SOME FURTHER NOTES ON THOMAS SIMON

By S. A. H. WHETMORE

An addition to the volume of printed material already published on Thomas Simon, his family, and his work, can only be written with hesitation but, some information not hitherto included in numismatic literature having come to my notice, I venture to add it to the record.

In the first place it may be useful to recall that the chief sources then available were given by Miss Helen Farquhar in her paper of 1932.¹ To her list must be added her own paper of 1936,² one by Mr. H. W. Henfrey³ and two by Mr. D. F. Allen.⁴

Thomas Simon was a son of Peter Simon, born in Blackfriars, himself the son of a Peter Simon born within the jurisdiction of the French king. When Sir George Bolles, Lord Mayor of London, compiled in 1618 by order of the Privy Council a list of strangers residing in the City, the father of Thomas was recorded as living in Walbrook Ward and trading beyond the seas.⁵ The following entry in the marriage registers of St. Stephen’s Walbrook indicates that a home had been established in Walbrook by 1611.

25 Jan. 1611–12 John Johnson of Kingston in Surrey and Mary Bennett servant with Mr. Peter Symond, frenchman.⁶

Peter Simon married Anne, daughter of Gille Germain of Guernsey on 12 September 1611, in the French church then existing in Threadneedle Street. An extensive table of the Simon family and their relations, compiled by the late Mr. Charles Anthony, F.R.S.E., was attached to Miss Farquhar’s paper of 1936 and it shows that seven sons and one daughter were born of the marriage. To this table may now be added the record of the baptism of the eldest son Peter.


Nothing more is known of him except that he was alive when Thomas made his will.

There can also be added an eighth son named John who is mentioned in the records of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

December the 15th 1637.

Memorandum that I John Symon the sonne of Peeter Symon of the parishe of St. Stevens in Walbrocke Marchaunte, do put my selfe apprentize unto George

Crompton Citizen and Goldsmith of London for the tearme of eight yeares to begin at the feast of St. Thomas next coming (December 21st).  

(Signed) John Simon.

The baptism of Thomas in the French church on 26 April 1618 has been noted before but it can be added that his parents took the unusual course of registering the baptism also in the records of St. Stephen’s Walbrook.  

‘3 May 1618 Thomas son of Peter Symons and Anne his wife Christened at the French Church.’ The entry was signed in the margin ‘Thomas Dickenson Churchwarden’.

Vertue recorded that Abraham, an elder brother of Thomas, was ‘trained to Scholarship with intention to recommend himself to ecclesiastical preferment’ and, presumably, higher education was available to Thomas had he shown a desire for learning. His name is not to be found in the records of the City schools which have survived to our time and he entered his first apprenticeship at the age of fifteen. The Goldsmiths’ Company records have, under 30 August 1633,

Memorandum that I Thomas Symonds the sonne of Peeter Symonds of the parish of St. Stevens in Walbroke, Marchant, do put my selfe apprentice unto George Crompton of London, Goldsmith, for the terme of eyght years to begin at Michaellmas next coming.

(Signed) Thomas Symons.

A second apprenticeship, already noted by Miss Farquhar, was made on 25 September 1635.

Memorandum that I Thomas Symons the sonne of Peeter Simons of Walbroke London, Marchante, do put myselfe apprentice unto Edward Greene cittizen and Goldsmith of London for the tearme of seaven yeares to begin at Michaellmas next coming.

(Signed) Thomas Simons.

There is a note in the margin ‘Upon seallinge of these indentures those indentures betweene Simons and Crompton are to be cancelled’.

This was not a ‘turning over’ as when a master died and an unexpired apprentice went to a new master for the balance of his term. George Crompton was still alive in 1637 to take John Simon into his care. It was a new binding to an apprenticeship to end on 28 September 1642.

George Crompton does not seem to have made a reputation as a medallist; he is unrecorded by Mr. Forrer. Edward Greene was chief engraver at the Mint from 1630 to nearly the end of 1644. Vertue, in his notebook, stated ‘Thomas Simonds, Engraver to the Mint, brought into that service by Sr. Robert Harley, who was warden of the Mint in Charles first Time’. Harley served his first term as master and warden of the Mint from September 1626 to August 1635. It is possible that Crompton, noticing the special ability of his pupil for the development of which his own work offered little opportunity, arranged with Greene, a brother Freeman of

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1 For the extracts from the records of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths I am indebted to Miss Susan Hare, Librarian to the Company.  
3 Biographical Dictionary of Medallists, L. Forrer.  
4 Num. Chron. 1913.  
the Worshipful Company, for his transfer to the place where the widest experience could be offered, a step which the Warden formally approved.

Simon progressed so much that in 1638, whilst still an apprentice, he made a seal for the Earl of Northumberland for use in his office as Lord High Admiral and in 1643, when just out of his term, he made his first Great Seal of the Realm. He was taken to the House of Commons on 19 July 1643 and the House ordered that Mr. Simonds be required and enjoined forthwith to make a new Great Seal of England and that he shall have £100 for his pains, £40 in hand and 3 score pounds so soon as he shall have finished the work.¹

On 4 April 1645 Simon was appointed joint chief engraver. The full patent was given by Nightingale in 1842.²

Without the Freedom of the Goldsmiths’ Company Simon could make important seals of State and be appointed to a professional office under the Crown, but without that Freedom he could not bind an apprentice at Goldsmiths’ Hall. He was slow in proceeding to his Freedom and did not take it until nearly four years after the end of his service. The Minute of the Court held on 12 June 1646 reads:

At this Courte Thomas Symon appr. with Edward Greene. Goldsmith deceased was sworne & made free by service upon a noate produced of Mrs. Greene’s assent thereunto.

Simon may have had a special reason for taking this step. It seems clear from his will that he had a particular affection for his younger brother Lawrence who was, apparently, of an unthrifty disposition. Perhaps Simon thought that, if he could get control of him, he might mend his ways. Lawrence became his apprentice on 7 May 1647, the entry in the records of the Company being

Memorandum that I Lawrence Simon the sonne of Peter Symon of London, Marchant, do put my selfe apprentice unto Thomas Symon citizen and Goldsmith of London for the terme of seaven yeares to begin this presente day.

(Signed) Lawrens Symon.

He stayed the course and, three days after completing his term, he proceeded to his Freedom on 10 May 1654, thereafter being given work by his brother in the Mint. Vertue in his book³ gave a copy of an account, prepared by Simon in 1665, of the money due to him by the Treasury for work done since the Restoration. It includes an item of sixty pounds ‘For three assistant workmen besides myself, for making dozens of piles and tressels att the first coynage at 55 per diem, working so many days about them.’ There is a marginal note ‘My brother Lawrence that deserved least had 30L of me’. Thomas in his will left money towards the payment of the debts of Lawrence and also a life pension. A note attached to Mr. Anthony’s table shows that Lawrence was still alive in Guernsey in 1681 and receiving money from London.

The Journals of the House of Commons show that on Saturday, 6 January 1648–9, a Committee of the House was ordered to bring into the House on

¹ Wyon, Great Seals.
² Num. Chron. 1842.
³ Medals, Coins, Great Seals etc. of Thomas Simon.
the following Monday a form for a new Great Seal; actually it did not appear until Tuesday. On 26 January Simon was authorized to engrave the Seal and on 7 February it was ordered that it should be brought into the House the following day. Vertue remarked ‘The small time our Artist had to design and engrave the first great seal made it appear a surprizing Performance’ whilst Wyon stated

The speed with which this Seal had been prepared is very remarkable even supposing that Simon had already commenced the work as soon as the design had been agreed upon (Jan 9th). It was impossible for him in so short a time to have produced one of his more finished works of art. This want of perfect workmanship may have been the cause of the replacement three years later by a Seal of the same general design but of the finer finish which I will now describe.¹

Parliament was, of course, in a hurry but was Simon subject to some private pressure? Had the date of his marriage been fixed and was it imminent?

It was recorded in Notes and Queries in 1855 that Simon married a Guernsey woman, the daughter and sole heiress of Cardin Fautrat² and in 1856 it was found that her name was Elizabeth.³ In 1861, in the same journal, a statement by P. S. Carey was published which included the following paragraph:

I believe Thomas Simon was married in or about the year 1650, certainly not later than 1653, and I think it likely that the marriage was solemnised in Maidstone, probably while Wilson was the incumbent.⁴

From the last paragraph of Mr. Henfrey's paper it seems that the writer of the note was Sir P. Stafford Carey, Bailiff of Guernsey, a descendant of Peter Carey, Lieutenant Bailiff in 1656 and a first cousin of Simon. The clue offered by Sir Stafford does not appear to have been followed.

Thomas Wilson was the incumbent of the parish church of All Saints' in Maidstone from 1644 to 1654.

Five days after the delivery of the new Great Seal the registers of the church disclose that the following marriage took place.

13 Feb. 1648-9. Thomas Simmons of Clements London gent and Elizabeth Fautress of this Parish.⁵

‘Simmons’ presents no difficulty, for the many variations in the spelling of the name will be apparent. Simon became a ratepayer in the parish of St. Clement Danes in London shortly after this marriage and may have been a lodger there whilst still a bachelor. His affection for the church is marked in his will. The description of the social status of Simmons is consistent with that of Simon. The spelling of the name of the bride is puzzling and seems a greater departure from correctness than was usual, but there is other evidence in favour of the marriage.

The registers disclose two baptisms:

19 March 1655-6. Thomas Simmons son of Thomas Simmons and Elizabeth his wife.

29 June 1657 Elizabeth Simmons the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth his wife.

¹ Wyon, Great Seals. ² Notes and Queries, 1st ser. xii. ³ Notes and Queries, 2nd ser. ii. ⁴ Notes and Queries, 2nd ser. xii. ⁵ For the extracts from the registers of All Saints, Maidstone, I am indebted to Mr. W. G. Malyon, Parish Clerk.
Thomas will be examined later; a daughter Elizabeth was a beneficiary under Simon's will.

Thomas Simon was alive on 25 June 1665 when he added a codicil to his will; he was dead by 23 August 1665 when probate of his will was granted. 'Thomas Simmons, Gent' was buried in Maidstone on 26 July 1665. In the grant of probate, to be given later, Thomas Simon was described as ‘of the parish of Maidstone’, although in the will he describes himself as ‘of the parish of St. Clement Danes’. There is good ground for Sir Stafford Carey’s belief.

Simon set up a home in the parish of St. Clement Danes and his name first appears in the accounts of the churchwardens and overseers of the parish, for a period ended 17 May 1649, under the heading ‘Dutchy Liberty’ and sub-heading ‘Beyond the Savoy’. He thus lived in the western part of the Liberty of the Duchy of Lancaster which lay to the south of the Strand. From Porter’s map of London (c. 1660) it appears that a row of dwellings faced the Strand between which and the river was open land and some larger houses.

His name appears in various spellings until 1664 and he had chosen a very select locality, his neighbours including the Lord Chancellor (£3. 15s), Earl of Salisbury (£1), Lord Ashley (£2. 10s.), the French Ambassador (£2. 10s.) and Lady Harbett (£1. 10s.). The figures in brackets are the assessments in 1664. Simon’s own assessment was sixteen shillings, the highest for an untitled person except Henry Slingsby who was Master of the Mint (1662–80). The rate for 1665 was paid by ‘Widow Symonds’ and thereafter the name disappears from ‘beyond the Savoy’.

According to his will Simon was survived by a son and two daughters, Samuel, Elizabeth, and Ann, whilst Miss Farquhar stated he was pre-deceased by two sons. Such was the case. Samuel was born on 1 April 1653 and baptized in St. Clement Danes on 13 April 1653. Ann was baptized in the same church on 15 September 1659 whilst the baptism of Elizabeth in Maidstone on 29 June 1657 has already been mentioned. The baptismal records of the French church in Threadneedle Street give:

Simon, Zachiarie, fils de Thomas et Elizabeth sa femme Tém Zacharie Bertrand Dec 28 1662.

and the records of St. Clement Danes give:

Zachariah Simon, a youth buried 21 Sept 1664.

The word ‘youth’ may be difficult but there can be little doubt that the entries refer to one child.

Thomas was born on 29 December 1655, baptized on 6 January 1655–6 in St. Clement Danes, and buried there on 13 February 1656–7. It will be recalled that Thomas Simmons was baptized in Maidstone on 19 March 1655–6 and it must be that this child was baptized twice as was his father. His baptism in London took place eight days after his birth and that of his brother Samuel twelve days after his birth. It may be that the parents wished the son, who bore his father’s name, to be baptized in the church in which they had been married but that pressure of work prevented a visit to Maidstone until over two months after the boy’s birth, too long to leave him unbaptized.

1 The records of the parish are in the custody of the Archivist to the City of Westminster.
The information given above of the family fills the gaps in Mr. Anthony’s table.

Turning again to Simon’s official life he had the pleasing experience of appointment by Parliament as ‘sole Chief Engraver to the Mints and Seals’ on 25 April 1649.¹

The authorities had been concerned for some time with the quality of the coinage and on 2 February 1649–50 the Council of State ordered the Committee of the Mint to call Peter Blondeau from France for conference. He came to London and quickly found himself in conflict with the vested interests of the Corporation of Moniers in the Mint. The long-drawn-out negotiations, the technical competition between Blondeau and David Ramage, representing the Corporation, and the battle of memoranda are fully described in the third chapter of Mr. Henfrey’s book.² Simon was not directly involved in this quarrel but he very probably made the dies for Blondeau’s patterns, as the latter was not an engraver. He was instructed by the Committee of the Mint on 8 May 1651 to deliver to Ramage ‘two rollers and a drawing mill’ and the next day Blondeau was authorized ‘to make use of such Engines and Instruments necessary thereunto, as are at present in the custody of Mr. Simons the Graver of the Mint. And shall worke either at the sd Simons, his house, or any such house or place, as the said Blondeau shall thinke most convenient for his work.’ Violet stated that Blondeau made his patterns in a private house in the Strand.³ If this were the domestic home Mrs. Simon must have been a patient lady.

After the battle of Dunbar on 3 September 1650 Simon was ordered by Parliament to make a commemorative medal and he went to Edinburgh to submit designs to Cromwell. In a letter to Parliament Cromwell included a very favourable opinion of Simon’s merits and a request that he might be appointed to the post which Nicholas Briot had held before him. The complete letter appears in both Vertue’s and Henfrey’s books.

In 1651 Simon made a new Great Seal of England, similar in design to that of 1648 but of perfect workmanship, and two years later he made yet another when Cromwell became Lord Protector on 16 December 1653.

A little later Simon became involved in a lawsuit in Guernsey in protection of an interest of his wife. It may be useful briefly to recall the event. The matter was first mentioned by Mr. Edgar MacCulloch of Guernsey in 1855 in Notes and Queries⁴ and the story was later developed by Henfrey.⁵ The action, begun in 1655, lay between Thomas Simon, acting for his wife and the other coheirs of the estate of John Fautrat senior, Elizabeth Simon’s grandfather, and John Fautrat junior, the subject-matter being the division of the estate amongst the coheirs. Simon was represented in the Guernsey Court by his cousin, Peter Carey, whilst Peter de Beauvoir, another cousin, was active in his interest; so much so that a complaint was made

And the said Peter de Beauvoir makes use of Mr. Thomas Symons, a graver living in the Strand, which Symons having skill in graving and making medalls, hath accessse unto His Highness and many members of the Council, speakes rashly

¹ Num. Chron. 1842.
² Answer of the Corporation of Moniers, 1653.
³ Notes and Queries, 1st ser. xii; 2nd ser. ii.
⁴ Numismata Cromwelliana.
⁵ Num. Chron. 1874.
of the isle and of the inhabitants thereof and mainteynes and recomends the said de Beauvoir, who is his cosen german and his helps and council in a suite in law about inheritance in the island of Guernsey, wherein the said de Beauvoir is very officious to oblige to himselfe the said Symons.

The Guernsey Court found for the plaintiffs and the defendant appealed to the Council of State in London. On 15 February 1655–6 the Council referred the case back to Guernsey for evidence on matters of fact to be taken from witnesses on oath. This was done and after considerable delay the case was heard by the Council on 22 September 1657, the Lord Protector being present. The appeal was dismissed and the case remitted to the Guernsey Court to enforce judgement. What advantage accrued to Mrs. Simon is not known.

Whilst the case was proceeding Simon received a further advance. On 15 February 1654–5 the Lord Protector ordered that he should be the sole chief engraver for the Mint and Seals and on the following day that he should be medal-maker for the State. The appointments were confirmed in a lengthy patent granted by Cromwell on 9 July 1656 which ordered that Simon should receive ‘the like fees, rewards, allowances and profits as Thomas Anthony, Charles Anthony, or Dericke Anthony, deceased, John Gilbert, Edward Greene, or any of them or any other engravers or cutters belonging to any King or Queen of England hath had or received’.2

In 1656 the Council finally decided that a coinage should be struck by the mechanical method invented by Blondeau and on 9 December designs prepared by Simon were approved. There were several delays in making a start, the source of the bullion was changed, Blondeau was first allotted the rooms in the Mint formerly used by Briot, then Worcester House was chosen and, finally, part of Drury House where the coins were actually struck. Possibly the vested interests in the Mint, where the ‘harp and cross’ design coins continued to be made, pursued Blondeau in his retreat, for he complained of interruption of his work by demolition of part of the building. The matter came before the Council on 16 July 1657 and on 17 November they asked the Lord Protector for a grant from the Treasury to provide Blondeau with machinery and tools adequate to strike coins to the value of £10,000 per week and they ordered proper space to be arranged in Drury House, including the evacuation of one of the residents. It would have taken a considerable time before everything was ready and the work could not have been fully developed before the death of Cromwell on 3 September 1658. The dies were made by Simon and the effigy of the Protector is regarded as a significant example of his work.

Richard Cromwell, successor to his father, entered upon a few months of troublesome rule which ended in his resignation in May 1659. In that month a new Great Seal, made by Simon, was presented to the House of Commons. The House ordered that Simon be referred to the Committee of Safety who were to consider what was fit to allow him for his work and to arrange payment and it was further ordered that Simon’s claim for payment for the former Great Seals he had made should be referred to the Council of State

1 Henfrey, p. 35. 2 Vertue, pp. 67–72.
when it should be constituted, a matter to be remembered when considering the financial position of Simon at the time of his death.

On 29 May 1660 Charles II was restored to his throne. He found Thomas Rawlins in possession of a patent from his father of April 1645 appointing him chief engraver, and also Thomas Simon with the patents of 1649 and 1656 already mentioned. Rawlins had followed the fortunes of Charles I and after his death had led a distressful life including imprisonment for debt. Thomas Simon had worked assiduously for the Commonwealth and Protectorate and had lived in comfortable circumstances. He asked the king for pardon and it is worth while to insert his petition, clear in its expression of fault but in the circumstances bold in making demands.

To the Kings most excellent Majestie Charles the second, by the grace of God Kinge of England, Scotland, France and Ireland etc.

The humble Petitioner of Thomas Simon Engraver

That whereas your Petitioner hath been for these 35 years past, bred up in that employment, being a servant to one Edward Greene Chiefie Graver to his late Maiesty of blessed Memory, in which service hee did engrave most of the Greate Seales and Originall Stamps for Coynes with the good approbation of his Maiesty And whereas in the unhappy difference betweene the late King & Parliament your Petitioner being noted for his skill in that Art, was by Order of Parliament commande to make their Greate Seale in the yeare 43 and after the decease of his Master was by them made Cheife Graver of the Minte and Seales.

Your Petitioner therefore humbly implores your Maiestys Gracious pardon for what hee so unhappily acted by their Command and to be gratiously pleased to admitt him into favor and to confer on him the employment of Cheife Graver to your Maiesty and of your Maiesties Minte and Seales, assuring your Maiestie that hee shall with all faithfulness and loyalty aquit himselfe in the discharge of what ever your Maiesty shall be gratiously pleased to entrust him with And your Petitioner shall pray

(Signed) Tho: Simon.

Simon made a mistake in his dates, for it was only twenty-five years since his binding to Edward Greene.

In the event the king honoured the patent granted to Rawlins without further ado, beyond a Treasury note that he was to be reinstated. On the other hand no action was taken against Simon and by August 1660 he was receiving instructions for work in the Mint. Perhaps this favourable treatment was due in part to the recollections which the king certainly had of a convivial Thomas Symonds and his wife Ursula, who had aided him in his difficult journey to the coast after his defeat at Worcester.

The authorities urgently required a new regal coinage to take the place of the Commonwealth issues, which were withdrawn, but the assistance received from Simon was not to their satisfaction. No doubt he felt some revulsion to the new conditions in which he found himself, but it is also very likely that he was called upon to do much more work than he could perform to his own

1 Vertue, p. 39, quoting Journals of the House of Commons.
2 Biographical Dictionary of Medallists, L. Forrer.
5 King Charles II, Sir Arthur Bryant.
artistic standards. Vertue records some of the warrants which were issued at the time and a climax seems to have been reached at a meeting of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, on 18 August 1660, at which the king was present. The record states:

The greate publique inconveniences and damage from the standing still of the Mint being this day represented to his Majesty, and the occasion of it being alleged to bee, that Mr. Symonde had not yet fitted the Stamps and tools that were of necessary and present use, and that by reason hee pretended hee had other warrants for graving several seales for Scotland and Ireland, his Majesty prepared and required a peremptory and absolute order from this board to be sent to Mr. Simonde: And in conformity at his Majesty's pleasure, the Lords Commissioners doe hereby order, That Mr. Simonde forbeare all other services, until he hath perfected all things which belonge to him to doe, for setting the Mint presently to worke: and that he use all speed and dilligence therein, suitable to the absoluteness of this order and hereof he is not to fail.

At a meeting on 24 January 1661, at which the king was present, an order was issued prohibiting the manufacture of punches, matrices, and dies except in the Mint and directing Simon to bring unto the Mint all tools and engines for coining he had in his custody.

A more pleasing event took place on 2 June 1661 when a patent was issued to Simon, as one of the chief engravers, 'to succeed Nicholas Briot defunct' with an allowance of £50 per annum which was greater than the allowance received by Rawlins.

The opposition of the Corporation of Moniers to Blondeau during his Commonwealth visit and the secrecy of the man himself must have prevented anyone in the Mint from mastering his machinery. Consequently it was decided to bring him to London again and Simon was issued a pass on 8 November 1661 to go to and return from France.

The pressure on the Mint was now so heavy that an increase in the higher engraving staff was necessary. The king had become acquainted during his exile with the Roettier family of engravers and on 19 May 1662 John Roettier was appointed 'one of the chief engravers' with the same salary as Simon and he was ordered to make the punches, &c., for the coins to be produced mechanically. His designs were used for the coinage of 1662. There followed what has been described as a trial in art to which Simon submitted his famous Petition Crown, dated 1663. It is necessary to read as it was written Miss Farquhar's assembly of the facts and expression of opinion in her paper of 1932. Apart from this it is perhaps reasonable to think that the Roettier designs were adequate for a badly needed commercial coinage whilst Simon's wonderful example of his medallic skill might have worn rapidly in circulation.

Simon continued to work in the Mint until a few months before his death in 1665, probably a disappointed man but enjoying the favour of the king who, in a direct Warrant dated 26 September 1664, called him 'our trusty and well-beloved Thomas Simonds, one of our chief engravers'.

Reasons for believing Simon died in Maidstone in July 1665 have already been given. Miss Farquhar concluded he died on 5 August 1665, a date she
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derived from an article in *Apollo*\(^1\) by Mr. E. Alfred Jones who quoted from a work by Sir Walter Prideaux.\(^2\) Mr. Jones gave a copy of a Minute of the Court of Assistants of the Goldsmiths' Company in the following words:

Symons the graver having died (August 5 1665) it was ascertained that the 'punsons' used in the Company in marking plate were in the possession of his wife or servant and it was ordered that they were to be got into the custody of the Company without delay.

This is not an exact copy from Sir Walter Prideaux who in his turn considerably condensed the original Minute of the Court of Assistants which met on 5 August 1665. The Minute, in the original record, reads:

At this Court as from information by Mr. Warden Mason that Mr. Symons the graver of the punsons was lately dead and that the counter punsons (by which two strokes of the punsons used by this Company in marking of their plate) were in the custody of his wife or servants it is thought fit and the Wardens are by this Court desired to use all possible care and speed they can to get the said counter punsons into their custody and when they have the same they are then to be disposed of as a Court of Assistants shall think fit.

It is clear from the wording of the Minute that Simon died before the date of the meeting of the Court. It is interesting that, in the table attached to Miss Farquhar's paper, Mr. Anthony gave July 1665 as the month of the death but he did not give the day. He also stated that Simon was buried in St. Clement Danes but his name is not to be found in the registers.

Mrs. Simon became a widow with a son aged twelve, two daughters aged five and eight respectively and probably with considerable financial difficulties. She paid the rates for the home in the Savoy for 1665 and then left the district. In 1666 a 'widow Symonds' appears in the records of St. Clement Danes paying a rate of 5s. 6d. for a dwelling in Stanhopp Street, which was reduced to 5s. in 1667. The street was in the Liberty of Westminster to the north of the Strand. There is no direct evidence that the widow was Mrs. Elizabeth Simon but the more cheaply rated dwelling is consistent with a reduction in income. It will be shown later that she had remarried by 1671.

The text of Simon's will was published by C. T. Smythe in 1843 but the subscription thereto, signed by the Registrar, is not the grant of probate.\(^3\) The registered copy of the will is in the Archives of the County of Kent with the grant, in contracted Latin, attached. The translation reads:

Probate was granted of the above registered will of Thomas Simon, of the parish of Maidstone in the diocese of Canterbury, deceased, who had considerable goods [i.e. worth over £5] in several dioceses in the province of Canterbury. It was exhibited on 23 August 1665 before Master William Lovelace, clerk and surrogate, and in the presence of me Thomas Simpson, notary public, on the oath of Elizabeth Simons, widow and relict of the deceased, who was named executrix in the will. And it was approved, and the goods committed to the executrix, she being first sworn in due form of law saving the right of all.

And then, viz, on the same day [—?] to the petition of the said executrix, decreed

\(^1\) *Apollo*, vol. xxi, p. 48.
\(^3\) 'The Will of Thomas Simon, the Medal Engraver, with Observations thereon', *Num. Chron.* 1843.
that the said will should be registered, and the transcript thus registered compared with the autograph or original itself, and as much accuracy shown in the copy so registered as in the autograph or original, and the said autograph or original to be handed and delivered to the aforesaid executrix, and thereupon he handed and delivered it.\(^1\)

There follows in English ‘Received the said original Will, according to the decree above recorded, 23 August 1665’ which receipt was signed ‘Elizabeth Simon, Executrix’.

The grant of probate surely determines Maidstone as the place of Simon’s death. The possession of property in more than one diocese required that probate should be issued in the Archbishop’s Court. If Simon had died in London, application could have been made in Doctors Commons and he would have been buried in St. Clement Danes.

The income enjoyed by Mrs. Simon from her possessions in Guernsey is not known. Briefly her husband’s will gave her

(i) one-third part of the personality with the remainder of another third part after many legacies had been paid;
(ii) the income from a farm in Shorn in Kent until her son Samuel reached his majority, that is until 1674.

It also placed upon her the obligation to preserve all the tools of Simon’s profession to be given to his nephew William, son of his brother Nathaniel, when he should have served his term and had set himself up as an engraver, failing which they were to be given to Samuel.

It is likely that at the time of Simon’s death a considerable part of the personality consisted of debts due by the Crown from which, on payment, it would be necessary to cover his own debts, which he directed in his will should be paid.

With regard to the pre-Restoration period the remark in the House of Commons in May 1659, indicating the dilatory methods of making payments by the Treasury, has already been noted. Hocking stated that an account dated 1657 covering sixteen foolscap pages was in the Royal Mint.\(^2\) Henfrey gave a summary of the account with additional information. On 13 July 1658 Simon petitioned the Council for speedy payment in order that he could satisfy his creditors and he remarked that he had received nothing for five years. The accounts may not be complete but it seems that at 5 February 1658–9 of a total debt of £1,861 a sum of £883 was unpaid. This probably became a bad debt.

Payment was just as slow after the Restoration, as Vertue in his book gave at length Simon’s account for work done from 12 June 1660 to April 1665, a short time before his death. The account amounted to £3,107 and it is evident from the following document that Simon had been pressing for some payment before his account was completed.

Whereas his Majesty by his Letters of Privy Seal of the 27th October in the 16\(^{th}\) yeare of his Ma\(^{st}\) reigne [i.e. 27\(^{th}\) October 1664] has directed the payment of the sume of £1,000 unto Thomas Symon (one of his Engravers) or his assignes without

\(^1\) I am indebted to the County Archivist for Kent and Miss Dunbar of the Archivist’s Department of the City of Westminster for transcriptions and translations.

\(^2\) Num. Chron. 1909.
Accompt. He having made for his Mat' use and service several Great Seales for
England Scotland and Ireland and other his Forraigne Plantations And also many
stamps and Medall and other worke and services wherein he disbursed a con­siderable sume of money and hath not yet receivd any towards his satisfacon of the
same And his making other things for his Mat'y service, which being not finished
his Accompt cannot well be made & presented His Mat'y being well pleased in the
meane time to afford him a sume of Monye the better to enable him in his said
service (the which is to be defalked out of his Accompt when the same shall be
presented) These are therefore to pray and require you to draw an order for Paym't
of the same sume of one thousand pounds unto the said Thomas Symon accord­ingly
and cause Tallyes to be struck for the same upon the Grand Com's of Excise
for the Quarter of the yeare to cr'd at Xmas next And for so doing, etc.¹

The document was signed by Lord Southampton, the Lord Treasurer,
addressed to Sir Robert Long and dated 24 May 1665, just seven months
after the king had given his direction. Simon did not know of this when he
signed his will on 17 June 1665 but he did know when he added a codicil on
25 June 1665. The money was paid to Mrs. Simon after his death.

At some later date, probably within a year from her husband's death,
Mrs. Simon petitioned the king for a settlement of the balance of the account.
The petition is not in the Public Record Office but the terms of a further
petition, recorded by Nightingale,² show that such an earlier petition was
presented.

Some interesting documents are in the Department of Manuscripts,
British Museum, obtained at the sale of the library of Mr. Stanesby Alchorne,
who helped so much in the preparation of the second edition of Vertue's
book. Additional MS. 18762 contains a copy of Simon's account later than
that given to Vertue, for the preliminary payment of £1,000 is shown. The
examination of the final account took some time. On 8 November 1667 Lord
Ashley asked Mr. Slingsby, Master of the Mint, for his opinion on the rates
charged by Simon for services amounting to £100 and on 13 December 1667
Mr. Slingsby replied approving the rates on the ground that Simon had
waited long for his money and had given so much of his time and that of
his workmen for His Majesty that 'he could not gain leisure to work for
private persons whereby to get money to maintain his family'.

There is an undated list of questions put to Mrs. Simon by Lord Ashley
and her answers. One relates to the charge for a medal for an Italian musician
which is item 28 in the account in Vertue.

To which the said Mrs. Simons humbly answered that the said Medall was made
by his Maties verbal order and when finished was delivered into his Maties owne
hande by her said husband in the presence of Mr. Ashburnham as by Memorials
thereof appeared in her said husbande's booke and humbly appealed to his Maties
memory & shall submit to his Maties pleasure therein.

In the final settlement the charge was disallowed.

Lord Ashley also questioned some extraordinary expenses and attendances
at Court for directions in connexion with making piles, &c. for the first coin-

¹ P.R.O. Treasury Early Warrants 1660-1692, Crown Copyright.
² Num. Chron. 1842.
ing at the Mint and Mrs. Simon replied, ‘... her said husband lost thereby much more w\th he might in that time have earned by graving for Lords and Gentl’.

The references to private work confirm Miss Farquhar’s description of Simon as a ‘trading goldsmith’.

Lord Ashley made his final report to the king in a document dated 18 July 1668, in the preface to which is a reference to Mrs. Simon’s first petition.

The copy of the account used in Vertue’s book is Additional MS. 45190, given to the British Museum by Miss Farquhar in 1938.

The second petition shows that Mrs. Simon was aware that the king had received a report on the first from Lord Ashley, but nothing had been paid because of the death of the Lord Treasurer, Lord Southampton. According to Nightingale the Treasurer was indolent in his discharge of his duties and suffered from a long illness terminating in his death in May 1667. It was not until 1670 that matters were finally settled as the following Royal Warrant shows:

Charles the seconde etc. To the Comrs of our Privy cr. Whereas We did hereto­for employ Thomas Symon deceased holder of the Cheife Graveri of our Mint to make severall Great Seales, Stamps meddalls & other works for Our service. And by our Lfres of Privy Seale bearyng date the seaventeenth day of October in the seventeenth yeare of our Reigne did direct that the sume of one thousand pounds should be paid to the said Thomas Symon without acco\t in regard he was then upon sev\’all other works for Our service by reason whereof his Acco\t could not then bee presented, but the same to be in parte of & to be defalked out of his Acc\t when the same should be brought in Which said sume of one thousand pounds was paid to the Relict & Ex\‘ of the said Thomas Symon as appears by the Certificate of Thomas Street dep\y Accontant of Our Revenue of the Excise grounded uppon the Bookes of disbursement of John Ball Esq\r late Tre\r of our said Revenue And is acknowledged by the said Elizabeth Symon to be received by her And whereas the said Elizabeth Symon hath presented her humble peticon unto Us with an Acc\t of money due to her said husband for the services aforesaid Which Wee did referre to your Examinacon & you did thereupon make Report unto Us that you had caused the same to be examined by Bartholomew Beale Esq one of or Auditors of Imports & Richard Sherrwyn Es & by others thereof under their hands it appears that there is claymed in deed over & above the said £1,000 the sum of 2164 whereof the sume of £376 is for service performed for or Kingdom of Scotland w\th wee think fit to leave to leye there and for severall Sumes conteyned in the said Acc\t amount­ing to the sume of £223 10s 00d there are no sufficient Vouchers produced & so the remayning Sume amounts to £1564 10s Our will and pleasure therefore is and Wee doo here bye Authorise & Require you Acc\t out of such or treasure as now inhereafter shalbe remaying in the Receyt of or Exchq\r you pay or cause to be paid to the said Eliz Symon the said sume of 1564:10:0 due to her said late husband for the service aforesayd the same to be payd to her or her assigns without acc\t etc. And these or letters etc. Given etc. Dated the 23 June, 1670.

Included in the miscellaneous items totally rejected were £65 for the expenses of Simon’s journey to France.

The Scottish records show that the claim referred to Scotland was satisfied.

1 P.R.O. Treasury (King’s Warrants), Crown Copyright.
Payed to Mathew Poole of London, clerk, and his spouse, relict and sole execu­
trix of Thomas Simon, late of London, His Majesties Master Graver, the sum of
four thousand fvey hundred and twelve pounds scots for seals and signets made
and furnished by the said Thomas for His Majesties service in Scotland, conform
to ane particular accompt, precept of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesties
Theasaurarie and discharge accordingly dated 9th March 1671 . . . £4512 scots.¹

At the rate of £12 Scots to one pound sterling this sum was exactly £376.

It is now necessary to recall an extract from Vertue’s notebooks already
given by Hocking² and Miss Farquhar.³

Of Thomas Simon engraver of Coins & Seals—says Mr. Marlow, Jeweller of
Lombard St—that in the year 1676, he then bought of the widow of Simons (who
was remarried to Mr. . . . . . . . a dissenting Parson) all the tools, stamps, pun­
cheons, wax impressions, &c, that did belong to Mr. Simons which he left and
appointed by Will to be preserved together for the use of his son if he liv’d and
should follow the profession of his Father, but as he was of weak understanding
when he grew up and not fit for such an employment he was otherwise provided
for . . . .⁴

In the original manuscript the space following ‘Mr.’ has been filled by a
row of dots for some two and a half centuries; the name Mathew Poole can
now be substituted. There is some confusion regarding the terms of Simon’s
will in Vertue’s statement. It has been shown that the tools of Simon’s profes­
sion were left to his nephew William if he followed the same profession and
if he did not—and he did not—they passed to Samuel without obligation. The
wax impressions belonged to Samuel in any case, as they and some other
objects were left directly to him in his father’s will. The possession of them by
his mother in 1676 is consistent with some limited intelligence in Samuel,
who was then twenty-three years old.

On the other hand Miss Farquhar recorded a statement that Samuel had
become a jeweller and had descendants, Mayer and Jean Henri Simon who
had attained eminence as gem engravers in Brussels and Paris.⁵ A Samuel
Simon married Catherine Ribault in the French church in the Savoy on
8 January 1690–1, by licence from the Dean of Canterbury.⁶ Were he the son
of Thomas he would have been thirty-seven years old at that time. In 1850
M. M. Guioth published a paper giving many details of the life of J. H.
Simon and descriptions of his work but there is no reference to any such
ancestry.⁷ In 1873, however, M. J. F. Leturcq stated ‘M. Mayer Simon était
d’une famille dont plusieurs membres se distinguent dans l’art de la glyp­
tique, un de ces ancêtres, Thomas Simon, vécut à Londres . . . ’ but the
source of the information is not given.⁸ In 1894 M. Ernest Babelon, in an
account of Mayer Simon, describes him as ‘arrière-petit-fils de Thomas
Simon’.⁹ The final paper is ‘Note sur Jean Henri Simon Graveur en Pierrres
Fines et Médailleur Bruxellois’ published by M. Alphonse de Witte in 1912.¹⁰

¹ Treasurer’s Accounts 1667–1682, p. 145, kindly given by the Curator of Historical Records,
¹⁰ La Gazette Numismatique, vol. xvi.
He was critical of M. Guioth's paper and seems doubtful of M. Babelon's reference to Thomas Simon.


Mayer was born in 1746 and Jean Henri in 1752 and, if their father Jacob were the son of the Samuel mentioned above, there is ample time after his marriage into which Jacob can be fitted. On the present evidence the story seems speculative and it is worthy of note that a statement is made by Guioth that the oration at the funeral of Jean Henri was delivered by the Chief Rabbi.

Some of Simon's tools made a later appearance in 1700. Hocking recorded that one of the minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Royal Mint held on 9 November 1700 recorded that 'The Master [Isaac Newton] reported that he had bought, according to the direction of the Board, 10 puncheons and 9 dies graven by Mr. Simonds famous graver in the time of Ol. Cromwell for 14 guineas'.

Mr. Croker, Ingraver of the Mint, chose out of them to pair 2 puncheons, one a head and the other an armes for crown pieces, two puncheons being a head and armes for sixpences, and two dies being a head and armes for 2\(^{1}\) pieces of gold, giving his receipt, and the rest were locked up in the Treasury.\(^{1}\)

The Board Minutes of the Royal Mint appear to be complete from 23 March 1699 to 26 February 1701 but they contain no record of any direction to the Master in this matter nor any other reference. The manuscript records kept by Newton whilst he was Master of the Mint were acquired by the late Lord Wakefield in 1936 and presented by him to the Mint. They contain statements of Warden's and Master's accounts, including an item dated 25 December 1700.

To Eliz Winter for old Puncheons and Dyes of Symonds Work for our Gravers to copy after £15. 1. 6.\(^{2}\)

Hocking's paper includes an analysis of the purchase which shows that it contained eleven tools made by Simon and seven of doubtful origin but all related to the Lord Protector's coinage.

Who was Elizabeth Winter has still to be discovered.

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\(^{1}\) Num. Chron. 1909.

\(^{2}\) Information kindly furnished by Mr. H. L. Neate.