

THE PROPOSED ROYAL ACADEMY MEDAL OF 1793

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Although it is quite clear that this medal was never issued in the manner intended, the fact that its preliminary stages are described at such length in the Farington Diary¹ entitles it to some notice. Though only a fragmentary tale, it takes us into a world where medals were regarded very seriously. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Royal Academy fell on 10 December 1793, and a general meeting was called a week later to reach final agreement on the manner of celebration. It was Farington himself who put the formal proposals to the meeting, namely that they should hold a special Academy dinner; present a loyal address to their patron, King George III; and make arrangements to have a medal struck - proposals which were unanimously agreed.² The dinner and the address were duly attended to, and the matter of the medal was set in motion. After some three years of hesitant progress the official order for the medal dies was finally given to Lewis Pingo on 31 December 1796, conditional on his completing within the coming year.³ The mystery of what happened after that, and why the medal failed to appear, is difficult to unravel.

The Academy records contain no reference at all to the medal after the placing of the Pingo order.⁴ Unfortunately, the Academy possesses no collection of its early medals, and little attention has been given to them. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the official history of the Academy⁵ published in 1968 the author mistook, as it now appears, the intention for the accomplished fact, and stated that 'in 1793 there were celebrations to commemorate the Academy's twenty-fifth anniversary. A medal by T. Pingo was struck, examples in gold being given to the Royal Family and in silver to the Academicians and Associates'.⁶ It was this statement that prompted me to search for the medal. According to Farington the intention was to strike four specimens in gold and sixty-five in silver.⁷ With a mintage of this size, and a prestigious medal, it is unthinkable that one or more examples should not have survived. The early nineteenth-century collectors were extremely active, and we should certainly expect to see a medal of this era listed in the sale catalogues; and eventually to find its place in such works as Forrer, Colonel Grant's List, and Laurence Brown's recent catalogue.⁸ Further, we should expect an example to have found its way to the British Museum,⁹ or possibly to have remained in the royal collection at Windsor, which we know was examined by Brown.¹⁰ The fact that no trace of the medal has emerged is to my mind conclusive proof of its non-existence.

Having reached this conclusion we return to Farington. His later allusions to the medal are few and cryptic. On 12 April 1797 he noted: 'Marchant called - saw Pingo today who says Burch's model will be of no use to him'. A year later, when the dies were already overdue, he wrote on 15 April 1798: 'Marchant in evening. Academy medal not a 3rd done'. Clearly progress was slow. These laconic entries need some explanation.

The design chosen for the medal was one put forward by Robert Smirke. A twelve-inch model was subsequently prepared by Smirke himself from which a reduction of medal size was later made by Edward Burch; and both these models were handed to Pingo to copy when he was given the order. It should also be explained that Nathaniel Marchant, the celebrated gem-engraver and an associate member of the Academy since 1791, was appointed to the Mint in 1797, and from that time must have been in regular touch with Pingo. He was thus the natural retailer of Mint news to Farington and to Academy circles, and was at this period a frequent caller at Farington's home. I have found only two later entries relating to the medal, many years afterwards, and both referring to Academy Council meetings. On 8 February 1804 Farington noted: 'The Commemoration Medal was talked about'; and on 16 February 1805; 'I also requested that something might be done respecting the Commemoration Medal'. These entries, with our other evidence, leave no doubt that the medal project, after a total span of some eleven years, was still uncompleted in 1805, and was likely to remain so. How far Pingo finally progressed with the dies remains uncertain, but it is clear that the medal was never struck in quantity as originally planned.

What was Pingo's problem? Was he overworked, or was it a matter of failing powers or confidence? Or did he simply dislike this particular medal? Pingo was born in 1743, and his rather limited output of medals belongs to his early or middle years. Although he continued as chief engraver at the Mint until 1815, his work on medals almost ceased after 1790. The last medal listed by Forrer is the St Paul's medal of 1789.¹¹ Brown also, correctly, gives him the Manchester Church and King Club medal of 1790.¹² We know from Farington, if not otherwise, that Pingo also engraved the dies for the 'Naval Gold Medal' issued in 1796 to honour Earl Howe and his captains at the battle of First of June 1794.¹³ Farington wrote on 22 December 1796: 'Lewis Pingo I met at Smirke's. He asks 150 guineas for engraving the Commemoration medal which would take him 6 or 7 months - will finish it by November next - had from the Admiralty 150 guineas for the medal in honor of 1st of June'. The naval medal is unsigned and I have not previously seen it attributed to Pingo,¹⁴ though Forrer came close to the truth when he listed an impression of its reverse among the Pingo relics that he examined in the Bousfield collection.¹⁵ It was perhaps the last of Pingo's medals. His figure of 150 guineas is astonishing for the time, and indeed astonished the Academy, though they felt obliged to accept it. In 1793 Marchant had been consulted about the costs of the Academy medal and had then advised them to allow £40 for cutting the dies.¹⁶ He later told Farington, 22 December 1796, that he believed Pingo originally only wanted fifty guineas. Clearly Pingo's success with the Admiralty encouraged him to re-appraise himself in the intervening period. However, his apparent abandonment of medal work in these years looks deliberate, the Admiralty medal being less avoidable since it was an official order on the Mint rather than a private commission. It is therefore possible to see his exorbitant quotation as a diplomatic attempt to lose the job.

It is impossible to assess Pingo's day to day work load at the Mint. Apart from responsibility for the dies there must have been other duties in running the department. There is occasional evidence of his working for other government departments such as the Stamp Office and the Excise Office.¹⁷ There was also work of some kind on his own account, for in a letter of 20 July 1801 Morrison remarked that 'as an artist of ability Mr Pingo has generally much private work in execution, and to obtain business for the Office...it becomes needful to urge him to dispatch'.¹⁸ The impossibility of holding Pingo to promised dates, and the constant need to 'urge him to dispatch', occur again and again in the Mint records at this time. No doubt

he was a conscientious and busy servant of the Mint, and familiar with all departmental aspects, but when it came to the artistry of engraving we really know nothing to be proud of in these later years. The deterioration in his performance is obvious, and his slowness and hesitancy were more likely to have been due to an awareness of this decline than to genuine pressure of work. Two contemporary passing views on Pingo in 1806 are worth noticing. Lord Charles Spencer, the master, stating a case to the Treasury for an increase in Mint salaries, wrote of Pingo: 'In giving credit to the present Officer for his knowledge and experience in coinage as a Steel Engraver, I believe I shall be justified by the opinion of the Office and every competent person. Of how great an importance it is to have an Artist of celebrity at the head of the Department may be inferred from the temptation...held out to a foreign Engraver to accept it at the restoration of Charles the Second'.¹⁹ Spencer's words were in fact chosen with some care, and it was wrong of Banks to misconstrue them in his memorandum to the Coin Committee: 'In representing the present Engraver as an Artist of Celebrity the Master gives a sad specimen of his taste'.²⁰ If Banks was at this time impatient with the Mint and with Pingo in particular it is fair to recall his letter to Pingo of some twenty years earlier expressing high satisfaction with the Captain Cook medal of 1784 for the Royal Society.²¹

The Academy medal presented its own problems in the three-way division of artistic responsibility between Smirke, Burch, and Pingo, an arrangement that was perhaps unwise. It was a condition of the order that the dies should be 'executed under the direction of Mr. Smirke, and subject to the inspection of the Council of the Royal Academy'.²² Smirke reported to Farington in January 1797 that Sir Joseph Banks had told him that 'Pingo had been with him and brought with him Smirke's model for the Commemoration Medal. He [Banks] remarked on Pingo being a weak man, and that he had foolishly said he should make many alterations from Smirke's model when he came to execute it'.²³ We have already noticed Pingo's dissatisfaction with Burch's model. The combination of Smirke's inexperience as a modeller, Burch's failing eyesight, and Pingo's powers of procrastination if nothing else, was unpromising. Under all these circumstances, even though our speculations may be wrong, the non-completion of the Academy dies need not entirely surprise us.

Nathaniel Marchant's function at the Mint has never been clearly explained,²⁴ nor why an artist of the standing that he had attained as a gem-engraver should wish to take lowly employment there under the official title of 'Apprentice or Probationer under the Chief Graver'.²⁵ This question puzzled Pingo at the time. When the vacancy arose after John Milton's dismissal Marchant's application for the post was in due course received by the master, Sir George Yonge. Enquiries were made and James Morrison, the deputy-master, reported to Yonge on 14 March 1797 that he had 'mentioned the business to Mr Pingo who speaks highly of him as a Stone Engraver, and his situation such that he is sure he will not undertake the business of the Mint, when he is made acquainted with its nature and the circumstances. Mr Pingo is well intimate with him, he purposes calling on him in a day or two'. Whatever Pingo may have said to him Marchant was not dissuaded, and confirmed his application to the master on 21 March.²⁶ On the twenty-third Farington wrote:

Marchant came in evening - he is appointed Assistant to Pingo the engraver to the Mint, in the room of Milton, who is discharged for having engraved a die to cast Louidores for a Frenchman - the place is £80 a year. Humphry recommended Marchant to Sir George Yonge. Marchant consulted Lord Spencer about accepting the offer. His Lordship advised

him to take it as, if he chose, he might at any time give it up. Perhaps, said his Lordship, you may see me in the Tower in a little time. Lord Carlisle advised him to take the place, 'I am an Old Politician', said his Lordship, 'and know it is well to have a foot on the ladder, you may rise from that situation to another'.²⁷

Marchant was now in his late fifties. His great days as a gem-engraver were past or passing, due to his years, and to changing taste and fashion.²⁸ He was evidently anxious to attach himself to the establishment for reasons of prestige and security, and viewed the Mint appointment as a rung or stepping-stone, as did his noble counsellors. To Pingo the easy relations that Marchant enjoyed with the nobility and men in power must have seemed unwelcome attributes in the junior member of his department. Even the master was somewhat awed, for when in January 1798 Marchant applied to him for undue favour in the allocation of engravers' accommodation, Yonge found it hard to say no. Debating the matter with Morrison, he wrote: 'His connexion and personal acquaintance with Mr Pitt, Lord Spencer, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir John Musgrave, Sir Richard Worsley, Mr Rose, and many others, besides myself, as well as his own merits and talents, entitle him to every regard'.²⁹ As it happened this argument carried no weight with Morrison who retorted sharply: 'As Mr Marchant has shown neither ability nor inclination to render service to the Mint, the plea of merit is put out of the question'.³⁰ No doubt Morrison preferred to judge by results rather than by promise or airy talk. When Thomas Major died at the end of 1799 Marchant took over his posts as engraver of his majesty's seals, and engraver to the Stamp Office, appointments which had been more or less reserved for him as early as 1797 by George Rose of the Treasury.³¹ These positions were not sinecures, and the time that he could devote to the Mint must have been seriously diminished. His attendance at the Stamp Office appears to have been fairly regular, and the fact that he had to find sureties indicates the extent of his responsibility there.³² The Stamp Office provided him with accommodation at Somerset House, and it was there that he lived until his death in 1816.³³

On joining the Mint in 1797 Marchant must have turned his hand seriously to engraving in steel. Perhaps his earliest exercise in the art was his ambitious portrait of the king. On 18 June 1798 Farington noted that he had breakfasted with Marchant, and had been shown a 'King's head in Steel which he is working - C.Greville³⁴ takes much interest in it - and is a member of Privy Council - to which it is to be referred, with others, in a week'. At that time the Privy Council Coin Committee were receiving evidence; the Royal Academy had been invited to make submissions on coin design;³⁵ and a team from the Mint was due to attend on 5 July with coin specimens and models. On that day Marchant arrived independently and handed in a plaster impression and a lengthy letter: 'I presume to submit to your Lordships an Impression of a Die which I have nearly finished of His Majesties profile in size and relief calculated for a crown piece. In so doing I consider myself sanctioned by the orders of your Lordships, without which, in the inferior station I hold in the Mint, I could not be justified in executing such a work, as I have been informed by the Superior Officers of that Department'. He went on to state that he had brought the die with him, though unfinished, 'that I may silence the insinuations of those who have said that I cannot work in steel', and then described the further stages needed to perfect the die.³⁶ His submission was duly minuted by the Committee. By October the die was finished. Permission was obtained, as the rules required, to use the Mint die press: 'by request of Mr Marchant Probationer Engraver, Two Medals to be presented to the Privy Council'. On 3 October 1798 Farington noted the unhappy result: 'Marchant

called. His Dye of the King broke'.³⁷ Marchant's response to this setback is not known, but late in 1800 the government proposed to issue an official 'Union Medal' to mark the forthcoming union with Ireland on 1 January 1801, and Marchant was nominated to design and engrave the dies under Mint auspices. His carefully prepared drawings for the medal are preserved in the Mint records and show his well-known portrait of the king, with an allegorical reverse of the three kingdoms.³⁸ But the initial urgency was soon spent, it seems, and what little time Marchant was prepared or able to give to the Mint in the next two or three years appears to have been devoted to perfecting the head model and working on the obverse die. Progress became imperceptible, and the Mint officers, anxious that either Pingo or Marchant should produce a new head for the coinage, saw little to choose between them. The tortoise race was eventually settled by Pingo copying Marchant's portrait model for the gold coinage of 1804.³⁹ The union medal must have died in Marchant's hands, for there is no trace of it today. If we read the evidence correctly, the obverse die was all but ready in 1803, and the reverse had not then been started.⁴⁰ Marchant's recurrent ill health from 1803 must have contributed to the death of the project.⁴¹

As Pingo had doubtless foreseen, Marchant's appointment to the Mint was in many ways a mistake. He had neither the experience nor perhaps the will to be of day to day assistance in the department. His apparent independence of action and his direct access to government circles cannot have endeared him to the Mint. If, as may well be, there were hopes that he would re-invigorate the engraving department with new ideas and designs they were largely unfulfilled at this period, though it is fair to say that his strong, overtly classical portrait of the king was a successful and timely modernization of the royal effigy, beside which Pingo's later attempts were insipid and old-fashioned to say the least.⁴²

Unfortunately Smirke's chosen design for the Academy medal is now lost, unless by chance it survived in some form in the Bousfield collection mentioned previously, and still exists unrecognized. This is an important possibility. Allusions to the design in Farington are always in the singular, and presumably refer to the imaginative reverse. For the obverse portrait of the king they already had Thomas Pingo's die of 1770, or perhaps intended to use or copy Burch's head of 1785.⁴³ Two remarks of Farington's would be helpful in recognition. On 22 March 1794 he wrote: 'Smirke's design for the Medal was approved of last night by the Committee. West suggested that something should be added to signify the relation the figure representing the Royal Academy had to the emblems of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Smirke thought the idea frivolous, but it was not opposed and passed'. Three years later Farington wrote of Banks (8 January 1797) that 'Sir Joseph remarked on Smirke's Academy Model that he had made Time a sort of Herculean figure, instead of representing him Old. It seems Sir Joseph has only the puerile idea of Time decrepit and with a Scythe; not recollecting that Time is coeval with eternity, or something like it'. Other Academy members who submitted designs at the meeting in July 1794 were John Bacon, Richard Cosway, and John Rigaud. President West had withdrawn his, and it was only months later that Nollekens came forward with a design but was ruled out of time. The final voting went narrowly in favour of Smirke's submission, and in preference to Bacon's 'Britannia embracing Minerva'. It was then decided that Smirke's winning design should be modelled in large at about twelve inches diameter; and Smirke, not generally thought of as a modeller, surprised the assembly by undertaking it himself.⁴⁴ His model was ready in the following March, and received approval in general meeting in April 1795.⁴⁵ It was no doubt Smirke's success with the Academy medal that induced Banks to consult him on the design of

the Rumford medal for the Royal Society.⁴⁶ As it finally appeared the medal is a rather plain one, but it was apparently Smirke who suggested the device of a tripod and flame, appropriate since the medal was intended to promote the study of light and heat. Later we learn from Farington, 25 May 1807, that Smirke was commissioned 'to make a design for a Medal in Commemoration of the Abolition of the Slave Trade; on one side to be a head of Mr. Wilberforce; and on the other an appropriate subject'. There can be no doubt that this was the well-known and handsome medal issued in 1809, and engraved by Thomas Webb of Birmingham.⁴⁷

Benjamin West, the Academy president, wasted no time in the matter of the medal design, for within a fortnight of the original meeting he invited Farington to call. 'He showed me', Farington wrote on 30 December 1793, 'a design he had made for the medal. On one side the King's head, on the other Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, represented by three Figures'. There is no difficulty in recognizing this as the drawing now preserved in the Ashmolean Museum. It is not an adventurous design, but has the merit of directness and simplicity. It was rather characteristic of the president to put himself forward and assume to himself the honour of designing the medal. The Academy members also saw it in that light, and felt that a wider competition was called for. They apparently shamed West out of it, for Farington wrote on 14 April 1794 that 'probably the cause of West giving up the competitorship for the design of the Commemoration Medal was being told by Bourgeois that Northcote said he ought not to grasp at or expect every honor; that the Academy had clothed him with a robe of velvet, but that he should not struggle for every stripe of ermine'. The excessive self-regard to which Northcote was here pointing was one of West's irritating little failings, though all in all during his long presidency there were few serious challenges to his supremacy. Many proofs can be found of West's recurrent interest in medals, and in 1815 he took the unusual step of commissioning a medal of himself.⁴⁸

Having settled the design of their medal the Academy had the task of choosing a die-engraver. The choice was, as always, limited. Among their own members, where they would naturally prefer as a point of honour to keep the work, the only person qualified was Edward Burch, an academician since 1771, and formerly an outstanding modeller, gem-engraver, and miniaturist. Indeed he had been Marchant's master. Burch had some experience of cutting dies for he had engraved two medals by royal command for Göttingen University in 1785 and 1788.⁴⁹ The problem was that his powers were failing.⁵⁰ It was decided to invite competition, and Burch, Pingo, and John Milton were asked to 'send specimens of their ability and express if they were willing to undertake it as candidates'.⁵¹ All three did so, and on 31 July 1795 the Academy Council assembled to make their selection. On that day Farington wrote:

It was the general opinion that in Burch's Hanoverian medal more knowledge of the art is expressed than in any of the others produced. The doubt was whether Burch is now capable of executing with the same degree of ability. That medal was executed in 1785. The specimens of modelling which Burch sent to the last Exhibition were very inferior to his former productions. It was at last moved and carried unanimously that Mr Smirke's model be delivered to Mr Burch and he be requested to make a model and accurate copy of it the same size of the Hanoverian medal, and that he deliver his model to the President to be considered by the Council. Bacon, in reply to an observation of mine, said it had been an affectation in Burch to make his legs and feet small, with a view to increase the effect of the body of the figure.

Burch was thus given every chance to prove his ability without the Academy committing itself. Eighteen months later, when the model was ready, Burch removed all embarrassment by declining to cut the dies. In Farington's words (17 December 1796), '3 years ago he was able to have done it, but does not now think his eyes and hands fit for such business'. The commission then, as we have already seen, went to Pingo.

It is interesting to consider, as we can do, what other die-engravers of proven ability were available at this time. In London the gem-engraver W. Barnett had recently issued on his own account two medals of some merit, one a tribute to the Prince of Wales, the other to Earl Howe.⁵² That they had been noticed is clear from some opinions of Marchant's encapsulated by Farington on 22 December 1796, at a time when the choice of an engraver was in their thoughts: '[Pingo's] medal done for the Admiralty is very bad. Milton is a bad engraver - Barnett⁵³ neat - this branch of art is at a low ebb in England'. Whether or not Barnett was invited to compete, we can agree with Marchant's verdict on him: the medals are indeed neat and skilful, if somewhat mannered. Perhaps the only other possibility was C.H. Kuchler, now working for Matthew Boulton in Birmingham. He may have been too far away, or too fully engaged, to be considered in 1796, but in June 1795 Farington had noted that 'Lysons recommended to me the Medals of Bolton of Birmingham, and thought he would do the Academy medal well', and a fortnight after that Boulton sent Lysons some sample medals to show their quality.⁵⁴

There is one other Royal Academy medal that failed to materialize. For their fiftieth anniversary in 1818 they again proposed to have a medal struck. The drawings prepared for it by John Flaxman are described and illustrated in the catalogue of the Flaxman exhibition held at the Academy in 1979.⁵⁵ But the project was abandoned, perhaps due to the death of the king which would have necessitated changes in the design, and engaged the Mint engravers on other matters. The apparent conclusion, therefore, is that the only medals actually issued by the Royal Academy during the reign of George III were the two well-known prize medals, the 'Gold' and the 'Silver', both engraved by Thomas Pingo, and first struck in 1770 shortly after the foundation of the Academy in 1768.⁵⁶

NOTES

1. *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, vols I-VI edited by K. Garlick and A. Macintyre, and vols VII- edited by Kathryn Cave (New Haven, Connecticut, and London, 1978-), currently being published. All subsequent references are to this edition. Joseph Farington, R.A., 1747-1821, was not an important painter, but was influential in the direction of Royal Academy affairs. His diary, 1793-1821, is one of the vital documents for his time and circle. After its re-discovery in 1921 it was published in greatly abbreviated form as *The Farington Diary*, edited by James Greig, 8 vols (London, 1922-28).

Almost everyone named in this article has an entry in *DNB*, and where appropriate in L. Forrer's *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists*, for which reason I have not thought biographical notes to be necessary in general.

2. Farington, 17 December 1793; and for earlier discussion, see 16 December 1793.

3. Farington, 31 December 1796.
4. I am indebted to Miss C-A.Parker, Librarian at the Royal Academy, for permission to examine their records, and other assistance.
5. Sidney C. Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy, 1768-1968* (London, 1968), p.75.
6. A version of this statement appears in R.Kraemer, *Drawings by Benjamin West* (Pierpont Morgan Library, 1975), p.31. The author quotes the late Mr.James of the Academy as saying that the British Museum possesses an example of the medal. In R.C.Alberts's *Benjamin West: A Biography* (Boston, Mass., 1978), p.199, we are told that the medal was struck by Thomas Pingo and Sons. Both these versions clearly stem from the Academy's own misconception about the medal's existence, and confusion of Thomas Pingo with his son Lewis.
7. Farington, 18 December 1793, and 31 December 1796, on the mintage. The gold medals were intended for the King, the Queen, the Prince of Wales, and the Princess Royal (Farington, 17 December 1793).
8. M.H.Grant, 'British Medals since 1760', *BNJ* 32 (1934-37), 269-93; 33 (1938-41), 449-80. L.Brown, *A Catalogue of British Historical Medals, 1760-1960*, I (1980). Hereafter, Brown.
9. Mr Mark Jones, of the British Museum, assures me that no specimen is known there.
10. Brown, p.xii.
11. Brown, nos.312, 313.
12. Brown, no.344. The medal is signed D.I. - P.F. A press cutting of 11 December 1790, preserved in the Miss Banks collection in the Department of Coins and Medals at the British Museum describes the medal and states that it is just completed by Mr Pingo. No doubt this is Brown's source. A theory suggested by Brown that the signature M & P, or M & P FECIT, found on a few later medals (Brown, nos.625, 655-56, 1042) can be read as Marchant and Pingo will not bear examination. A commercial collaboration between these aging and probably incompatible artists cannot be imagined, and the medals are poor, unworthy things.
13. Marquess of Milford Haven, *British Naval Medals* (London, 1919), nos. 427, 428. And see extensive documentation in J.H.Mayo, *Medals and Decorations of the British Army and Navy*, 2 vols (London, 1897), I, 172-77.
14. Neither Milford Haven nor Mayo mention Pingo, nor does the designer appear to be known if other than Pingo. The dies were at the Admiralty when Mayo wrote in 1897, and he adds that the name, R.Wood, is stamped on each. Perhaps the name of the die-forgers, I would suggest. A letter of 12 March 1797 from J.Morrison to the master of the Mint (PRO, MINT 4/21) confirms the Mint origin and implies Pingo's authorship.
15. Forrer, IV, 558, under Thomas Pingo. Some or all of these relics were listed in a Sotheby sale catalogue of 28 July 1930, lots 211-13, as the property of Dr Stanley Bousfield. I have to thank Mr Hugh Pagan for this location. Lot 212 contained 78 die impressions 'nearly all by Lewis or Thomas Pingo'. Included by name is the 'large and small gold Naval Medal'. What happened to this important and precious collection, described there as 'most carefully identified and ticketed'?

16. Farington, 18 December 1793.
17. PRO, Board of Stamps, IR 31/1-8. I have noticed at random payments made to John and Lewis Pingo: £158 at 11 January 1800; £172 at 11 January 1802; and £193 at 9 February 1803. An annual account perhaps. In July 1811 Pingo was summoned to York by the Excise Office to verify a stamp impression in a forgery case, presumably from his own engraving (PRO, Board of Trade, BT 6/123, document 46); and the striking of 'ten Brass Export Stamps' for the Commissioners of Excise in 1798 is noted in PRO, MINT 1/15, p.109.
18. PRO, MINT 4/23, copy or draft letter of 20 July 1801 from J.Morrison to the master, Lord Arden.
19. PRO, MINT 1/16, pp.129-31, dated 25 October 1806.
20. PRO, BT 6/119, 'Sir Joseph Banks's Observations on the Application of the Mint Officers for an Increase of Salary' (undated).
21. *The Banks Letters*, edited by W.R.Dawson (London, 1958), p.672. Banks to Pingo, dated 4 March 1784. Brown, no.258.
22. Farington, 31 December 1796.
23. Farington, 6 January 1797.
24. A monograph on Marchant's life and work, with emphasis on gems, is being prepared by Miss Gertrud Seidmann. It is odd that Sir John Craig, *The Mint* (Cambridge, 1953), p.233, makes Marchant a Frenchman, while Archibald Billing, *The Science of Gems* (London, 1875), p.203, tells us that he was a German. The rest of us, including Miss Seidmann, have no doubt that he was English.
25. This title, of which several variants occur, was used in Marchant's warrant of appointment (PRO, MINT 1/15, pp.15, 16).
26. PRO, MINT 4/21. Marchant's letter to Sir George Yonge, 11 March 1797; J.Morrison to Yonge, 14 March 1797; and Marchant's confirmation to Yonge, 21 March 1797.
27. Farington, 23 March 1797. Ozias Humphry, R.A., 1742-1810, was an old friend of Marchant's, and enjoyed a long, sometimes strained, artist-patron relationship with Yonge. Lords Spencer and Carlisle were patrons of Marchant. Lord Spencer's joke about the Tower relates no doubt to his work at the Admiralty on which so much depended at that time.
28. *DNB* gives Marchant's dates as 1739-1816. I owe to Miss Seidmann the point about changing taste.
29. PRO, MINT 4/22, Yonge to Morrison, 26 January 1798.
30. PRO, MINT 4/22, Morrison to Yonge, 29 January 1798.
31. Farington, 20 December 1797, 'Rose wishes to attach Marchant to Major that he may succeed him'; and 26 January 1798, 'Rose has informed Marchant that Pitt has agreed to his succeeding Major in Stamp Office - place Rose says shall be £200 a year'.
32. PRO, IR 31/1, minutes dated 20, 23, 27 January 1800, for Marchant's appointment and sureties at the Stamp Office.
33. Marchant's accommodation at the Mint has already been mentioned, but he did not live there. The engravers' houses were part of their emolument to occupy or let at will, except that the chief engraver's responsi-

- bilities required his residence. Marchant never intended to reside (PRO, MINT 4/22, Morrison to Yonge, 19 January 1798), and in 1811 'had never resided nor was ever likely to reside' (PRO, BT 6/123, Sir J. Banks to Earl Bathurst, January 1811).
34. Charles Greville, 1749-1809, art patron.
 35. Farington has perhaps a score of entries from 15 July 1798 to 25 December 1799 on the Academy response to this invitation, and on the highly individual reactions of certain members.
 36. PRO, BT 6/118, Marchant to secretary of Coin Committee, 5 July 1798. The Mint must have acquiesced in his conduct, if grudgingly; and in March the master had desired that 'every Officer concerned in the Engraving Department should exert themselves, each of them, separately, to produce as able specimens both for drawing and execution as they possibly can' (PRO, MINT 4/22, Yonge to Morrison, 17 March 1798).
 37. PRO, MINT 1/15, p.109. The permission to use the die press is dated 7 October 1798, but this or Farington's date must be wrong.
 38. PRO, MINT 1/15, pp.223-24, 229-30. The order on the Mint came from the Treasury, but the source of Marchant's nomination is not stated. Pingo's inglorious part in the affair is related here. Having been recruited to engrave a second pair of dies from Marchant's designs, he apparently put the allegorical figures in the wrong order, and was taken off the job. There must have been some very severe recriminations for this episode to have been given permanent place in the record.
 39. R.L.Kenyon, *The Gold Coins of England* (London, 1884), p.197.
 40. PRO, MINT 4/23, James W.Morrison to John Smyth, the master, 14 October 1803. 'Although I can't say that I myself perceive much progress in the Medal he tells me there is, and that he means to set about the Reverse immediately'.
 41. Farington, 16 July 1803, and 11 April 1806, on his illness.
 42. Compare some remarks on the royal effigies of this period by J.G. Pollard, 'Matthew Boulton and Conrad Heinrich Kuchler', *NC* (1970), pp.259-318, p.314. Marchant, I assume, is the ancestor of Thomas Wyon and Pistrucchi.
 43. Brown, nos.132, 266, 291, on which more hereafter.
 44. Farington, 8 July 1794.
 45. Farington, 4 April 1795.
 46. Farington, 6 January and 18 March 1797. For this medal see C.R.Weld, *History of the Royal Society*, 2 vols (London, 1848), I, 219, where it is illustrated and Smirke's participation noted. Brown (no.413) includes a later version of the medal with the Rumford portrait, but does not mention this original medal engraved by Milton and first struck in 1802.
 47. Brown, no.627.
 48. Brown, no.862.
 49. Brown, nos.266, 291. Burch also signs the cast medal of William Hunter, Brown, no.188.
 50. On Burch's sad and impoverished situation see for example Farington, 30 December 1795: 'Burch called on me. He said that in the last four years he has only had one commission, and that but to the amount of

20 guineas. That he had removed to a small house in Paynes Place, Kentish Town, no.1, and with all economy could scarcely support his expences...'. He hoped for £100 from the Academy funds to help him publish a set of impressions from his works. The Academy felt some compassion for him, and had already appointed him their librarian in 1794, which brought in £50 a year.

51. Farington, 18 July 1795.

52. Brown, nos.361, 382. These appear to be his only medals. Two others were wrongly ascribed to him by H.A.Grueber, 'English Personal Medals from 1760', *NC* (1890). One is the Captain Cook medal of 1772 (Brown, no.165) which is signed B.F. But as Brown says at the end of his note this should be read as Boulton Fecit (or Boulton & Fothergill), i.e. the manufacturer. And see Forrer, VI, 458, on John Westwood, senior, who may well have been the engraver on the evidence of an obverse cliché with his signature in the Bousfield collection. The cliché was part of lot 214 in the Bousfield sale referred to in note (15).

The other is the Combermere medal of 1821 (Brown, no.1157), or rather its reverse, which has the signature B.F. But since the obverse is signed FAULKNER F. it seems perverse to question the simple equation of B.F. with Benjamin Faulkner!

53. Written 'Barnes' in this edition, but our knowledge of the period requires Barnett.

54. Farington, 20 June and 4 July 1795. Samuel Lysons, 1763-1819, antiquary.

55. *John Flaxman, R.A.*, edited by D.Bindman (Royal Academy Exhibition Catalogue, 1979), p.137.

56. Hutchison, *Royal Academy*. On the 1818 medal, p.92; and on the prize medals, p.52. And see Brown, nos.132, 133, and his note.