her ...’
- 1852 Debenham has identified a third (previously unreported) marriage for Charles. On 30 November 1852 he married Mary Ann King, daughter of Robert King, butcher, at St Mary’s Stratford, Bow, Middlesex. Both bride and groom are shown in the parish register entry as being ‘of full age’. The groom’s father’s name and occupation are given as ‘William Southwell, pianoforte maker’.
- 1855 Charles left England, sailing on the *British Trident* from Liverpool for Australia – but without his wife, Mary Ann, whose name does not appear on the passenger list. Debenham has been unable to discover what happened to her.
- Charles arrived in Melbourne in July and after attempting to embark on a theatrical career (appearing as Shylock in ‘*The Merchant of Venice*’) he decided to run for election to the Legislature. He was denounced by the Melbourne Press when his views of religion became public knowledge.
- 1856 After this debacle, Charles moved on to Sydney and there joined Foley’s theatrical troupe, travelling on with them to Auckland, New Zealand. After quarrelling with them, he proceeded to found another radical newspaper, the *Auckland Examiner*.
- 1857 Foley’s theatrical company failed in this year and Charles once more tried his hand at theatrical productions, leasing the Theatre Royal – an enterprise which also failed.
- 1859 In 1859 a ‘handsome 7-octave PIANO, Walnut Case, quite new, by [William] Southwell [junior], Baker-street, London’ was advertised in the *Daily Southern Cross* by Mr. S. Jones for sale at his auction house in Auckland on October 4 and 25, 1859.¹⁰ It seems likely that this example of his brother William’s work was sold by Charles, who by then was once more in a very impecunious situation.
- 1860 Charles died on 7 August 1860, after what was described in his death notice as a ‘long and serious illness’. He is buried in Auckland, New Zealand, where his gravestone may be seen.

Some years after his death an interesting account of his activities by W H J Seffert appeared in *The New Zealand Herald* 3 December 1887.

He left behind a partner, said to have been his widow, Elizabeth Edge. However Debenham has been unable to locate a record of any marriage ceremony. Since no trace of his wife Mary Ann has been located, whether or not he had been free to marry again remains an open question.

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¹ *The Confessions of a Free Thinker*, ca. 1851.

² *The Confessions of a Free Thinker*, ca. 1851; also cited by J A Secord, "Southwell, Charles": *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³ Parish register of St Pancras Old Church.

⁴ *The Times* (17181) 24 October 1839, 6.

⁵ *The Confessions of a Free Thinker*, ca. 1851.

⁶ J A Secord, "Southwell, Charles", *Dictionary of National Biography*. Professor Secord's exact source is not cited directly, but his list of consulted sources includes T Paterson's *Letters to infidels* (1846).

⁷ *The Confessions of a Free Thinker*, ca. 1851.

⁸ Unpublished letter from Charles Southwell to G J Holyoake, 18 October 1845. (Letter No. 145, Co-operative Archives, Manchester, consulted by the author by kind permission).

⁹ Jane Southwell (wife of Charles Southwell, Gentleman) died at 1, Webber Street, Blackfriars Road, aged 36 years on 9th January 1849; cause of death: cancer in the womb. (Death certificate of Jane Southwell). Registration District: St George the Martyr, Southwark. Certified Copy DYB 592645, held by Margaret Debenham.

¹⁰ *Daily Southern Cross*, 30 September 1859, 2; repeated 4 October 1859.

6.2 Frances [Southwell] Cripps née Southwell (ca. 1799–1886)

Timeline

1799/1800 Frances Southwell, daughter of William Southwell Senior and Frances, was born.¹

1803 When in Dublin at the age of three, according to her grandson, Frederick Southwell Cripps, she remembered being carried on her father's shoulders as they escaped after their house was set on fire by Irish rebels. This is consistent with the date of the Emmet rebellion in that city.

ca. 1807 She recalled being at boarding school in Liverpool when burglars came down the chimney into the room where she was sleeping and reported they were caught in the garden.

1818 She married Thomas Cripps, a ships purser at this time, on 31 January 1818 at St Pancras Old Church, London. Her father, William Southwell, signed the register as a witness.

1827 Her son Frederick was born. As an adult he went on to become a successful tailor in Worthing and was the father of Frederick Southwell Cripps (writer of the 'Cripps letter', 1911).

1841 Thomas Cripps died in Brighton on 2 April 1841 as a result of a fall off a ladder when cleaning windows. The couple had nine children before he died, leaving Frances widowed and in dire straits.

It appears she started a business as a milliner and dressmaker in this year. In subsequent years this was taken over and developed into a successful business by her daughter, Frances Ann, at 1, Steyne, Worthing.

1842 One of her sons, William, was convicted at Lewes on 7 December 1842 of stealing 8 pairs of slippers and 5 pairs of half boots. He was sentenced to 10 years transportation, arriving at Van Diemen's Land via the ANSON on 4 February 1844.

He went on to establish a well known family bakery business that grew into the largest automatic bakery in Tasmania by the late 1960s some 110 years later, Cripps Bakery.

1861 Frances wrote to her son William in Tasmania in response to the first letter she had received from him since his deportation almost twenty years earlier, bringing him up to date with family news. This included information relating to the circumstances of the death of his grandmother, Frances Southwell (wife of William Southwell Senior) in 1847 after a fall down a flight of stairs.

1886 Frances died of chronic bronchitis on 20 November 1886 at 1, Steyne, Worthing, aged 86 years.²

¹ Her death certificate in 1886 gives her age as 86 years, establishing a birth year of *ca.* 1800. Later census returns record some confusion about her place of birth. In 1841 when living in Brighton, the 'out of county' column is ticked; in 1851 her place of birth is given as London, Middlesex; in 1861 and 1871 as Lancaster, Lancashire; and in 1881 as Chester, Cheshire. In the early years of the 18th century Chester was the main port of embarkation for Dublin, so it is possible she was born there when her mother was en route to Ireland with her father. It appears that she consistently subtracted several years from her age in the census returns, giving the impression that she was four years younger than her real age.

² A copy of her death certificate, which has been consulted by the author, is held by David Cripps.

6.3 Frederick Southwell Cripps (1855–1941)



Figure 1 1 Ancestry.com. UK, Civil Engineer Photographs, 1829-1923 [database on-line]

Frederick Southwell Cripps was a grandson of Frances Cripps, nee Southwell (1799–1886), and great grandson of William Southwell (1736/7–1825). Born in Worthing, the eldest son of Frederick Cripps (son of Frances), a tailor, he became a noted civil engineer of his day and an author of several influential papers with many patents in the field of gas and water engineering to his name (the author has located 14). An obituary published in the *Sussex Daily News* on 21 April 1941, summarizes his career.

FAMOUS BUILDER OF GASHOLDERS

Death at Worthing – Mr F S Cripps, A.M.Inst.C.E.

A distinguished son of Worthing passed away at his home on Saturday. He was Mr Frederick Southwell Cripps, A.M.Inst.C.E., of 2 Oxford Road; his death occurred at the age of 85 years.

Born at Worthing in 1855 he rose to eminence in his profession as consulting engineer to gas and water companies. He was an authority on the construction of gasholders and his book "*Guide framing of gas holders*" became a standard work and was translated into Dutch at the request of the authorities in Holland. Another of his important papers was "*An investigation into the strains upon the top curb of a gasholder*" and this was incorporated in the volume "*Transactions of the gas institute 1882*". Mr Cripps was educated in private schools (day and boarding) at Worthing, Greenwich and Lancing.

With slight commercial training and private study he then left Worthing to become a pupil to Messrs J and A Blythe, marine and general engineering, London in October 1873. He passed through shops and offices, spending all his spare time in the study of engineering sciences. After leaving Messrs. Blythe he entered Messrs. Cutlers drawing office for a little more than 12 months, and from there entered the city offices of Messrs. C and W Walkers, the well known firm of gas engineers. Shortly afterwards he

went to their works at Donnington near Newport, Shropshire and remained till 1879 when he passed a short term in the Sutton gas works. He was induced to start on his own account as a consulting engineer to gas companies in 1880 and acquired offices in Westminster.

Mr Cripps built the largest gasholder of its time in the world and 30 years ago as consulting engineer to the Bournemouth Gas Co. he built what was up to then the cheapest gasholder in the world, the cost was £5 per cubic foot. He was also consulting engineer to the Bournemouth Corporation and provided the town with its water supply from Wimbourne.

Mr Cripps was one of a brilliant family of brothers, and when he was carrying out work at Bournemouth two other brothers were also there in important positions. One was the late Mr Richard A Cripps who died at Hove a couple of years ago and the other was Mr Frank R Cripps who now lives in High Salvington, Worthing. The former was the Borough public analyst to the Bournemouth Corporation and the latter engineer at the Poole electric works. Mr Richard Cripps will be recalled as in the profession of an analytical chemist of Hove. They were the sons of the late Mr Frederick Cripps who had businesses in South Street Worthing and was interested in much property in the town. The family moved to Worthing from Brighton. Mr F S Cripps retired from his profession in 1914 and died a bachelor.

[Information and photograph courtesy of David Cripps]

6.4 Henry Southwell (1782–1866): Solicitor of Dublin

Timeline

- 1782/3 Henry Southwell was born in Dublin, son of William Southwell and Ann Doland.¹
- 1799 He was apprenticed to the Dublin Attorney Sobieski Kildahl in this year, with supporting papers signed by his father, William Southwell (1736/7–1825).²
- 1804 Henry completed his apprenticeship and was admitted to full membership of the Kings Inns, Dublin, supported by a Bond sponsored by his brother John Southwell and James Laprelle, a merchant of Abbey-street.
- 1807 In 1807, the Broadwood Out-letter book records correspondence with Henry Southwell, who was representing the firm's interests in Dublin regarding a debt owed to them by William Ware of Belfast.³
- 1818 *The London Gazette* of 8 August 1818 makes reference to Mr Southwell, a solicitor of Dublin, in a notice relating to the bankruptcy of Thomas Cooke and Michael Brennan, music sellers of Dublin and Strand in London, raising the question of whether their Assignee should be permitted: 'paying to Mr Southwell, of Dublin, the late Solicitor of the said Bankrupts, the full amount of his claim upon them, for professional business performed by him for them, or either of them, or upon their account, in consideration of and as an inducement to his giving the said Assignee any information in his power regarding the estate of the said Bankrupts, or either of them'.

Note: Thomas Cooke and Michael Brennan, music and musical instrument sellers and publishers, are listed in business at 45 Dame-street, Dublin ca. 1806–12; the firm of ‘Thomas Cooke & Co.’ is listed at the same address from 1812–17.5 Thomas (Tom) Cooke came to London to join the Theatre Royal at Drury lane in [year]. His father, Bartlett Cooke, was in business at 4, Sackville Street, Dublin from 1794–98.6 Bartlett is known to have published a song *’Twas Yes Kind Sir. A Favorite New Song* written by F W Southwell (Francis, son of William Southwell Senior).

- 1824 Henry Southwell (solicitor) is listed in Pigots Dublin Directory 1824 as an Attorney at 10, Digges-street in Dublin, with a residential address at 9, Digges-street.
- 1842 Pettigrew & Oulton's Dublin Directory, 1842,⁷ lists Henry Southwell, solicitor, at 36 Cuffe-street, Dublin.
- 1851 The 1851 census return for the Isle of Man census lists Henry Southwell, retired solicitor, born in Dublin, living in Ballafour House, [Douglas] Isle of Man, aged ‘59’. Living with him is Isabella Southwell, sister aged ‘38’ (therefore born ca. 1811) also born in Dublin.⁸ It becomes clear that the enumerator has misread his age when one reads his death notice in 1866. He was sixty nine and not fifty nine in 1851.
- 1861 The 1861 census return lists Henry Southwell, retired solicitor, aged seventy eight living at 8, Woodborn Road, Douglas Isle of Man. Isabella Southwell aged forty two [‘42’, probably a transcription error for ‘48’] is listed at the same address.
- 1866 A death notice of Henry Southwell, aged eighty four, who died at his residence, Westview-terrace, Douglas, Isle of Man on 29 September 1866 appeared in *The Liverpool Mercury* on 4th October of this year.⁹

¹Supported by three sources:

- (i) his age at date of death given in death notice in *The Liverpool Mercury* in 1866
- (ii) census records
- (iii) see note 2.

² His father signed a sworn statement in Dublin that Henry was ‘of full age of sixteen years’ when he [Henry] became apprenticed to the Dublin Attorney Sobieski Kildahl in 1799. (Edward Keane, P Beryl Phair, and Thomas Ulick Sadleir, *King's Inns Admission Papers, 1607–1867* (Dublin: Stationery Office for the Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1982), 458; original documents extant in the King’s Inn Library.)

³ Broadwood Out Letter Book. Broadwood Archives, Surrey History Centre, Woking. 2185/JB/6/1/1.

⁴ *The London Gazette* (17386), 8 August 1818, 1427. My thanks to Robert Southwell for drawing this notice to my attention.

⁵ Ita Margaret Hogan (196?) *Anglo-Irish Music 1780–1830*. Cork: Cork University Press p101.

⁶ Ita Margaret Hogan (196?) *Anglo-Irish Music 1780–1830*. Cork: Cork University Press p101.

⁷ Pettigrew & Oulton Dublin Directory 1842,

524. <http://www.failteromhat.com/dublindir1842.htm> accessed 19 June 2008.

⁸ Possibly a much younger half-sister informally adopted as a child.

⁹ *The Liverpool Mercury* (5829), 4 October 1866.

6.5 Nicholas Southwell (ca. 1760–1832)

Timeline

ca.1760 Nicholas Southwell was born (year confirmed by his age at date of death – see 1832) His place of birth is as yet unidentified.

Before 1793: He married Martha Matilda Fazakerley. Though a record of the marriage has not been located, this was the birth year of their eldest daughter Caroline (later wife of Charles Nicholson, the renowned flautist), established by her age at date of death in 1828.

1802 He was named as William Southwell's brother in the Dublin Deed of partnership of 1 June, which established the new partnership of Nicholas, John and Francis Southwell (the latter two being William's sons).¹

1805 Nicholas is listed as a musical instrument maker in Duke-street, Liverpool in the Liverpool directory, together with his nephews 'J' and 'F'.

1808 By this year he had also established a manufacturing presence at 49, Rathbone-place, London.²

1811 He began to advertise his wares in the newly established Liverpool Mercury, including his 'lately improved PATENT PIANO FORTES, with six turned feet, crescent shaped drawers in front and gilt ornaments'. A particularly intriguing model is a 'newly invented ELLIPTICAL DITTO [square piano], with eight feet, crescent drawers, &c., particularly adapted to stand occasionally in the centre of a room'.

He also states that he 'is lately appointed principally Agent for the sale of Messrs. Clementi and Co.'s recently improved PIANO FORTES'.

1817 He advertised a newly completed CABINET PIANO FORTE, which he claims is an improved version of his brother William's design. He names the artists who have finished the exterior 'in the best Chinese style' as 'Messrs Smith and Mason, artists of the first celebrity, from London'.

1820 A notice in *The London Gazette* announces the dissolution of the partnership of Nicholas Southwell and Stephen White, organ builders of Liverpool. This is the first mention of Southwell involvement in this field located by the author.

1821–1829 Nicholas is listed in Liverpool directories at various addresses in Duke-street as both an organ builder and pianoforte maker.

1821 Martha Southwell died.

1832 Nicholas Southwell died and was buried in St. James Cemetery, Liverpool. The burial register gives his age as 72 years.

¹ Registry of Deeds in Dublin: book No. 551, pages 111–12, memorandum No. 362400 (transcribed in full in Bozarth and Debenham, *Piano Wars* [2009], Appendix 5, 96).

² Margaret Debenham (2013); *William Southwell (1736/7–1825): Anglo-Irish Musical Instrument Inventor and Maker – an Extraordinary Life, 19–20*.

6.6 William Southwell Junior (1804–1880):

Timeline

- 1804 Born in Liverpool in 1804,¹ son of William Southwell (1736/7–1825) and his wife [partner] Frances.
- 1822 Married Elizabeth Cuming at St Marylebone Church on 26 August 1822, a union that was to endure for fifty-eight years. They had ten children, details of whom are in the genealogical section of the site.
- 1825 At the time of his father's death in this year, he was one of two brothers already employed by the firm of Broadwood.² It seems probable he had served his apprenticeship with his father, begun at a younger age than the norm of fourteen years, since apprentices were not permitted to marry.
- 1837 Charles Southwell recounts how when he returned to England after fighting as a Legionnaire in the Spanish Civil war in 1837 he sought out his brother William who was 'at that time a foreman and contractor' for Broadwood and living in 'an elegant house in the Edgware Road'.³ This residence may be identified as 5, Winchester Row from two sources:

- Firstly, it is the address given in William Junior's patent application for an improvement to the action of grand pianofortes (no. 7424), which was granted in this year,⁴ the manufacturing rights for which he sold to Broadwoods and which was known as the 'Victoria Repetition Grand', in honour of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne in 1837. The original patent drawing is extant in the patent rolls of The National Archives, Kew and is reproduced here by kind permission (under license).
- Secondly, corroborative evidence of his identity is found in the birth certificate of his daughter 'Celina' in 1838 – in all subsequent records known as 'Selina' - which gives her father's occupation as 'pianoforte maker' and address as 5, Winchester Row.

A record in the Broadwood archives confirms that on 12 May 1837 the firm paid Southwell £100 for the assignment of his patent and includes a commitment to pay him a further £200 in May 1838 if they continued to use his improvement.

An article in *The Penny Cyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge* (1840), 141 discusses this patent innovation, stating that was 'Invented by Mr. Southwell, son of the late Mr. W. Southwell'.

- 1838–1850 A notebook of wages, salaries and gifts in the Broadwood archives shows that in 1844 the firm discontinued use of his patent and increased his wages to £3.3s per week in compensation for this and his attention to the finishing of Grands in their workshop.

In the 1841 census return, William Southwell is listed at St. James Place, Hampstead, with his wife and family, indicating that he had moved from Winchester Row to this address.

From 1845 – 1848 the Post Office Directory for London he is listed at this same address, 12, St. James's place, Hampstead–road, which is consistent with Charles' statement that his brother was operating his own workshop as a contractor to Broadwood as well as being a foreman at their premises.

In 1850 the Broadwood wages book records a payment of £200 to Southwell, and this is the final entry located for him there.

- 1851 William Southwell gained the prestigious award of ‘The Prize Medal’ for ‘a grand pianoforte’ at the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 under Jury Xa in his own name. No mention is made of any association with Broadwood at this time.⁵

The census return for this year shows him as resident at 16 Baker-street with his wife and two of his daughters. A second census entry shows the remaining children and a servant resident at 25, Gloucester-road, with an enumerator's note that the head of household was absent. It appears that Frederick, second son of William, then aged 18 and an apprentice pianoforte maker provided the information about the rest of the family. For reasons unknown his sisters' names are incorrectly stated.

Two entries appear in the *Post Office Directory for London*, one under the name ‘Wm. Southall’ at 16, Baker-street – a variation of the surname that reflects the received pronunciation of the day [Suthall]; and in another entry on the same page, as ‘William Southwell, pianoforte maker, 4, Circus-street’.

- 1856 In this year he is still listed at 16, Baker-street as a pianoforte maker, indicating that the watershed change of the family business to portrait photography had not yet occurred.

- 1857–58 The first mention of Messrs. Southwell, photographers of Baker-street is found in a newspaper report – see Southwell Brothers: Photographers Royal.

- 1859 A semi-grand pianoforte by Southwell of Baker Street, London was advertised for sale at auction in Auckland, New Zealand (see Timeline for Charles Southwell).

An extant instrument fitting this description has recently been drawn to Debenham's attention by the new private owner, New Zealand. This is the sole known surviving instrument badged under William Southwell Junior's own name to be identified to date.

- 1860 *The Royal Blue Book* of 1860 lists ‘Southwell, Wm. Photographic artist’. Whether this refers to the William in question here or to his eldest son William Henry (b.1823), one of the three brothers in business as ‘Southwell Brothers: Photographers Royal’ from 1862, remains an open question.

- 1861 The census return for this year shows William, aged 57, as resident at 13, Queen's Road West and his occupation now given as ‘proprietor of houses’.

- 1878 William made his will, while living at 46, Haverstock Hill, Hampstead. His youngest daughter Amanda and her husband William Elliott Debenham (a Regent-street portrait photographer) were living with him at this time.

- 1880 In February of this year, Elizabeth died. They had been married for fifty-eight years. Six months later William died on 4 July 1880. He is buried in a tomb in Highgate Cemetery, London. A photograph obtained of the tomb by David Cripps some years ago shows it still exists, but is highly overgrown. In his lengthy will he forgave his surviving sons Frederick and Edwin any debts they owed to him (suggesting he had bailed them out following their bankruptcy in the 1870s) leaving the majority of his now modest estate (said in the probate record to be ‘under £4,000’) to his seven daughters and their children.

- ¹ According to the 1851 and 1861 census returns, William Southwell Junior's place of birth was Liverpool.
- ² Charles Southwell states in his book *The Confessions of a Free Thinker* (ca 1851), 13, that two of his brothers were already employed by Broadwood at the time of his father's death in 1825.
- ³ Charles Southwell, *The Confessions of a Free Thinker*, 55.
- ⁴ It was enrolled in Chancery on January 2, 1838.
- ⁵ *The Times*, 16 October 1851, 2. Medals were awarded as rewards for excellence, rather than with reference to individual competition (see 'The Great Exhibition of 1851', Old and New London: Volume 5 (1878), pp. 28-39. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45220>; accessed 21 July 2013. According to an on-line article by Terry McGee (Flute Maker), [Flutes at the 1851 Exhibition](#), the Sub-Jury for Class Xa (Musical Instruments) comprised:

Sir H. R. Bishop, Chairman and Reporter; Sigismund Thalberg, Deputy Chairman, Austria; W. Sterndale Bennett; Hector Berlioz, France; J. Robert Black, United States; Chevalier Neukomm, Zollverein; Cipriani Potter, 9 Baker Street, Portman Square; Dr. Carl von Schafhautl, Zollverein; Sir George Smart, St. Anne's, Chertsey; Henry Wylde. (For more information about these jury members see [Flutes at the 1851 Exhibition](#)).

6.7 Southwell Brothers, photographers

For full research information on the Southwell Brothers, Photographers click on the following link: <https://debenham.org.uk/southwell> leading to the relevant section of Margaret Debenham's website.

The brothers were the [three](#) sons of William Southwell Junior (1804-1880) pianoforte maker. They became renowned portrait photographers in Victorian London, with sitters including Queen Victoria and many members of her family.

7. Other Southwell Branches investigated

7.1 John Southwell, peruke maker, London (ca. 1736–1788):

This line of investigation is included here for the benefit of future researchers, since Frances Southwell Cripps (daughter of William Southwell Senior) is on record as having told her grandson that her mother was the daughter of a London hairdresser. No direct connection has been identified to date. However, it remains an avenue of interest for future research.

Timeline

Richard Southwell of Halesowen, father of John Southwell (1736–1788), peruke maker of Nicholas-lane, Lombard-street, London (fl. 1757–88) appears to have been a descendent of the line of Richard Southwell (b. ca. 1600) and his wife Margaret Cartwright of Womborne. According to the obituary of John Southwell, headmaster of Stafford Grammar School (1722–1797), a descendent of another child of this line:

‘His grandfather, the Rev. John Southwell, educated under Mr Woodhouse at the dissenting academy at Sheriff-Hales, in Shropshire, was successively

chaplain to Philip Foley, Esq. Of Prestwood, assistant to Mr. Woodhouse, master of an academy at Kidderminster, which he removed to Dudley and thence to Newbury, Berks; and died of a consumption about the year 1694, aged about 32.

His paternal great grandfather, of Wombourn, Co. Stafford, farmer, served in the parliament-army and had two brothers, who were ejected ministers, one of whom, Mr. Richard Southwell, is mentioned, in Calamy, abridged by Palmer II 390, as minister of Baswick chapel, near Stafford.¹

ca. 1736 Birth of Birth of John Southwell, later peruke maker, London.

Birth of Jane Butler, later wife of John Southwell, said to have been of St Olave, Jewry (sister of the Revd. [Charles] Weedon Butler, a clergyman and schoolmaster.

1737 A John Southwell, son of Thomas (a cabinet maker) and Margaret was baptised at St Lukes, London in this year.

1751 John Southwell, son of Thomas deceased, was apprenticed to John Homm in the Barber's company.

1756 John Southwell, son of Richard of The Grange, Halesowen,² was made free in the City of London Barbers Company by redemption, 28 September 1756. It appears this is another John Southwell (perhaps a cousin) since this is only five years after John, son of Thomas was apprenticed to John Homm in the same company.

1757 Marriage of John Southwell and Jane Butler, St Martin Orgar, 24 November 1757.

1758 Birth of Mary Southwell, 27 September 1758; baptized St. Martin Orgar 15 Oct 1758.

1760 Birth of Jane Southwell, 22 June 1760; baptized St. Martin Orgar, 13 July 1760.

1763 Birth of John Aylward Southwell, 10 January 1763; baptised St Martin Orgar, 16 January 1763. Later appears in Register of scholars admitted to the Merchant Taylor's School.

1764 Birth of Weedon Southwell, 21 November 1764; baptised St Martin Orgar, 16 December 1764. Later appears in Register of scholars admitted to the Merchant Taylor's School.

1766 Birth of Daniel Southwell, baptised St Martin Orgar, 30 March 1766.

1767 Birth of Elizabeth Southwell, 18 November 1767; baptised St Martin Orgar, 14 December 1767.

1770 Birth of Edwin Southwell, 29 January 1770; baptised, St Martin Orgar, 16 February 1770.

1775 Birth of Matthew Southwell, 26 March 1775; baptised St Martin Orgar, 23 April 1775. He later appears in Register of scholars admitted to the Merchant Taylor's School.

1778 William Shenston Southwell,³ born 15 July 1778, baptised 9 August 1778.

- John Aylward Southwell, son of J Southwell of Lombard Street, peruke maker, was apprenticed to Joseph Read on 6 May 1778.⁴
- 1780 Daniel Southwell (naval officer and diarist), joined the navy in May 1780 as a first lieutenant's servant.⁵
- 1787 Daniel Southwell embarked as a midshipman in the *Sirius* in 1787 and was made a mate on the voyage to New South Wales, Australia. He kept a journal from the time of sailing until May 1789 and also corresponded with his mother, Jane Southwell, and his uncle, Rev. Weeden Butler, a highly respected Headmaster of a school in Chelsea.⁶

Notes from Heritage Collection: Nelson Meers Foundation.

*The First Fleet Journals, 1787-92.*⁷

Extract:

‘The 11 ships of the First Fleet sailed from England in May 1787, under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, carrying almost 1500 people of whom roughly half were convicts. Travelling via Rio de Janeiro, the Cape of Good Hope and Tasmania, the Fleet arrived first in Botany Bay on 18 January, and settled at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788.’

What distinguishes the journals from official records is their personal nature. Written by men of different ranks, travelling on different ships and harbouring different hopes and ambitions for the expedition, the journals record the most profound political revolution ever experienced on the Australian continent.

- 1788 John Southwell died. in his Will, proved in London on 16 September 1788 (executed on 10 September 1759 – a very simple will made early in his marriage when he had only one infant daughter), he left everything to his wife Jane.
- 1789 In 1788-89 [Daniel] Southwell was aboard the *Sirius* when she went to the Cape of Good Hope for stores. About March 1790, against his will when the *Sirius* was sent to Norfolk Island, Southwell was placed in charge of the look-out station on South Head.⁸
- 1794 On 11 February 1794 he [Daniel] was made a lieutenant.⁹
- 1797 He [Daniel] was wounded off Portugal and died in Lisbon Hospital on 21 August 1797 aged about 33.¹⁰

¹ *The Monthly Magazine and British Register for 1797* Vol 4 (London: Philips), 491.

² City of London Freedom admissions paper for his admission to the Barber's company by redemption, specifies the name and address of John Southwell's father. (accessed via ancestry.co.uk, 2012).

³ The poet William Shenstone lived in Halesowen, near to 'The Grange', home of Richard, father of John Southwell. The families were related by marriage, Richard's wife, Mary Shenstone appears to have been a cousin of the poet and was a beneficiary of his will in 1763. (Will of William Shenstone, The National Archives, UK PROB 11/884).

⁴ *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers*.

⁵ 'Southwell, Daniel (1764?-1797)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 2, Melbourne University Press, 1967, pp 462-463.

⁶ Horton, ‘Southwell, Daniel’.

⁷ Heritage Collection - Nelson Meers Foundation - The First Fleet Journals 1787-92:

‘Of the surviving, contemporary records that document the First Fleet, the original, private manuscript journals written by those who actually sailed with the expedition occupy a central place. The Mitchell and Dixson Libraries hold a total of nine First Fleet journals, the most comprehensive collection in the world. The original journals of only two others — Rev. Richard Johnson and Daniel Southwell — are known to exist.’

⁸ Ibid:

... Southwell's journal and letters record details of the journey and the establishment of the settlement, provide an insight into the hopes and fears of a young naval officer in the colony, and reflect the attitudes and moods of some of the settlers. He comes to the conclusion that the colony will be a ‘long-continued heavy expence to the m'r country’, and his high regard for Governor [Arthur Phillip](#) changes: at first he had written of him as ‘very kind and considerate’ and ‘one of a thousand’, but by July 1790 the governor is one of those ‘people whose ill-nature sometimes get the better of their understanding’, and Southwell confessed to be ‘rather vex'd at myself for being so very lavish in my encomiums formerly’. The letters have much to say of the Aborigines and include a brief vocabulary of their language ...

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ *ibid*

7.2 John Aylward Southwell (1763–1847)

Timeline

- 1763 John Aylward Southwell son of John Southwell, peruke maker and his wife Jane Butler of St. Nicholas-lane, Lombard-street, London, was born. He was baptised at the church of St. Martin Orgar, 16 January 1763.
- 1778 He was apprenticed to Joseph Read of Fleet Market (a City of London liveryman of the Upholders Company) on 6 May 1778.¹
- 1785 He completed his apprenticeship and was accepted into that company on 3 August 1785.
- 1792 By 1792 he had become foreman to George Oakley, a prominent London Upholder – as is evidenced by his testimony as a witness in a court case against two defendants, John Matthews and Samuel Larter in their trial at the Old Bailey.² Southwell affirmed that he was Mr Oakley’s foreman and had three persons employed under him, besides several workmen.
- 1793 A ‘J Southwell’ subscribed to Sheraton’s *The Cabinet-makers-Drawing-Book* in this year, which seems likely to be John Aylward Southwell.
- 1801 When a widower, he married an eighteen year old, Amy Hope Wagner on 24 December at the church of St Mary Lambeth.
- 1822 Amy died when matron of the Liberty of the Rolls workhouse and was buried at St Dunstan in the West on 4 July. Less than three months later, he remarried for a third time, to a widow Jane Taylor, at the same church.
- 1847 John Aylward Southwell died in the first quarter of 1847. He had fathered two children by his first wife (whose identity remains unknown), Valentine (1796–) and Sabina, who married John Whittaker in 1820.³

- 1 Dictionary of English Furniture Makers (1660–1840)(Leeds: Furniture History Society and Maney & Son, 1986), 840.
- 2 Old Bailey on-line. John Matthews, Samuel Larter, theft from a specified place 13th January 1792, ref. no.: t17920113-36 <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t17920113-36&div=t17920113-36&terms=Oakley> ;, retrieved 4 February 2010.
- 3 Identified through the will of his sister, Jane, who left them bequests in 1832 (The National Archives, Kew, PROB 11/1800).

7.3 William Southwell (1768–1852), cabinet maker, Liverpool

Introduction

Debenham's investigations into the Southwell connections with the Liverpool area revealed the existence of a prosperous firm of cabinet makers in that city, established in the closing years of the 18th century, by one William Southwell who was joined by Jonathan Wilson at 12, Ranelagh-street. They remained in business together until 1810, when their partnership was dissolved.

It is worthy of note that this William married a lady named Ellen Fazakerley in Liverpool in 1793 – the same surname as that of Nicholas Southwell's¹ wife, Martha, whose family have been confirmed as originating from this area.

The famous sculptor John Gibson was initially apprenticed to this firm, described as 'wood carvers and cabinet makers', before deciding that his interest lay in another medium and with some difficulty persuading his masters to allow him to transfer to Messrs. Francis [or Franceys], a Liverpool firm of sculptors.²

An exploration of this William's parentage yielded intriguing results. The information for his place of birth given in the 1851 census (taken with other sources) enabled the author to trace his birth to Ormskirk, Lancashire (near to Liverpool) ca. 1768 where the baptism of a child named William is recorded in the neighbouring parish of Halsall to Mary and William Southall [sic] in 1768.

Further investigation revealed a marriage between a William Southwell and Mary Balshaw on 8 April 1765 in the church of St Peter and St Paul Ormskirk, a likely match to have been his parents. A witness at this ceremony was John Balshaw, a relative of the bride, whose sons are later recorded in Ormskirk as joiners in 1811.

This connection with the Liverpool area led Debenham to consider the possibility that this might have been an early marriage of our William Southwell (1736/7–1825). If, for example, he had completed an apprenticeship in cabinet making with one of the major London furniture makers, it would be entirely feasible that he might have been deployed as a journeyman to work on the interiors of stately homes in other parts of the kingdom. For example, the estate of Knowsley, home of Lord Derby lies very close to the parish of Halsall, as does Rufford Hall. However, we encounter immediate difficulties with this scenario, since four additional children of the marriage may be identified from the baptismal register of St Peter and St Paul, Ormskirk, these being Margaret (30 March 1766), Mary (17 April 1777), Charles Southwall [sic] (30 January 1774), and Henry, (8 December 1776). Since the birth year of William's known son Francis in Dublin can be established as ca. 1774³ and his older brother John must have been born even earlier, it is only if we allow the possibility that he may have maintained relationships on both sides of the Irish sea simultaneously during his early years in

Dublin, either formally (but illegally) contracting a bigamous marriage or informally having a mistress in Dublin that this becomes tenable. Unlikely perhaps – however, given the evidence of William’s eye for the ladies, not to be discounted entirely. In the light of the cabinet making connection it seems more likely that the William who married Mary Balshaw may have been in some way (as yet undiscovered) related to our William.

The known history of this Liverpool branch of the Southwell family is presented in outline in the timeline below, as a resource for future research:

Timeline

- 1768 Baptism of William Southall [sic], Halsall, near Ormkirk, Lancashire, 31 May 1768.
- 1793 Marriage of William Southwell (cabinet maker) and Ellen Fazakerley, 4 April 1793 at Holy Trinity Church, Liverpool.
- 1796 William Southwell began trading as a cabinet maker at 1, Coventry-street, Liverpool.⁴
- 1797 September 1797. Baptism of Mary, born 24 May 1779, daughter of William Southell [sic] and Ellen Fazakerley, of 49 Thomas-street, cabinet maker, at Christchurch, Hunter-street, Liverpool. The adjacent entry is for the baptism of William Southell, born 1 November 1794, son of the same parents. It seems this latter child must have later died young, since William and Ellen used the name William again for a son baptised in 1811.
- 1800 By 1800 this William Southwell had formed a partnership with ‘a man called Wilson’.⁵
- 1803 ‘Southel’ & Wilson, Liverpool, subscribed to Sheraton’s Cabinet Makers Directory.⁶
- 1804 A number of articles provide evidence that John Gibson (later to become a renowned sculptor) was apprenticed to Southwell and Wilson, cabinet makers, portrait and miniature painters in Liverpool.

After a year he moved into the carving branch of the business, involving the carvings with which the firm’s furniture was ornamented. After another year he became interested in working in marble and entreated his Masters to release him to another firm, Francis of Liverpool, who specialised in this business. When they refused he staged a strike, came to work each day but did no work. Eventually after an offer of £70 from the other firm his apprenticeship was transferred. Later he was to go to Rome and was trained by Canova.⁷
- 1806 In addition to their cabinet making activities the firm was also selling ‘carpets, printed furniture, papers and Feathers, as well as every other article in the Upholstery trade.’ They are also said to have maintained a timber yard at Great Charlotte Street, which was still in their possession in 1810.⁸

- 5 November 1806: Sarah Southell [sic] (date of birth recorded as 4 October 1806), daughter of William Southell and Ellen Fazakerley, was baptised at Bethesda Chapel, Duncan-street East, Liverpool.
- 1810 The partnership between William Southell [sic] and Jonathan Wilson was dissolved on 3 November 1810.⁹
- The Dictionary of English Furniture Makers* cites addresses in Lime-street for William Southwell 1810–1813.
- 1811 3 August 1811: William Southell (date of birth 29 June 1811), son of William Southell and Ellen Fazakerley, was baptised at Bethesda Chapel, Duncan-street East, Liverpool.
- 1813 A notice of a dress shop opened by an E Johnstone and M Southell in Lime-street, near Ranlagh Place appeared in *The Liverpool Mercury*.¹⁰
- 1817 On 1 March 1817 a notice of the bankruptcy of William Southell [sic], Late of Liverpool, Cabinet-Maker, Dealer and Chapman, was announced in *The London Gazette*.¹¹
- 1820 An advertisement in *The Liverpool Mercury* announced the re-opening of ‘The Misses Southwell’s School’ at No. 37, Brownlow-street.¹²
- 1825–3 William Southell was in business again at Rusholme Road, Manchester between 1825 and 1833, also at No. 27, Rusholme Road in 1825 and from 1829–33 at No. 42.¹³
- 1841 The 1841 census shows William and Ellen Southell living at Brook Street, Hulme, Manchester living with Mary Southell, governess aged 40. [Note: Ages in the 1841 census can be slightly misleading as they were permitted to be approximated to the nearest five years].
- Pigots Directory for Manchester* in this year shows Mary Southell [sic], Ladies School, 5, Worcester Terrace, Hulme.
- 1847 5 February 1847: *The Liverpool Mercury* announced: Jan, 28, at the house of her daughter, Mrs. Thomas Bostock of Montgomery, in her 84th year, Ellen, wife of Mr. Wm. Southwell, formerly of this town.¹⁴
- 1851 The 1851 census lists William Southwell, aged 84, born Ormskirk, Liverpool living in Montgomery, Wales at the house of Thomas Soley (71) and his wife Elizabeth Ann Soley (49), born Liverpool. His relationship to the Head of Household is erroneously given as ‘brother in law’ instead of ‘father in law’.
- 1852 A death notice placed in Manchester records the death of William Southwell: ‘On the 18th inst. At Montgomery, North Wales, aged 85 years, Mr William Southwell, formerly of Liverpool, and father to Mr. Wm. Southwell, of this town’.¹⁵

¹ Brother of William Southwell (1736/7–1825), pianoforte inventor.

² T Mathews, *The Biography of John Gibson – Sculptor* (Read Books, 2006), 8.
The Men of the time: or Sketches of living notables (Redfield, 1852), 227.
 Gibson, John (1790–1866) *Dictionary of National Biography 1885–1900*, vol. 21.

³ Identified by Terry de Valera from Francis’ age given in a surviving fragment of the 1821 Dublin census; Terry de Valera, ‘Two Eighteenth Century Musical Instrument Makers’, *Dublin Historical Record* (1982/2), 36/41.

- ⁴ G Beard: *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers* (Leeds: 1986), 840. In some directory entries and other records his surname is given as ‘Southell’, which reflects the received pronunciation of the name ‘Suthell’ at this time [as, for example, in Southwark, which to this day is pronounced ‘Suthark’].
- ⁵ According to *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, 840, this lasted until 1813. However, see 1810 for evidence it was dissolved in that year.
- ⁶ Ibid p840.
- ⁷ See note 2.
- ⁸ *Directory of English Furniture Makers*.
- ⁹ *The London Gazette* (16424), 13 November 1810, 1813.
- ¹⁰ *The Liverpool Mercury* (125), 19 November 1813.
- ¹¹ *The London Gazette*, 1 March 1817, 509.
- ¹² *The Liverpool Mercury* (478), 4 August 1820.
- ¹³ *The Dictionary of English Furniture Makers*.
- ¹⁴ Though her baptismal record has not been located, further research has revealed that Mrs Thomas Bostock was formerly Elizabeth Ann Southwell, who went on to marry a Mr Soley by 1851, after being widowed. Her age is given as 59 in the 1861 census (therefore born 1802) and her place of birth as Liverpool. Her first husband, Thomas Bostock, died aged 32 and was buried in Rusholme, Manchester on 28 August 1850. (*Manchester Burials and Deaths*, Manchester Archives).
- ¹⁵ *The Manchester Examiner and Times*, 21 January 1852. From later genealogical records, the author has been able to identify the William Southwell who placed this advertisement as the William born in Liverpool in 1811 to William Southwell and Ellen Fazackerley.



William Southwell's 'Deception Pier Table Piano Forte'
Sigal Music Museum; Photo by Marlowe Sigal