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Chandeliers in Gloucestershire Churches

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Chandeliers in Gloucestershire Churches

A SUPPLEMENT

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SINCE the publication of Volume 81 of the *Transactions*, fresh information has come to light, calling for a supplement to the article 'Chandeliers in Gloucestershire Churches'. The number of churches said to possess chandeliers should now be amended from fourteen to fifteen. This is because Mrs Evelyn D. Atkinson has kindly drawn my attention to the example at Coln St Aldwyns. At the same time, the number of chandeliers formerly existing can now be reduced. When the article was written, it was supposed that the Cheltenham chandelier had disappeared irrevocably in the 19th century. Events that occurred immediately after publication of the *Transactions* showed just how wrong a supposition this was.

COLN ST ALDWYNS—Chancel (PLATE v)

11 $\frac{3}{4}$. 2 tiers of 6. On lower collar: I. FIFIELD VIC. W. TOMBS & R. FIFIELD CHURCH WARDENS. 1767.

Here is seen the fusion of two normally separate Bristol styles. The branches are of Bristol Style III, but the way in which they hook into bosses projecting from the collars is typical of Bristol Style IV. Such fusion demonstrates the oneness of Bristol tradition, which in any case is evidenced by the fact that a trefoil suspension-ring, gadrooning without fluting, and scalloped sockets and pans are details common to both styles. The body at Coln St Aldwyns has two castings above the upper globe that are found also at Stone, but the foliage ornament between is unparalleled, while the finial of four leaf-like flames surrounding the suspension-ring is an anticipation of future developments.

Since the chandelier is inscribed with the names of the vicar and churchwardens, it might be imagined that it was paid for out of the rate, but, in fact, the accounts for 1767–8¹ contain no significant entries. Perhaps, therefore, the chandelier was bought by subscription. The church had been re-roofed in 1763, and the acquisition of the chandelier was no doubt a complementary undertaking.

The bottom of the hangings consists of an iron rod, embellished with scrollwork and likely to be contemporary with the chandelier itself.

¹ At the vicarage and seen through the kind co-operation of the incumbent.



PLATE V



PLATE VI

CHANDELIERS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHURCHES

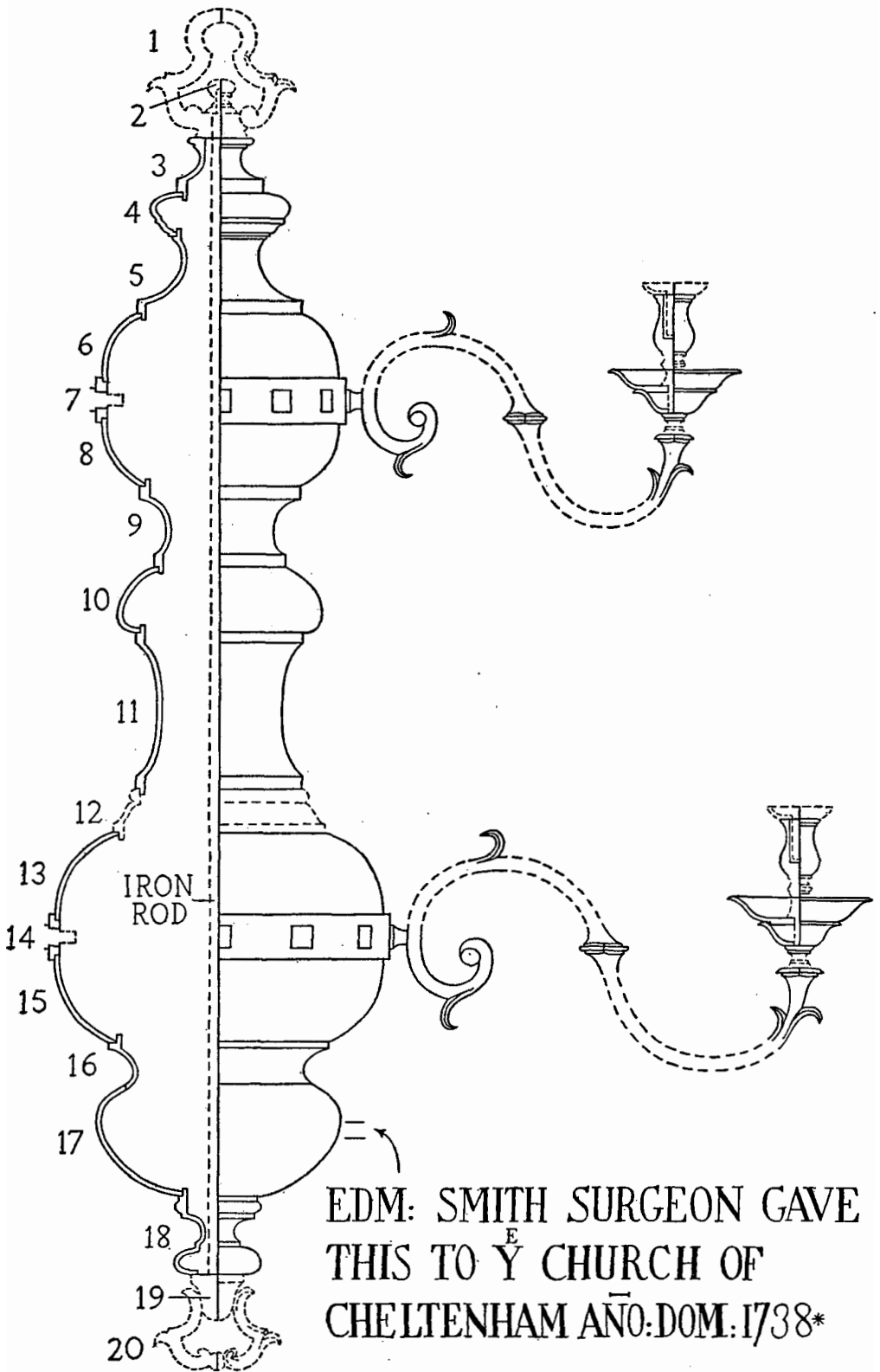


Fig. 1. Temple Newsam House, Leeds. (†, except inscription, ‡).

LEEDS, TEMPLE NEWSAM HOUSE—Great Hall¹ (PLATE VI)²

12½. 2 tiers of 12. On casting (17): EDM: SMITH SURGEON GAVE THIS TO YE CHURCH OF CHELTENHAM AÑO: DOM: 1738.

The remarkable nature of this chandelier stems from its date. It is the earliest known example where the branches are bolted to collars that form part of the globes, and, in view of its importance, it is a matter for particular satisfaction that the chandelier can be attributed to a maker. This is the result of comparison with three other chandeliers. The first two are the pair formerly at St Dionis Backchurch, London. They were acquired after negotiation with a 'Mr Gyles'. This was in 1740-1, and, when intact, they may have been identical with the Cheltenham chandelier. The third chandelier is that at Framlingham, Suffolk, which has the same branches and suspension-ring as those at Cheltenham. It is signed IOHN GILES FECIT and dated 1742. If the St Dionis and Framlingham chandeliers are both the work of John Giles, it would seem fair to conclude that he was the maker of the Cheltenham chandelier, also. One of this name was admitted to the Founders' Company in 1716, and died in September 1743. He would have been residing at Addle Street in the City of London in 1738.

In making comparisons, it has been assumed that the Cheltenham chandelier when intact would have been as shown in FIG. 1. Castings (12) and (20) had been removed by 1865; all the other alterations are likely to have taken place when the chandelier was converted to use with gas, some time after 1866. Castings (4) and (5), and from (9) to (17) are repeated in a pair of chandeliers at Rotherhithe, London, and castings (4) to (20) were apparently repeated at St Dionis even after the chandeliers at that church had been converted to use with gas.

The Cheltenham chandelier remained in its original setting until at least 1859. A bill of this date refers to its repair. It was probably removed at the 1860-1 restoration, and by 1865 was hanging at The Hendre, the country seat near Monmouth of John Etherington Welch Rolls. It was sold at Christie's on 28 November 1963 for 850 guineas, and was bought by Leeds City Art Gallery for Temple Newsam House in April 1964.

The chain by which the chandelier is now suspended is not original. In 1865 and 1866, there were two or more twisted iron rods.

¹ For a fuller account of the chandelier and its history, see *The Connoisseur*, February 1965, and *Leeds Arts Calendar*, no. 57. The help of Lieut.-Col. J. C. E. Harding-Rolls and Captain E. G. Prior in making available three photographs showing the chandelier while still at The Hendre is gratefully acknowledged.

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