



MID-18TH CENTURY ENGLISH ROCOCO SILVER: ITS SOCIAL CONTEXT AND THE ADVENTURES OF ITS OWNERS AND MAKERS

RALPH HOYLE

**Lowther Pavilion Theatre
Lytham St Annes
FY8 5QQ**

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This month we are delighted to welcome Ralph Hoyle who visits us from West Yorkshire. With his particular interest in mid-eighteenth century English Rococo silver, he will speak about the methods of manufacture and decoration, its use and its importance in “polite tea culture”. He will outline the Huguenot influence on this most decorative period (where new silversmithing techniques fused with new designs) as well as methods of manufacture and will speak about interpreting the engraved heraldry of the items and the social context.

The silver tea kettle shown here (and at the lecture) has been the subject of Mr Hoyle’s research into the original owners by tracing the heraldry and allowing him to show us their portrait. He will reveal some of the life stories of owners: fabulously wealthy aristocrats and middling sorts; guests of the Tower of London or with tragic family circumstances; descendants who gambled away estates; a husband finding his wife in a bed she should certainly not have been in; owners dragged to their death in an overturned carriage—the history and exploits of the original owners of these pieces adds considerably to their interest and brings another dimension to how we see them now.

And, if only we could share a cup of tea today to discuss all this!

RALPH HOYLE

Ralph Hoyle was a schoolboy member of the Wine Label Circle, a society devoted to the study of silver decanter labels; he went on to be its President. He is a long standing member of the Silver Society. Mr Hoyle has given talks to the Art Fund, Sheffield Assay Office, the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, Historic Houses and small charity fund-raising events.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Huguenot Legacy: English Silver 1680-1760; Christopher Hartop, 1999, Thomas Heneage & Co. Ltd (currently out of print)