

The Partnership of Hukin and Heath.

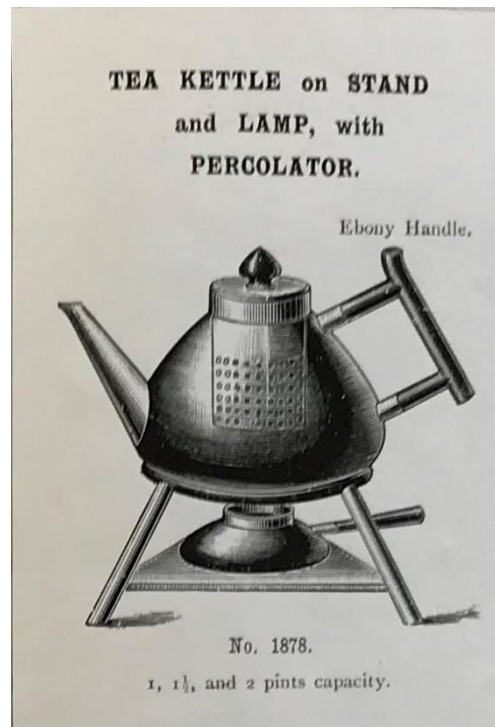
It has become axiomatic that any account of the firm of Hukin and Heath, and any sales description of a piece made by Hukin and Heath, must mention the name of Dr. Christopher Dresser. Moreover, any history of the firm must state that the partnership was founded in 1855 – a date which derives from the firm's own advertisements. In fact, as will be seen, the partnership did not begin in 1855 and, although the genius of Dr. Dresser is undeniable, it was Hukin and Heath who employed his services as a designer and not the designer who employed Hukin and Heath. In justice to the firm, an account of their history, in which, of course, the employment of Dr. Dresser played a part, is long overdue.

When Hukin and Heath Ltd. was finally wound up, in 1953, the name of Dr. Dresser had been almost entirely forgotten, noted only by Nikolas Pevsner in 1936 and 1937, and those who visited the Victoria and Albert Museum's, *'Exhibition of Victoria and Edwardian Decorative Art'* in 1952. In consequence, much of the archival material relating to Dresser's career was destroyed, a process that continued even after the exhibition. With the same spirit of indifference to industrial design history, the archives of Hukin and Heath, which included their records relating to Dresser, were also discarded.

After a new exhibition in 1972, mounted by John Jesse, Richard Dennis and the Fine Art Society, and a succession of exhibitions and monographs since, the remarkable work of Dresser has been celebrated once more. A paucity of archival sources has been remedied with scholarly interpolation and enticing speculative attribution: a heady mix of evident genius and irresolvable mystery. Dresser's relationship with Hukin and Heath, was recorded by contemporaries and is attested by the stamp 'Designed by Dr. C. Dresser' on some Hukin and Heath articles. More uncertain is the influence that Dresser may, or may not have had, upon later pieces by the same firm which exhibit some distinctive 'Dresser' aspects but which, in other respects, are quite different adaptations to suit a commercial imperative. Alongside these adaptations, the firm continued to reproduce pure Dresser designs long after any identifiable connection with the designer, and indeed, even after the Doctor's death in 1904. Rather than contributing further speculative thought upon such conundrums, the purpose of this essay is to garner what information there is about the lives of Jonathan Wilson Hukin and John Thomas Heath and their successors and to collate the pattern numbers of articles produced by the company as a means of gaining a clearer understanding of the history of the business.



Above: Original Dresser designed Teapot, pattern 1878. [Courtesy H. Blairman & Sons Ltd.]



Above: Hukin and Heath Ltd. version of the Dresser designed pattern number 1878, as advertised in 1906 with the addition of a percolator.

Jonathan Hukin was born in 1811¹, one of eleven children, the son of William Hukin, a silver-plater in Sheffield, and his wife, Hannah, née Wilson. In 1837, when he married, Jonathan was living in Branston street in Birmingham. His wife, Juliana Chivers, had been born in Stone in Staffordshire², but, at the time of the marriage, was living in Caroline street, in Birmingham, at the centre of the precious metal trades in the town. The marriage took place on the 16th May, at the parish church of St. Martin in the Bull Ring. How long Hukin remained in Birmingham after his marriage remains uncertain, but his only child, Maria, was born in Sheffield in 1840.³ The '*Sheffield Independent*' newspaper carried a report of a robbery at Hukin's house there in July 1843:

'Wm. Marsden, charged on a bill of indictment found at the West-Riding Sessions, with having, on the 31st March, at Sheffield, broken into the dwelling-house of Jonathan Hukin, and stolen therefrom thirty-one farthings, a pair of kid gloves, and a silk bag.'



Above: a photograph of Juliana Hukin, circa 1875. [Courtesy of Jonathan Nicholas]⁴

By the time of the 1851 Census, he and his wife were living in Charlotte street in Sheffield and his trade was described as that of 'silver-plater'. They had one young servant, Emma Hale⁵. The '*Sheffield Gazetteer*'⁶ of the following year lists Jonathan Hukin as a silver-plate manufacturer working with Hawksley and Company and living in Broomhill some two miles west of Sheffield. However, he left that partnership in June 1852, the '*London Gazette*' and local newspapers carrying details of the dissolution of partnership:

*'WE the undersigned, George Hawksley, Jonathan Hukin, and Charles Haslam, carrying on business at Sheffield, in the county of York, as Silver Smiths, and Silver Platers, under, the firm of Hawksley and Company, have this day dissolved partnership so far as Jonathan Hukin is concerned, and all amounts due to and from the aforesaid firm, will be received and paid by the aforesaid George Hawksley and Charles' Haslam.—As witness our hands this 15th day of June 1852. George Hawksley. Jonathan Hukin. Charles Haslam.'*⁷

It was probably Jonathan Hukin who formed a partnership soon afterwards with John Frederick Fenton, as Hukin and Fenton, in Sheffield. The '*Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*' newspaper of March 15th, 1856, reported the presentation of a silver goblet made by the partnership:

'On Wednesday evening, a very handsome silver goblet, manufactured by Messrs. Hukin and Fenton, was presented to Mr. J.H. Graves, lately proprietor of the Sheffield Examiner, by his late workmen, on the occasion of his retirement from the newspaper and printing business'...

The partnership did not last long and its dissolution was announced in newspapers in June and July of 1856.⁸ Fenton was ten years younger than Hukin and had worked for the silversmiths and platers, Hawkesworth, Eyre and Company. When Fenton died in 1883, the '*Sheffield Independent*' newspaper surveyed his life:

'In our obituary notices we have recorded the death of Mr. John F. Fenton, of South Moor Works, which took place at his residence, Ecclesall road, on the 14th inst. In the brief sketches which we have given from time to time of the careers of many of Sheffield's successful manufacturers, who have already passed away, we have seen many striking witnesses of what has been attained by men whose sole capital at the commencement of their commercial life was simply a good practical knowledge of the business in which they were engaged, combined with an inordinate degree of perseverance. Mr. Fenton's career as a manufacturer of silver plate is but another example of this kind. About thirty years ago he left the employ of Messrs. Hawkesworth, Eyre, and Co., who at that time carried on their business in the Wicker, and commenced business as a manufacturing silversmith in a very small way, in premises near Norfolk lane. After several years of hard struggling, and two dissolutions of partnership – and while the business was of but very limited proportions -he took into partnership his brother, who at the present time resides in Jersey. The firm then took the designation of "Fenton Brothers"...'

By the time of the 1861 census, on the 7th April, Hukin had established his business in Birmingham, by then employing eleven people, and was living in Henley street, Aston. Later advertisements by Hukin and Heath state that the business was 'established' in 1855, which suggests that he had been working in Birmingham for six years at the date of the census. He is likely to have retained business and family links with Sheffield during that period.

The '*Birmingham Daily Post*' of July 18th, 1862, reported a robbery from Hukin's premises at 70½, Newhall Street: the thief taking '*a box containing five plated dish-covers and seven warmers, valued £10.*' By 1867, the address had become 71, Newhall Street, where the Post Office Directory for Birmingham listed 'Hukin, Jonathan W. Electro plated ware manufacturers.

Undoubtedly Hukin, in common with many Birmingham and Sheffield silversmiths and platers, used representatives in London to sell his products. John Thomas Heath was just such a London agent. He

was born in 1840, in London, the son of John Heath and his wife, Rebecca Lily. His father came from Kent and, in the 1851 census, (by which time the family had moved to Dover), his occupation was recorded as 'North Sea Pilot'. John Thomas Heath was not christened until 1844, at St, Mary the Virgin in Dover.⁹ As an adult, Heath returned to London, and he married there in 1864: Eliza, the daughter of a Wool sorter, John Wright. For the marriage, Heath gave his occupation as electro-plate agent living in Dyer's Buildings, Holborn.¹⁰

It was not until 1870 that Hukin brought Heath into his business as a partner. The 1871 census records Heath living at 63, Beresford street, in Walworth, his occupation a 'manufacturer', living with his wife, Eliza, a daughter, also Eliza, aged 5, born in Holborn, and his brother-in-law, William Wright, occupied as Heath's Clerk, together with two of Heath's nieces.

The partnership brought changes to the business, which expanded throughout the decade. From May 1872, the firm began to register design patterns with the Designs Registry office on a regular basis¹¹. At the beginning of 1877, they moved into larger and grander premises: the 'Imperial Works', in Great Charles Street¹². The *Birmingham Daily Gazette* of 23rd January reported the move:

'Treat to Workpeople. – On Saturday, the 20th inst. Messrs. Hukin and Heath, silver and electroplate manufacturers, Imperial Works, Great Charles Street, invited their workmen to dinner in order to celebrate the opening of their new works. The meeting took place at Mason's Dining Rooms, Church Street. Between fifty and sixty sat down to dinner, Mr. Hukin occupying the chair, and Mr. Heath the vice-chair. After the usual loyal toasts, the health and prosperity of employees was proposed, and replied to by the oldest workman. Mr. Hukin and Mr. Heath both responded to the kind wishes expressed towards them. After a very harmonious evening the meeting closed at eleven o'clock.'

The new premises were held on a lease and an auction of the lease in 1878 provides a little more detail¹³:

'Auction:

Lot 6 -Great Charles Street. By direction of the Executors of the late Mr. Samuel Weicht. -An extensive Leasehold Property, No. 138, Great Charles Street, near to Newhall Street, comprising a large portion of the Warehouses, Offices, Show Room, Shopping Yard, and other Business Premises, in the occupation of Messrs. Hukin and Heath, Elector Platers.

This Property is let on lease to Messrs. Hukin and Heath for a term having 13½years unexpired on September last, at a yearly rent of £65 and it is held for a similar term, and freed from ground rent. '

In London, the business moved offices from Dyer's Buildings to 30, Ely Place. In November 1875, they registered silver marks at the Birmingham assay office: using the 'H & H' punch which they used also for electroplate, which probably pre-dates the silver mark. A London mark was not registered until November 1879, incorporating the initials of Jonathan Hukin above those of John Heath.¹⁴



From April 1878, Hukin and Heath began to register a range of radically different designs by Christopher Dresser, beginning with two small metal and glass condiment cruets¹⁵, and, in May, an egg boiler on stand and a teapot, or kettle, on stand. The designs for the condiment sets, according to Dresser's account books, were sent to Hukin and Heath on the 24th October 1877. A reference to their employment of Dr. Dresser appeared in the South London Press, on the 20th July 1878, which carried the story of an exhibition in Wandsworth in which Hukin and Heath participated:

Fine Art Exhibition and Fancy Fair.

'From this room there was an entrance into what was called the "Moorish Refreshment and Music Room". The appearance of this room was certainly very effective. In every direction the eye rested upon rich Oriental drapery from the ceiling downwards, set off with curious weapons and so forth – the whole of the costly and rare drapery being lent by Messrs. Lewis and Allenby, through Mr. Webb. On one of the tables Messrs. Hukin and Heath, art metal makers, &c., had placed a number of beautifully-designed articles in silver. A novelty in the way of teapots was shown by them, the design of which, as well as that of other articles, being attributed to Dr. Dresser. The object of the designer was evidently to enable the good qualities of the tea only to be extracted.'

The abstracted designs of Dresser were exhibited as part of a broader contemporary interest in Oriental design, which Dresser worked to promote including 'bazaar' and 'Moorish' objects from the middle to the far east. Hukin and Heath had already begun to offer articles of china from Japan mounted in silver or plate.



Image above: a Japanese porcelain Beaker mounted in silver by Hukin and Heath, Birmingham 1877 [Courtesy David Pickup]

John Heath had formed an interesting friendship with Jonathan Pearson, a prosperous wholesale ironmonger and builder in Notting Hill, in partnership with his elder brother, Robert Henry. The Pearsons were from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the sons of a hardware-man in Forth street. Heath had named his son, Frank Pearson Heath, born in 1876, after his friend. The Pearson brothers had three unmarried sisters, who lived in Cotherstone, in the North Riding, a short distance from Barnard Castle. It was to an event there that Jonathan Pearson brought John Heath in August 1879:

Cotherstone Church Bazaar at Barnard Castle.

‘Hitherto the want of a church in the charming village of Cotherstone, three miles from Barnard Castle, has been greatly felt by those residents there who happened to belong to the Church of England, and most strenuous efforts have been and are now being made with a view of securing the much-needed accommodation. With this end in view several ladies of Cotherstone, most prominent among whom were the Misses Pearson, combined together, and yesterday presented to the gaze of the public in the Music Hall, Barnard Castle, such an array of “bazaar materials” as to fairly astonish, not only their friends, but themselves. The usually dingy music hall was completely transformed, and presented a most gay and charming appearance. The centre of the hall was occupied by two large and spacious stalls, over which presided Mr. Jonathan Pearson, the well-known manufacturing ironmonger of Notting Hill, London, who, although a host in himself, had brought down with him from London a number of friends to aid in the good work, including Mr. J. T. Heath, of the firm of Messrs. Hukin and Heath, manufacturing silversmiths, &c., of London and Birmingham. The stall was completely covered with all the thousand and one articles which may be defined as being of a “bazaar” nature, and, with tasteful festoons of flowers, looked a perfect picture. First and foremost must be mentioned a superb assortment of silver and silver-plated goods from the firm above-named, beautiful in design and chaste in construction. Amongst them was an inkstand decorated with oxidised silver in basso-relievo, designed by Dr. Christopher Dresser, F.L.S. Hundreds of articles there were, too – the handiwork of cunning Japanese, splendid cutlery from Sheffield, Wedgwood ware from the Potteries, and last, but not least, some beautiful specimens of the pretty iridescent glass, a ware just coming into fashion. To the left, upon entering, was a stall filled with such things as children’s stockings, wee small purses, neckties, fans, children’s underclothing, and other fancy and useful articles. This stall was presided over by Mrs. J.T. Heath, Miss Barge, and Mrs Bradley, all of London. The next stall, filled with articles of a similar nature, was attended by Mrs Young and Miss Maria Pearson, both of Cotherstone’. ‘From the ceiling depended flags and banners, bearing curious and divers devices, which had been lent by Mr Jonathan Pearson, who was throughout most energetic in his efforts to please the many visitors who were here in attendance. Indeed, it is mainly due to his, and his sisters’ untiring and lavish labours that the bazaar was held, and carried out, as it most certainly was, to a successful issue.’

[The ‘Northern Echo’, Wednesday, August 27, 1879].

This was a busy period for the Heaths, having just moved the London premises of the firm from Ely Place to 19, Charterhouse Street. The *South London Press* carried the story on the 23rd August:

‘Since Bethnal Green was played against South Kensington there has been a general diffusion of light, and collections of Art produce are to be encountered in all localities. Farringdon-street, for example, would not seem a likely quarter in which to look for the Higher Art, though from its proximity to Hatton Garden, the jewellers’ district, and lying as it does on the fringe of Clerkenwell, it is not wholly free from artistic association. It is now brought into prominence, and this is due in great measure to the enterprise of Dr. C. Dresser, one who stands almost alone in decorative and other Art studies. Recently the establishment of Dresser and Holme was opened there for the supply of the higher class of Oriental produce, including ancient Japanese, now of such rarity that the savants of Japan are buying up and re-importing into their own country, regardless of cost, the rare and more precious specimens.

In the immediate neighbourhood – that is to say at 19, Charterhouse-street, Holborn Circus, an establishment of another kind, but still of high claims, has just been opened by Messrs. Hukin and Heath. The specialities of this establishment are artistic designs to meet the general buyer – that is to say simple artistic designs which are within reach of the middle classes. With this object, Messrs. Hukin and Heath have secured the services of Dr. Christopher Dresser, who not only advises them, but prepares their more important designs. These embrace real Persian work, either covered with gold, silver, or oxidised. Owing to the extravagant expense of skilled labour in England, the firm have had many articles produced in Persia by the best artists – as Art labour in Persia is inexpensive – and are thus enabled to offer to their customers real Eastern work of high merit at less than the cost of imitation work in England. They also offer genuine Cashmere work, the result of hand labour, at the price of imitation reproductions, having engaged the services of some of the best Cashmere workmen.

In the department of reproductions they are enabled by the electrotype process to reproduce with positive exactness any work, and have been led to make exact copies of the great works which have reached them from the far East, when it was impossible that they could get duplicates of these interesting specimens. They have also had repoussé work prepared for them in Japan, such as they think is as yet unrivalled in this country. They also claim to have availed themselves of all modern productions in pottery. Thus they have a show of the new Linthorpe pottery, Doulton ware, Oriental pottery, and rare potteries mounted in silver, which may be pronounced unique.

Besides these wares, which are their specialities, they have a large display of ordinary commercial goods, as they especially seek to meet all wants, and to be fully equal to, if not in advance of all the wants of the times. We need hardly add that a visit to Messrs. Hukin and Heath's establishment is most interesting.'

On the same day, the *Furniture Gazette* carried an even longer account of the opening of the new premises [See Appendix 1], the last paragraphs of which provide more details of the range of eastern objects imported and reproduced by Hukin and Heath, the mounting of pottery wares, and the first references to the stylised naturalism that featured in the firm's products over the next few decades:

'We also saw a unique collection of both real Japanese metal-work, and of its imitation manufactured by the firm in this country. The collection of the new Linthorpe pottery is also worthy of notice. Messrs. Hukin & Heath have purchased a large quantity of this pottery which excited so much admiration at the opening of Messrs. Dresser & Holme's Japanese warehouse a few weeks ago, and they have considerably enhanced the original beauty by mounting them appropriately in silver; besides these there were samples of Doulton ware and Oriental and other pottery similarly mounted. It is not necessary to refer particularly to the ordinary commercial goods that the firm manufacture in common with other houses in the trade, further than to say that when a firm introduces an art element into its manufacture generally, that influence is felt by the most modest article made; ; the salt spoon becoming naturally a leaf with its stalk, and the sugar tongs a Venus' fly-trap. As Messrs. Hukin and Heath supply the whole of the trade with the articles to which we have here alluded, they will probably before long be obtainable elsewhere.'

A few days later, on the 1st September, *The British Trade Journal*, published their account of the collection shown [See Appendix 2]:

'The table plate is mostly in new forms, remarkable for lightness, elegance, "and adaptability to their intended purposes, including many charming objects after Japanese styles by Dr. Dresser and other artists.'

The reference to *other artists* is intriguing. The Journal also added more detail on the Linthorpe pottery displayed:

'Another class of mounted articles will be found, perhaps, even more interesting to some tastes. They consist in beautiful specimens of pottery, Japanese and Doulton ware, with specimens from the new pottery of Linthorpe, in the form of bowls, biscuit-boxes, and other useful articles. The ware is mostly

of the tertiary colours, which are so much admired, ranging from orangeyellow to the richest purple-browns, and in many instances mottled or marbled, and presenting the beautiful appearance of porphyry, jasper, and other precious stones.'

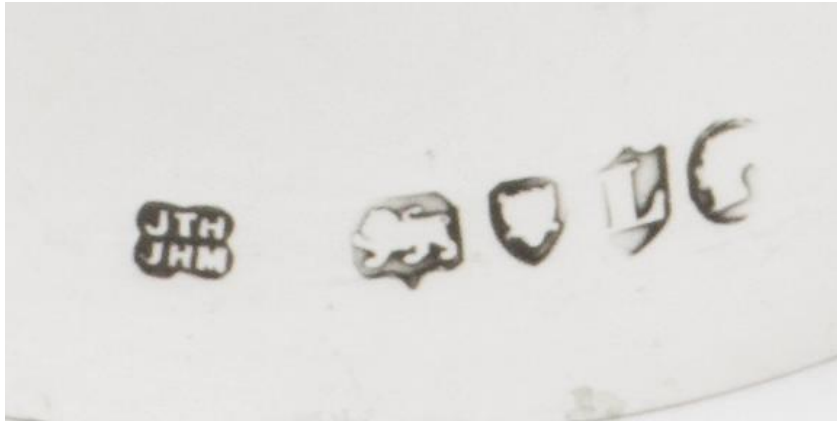
Whilst Heath managed the expansion of the firm in London, another man of the same age began to manage the Birmingham workshops. John Hartshorne Middleton was the son of a Sheffield born die-sinker working in Birmingham. John entered the plating trade and was still living with his parents in Soho road in Birmingham in 1861¹⁶. Two of his brothers were also electro-plate workers – Joseph, aged 19 and Frederick, aged 18. It is not clear whether, at that date, Middleton was employed by Hukin but, in April 1863, when he married Maria, Jonathan Hukin's only child, both were living in Birkendale, Sheffield¹⁷. Middleton gave his occupation at the time of the marriage as 'silversmith'. The couple's first child, William Hukin, was born the following year in Sheffield. By 1866, when their eldest daughter, Julia Chivers Middleton was born, they had moved back to Birmingham, living near Maria's parents. In 1871, Middleton now gave his occupation for the census as 'silversmith's manager.'

Jonathan Wilson Hukin retired on the 12th March 1881 and Middleton took his place as partner in the firm of Hukin and Heath.¹⁸ The Hukins were then living with their daughter and son-in-law at Stratford House, St. Bernard's Road, in Olton, near Solihull: a substantial house which still stands. The Heaths then had six children living with them, [Julia was at boarding school], three servants, and Juliana Hukin's sister, Judith Jackson, then aged 72. A widow, she had been living with the Hukins for at least twenty years, having been with them when they lived in Henley street, in Aston.¹⁹



Above: Stratford House, now number 49, St. Bernard's Road, Olton.

Despite the change in partners, Hukin and Heath continued to use the same maker's marks on silver until on 21st June 1886, in London, and January 1887, in Birmingham, when they entered a new mark incorporating the initials of John T Heath above those of John H Middleton.



Above: the London mark of Heath and Middleton on a Pepper Grinder of 1886.

Over the next two decades, the partnership brought forward an increasing range of designs but also continued to manufacture patterns that had been created in the 1870's. The firm used a numerical sequence of pattern numbers which is likely to have begun in 1870 with the formation of the original partnership. The first condiment cruets, designed by Dresser, which bear the stamp 'Designed by Dr. C. Dresser', correspond to Hukin and Heath's pattern numbers 1867 and 1873, the registered design numbers being 320317 to 320320, of April 1878. The last articles bearing this Dresser stamp (thus far noted) bear Hukin and Heath's pattern number 2566 and are of a design registered on 9th May 1881. Within that span of pattern numbers, a total of thirty-two designs have been noted with the Dresser stamp. Doubtless others will appear, for there is no doubt that some of the designs registered by Hukin and Heath but, at present, otherwise unrecorded, are attributable to Dresser. Many other articles, however, introduced by the company during the time that Dresser was employed, are very conventional in design: for example, pattern number 2528: struck on an epergne with four arms, upon which sat circular glass dishes and a central support with a larger glass dish, the base of the epergne decorated with applied gryphons. This pattern of epergne was still being offered by Hukin and Heath in 1906. Equally conventional were the oval Breakfast dishes, with lift-off lids, liners, and decorated with bead edges and bands of Greek key engraving, pattern number 162, which were continuously offered for production and sale until at least 1907.



Above: The Dresser stamp on pattern number 1953, a two bottle Cruet, the design registered 8th October 1878. Courtesy H. Blairman & Sons.

Whilst still answering a demand to produce articles of conventional taste, the company continued to introduce new patterns of distinctive design: some were whimsical novelties, but others represent a determination to use industrial production techniques for creative purpose. Whether they continued to be advised by, or to employ, Dresser, remains an open question but there is no doubt as to the partners' personal interest in new design.

The articles in the aesthetic style which Hukin and Heath produced in the 1880's have a particular character, combining sheet and wire, sometimes textured and sometimes plain. The lotus bowls and sifter spoons, which they made from the mid-1880's, mirror objects made in Japan in this period: these, in turn, deriving from earlier Japanese libation cups. They also produced more abstract bowls and spoons, naturalistic in manner, but both detail and form are highly simplified: plain bodies with folded edges, and sometimes embossed leaf venation, or geometric radiating dashes. Wirework, curved and twisted, was used to support bowls and baskets, or to form over-arching handles. Other bowls, in various sizes, were gourd-like in form with asymmetrical folded rims and peg feet in the manner of cauldrons: not the plain rod feet used for the Dresser-designed tureens which they made from the 1870's onwards, but gently tapered, with rounded ends. The embossing used to decorate such bowls was inversed and raised into the interior rather than the exterior side. To accompany their bowls and dishes, they introduced spoons and servers with simple strip metal handles, the terminals of which folded over onto the upper side to form a clip-like shape – a pattern which the firm still made in the 1920's. They also manufactured a small range of articles in silver-plate combined with textured, bark-like, wooden bodies – biscuit boxes, bottle holders and mugs, struck with pattern numbers between 3297 and 3350. Some of these had boar-tusk handles which remained a feature of their products well into the 20th century.

Whilst there is no direct evidence for Dresser's involvement with Hukin and Heath after 1881, whoever was responsible for these innovative designs, conformed to Dresser's teaching – that the beauty of nature should be translated into shape and ornament not by mimicry in the manner of the 'Natural school' but by understanding what lay behind it. As Pevsner wrote of Dresser in 1937: *'What he really wants to encourage is the study of flowers in order to grasp the principles underlying their shapes and the application of these principles to abstract or 'conventional' ornament, be it of simple or complex form.'*

Hukin and Heath had supplied mounts for glass and ceramic objects, both in electro-plate and silver, from the early 1870's. They also produced mugs, pattern number 2936, the bodies of which were formed from bamboo. However, rather than mounting imported objects, in the manner of the Japanese beaker [page 4 above], of 1877, the firm began to supply mounts for British made glass and ceramics. From 1877/1878²⁰, they began to collaborate with Doulton, supplying rims, lids, and handles for their stoneware products. The relationship with Doulton continued into the mid-twentieth century. From circa 1890, they started to work with Coalport, often using white ceramic bodies, decorated with gold-painted rims and handles, in the manufacture of tea and coffee sets, lemonade sets, and a variety of bowls and dishes.



Above: Marks on the base of a piece of 'hammered' Coalport china with Hukin and Heath Mounts.

Coalport white china particularly suited the ‘hammered’ surface used for Hukin and Heath’s naturalistic pieces from the mid 1880’s. Ceramic handles were modelled in imitation of the boar’s tusks used for silver and plate wares. This style became a significant feature of many of Hukin and Heath’s products: an iteration of the earlier abstract naturalism, often with wirework supports and handles that sprouted leaves, flowerheads, and fruit. The mounted glass bodies of claret jugs, pepper grinders, and oil lamps were made to conform to the style with wheel-cut grooves. The *British Trade Journal* of the 1st April 1885²¹ carried the following:

Novel Designs in Silversmiths’ Goods.

‘A considerable number of new designs in silver and plated goods, showing a bold departure from ordinary patterns, is now on view at the show-rooms of Messrs. Hukin & Heath, silversmiths, 19 Charterhouse Street, London. It is at once apparent that the change introduced during recent years in favour of things medieval, and of daringly novel ideas, so long as their artistic treatment be well understood, has reached the silversmiths’ art. It was, indeed, necessary that to be in keeping with the most fashionably antique furniture and decorations the change we have referred to should be introduced in the services of silver or plated wares adorning the table, and where the potteries had taken the lead in furnishing designs in harmony with the Queen Anne style the silversmith could not long remain behind. Now that he has come forward, we are pleased to see that he has done so with a thoroughness and an intelligence worthy of the high position as an art worker and designer he has so long enjoyed. The collection of new designs on the lines pointed out at Messrs. Hukin & Heath’s will fully meet the expectations of the most artistic tastes. The new “hammered silver” services, in which, among other charmingly quaint ideas, that of a water-lily pattern is prominent, cannot fail to win admiration, not only for the artistic character of the idea itself, and of the fidelity with which it has been carried out, but also for the exquisite finish of the workmanship. Salvers, in which the surface is hammered instead of covered with the ordinary engraved scroll-work, are also among the more striking of the innovations introduced. The same idea in a modified form is applied to tea and coffee services. Another series is noticeable for “curled edges”, a graceful outward curve being given to the upper edges, the result of which is that parts of the interior surfaces are brought to view with brilliant effect. Oak goblets, decanters, &c., silver mounted, the oak being made to resemble ivory, are also among the newest patterns. In novelties of construction as well as in design the firm are introducing a bowl which may be used either for keeping warm two sauces, as a vegetable-dish and salad-bowl, or as a soup-tureen; and a new muffin-dish, in both of which are compartments for hot water. The old fluted pattern of teapot is being revived, and many strikingly handsome designs may be noticed in biscuit-boxes, goblets, claret-jugs, decanters, sugar-bowls, &c. The stems of spoons, and branches of epergnes, &c., are now generally wrought instead of cast. We were shown several presentation or testimonial sets, complete, in plate-chests, among them being designs which have not yet been offered to the trade, and for which there will, we venture to predict, be a large demand. The firm’s show-rooms are full of interest, and shippers and the trade generally, desiring the most novel patterns in the highest class of silversmiths’ goods, should not omit to pay them a visit.’

Alongside the firm’s novelty products and their plainer styles, ‘hammered’ wares continued to feature in Hukin and Heath’s trade catalogues of the first part of the 20th century and they took them to the Paris Exhibition of 1900. The *‘Birmingham Post’* of the 11th April carried an account of the company’s display:

‘The lighter fancy metal trades of Birmingham will not be very largely represented, but in this department an interesting display will be made by Messrs. Hukin and Heath, of Great Charles Street, who propose to show specialities in hammered or hand-beaten ware, consisting of articles for dinner-

table use – soup tureens, sauce tureens, vegetable dishes, sauce boats, dinner plates, &c. They also send various table decorations, such as jardinières, with electric-light fittings &c.; fruit dishes, fern pots, flower vases, composed of crystal cut-glass, silver and electro-plated hammered and pierced metal work; electric table and bijou lamps; hammered art-metal dishes for entrées, bread, fruit, &c. In addition to these the firm show smoking combinations, wine coolers, claret jugs, aerated water stands, and similar commodities of new and original design.'

The 'Furniture Gazette' article of 1879 had referred to Hukin and Heath's extensive network of relationships with the trade, and some of the retailers who purchased from Hukin's can be identified from their engraved details on articles²²: amongst these, many were in London – notably Alfred Clark, Vickery, Dobson, Thornhill, Leuchars, and Asprey. Others were in Scotland: Marshall and Sons, of Edinburgh, and James Duncan of Paisley. Further afield were: L. Schuch's, and Frank Heiss & söhne in Vienna; and, in Australia, Hardy Brothers. However, other retailers evidently either over-stamped their mark on that of Hukin and Heath,²³ or bought their articles unmarked, and struck them with their own marks. In this way, articles which are quite evidently made by Hukin and Heath sometimes bear the mark of Leuchars. In the 20th century, Harrods and Asprey's adopted the same practice. The marking of pieces by retailers and wholesalers was a long-standing practice in the trade but makes identification of the real manufacturer more difficult. It is perfectly possible that Hukin's themselves bought in wares from other silversmiths and platers on occasion and then struck them with their marks.

Despite the complete loss of the company's archives, occasional incidents provide a little insight into the business. 'The Times' newspaper of 26th January 1878 carried details of the trial of a man who stole from Hukin and Heath:

'At the Mansion House, yesterday, Edward Partridge, of 12, Gresham-street, merchant, and John Law Crawford, of Bernard-street, Brunswick-square, clerk, were charged before the Lord Mayor, upon remand, with being concerned in stealing claret jugs and other goods of value, belonging to Messrs. Hucker [sic] and Heath, manufacturing silversmiths, at 30, Ely-place, Holborn, and 21 silver watches, of the value of £40, the property of the Elgin National Watch Company.' .. 'Mr. John Thomas Heath, one of the firm of Hucker [sic] and Heath, deposed that about the 26th November the prisoner Partridge called at their place of business and said he was a merchant and shipper and likely to ship many of their goods. Witness said, "Where to?" and he replied, "To Barbadoes." He then asked what were their terms? The reply was "Cash". He said he should not always be able to pay cash, but should require a month's credit. Witness said they should require cash for the first transaction, and if afterwards the references were satisfactory they could then give a month's credit. He accepted those terms, and witness left him with his traveller. On the 27th of November they received a letter containing the order, and on the 30th he sent the goods to the prisoner's offices with certain instructions if the goods were not brought back. Between the 1st and 4th of December he had been to the prisoner's office several times to see him, but always found the office closed. Witness went again on the 4th ult. and waited an hour there, but the prisoner did not come. Witness afterwards saw him accidentally and asked him where the goods were. The reply was that they were in Leadenhall-street, and witness said he should require them again. He was told that he could not have them returned, inasmuch as they had been sold. The reply to that was that he had no right to sell them, they being merely sent as samples. Witness afterwards obtained a warrant for his apprehension. Witness added that he never intended to part with the property in the gods in question, believing as he did that the defendant only wanted to show them to a shipper....'

Another case was recorded by 'The Watchmaker, Jeweller and Silversmith' of June 1st, 1892:

'Loss of Messrs. Hukin and Heath's Action. – For many years this old firm have been in the habit of supplying the committee of the Licensed Victuallers' Protection Society, Queen Victoria Street, with the testimonials to their outgoing chairman. In 1888 and 1889 the recipients called at their

establishment and selected the goods as usual, which were presented at St. James's Hall banquets, but these not being paid for, Messrs. Hukin and Heath resorted to law. It was, however, held that the invoice was made out in the name of the secretary, and that he therefore was responsible for the payment. A verdict in favor of the committee was returned. Moral – make out invoices to committees, not to secretaries.'

In 1891, (the year in which Jonathan Wilson Hukin died), the partners approached the Birmingham Municipal School of Art with an offer of a prize. Founded in 1895, the school had established itself at the heart of a movement to promote craftsmanship and design within applied and decorative arts in Britain and its management took pains to appoint highly qualified teachers in 'executed design.'. Despite Birmingham's thriving trade in jewellery and silver, and the excellence of the school's teaching, Hukin's was the only Birmingham firm to sponsor a prize for the school's students. Two of John Middleton's children enrolled at the school, and one of them, Julia Chivers Middleton, (born in 1866), was an undoubtedly an accomplished craftsman, winning a succession of student prizes.

The letter from Hukin and Heath to the School is recorded in the minutes of its management committee:

'The following communication was received from Messrs. Hukin, Heath: -

Imperial Works, Gt. Charles St.,

Birmingham

Decr. 17th, 1891.

Edward R. Taylor, Esqr.,

School of Art

Dear Sir,

Referring to our conversation of a few days ago respecting our wish to give a Prize for the encouragement of the Art of Repoussé we now beg to confirm that. We shall be very pleased to give £5 per annum for the above purpose. We think that the introduction of this Art into the work of the School is a step in the right direction and it will form a good outlet for good design, and manipulative skill, and must eventually be a great benefit to the Metal Workers of the Town.

We trust ere long that the Authorities at South Kensington will see their way to recognise it as one of the Arts worthy of encouragement.

We are, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

(signed) pro Hukin, Heath

J.H. Middleton.

Resolved. That Messrs. Hukin, Heath's offer be accepted, with thanks.'

In 1892, Julia Middleton received £1 for achieving third place, alongside Florence Stern in the repoussé prize awarded by her father's company. In the same year, her brother, John Wilson Middleton, (born in 1872), received 'hon. mention' in the class for 'Modelled design', and Julia gained an 'honourable mention', in 'A Prize of Ten Pounds for modelled design for a tobacco jar, suitable for execution in metal: the material in which the design would be executed to be chosen and stated by each competitor.'

In the following school session of 1892-3, Julia's name appeared again in the lists of prize winners:

£5 – Prizes given by Messrs. Hukin and Heath for the repoussé decoration of a round or oval cylinder suitable for the body of a biscuit box, and accompanied by a design for the complete box.

Equal [first] - £2 10s each Tidmus, John A.; Middleton, Julia C.

In the £3 prize for 'Modelled design', Julia was amongst those given an honourable mention.

A work by Julia was accepted by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society for its annual exhibition, held in Regent Street in London in October 1893:

*'Art is pleasingly prominent in the exhibition of the Arts and Craft Exhibition Society, which opens at the New Gallery, Regent Street, tomorrow. Some fine work of Mr. Burne-Jones is shown, among which "Angels, with scroll", a cartoon for glass, is particularly excellent; and the design of an arras tapestry, representing "Sir Galahad and the Holy Grail," this being one of the Grail series, is a magnificent piece of workmanship, the subject being executed by Messrs. Morris and Co. The neighbouring exhibits are Mr. Walter Crane's cartoons for glass, illustrating "Christ's Charge to St. Peter" and "Christ and the Widow of Nain." In the same room are two admirable exhibits by contributors from your city, a hammered copper bowl coming from Mr. T. Ducrow, of the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft; while an excellent silver dish is sent by Miss Julia C. Middleton, of the Birmingham Municipal School of Art....'*²⁴

In the School year 1893, the subject for Hukin and Heath's £5 prize for repoussé was 'a rose water dish, hammered from the plain sheet and decorated. Size: about 18 in. in diameter'. The winners were: '£2 10s., Harrison Maggie E'.; '£1 10s., Phipps, E. Jessie'; '£1 Ward, Eleanor L.'; with 'Hon. Mention, Stern, Florence.'

In 1895, Julia again won a prize for repoussé 'Designs executed in the respective materials for which they are intended', gained 'honourable mention' for her book cover in the leather work classes, and in 'Class No. VI – Repoussé', won a prize for a 'plaque and rings', alongside Florence Stern, who won for her 'sconce and name plate'.

Julia left the school at the end of 1895 and perhaps it is no coincidence that Hukin and Heath withdrew their sponsorship of the repoussé prize from 1896.

Manuscript minutes of the School management committee:

'1350. The following letter was received from Messrs. Hukin and Heath, who had for 4 years offered a prize of £5 per annum for repoussé.

Imperial Works, Gt. Charles Street,

Birmingham,

March 14th, 1896.

E.P. Hytch Esq.

School of Art.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed find note £5 for our prize. We beg to inform you that we do not intend continuing it any longer. We think it has answered a very useful purpose in starting the repoussé work. Perhaps you may be able to induce someone else to take it up.

Yours truly,(signed) Hukin and Heath'

Julia Middleton married a young Methodist clergyman, the Rev. Frank Warburton, in 1897, and there is no evidence that she continued her craft work after her marriage.

There has been little investigation into the commercial employment of former students of the Birmingham School. Most of those who did [and many of the students were female], seem to have found work within small scale studios, after the arts and crafts model. Few, it would seem, went on to be employed by the larger scale workshops within Birmingham. Hukin and Heath, however, were an exception, perhaps because of their sponsorship of the prize for repoussé work in the years 1892-96, and the relationship they developed with the school. Certainly, they produced a small number of articles in the 'arts and crafts style' between 1892 and 1903, and even [unlike Liberty's] allowed the designers' names to be recorded on a few of those pieces.

The sculptor, Benjamin Creswick, [1856-1943], was a teacher at the Birmingham Municipal School whilst Julia Middleton was a student there. The Creswick's were a remarkable family of artists. Three of Creswick's eight children were students at the Birmingham school whilst Julia was there. In 1892/3, Benjamin Creswick, junior, achieved third prize in the competition '*Time study. Modelling. Limited to such Students as have studied Modelling for not more than Three Terms.*' William H. Creswick won third prize in 1895/6 for '*Modelling the figure from life, in relief, on a half imperial slab. Four sittings of three hours each in the day time, or six evening sittings of two hours each, to be allowed.*' His younger brother, Edward, won first prize in the same competition, as well as several other prizes whilst a student. In 1898, the School's management committee noted:

'1786. Resolved. – That Mr. Edward Creswick be appointed as an additional Assistant Teacher of Modelling at the Jenkins Street Branch School on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 7.30 to 9.15 p.m., at a salary of £15 per School year.'

'The Studio' in 1902 praised 'Mr. E. Creswick's copper and silver casket'. Four caskets marked by Hukin and Heath have been noted with the names of the Creswick brothers:

A casket-form inkstand, 'with hammered finish, the rectangular base with scrolled border, the centre fitted with a box embossed with tree motifs above four supports, the hinged lid embossed with a grinning mask', London 1900. 'Engraved on the underside 'Benjamin Creswick, Designer.'

A casket of the same year 'Of rectangular form, raised on four feet, hand beaten from individual pieces of silver rivetted together, and with designs depicting the tree of life at either end and a trio of fishermen to the lid', London 1900, engraved underneath 'Benjamin Creswick, Designer.'

A rectangular Casket, hand beaten, raised on four applied and rivetted feet, with pierced rivetted strapwork hinges and clasp, pierced with stylised foliage and flower heads, the hinges set in the top with cabochon turquoises, London 1902, engraved on the underside, 'Benjamin Creswick, Designer.'

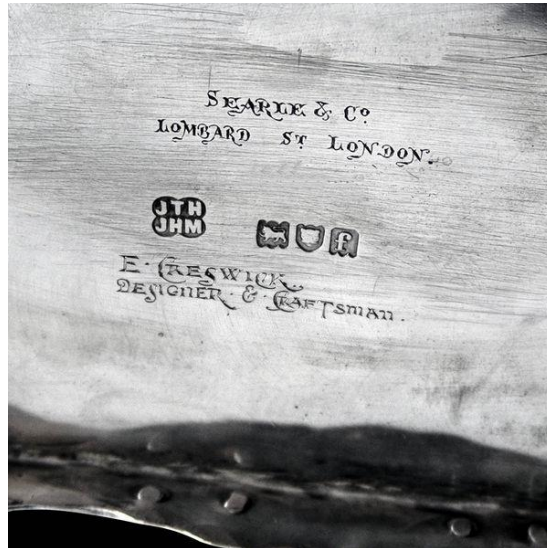
A Casket, rectangular and hand beaten with oval convex lobes, and applied with rivetted feet and strapwork hinges, engraved on the underside 'E. Creswick, Designer & Craftsman', London 1901. The base of this casket is additionally engraved with the name of the retailer 'Searle & Co. Lombard St., London.'



Above: Casket of 1902, designed by Benjamin Creswick. [Courtesy Titus Omega]



Above: A Casket, designed by Edward Creswick for Hukin and Heath, London 1901, and retailed by Searle. [Image courtesy of B. Silverman Antiques].



Engraving beneath the Casket.

Other pieces within Hukin's arts and crafts range, including a Belt Buckle of 1902, in silver and chrysoprase, illustrated below, have no designer's name.



Image courtesy Tadema Gallery].

Some Hukin and Heath silver spoons and servers of this period bear a precise likeness to the designs of Oliver Baker, [1856-1939], another former student of the Birmingham School of Art: including a pair of servers of 1901, with terminals which elaborate the 'clip over' terminals employed by Hukin's from the 1880's, and with 'script M' wirework on the lower part of the stem. Identical spoons were hallmarked by Liberty and Company in this year.

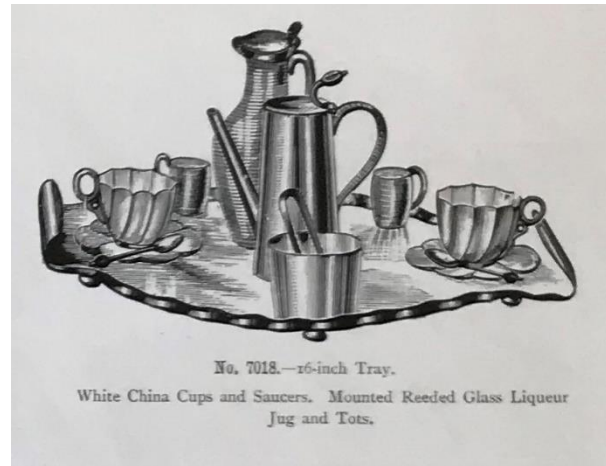


Above: Servers. [Image Courtesy of Mellors and Kirk, Auctioneers, Nottingham, 06/03/2013]

From at least 1879, when Hukin and Heath introduced Dresser-designed picnic sets, the company developed an interest in supplying 'combination' pieces. They also introduced articles incorporating innovative mechanisms. Their wares mixed metal, glass and ceramic parts: electro-plate, or silver, picnic sets neatly packed within themselves; the leather cases for these sets were complete with ceramic cups and saucers.



Typical of the many combination sets introduced in the late 1890's was pattern number '7018', an 'After Dinner Coffee Set', which incorporated a metal coffee pot and sugar basin on a metal tray with metal-mounted liqueur jug, and tots, with ceramic cups and saucers, illustrated below.



Hukin and Heath were not, of course, unique in seeking to supply all the components required for a meal, or a drink, in a combination package, but they did so in a particularly neat and adept way. Breakfast trays were introduced with folding wire-work legs and these could be supplied with all the requisites. Their pattern 20283, the 'New Registered Breakfast-in-Bed Set', which was available in electroplate, or silver, with folding legs to the tray and [as usual with Hukin's combination sets] removable wire parts to hold all the elements of the set, included *'Tea-set, and Tongs, Two Preserve Jars and Spoons, Combined Toast Rack and Butter Dish, with Knife, Egg Set and Spoon with Pepper and Salt Muffineers, Tea Cup and Saucer with Spoon.'* The china offered with this pattern number was made from white Spode.

The lemon squeezing set registered by Hukin and Heath in 1887, pattern number 6010, was particularly popular, and the firm subsequently produced a variety of different forms of the design, incorporating bottles and glasses in different ways. The design was topped with a cast lemon, realistically modelled, with screw-down squeezer, on a plain functional base with wirework tendril frame.

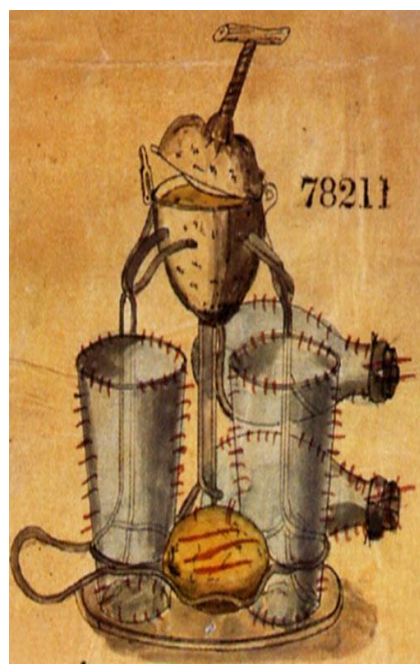


Image courtesy of the National Archives, Kew.

Many of the ingenious innovations introduced by Hukin and Heath in the 1890's were designed to improve the opening of lids on ceramic or glass vessels. Their registered design 48328-9 integrated cork stoppers into the lid. Their patent 5518 allowed the handle of a jar or biscuit box to operate the opening of the lid. The thumbpieces for flat-lidded mounts on jugs were applied to the hinge of the mount and, formed as a long wire with out-curved end, to allow the lid to be pulled open readily [registered design 187357].



Above: the hinge and opener, registered design 187357 attached to a claret jug lid of 1896, pattern number 10858.



Above: a glass-bodied Biscuit Jar with patent opening mechanism 5518.

On 4th July 1904, Hukin and Heath transformed into a limited liability company, describing themselves as '*wholesale, retail and manufacturing silversmiths, dealers in precious stone and metals, electroplaters, assayers, refiners, melters, metallurgists, dealers in bullion, specie, coins and precious metals, manufacturers of and dealers in leather and fancy goods, articles of vertu and ornaments of all kinds*'²⁵. The company declared a capital value of £40,000 in £1 shares and the

registered office was 139, Great Charles Street, Birmingham. The partnership between John Hartshorne Middleton and John Thomas Heath was expanded to include Frank Pearson Heath, the only son of John Thomas Heath, and John Wilson Middleton²⁶.

Frank Pearson Heath, as boy at Stevenage Grammar School, had won third prize in book-keeping.²⁷ It seems probable that his role within the company was largely administrative, but his name appears as the patentee of devices relating to the covers of jars and for carrying cake stands with removable dishes, in the period 1908 to 1919. He also patented rests, or holders for fishing rods, and ‘electrically-operated brushes for horses and other animals’.²⁸ On 1st April, 1908, in partnership with Henry L. Sulman and Hugh F. Kirkpatrick-Picard, metallurgists, of 44 London Wall, Frank Heath patented a process for ‘*Ornamenting glazed pottery, by applying to the article a pattern of “liquid metal”, firing the article and subsequently electrolytically depositing the metal upon the metallic filament obtained.*’

Other members of John Middleton’s family were employed by the company. His eldest son, William Hukin Middleton, born in 1864, was described as a ‘silversmith’ in the census of 1881 but the rest of his life is unrecorded until his death in Queensland, Australia, in 1937.²⁹ Oliver Smith Middleton, born in 1876, worked for the company throughout his career, and George Bertram Middleton, born in 1880, appears to have worked for Hukin’s for a period and then left. He described his occupation as ‘art metal worker’ for the 1911 Census but, by the 1920’s, had become a poultry farmer in Hertfordshire³⁰. John Middleton’s younger Frederick died in 1904, making his nephew John Wilson Middleton joint executor. Frederick had also worked for his brother’s firm – describing himself as a ‘plater’ in the 1871 census, and an ‘art metal worker’ in the 1881 census.³¹

John Hartshorne Middleton died in March 1907³², and John Thomas Heath died only three years later, his death reported in the Watchmaker, Jeweller and Silversmith³³. With the death of the two senior partners, the family business transferred entirely to the next generation of their children. Oliver Smith Middleton, who gave his occupation in the 1911 census as ‘silversmith’s manager’, became one of the directors of the company.

The company registered a new mark at the Birmingham and London assay offices in November and December 1909.



Further marks were registered in 1924, using three aligned oval shields as their first Birmingham mark.



Finally, in Birmingham in May 1938, and in London in July of the same year, they registered a freshly designed version of their ‘H & H’ punch.



Marriages by the children reflect the network of social and business connections within which the family moved. Frank Pearson Heath married Clara Annie, the daughter of a 'commercial traveller' and 'wholesale jeweller'³⁴, Samuel Lyus, in Muswell Hill on the 21st August 1910. Frank was then living at 66, Compayne Gardens, London. Oliver Smith Middleton had married, in September 1904, Mary Cuming Husband, daughter of Charles Husband, a master tailor in Handsworth. The next year, on the 21st September, John Wilson Middleton married Florence Steane White at Holy Trinity Coventry. Florence was the daughter of Joseph White, a Watch manufacturer of Coventry. Some years before, in 1897, John Wilson's sister, Maria Louise³⁵, had married Florence's brother, Alfred James White. Joseph White and Sons made high quality chronometers but had expanded into other branches of engineering. Joseph was managing director of the Coventry Machinists' Company, manufacturing cycles. Alfred, funded largely by his father, went into partnership with a Norwegian, Peter August Poppe, in an engineering business supplying automotive parts. The firm was later bought by Dennis motors, and Alfred White became a director of that company.

During the First World War, in common with many Birmingham metal working companies, Hukin and Heath turned their production to supporting the war effort:

*Hukin and Heath, Limited, is a firm of manufacturing silversmiths which, since June 1915, has devoted its energies almost exclusively to war material. The first contract to be undertaken was the manufacture of friction wires for T tubes, but the products now embrace discs for primers, amgle tubes, and other apparatus for anti-gas apparatus. The number of women employed has been multiplied five times.*³⁶

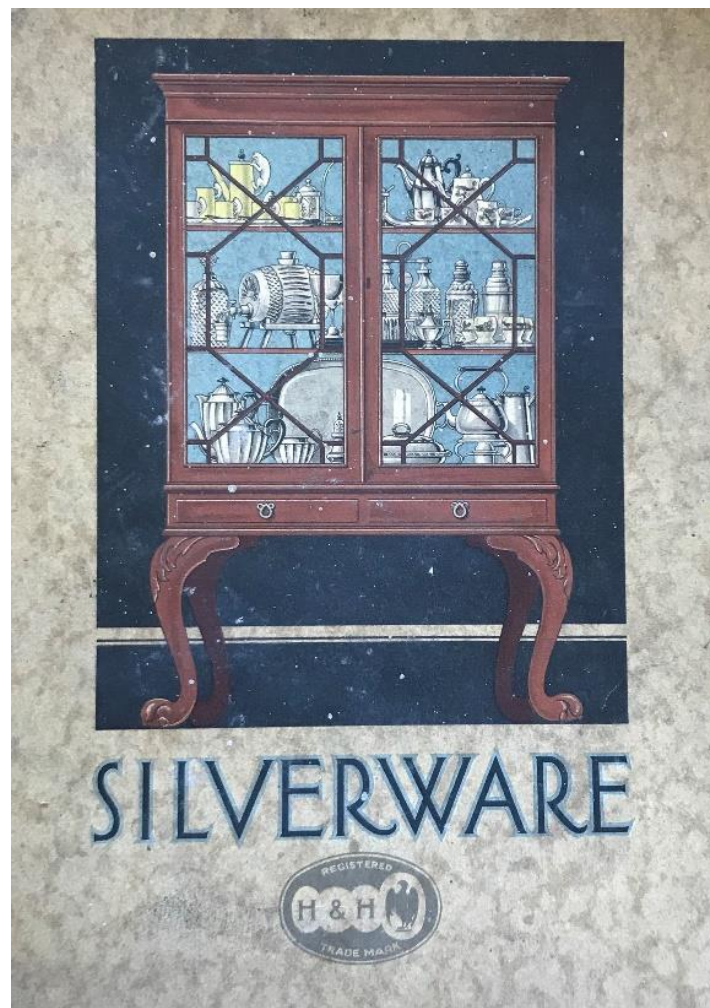
After the war, Hukin's exhibited at the 'British Industries Fairs', held in Castle Bromwich in 1922 and 1929³⁷, where they displayed a variety of silver and plate, together with 'nickel shaving sets and novelties.' They continued to manufacture combination sets for all occasions – 'Coffee, Liqueur and Smoking Combinations', 'Breakfast in Bed Sets', 'After Dinner Coffee Sets', 'Early Morning Tea Sets', - as well as a great variety of mounted glass decanters in conventional, novelty, and art deco styles. The new fashion for cocktails led them to produce complete sets on trays with glasses, as well as individual cocktail shakers and accessories. One of their patents, on 9th September 1926, was for the tops of Cocktail shakers with an integral strainer, patent 257821, in the name of Oliver Smith Middleton. They called these their 'Perfect Tops': 'The cover, which also embodies the strainer, is so designed that metal and cork surfaces which come in contact with the liquid are reduced to a minimum, thus rendering it perfectly hygienic.' Hukin's continued to collaborate with Coalport and Royal Doulton for the supply of ceramic pieces, but the range of cocktail shakers, often in coloured glass, with painted enamelled scenes, were probably supplied by Stevens & Williams of Brierley Hill, Staffordshire. The most popular painted decoration was a cockerel, but they also produced country scenes of various sorts, playing cards, pheasants and golf hole flags.

John Wilson Middleton died on the 11th May 1924 and his brother, Oliver, became managing director in Birmingham. Frank Pearson Heath died in December 1940. Although the quality of their products was maintained, gradually, the firm began to become less distinctive and innovative.

The capitalisation of the company was reduced in 1931. The 'London Gazette' of 26th May reported the details:

'In the Matter of HUKIN & HEATH Limited, and in the Matter of the Companies Act, 1929. Notice hereby given that a petition for confirming the reduction of the capital of the above-named Company from £40,000 to £30,000 by the return to the 'holders of shares in the said Company' of 5s. per share was on the 4th day of May, 1931, presented to the High Court of justice and is now pending; and that by an Order dated 22nd May, 1931, an enquiry was directed as to the debts, claims and liabilities of the said Company as on the 4th May, 1931. A list of the persons admitted to have 'been creditors of

"the 'Company on the said 4th May, 1931, may be inspected at -the office of the Company, at 139, 'Great Charles-street, Birmingham or at the office of the undersigned, Solicitors to the Company, at any time during usual business hours, on payment of the charge, of one shilling. Any person who claims to have been on the said 4th May, 1931, and still to be, a creditor of the Company in respect of any such debt, claim or liability and who is not entered on the said list and claims to be so entered must, on or before the 19th. day of June, 1931, send in his name and address and the particulars of his claim, and the name and address of his Solicitor (if any), to Francis Henry Pepper, a member of the firm of Pepper, Tangye & son, the undersigned Solicitors to the Company, 34, Waterloo-street, Birmingham, or in default thereof he will be precluded from objecting to the proposed reduction of capital.'



Above: Frontispiece of Hukin and Heath Trade Catalogue of circa 1930.

The architect and designer, Arthur Edward Harvey, [1893-1978] joined the Birmingham Art School in 1925, at first as a teacher of painting and drawing but, from 1930, of Trade Draughtsmanship and Design. He was made head of department in 1933. His plain stylish designs, ornamented with stepped moulding, were perfectly suited to the spin-forming methods employed by large scale commercial silversmithing. For a few years, from 1934 to 1936, he supplied designs for Hukin and Heath, but he was not named as the designer on any of the pieces. He also supplied designs to Deakin and Francis, Mappin and Webb and S. Blackensee and Sons Ltd.



Above: a silver mounted glass Biscuit Barrel, with typical Harvey designed stepped lid, and tapered ivory finial, by Hukin and Heath Ltd., Birmingham 1935.

Some of the articles made to Harvey's design by Hukin and Heath were exhibited at an Exhibition of British Art and Industry at the Royal Academy in 1935, where the Victoria and Albert Museum acquired a biscuit box and a tea set³⁸. The silver, jewellery, and leather exhibits occupied two galleries and the silver pieces were selected by the London Goldsmiths' Company to include articles made by the best silversmiths of the day, from large commercial companies to small workshops. The exhibition catalogue³⁹ shows that Hukin and Heath provided twenty articles in silver and plate, most of which were designed by Harvey.

772. Tankard, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £7 10s

773. Smoker's Lamp with nest of Ashtrays, silver, designed by J. Middleton, [probably John Philip, the son of John Wilson Middleton, born in 1908], manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £5 5s.

783. Cocktail Set, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured by Hukin and Heath Ltd., exhibited by the Goldsmiths' and Silversmiths' Company Ltd. £35.

787. Tankard, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £5 12s.

792. Tea Set, (three pieces) silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £13 13s

804. Tea Caddy, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured by Hukin and Heath Ltd., exhibited by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

805. Biscuit Box, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £6 10s

818. Fruit Dish, silver and ivory, designed by J.R. Froggatt⁴⁰, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £7

819. Pepper Grinder, silver and ivory, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £2 10s.

825. Biscuit Box, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £11 5s

835. Fruit Dish, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured by Hukin and Heath Ltd., exhibited by the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company Ltd. £12.

836. Cake Plate, electro-plate, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. 15s.

839. Fruit Dish, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £9 9s.

849. Coffee Set, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd., £11 15s

850. Tray, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £12 12s.

866. Mug, silver, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £3 3s.

930. Decanter and Glasses on Tray, glass and chromium plate, Glass, designed by K. Murray, tray, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £6.

994. Cup and Cover. silver and ivory, designed by A. E. Harvey, manufactured by Hukin and Heath Ltd. exhibited by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

998. Beaker, silver with ivory stem, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured by Hukin and Heath Ltd., exhibited by the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company Ltd. Purchased by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

999. Cup and Cover, silver and wood, designed by A.E. Harvey, manufactured and exhibited by Hukin and Heath Ltd. £11.

Hukin and Heath Ltd. survived the war but, with the death of Oliver Smith Middleton in November 1951, the company was voluntarily wound up. The London Gazette in November 1952 gave notice of the closure:

'HUKIN & HEATH Limited. The Companies Act, 1948. NOTICE is hereby given that the Creditors of the above-named Company are required on or before the 20th day of December, 1952, to send their names and addresses and the particulars of their debts or claims, and the names and addresses of their Solicitors if any, to J. Wood Massey, F.C.A., of 6, Corporation Street, Birmingham, 2, the Liquidator of the said Company, and, if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are by their Solicitors, or personally, to come in and prove their said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts are proved. —Dated this 18th day of November, 1952.(2 72) J. WOOD MASSEY, Liquidator.'

The final meeting of the board took place on the 23rd June 1953, ninety-eight years after the date claimed by the company as its year of establishment and eighty-three years after Jonathan Hukin formed a partnership with John Heath.

Conclusion.

In the absence of any archives relating to the company, and without any manuscript evidence, apart from two transcribed letters in the management committee records of the Birmingham Municipal School of Art, the basis of this essay has been genealogical records, supplemented by occasional newspaper articles, and a concordance of the company's pattern numbers noted on the pieces they manufactured and culled from the few surviving trade catalogues. A list of the pattern numbers noted so far will [eventually] be attached as an appendix to this essay. The list is far from complete: the pattern numbers noted begin in about 1870 and run to more than twenty-two thousand. About 1928, they began a fresh series of numbers, whilst still using existing pattern numbers for their older designs.

The result is a somewhat skeletal history of the family and their business. Nevertheless, it reveals the story of an inventive family with an interest in design, mechanics, and industrial production. Clearly, the several generations of the families of Hukin and Heath and their descendants, were commercially astute, or they would not have prospered for so long. Although their premises in Newhall street and in Great Charles street, in Birmingham, have long disappeared, a fascinating variety of their products survives. The trademark eagle used by the company, and the choice of the name 'Imperial Works' for their premises in Great Charles street suggests an expansive outlook but these were practical not grandiose people who left behind a very distinctive brand that is worthy of further study. As the '*Sheffield Independent*' newspaper had written of John Fenton and so many other successful Sheffield businessmen of the period, these were men '*whose sole capital at the commencement of their commercial life was simply a good practical knowledge of the business in which they were engaged, combined with an inordinate degree of perseverance*'.

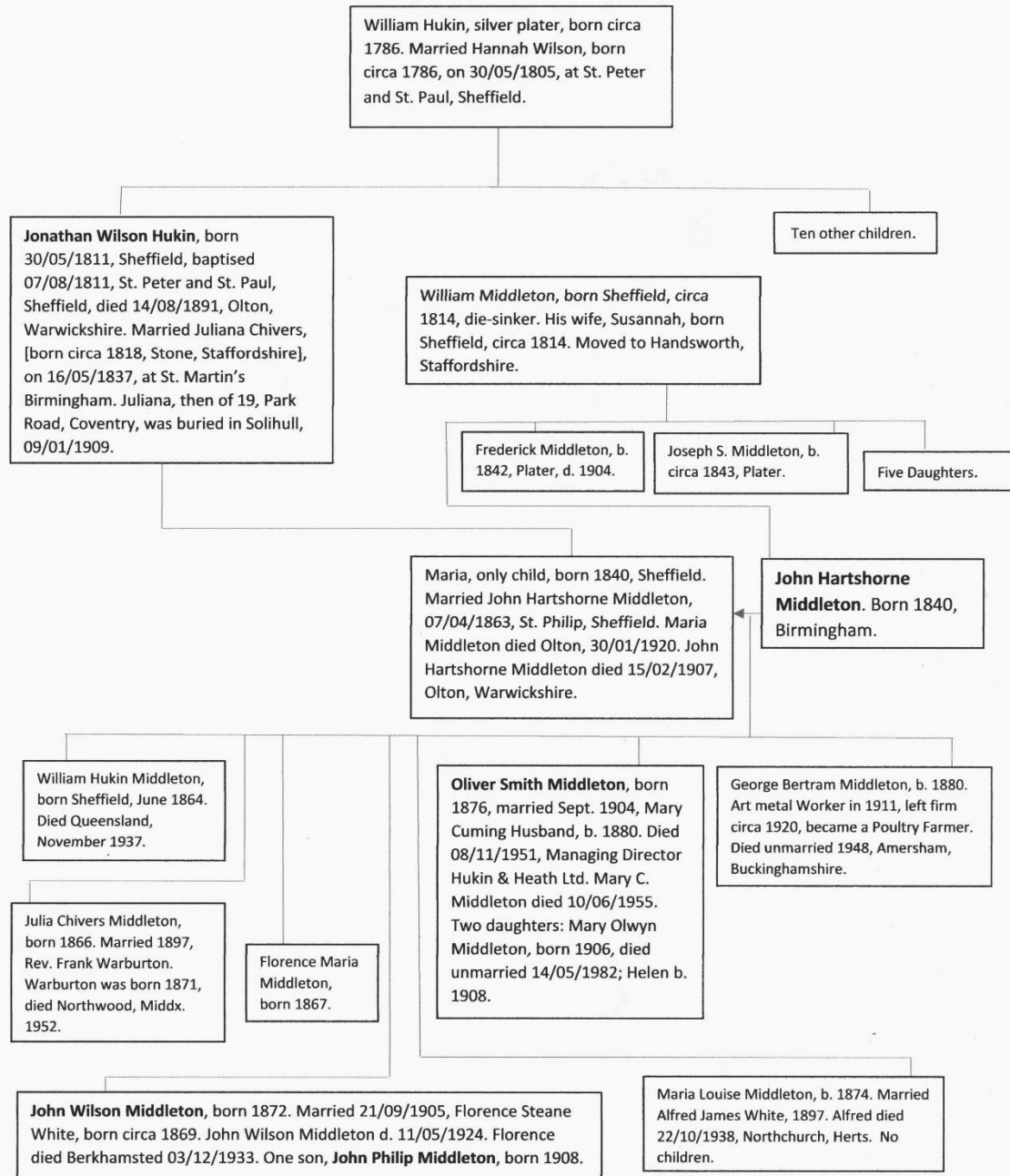
TELEPHONES :
LONDON 1226 HOLBORN
BIRMINGHAM 1707 CENTRAL
TELEGRAMS :
"RAMEQUIN, LONDON"
"RAMEQUIN, BIRMINGHAM"



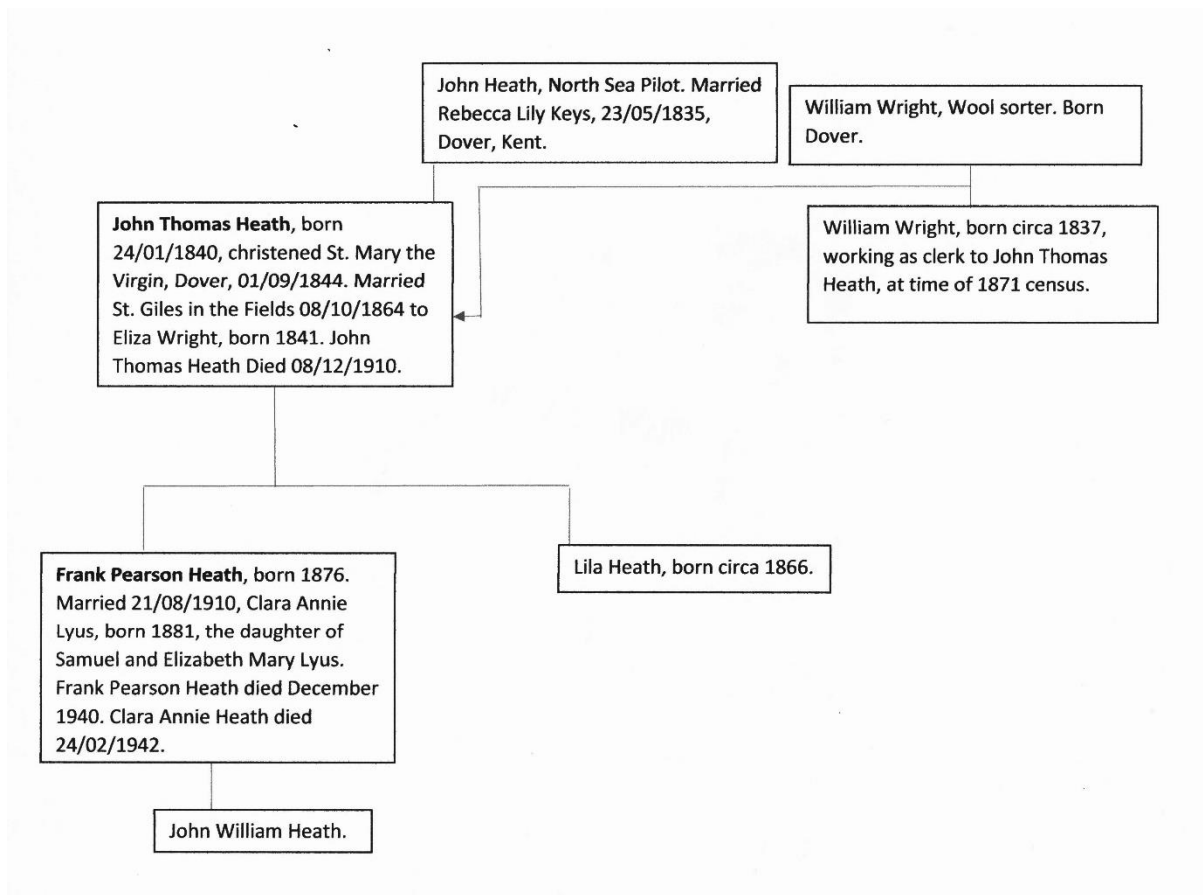
SHOW ROOMS
19 CHARTERHOUSE ST.
LONDON E. C. 1.

MANUFACTORY & REGISTERED OFFICES
IMPERIAL WORKS
139 GREAT CHARLES ST.
BIRMINGHAM

The Hukin and Middleton Families.



The Heath Family.



Endnotes:

¹ Born 30 May 1811, Christened 7 August 1811, Cathedral Church of St Peter and St Paul Sheffield.

² The birth records of Juliana, and her sister, Judith, have not been traced. A John Chivers, victualler, and Mary, his wife, were living in Stone in Staffordshire at this date.

³ He has not been found in the 1841 Census.

⁴ Jonathan Nicholas is descended from Jane Maria Hukin, Jonathan Wilson Hukin's younger sister. He wrote a fascinating article on his Hukin ancestors for the Totley History Group. The article can be found online. I am very grateful to Jonathan Nicholas for allowing me to use the image of Juliana Hukin and to the Totley History Group, for putting me in touch with him.

⁵ The entry appears as Jonathan Hewkin.

⁶ Published by Robert Leader.

⁷ London Gazette, 18th June 1852, p. 1736.

⁸ See the London Gazette.

⁹ The christening took place on 1st September 1844.

¹⁰ Witnesses to the marriage were Thomas Edward, Allen Munson and Rebecca Lily Youlton. Rebecca Youlton was the aunt of Eliza Wright.

¹¹ For an explanation of the history of this office, see <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/registered-designs-1839-1991/>

¹² The Imperial Works were at number 137, later 138 and 139, Great Charles Street. 138 and 139 had been the premises of Chartwright, Hirons & Woodward, electroplate manufacturers and silversmiths, with London

showrooms at 41 Hatton Garden. Hukin had also taken a lease on a property in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1875, although its purpose is not known. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, DR571/19-20. Lease (with counterpart) from William Henry Haden of Stratford-upon-Avon, gent., to Jonathan Wilson Hukin of Newhall Street, Birmingham, electro-plate manufacturer, of a messuage and outbuildings in Rother Street, numbered 9, to hold for seven years at an annual rent of £50. 19 August 1875.

¹³ *'Birmingham Daily Post'* 2/11/1878

¹⁴ The mark was entered by John Heath, with power of attorney from Hukin on the 19th November. Heath gave his home address as Belle Vue Villa, Nunhead Lane, [Camberwell].

¹⁵ See: Nikolaus Pevsner, *the Architectural Review*, LXXXI 1937, P.183-6 Pevsner states that, according to Dresser's [then surviving] account books, the designs of two cruet sets were posted to Hukin & Heath on 24/10/1877. This reference by Pevsner is pointed out in Christopher Morley, *'Dresser's Decorative Design'*. Publ. 2010 Beresford. C., p.206.

¹⁶ Census 1861.

¹⁷ Marriage at St. Philip, Sheffield, 7th April 1863.

¹⁸ The *'London Gazette'*. 18th March 1881. 'NOTICE is hereby given, that the Partnership hereto-fore subsisting between the undersigned Jonathan Wilson Hukin and John Thomas Heath, heretofore carrying on business at 137, Great Charles-street, Birmingham, in the county of Warwick, and at 19,- Charterhouse-street, in the city of London, as Manufacturing Silversmiths, under the style or firm, of Hukin and Heath, has been this day dissolved by mutual consent. The business will in future be carried on at the same places by the said John Thomas Heath and John Hartshorne Middleton, under the same style or firm of Hukin and Heath, and, by whom all debts due to and from the late firm will be received and paid.—Dated this 12th day of March, 1881.J. W. Hukin .John T. Heath.'

¹⁹ Judith Jackson, born in circa 1809, died in July 1881, making her sister and Jonathan Hukin her executors. She was buried in Solihull on 5th August 1881.

²⁰ The assay date letter struck on silver mounts on a Doulton stoneware beaker.

²¹ Morgan's *The British Trade Journal and Export Price Current*, Page 238.

²² See below for those noted [including a number noted by John Culme]:

- 1) Marshall and Sons, Edinburgh [picnic set pattern 2109]
- 2) James Duncan of Paisley [leaf-shaped dish with glass liner, pattern 6969]
- 3) Vickery of Regent Street [hot water jug pattern 9659], [lemon squeezer pattern 16746], [egg cruet pattern 18112; Sotheby's *Belgravia* 7.2.1980, a lemon squeezer Birmingham 1906]]
- 4) Hardy Brothers of Sydney, Australia [A pair of liqueur jugs pattern 18399]
- 5) Alfred Clark of Old Bond Street, London, [Sotheby's *Belgravia* 27.7.1978, lot 333, a cigar box in the form of an automobile circa 1905, pattern 18477], [glass and silver liqueur set 1888]
- 6) Haseldine, 36, New Bond Street, London, [bark and ep cigar box with tusk handle pattern 3797]
- 7) A & J Smith of Aberdeen
- 8) Charles Desprez of Bristol [toastrack pattern number 2556], [ep and glass decanter set]
- 9) Edwards and Sons 161 – 159 Regent Street, London. [Apple cutter]
- 10) Dobson of Piccadilly [Sotheby's *Belgravia* 29.6.1972, lot 15, set of 4 chambersticks London 1880 with PODR mark for 22.1.1880]
- 11) J.B. Carrington & Co. Regent Street [Sotheby's *Belgravia* 21.10.1976, lot 214, a set of 12 salt cellars London 1885]
- 12) Walter Thornhill & Co., New Bond street [Sotheby's *Belgravia* 9.10.1975, lot 235, a silver-mounted clear glass magnum Birmingham 1893]
- 13) Millar Wilkinson, 3 St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill [Sotheby's *Belgravia* 8.6.1978, lot 406, a sandwich tray London 1893]
- 14) Searle, London [silver Casket designed and made by Edward Creswick, 1901].
- 15) Wilson & Gill, Regent Street [Sotheby's *Belgravia* 23.2.1978, lot 653, three beakers London 1894/5]
- 16) Asprey & Co. Ltd. [Sotheby's *Belgravia* 26.1.1978, lot 210, a silver mounted glass Claret Jug, Birmingham 1920]

-
- 17) L. Schuch's, Austrian Imperial Court supplier, Vienna [see a double magnum silver mounted glass champagne decanter, London 1892]
 - 18) Frank Heiss & söhne, Wien [see Sheffield Museum, Accession Number: 1978.525, Crow's foot e.p.n.s. and glass claret jug circa 1879]
 - 19) Leuchars & Sons [Paris and London] [see e.p.n.s. porcelain, and leather case, picnic set, Hukin and Heath, V&A, M57-1979 -M65-1979; another picnic set Bonhams London 02.06.2015, lot 254]
 - 20) James Crichton, 47 George St. Edinburgh. [plain hemispherical bowl e.p.n.s.]

²³ Bonhams London, 5/07/2006, lot 107: A Victorian novelty silver preserve jar, by Heath and Middleton, overstamped with maker's mark of Frederick Elkington, London 1889.

²⁴ 'Birmingham Daily Post', Monday, October 2, 1893; Issue 11009.

²⁵ 'Financial Times'. Saturday, July 23, 1904 Issue 5,029, p. 3.

²⁶ In 1891 the Census recorded that he was living with parents as a 'silversmith's clerk'.

²⁷ Recorded in 'The Journal of the Society of Arts', Vol. 39, No. 2034, (November 13, 1891), pp.1-30.

²⁸ Patent: GB190906091A, 13/03/1909. Improvements in or relating to Covers for Jars and the like. Abstract 6091. Heath, F. P. March 13. Lids and covers. -A cover for a jar &c. consists of a disk G formed with projections F, F<1>, which engage slots E, E<1> in a handle D pivoted to uprights C attached to a base B. When the handle is swung aside, the cover G slides off the jar. For the brushes, see 'The Electrical Engineer', Vol. 42, 1908.

Patent. GB191210853A, 05/07/1912, Improvements in or relating to Dishes, Cake-stands and the like. Abstract 10,853. Heath, F. P. May 7. Stands. - Relates to cake stands or dishes carrying smaller receptacles adapted to be moved into or out of the dish as described in Specification 7192/ 12, [Class 66, Hollow-ware], and consists in so hinging the receptacles that they can maintain their horizontal position at all times. In the form shown in Fig. 1, the receptacle B is hinged to an arm D detachably hinged to the dish at D<2>, a clip E serving to hold the receptacle as an horizontal fixture. In a modification shown in Fig. 2, more than one arm is used so as to provide a parallel motion for the carriers F of the smaller dishes.

Patent: GB150071A, 27/05/1919, Improvements in or relating to rests or holders for fishing rods or the like. Abstract 150,071. Heath, F. P. May 27, 1919. Rod rests and holders. -A holder for fishing- rods &c. comprises a U-shaped member 10, 12, 11, made of a single piece of metal rod, and a bridgepiece 14 formed of a flat strip of metal the ends 15 of which are bent round the legs 10, 11 of the U. The ends 13 of the legs may be pointed to be easily pushed into the ground or shaped to fit any convenient sockets. A rod 16 is supported by the curved end 12 and the bridge-piece 14, and its inclination is adjusted by sliding the bridge-piece.

²⁹ 5th November 1937. Burial: Charters Towers Monumental & Lawn Cemetery, Charters Towers, Charters Towers Region, Queensland, Australia. Plot LYntD, Section 44, Plot 288, Grave #8900. Memorial ID 184539504

³⁰ He moved with his sister, Maria, and her husband, Alfred White to Woodcock Hill. George Bertram apparently suffered from poor health. The memorial to Alfred White in the churchyard at St. Mary's is also dedicated to George Bertram Middleton.

³¹ Frederick was born in 1842. He married Clara Cottrell in 1865 in West Bromwich. He died on the 17th January, as of 77, Thornhill Road, Handsworth. See: The 'London Gazette', 12 July 1904, Issue: 27695, Page: 4473. Bertha Massey and John Wilson Middleton were joint executors of his will. Bertha Massey was born in 1878, the daughter of John Massey, a jeweller and ring maker, and Mary Ann Cottrell. In the 1901 census she is described as a housekeeper, and niece, living with Frederick Middleton, a retired silversmith. She married William Frederick Evans, Clockmaker, in 1905. She died in 1955. There is a note on the history of the Evans family clock business in the London Watchmaker of 1905:

One of the most interesting centenaries of the Nelson year is that of the Soho clock factory, practically founded by the celebrated Boulton and Watt. These famous inventors had a department in their works in which clock-making was carried on, and a Manchester man, John Houghton, was employed to look after it. On their giving up the department Mr. Houghton took it over, and started for himself in Park Road, near by the old Mint, in 1805. In 1842 he built the present well known

factory on the main road from Birmingham to Wolverhampton.

At this period it stood alone, being away in the country, and, moreover, the smoke, now such a feature of the surrounding country, had not then made its appearance. Soon after this Mr. Houghton retired, and the business passed to William Frederick Evans, his son-in-law, who had assisted him for some considerable time. Mr. Houghton died in 1863. When W. F. Evans took over the business he speedily made improvements, so as to keep it thoroughly up to date, and having had a long experience representing the firm on the road and being personally known throughout Great Britain, he had no difficulty in keeping the quality of the work up to the standard and a large clientele. He was succeeded by his sons, J. H. and W. F. Evans, when he passed away in 1899.

W. F. Evans, however, did not long survive his father's death, and owing to J. H. Evans' London business precluding his taking the management, W. Evans, Jr., took over the management of the establishment, which, owing to his very wide practical knowledge, he will undoubtedly control in a manner reflecting credit alike upon himself and also the reputable British firm which has made such an honored name throughout the commercial world for the past century.

³² Death of John Hartshorne Middleton March 1907, death registered Solihull, 6d 404. Will: Middleton, John Hartshorne of "Westfield" St. Bernard's Road, Olton, Warwickshire. Died 15th Feb 1907. Probate granted 19 June to Maria Middleton widow Effects £10925 7s. 6d. Maria Middleton died Westlyn, St. Bernard's Road, Olton, 30/01/1920. Probate 03/07/1920 to John Wilson Middleton and Oliver Smith Middleton, silversmiths and Alfred James White, engineer. Effects £10241.

³³ John Thomas Heath died, aged 70, on 18/12/1910. He had been chairman of the London Wholesale Jewellers' and Allied Trades Association.

³⁴ See the 'London Gazette', 5th November 1901, for a reference to Samuel Lyus as commercial traveller. A Samuel Lyus, jeweller, of 11 Brunswick Road, Camberwell, had been made bankrupt in September 1889. Samuel Lyus appears in the 1881 census as a 'jeweller's traveller', then aged 29. The 1911 census gives Lyus's occupation as 'wholesale jeweller'.

³⁵ Maria White, and her neighbour and sister-in-law, Edith White were keen members of the Suffragette Movement. See 'Mapping Women's Suffrage, 1911' Warwick University [accessed 12/05/2020] Researcher, Tara Morton. : 'Marie played a central role in founding the Coventry Women's Suffrage Society (CWSS) - the local branch of the law abiding NUWSS - by inviting and hosting a meeting for the latter in Coventry in 1909 from which a preliminary Coventry committee was formed. At the beginning of 1910, the CWSS was officially founded with Marie acting as literature secretary. Afterwards, she hosted a series of follow up meetings and 'at homes' at St. Gilgen often with her sister in law (see) Edith White helping the Coventry Society grow in its early years. Marie seems to have been most comfortable as a facilitator rather than as a speaker, but was ever present throughout the campaign. She was an avid supporter of Coventry and District Nursing Association and numerous children's welfare charities. In 1920, she left Coventry for a time to work in the Tyrol, Austria, for Coventry's Save the Children and Famine Relief Fund.' In 1925, Maria and her husband moved to Woodcock Hill, Berkhamsted. After Alfred White's death in 1938, Maria remained at Woodcock Hill until 1942. She continued to live in the area until her death in the early 1950's. Florence Stowell, Maria's sister and her husband, Herbert Stowell, a Congregationalist minister at Olton, [married 1899], are buried near Alfred White and George Bertram Middleton at St. Mary's Northchurch.

³⁶ The Engineer, vol 125 p. 271. March 29th, 1918.

³⁷ Their 1922 British Industries Fair Advert as Silversmiths and Electro-Plate Manufacturers lists them as 'Manufacturers of Shaving Mirrors, Inkstands, Ashtrays, etc: Finished in Nickel, Satin, Polished Brass and Antique. Mounted Glass and China, featuring exclusive novelties. (Stand No. D.41)' and suppliers of 'Novelties and General Fancy Wares. (Stand No. K.47)'. For the 1929 fair, the firm offered 'Finest Quality Silver and Electro Plate. Wares in Mounted English Glass, China and General Ware. Also Nickel Shaving Sets and Novelties'. Birmingham Jewellers' and Silversmiths' Association. (Stand Nos. J.43 and J.54)'.

³⁸ The milk jug and sugar bowl can be viewed in the museum's collection online.

³⁹ Most of the catalogue is available to read online - <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/exhibition-catalogue/1935-exhibition-of-british-art-in-industry>

⁴⁰ J.R. Froggatt exhibited a pair of silver candlesticks, hand raised, hammered, and chased, £11, at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, Burlington House, 1931. The address given was: FROGGATT, J. R., Orchard Road Erdington, Birmingham.

Appendix 1.

The 'Furniture Gazette' of 1879: p. 124, 23/08/1879:-

'Art Metal-Work.

The rapid strides that have been made of late years in all branches of artistic ornamentation, commencing with architecture and passing through the various phases of furniture, with its concomitant decoration of walls, ceilings, and floors, have at length overtaken the precious metals themselves, and have given fair warning to the gimcracks and gingerbread designs of the past- that their days are numbered. There is much that is anomalous in possessing a residence, artistically furnished, and surrounded with objects of artistic elegance, while the most valuable articles of gold and silver remain of incongruous design, representing nothing of a more artistic nature than the evanescent architecture of the pastry-cook or the toy-shop. These days, however, have passed, never to return, and Messrs. Hukin & Heath, whose names are a sufficient guarantee for both stability and enterprise, are foremost in the race for the kind of excellence to which we have alluded. To say that this firm lead the whole trade of silversmiths would be slightly in advance of the truth, but it is only one or two of the very oldest houses who excel them, and these will not view the recent strides of the firm in question with complete indifference. They opened their new premises, No. 19, Charterhouse-street, on Saturday last, and the collection of metal-work there brought together was of the very highest order of merit, eliciting the admiration of a company of some three or four hundred visitors who had been invited to the private view on that day.

In order that the firm may be recognised by the trade as reliable in point of design in every article of manufacture, whether for use or ornament, and to render themselves secure against the insidious inroads of wedding-cake art, they have wisely secured the services of one of the past masters of decoration, Dr. Christopher Dresser, - having said which, nothing more is needed to satisfy criticism.

It is well known that Dr. Dresser has constantly laboured for many years to teach what is an easy lesson to any but the proverbially conservative Briton, that in order to be inexpensive – not cheap, that is gimcrack – an article need not be ugly, ponderous, or offend in some form or other against the sensibilities of good taste. It seems strange that such a lesson should require to be taught, and yet stranger than that, being, necessary, it is so difficult to learn. However, some of the seed seems to have fallen on productive soil, for we have ample evidence in the Exhibition of its resultant fruit. The great charm of all Dr. Dresser's designs is, that they start from a new departure, so to speak; nothing is taken for granted; he appears to have paraphrased the old saying of "Whatever is, is right," into the antithetical "Whatever was, is wrong" – a sentiment to the belief of which of which we are becoming rapidly converted. It is both impossible and unnecessary to indicate here even the chief of the many peculiar and hitherto unknown shapes adopted for articles of daily use which we inspected last week; it is sufficient to mention a few that struck us as noticeable, without prejudice to others.

One was a cruet-stand, the shape of the cruets being such as to take the form of a peacock's tail when in repose, but having an axis which is at an angle of forty-five degrees with the horizon; the silver mounting being of an appropriate and severe design. In another cruet-stand, the plan of which was an intersection of two equilateral triangles, advantage was taken of these angles being 120

degrees to insert a cruet, hexagonal on plan, that should fir a rhomboidal opening. A teapot of remarkable shape was very noticeable, the spout being supported by one of the legs. An elegant claret jug, though absurdly simple in its design, attracted universal attention; the body was of the shape of an egg, pointed beneath, while the silver handle, legs, and lid were of the extreme of severity.

The whole collection would bear the closest criticism, and awakened suggestions in the mind, of designs hitherto unheard of, and certainly never before executed. Many of these articles are designed with an express view of bringing really good and artistic metal-work within the reach of those who cannot afford to invest in expensive and intricate work; they are most of them, therefore, of a severe design, their beauty consisting rather in their outline than in the amount of labour bestowed on their manufacture.

In addition to those articles of modern design by Dr. Dresser, Messrs. Hukin & Heath have a large and valuable collection of real Persian and Cashmere works of art, either oxidised or covered with gold or silver. These are being designed and manufactured in Persia and Cashmere by native workmen, who are expressly and exclusively employed by the firm; they are, therefore, as much their servants as are their English employés. It is found that labour being inexpensive in the East, works of art may be procured thence, provided constant employment be given to the native artisan, at even less cost than that at which the reproduction can be effected by the electrotype process in England. If, however, copies are required of any works of special merit, the electrotype process is brought into requisition, and exact copies are the result. As a matter of fact, there is an old-standing prejudice in all Eastern countries against making copies, whether of metal-work, carpets, shawls, or anything else, and, indeed, it is by the electrotype process alone that fac-similes can possibly be produced.

We also saw a unique collection of both real Japanese metal-work, and of its imitation manufactured by the firm in this country. The collection of the new Linthorpe pottery is also worthy of notice. Messrs. Hukin & Heath have purchased a large quantity of this pottery which excited so much admiration at the opening of Messrs. Dresser & Holme's Japanese warehouse a few weeks ago, and they have considerably enhanced the original beauty by mounting them appropriately in silver; besides these there were samples of Doulton ware and Oriental and other pottery similarly mounted. It is not necessary to refer particularly to the ordinary commercial goods that the firm manufacture in common with other houses in the trade, further than to say that when a firm introduces an art element into its manufacture generally, that influence is felt by the most modest article made; ; the salt spoon becoming naturally a leaf with its stalk, and the sugar tongs a Venus' fly-trap. As Messrs. Hukin and Heath supply the whole of the trade with the articles to which we have here alluded, they will probably before long be obtainable elsewhere.'

Appendix 2.

Morgan's The British Trade Journal and Export Price Current, vol. 17, September 1st 1879, p. 494:-

'Artistic Wares.

In our July number we noticed the opening of an important establishment for the sale of porcelain and other ware from Japan, China and India in Farringdon Road; we have now to mention another event of similar character within a very short distance of the same spot.

Messrs. Hukin & Heath, the well-known silversmiths of Birmingham and London, the other day invited the trade and a few connoisseurs to see a gran collection of plate and electro-ware at their new establishment, No. 19 Charterhouse Street. The collection includes both objects of utility and art. The table plate is mostly in new forms, remarkable for lightness, elegance, "and adaptability to their

intended purposes, including many charming objects after Japanese styles by Dr. Dresser and other artists. They exhibit, however, no slavish imitation, but, on the contrary, are replete with originality and in some cases great quaintness.

The mounting of articles in glass and pottery is a prominent feature in the exhibition; the variety lately introduced by our glass manufacturers in the forms and ornamentation of their wares offers great scope for this sort of work, and Messrs. Hukin & Heath have availed themselves of the fact to the full; the collection of jugs, beakers, and flagons exhibits an infinite variety both in the glass and the mounting, and the taste that has presided over the whole is very evident. Another class of mounted articles will be found, perhaps, even more interesting to some tastes. They consist in beautiful specimens of pottery, Japanese and Doulton ware, with specimens from the new pottery of Linthorpe, in the form of bowls, biscuit-boxes, and other useful articles. The ware is mostly of the tertiary colours, which are so much admired, ranging from orangeyellow to the richest purple-browns, and in many instances mottled or marbled, and presenting the beautiful appearance of porphyry, jasper, and other precious stones. More charming objects on a dinner table could not be desired, the contrast between them and the brilliant silver and damask table linen being exquisite. The one great feature of all the articles exhibited is the absence of redundant ornament; in place of that we see well-studied forms admirably executed.

The art portion of the collection is quite as remarkable, in its own way, as that we have already referred to. Everyone knows the enormous cost of artistic labour in this country, and that it absolutely places objects of art out of the reach of all but the wealthy. Messrs. Hukin & Heath have adopted two methods of partly altering the state of things, and have certainly achieved much success; they have gone to Persia, Cashmere, and Japan for their art workmanship, and the reduction of cost attained is enormous. Most of this work is executed in copper or other ordinary metal, and is then gilt or silvered by the electro process, or oxidised. The second method adopted will be highly acceptable, though it presents no actual novelty; it consists of the reproduction, in electro, of rare and costly specimens of Oriental art. We recommend all who are interested in such productions to pay a visit to Charterhouse Street.'
