

# Committee on the Jean F Watson Bequest

10.30am, Friday, 23 February 2023

## Purchase of a set of three silver casters, by Edward Penman, Edinburgh 1728

Executive/routine  
Wards

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee approved the purchase of a set of three silver casters by Edward Penman, Edinburgh 1728.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

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# Report

## Purchase of a set of three silver casters, by Edward Penman, Edinburgh 1728

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the purchase of set of three silver casters by Edward Penman, Edinburgh 1728.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Museum of Edinburgh has a fine collection of silver dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The majority of the collection was made in Edinburgh and Canongate. The collection is recognised as of National Significance by Museums Galleries Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government.
- 3.2 The majority of the pieces in the silver collection are domestic silverware and a high proportion of the collection is on permanent public display within the silver galleries at the Museum of Edinburgh.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 The following items of silverware are presented to the committee for their consideration: one set of three casters by Edward Penman.



- 4.2 Three octagonal shaped casters by Edward Penman, 1728. Comprising one large and one small, pierced caster, and a matching 'blind' small caster. All of baluster panelled octagonal form with a moulded girdle and crest of the Colville family for Lord Colville of Culross and Ochiltree engraved above. All raised on stepped octagonal domed feet, and with pull off covers with compressed urn finials. The covers are chased and pierced and have alternating panels of floral lattice work and scrolls.
- 4.3 All three casters are hallmarked with the three towered castle (Edinburgh), date letter Y (1728) and the mark EP (Edward Penman). Edward Penman is likely to have been both the maker and assay master of this piece as it dates from his time as assay master. Commonly when the maker was also the assay master only one mark was struck.
- 4.4 Of exceptional quality and of octagonal form which was fashionable in London Silver but is less commonly found on Scottish pieces of this date.
- 4.5 It is also unusual to have the 'blind' caster in its original form. The original purpose of the enclosed 'blind' caster was to hold powdered mustard, which was then mixed with vinegar on the plate. These 'blind' casters rarely survive as they were often pierced at a later date.
- 4.6 Each castor has the engraved crest and motto of Colville for Lord Colville of Culross and Ochiltree.
- 4.7 Made by Edinburgh Goldsmith Edward Penman. Edward Penman was a notable Goldsmith of his generation. He was born in 1679 and died in 1729. He was first mentioned in records of the Incorporation of Edinburgh Goldsmiths in 1700 and last mentioned 1729. Penman was the grandson of Edinburgh Goldsmith Edward Cleghorn (I) and was related to the Cleghorne, Yorstoun, Mitchell, Inglis, Tait and Lothian families of goldsmiths. Penman became a freeman of the Incorporation of Edinburgh Goldsmiths on 5 April 1700. In 1708, when his father became Master of the Mint, Edward Penman succeeded his father as assay-master to the Incorporation. Penman held this post until his death sometime between 13 September and 30 December 1729.
- 4.8 We have no other pieces by this maker in our collections.
- 4.9 Dated 1728 so as an early 18<sup>th</sup> century piece is from a period which is less widely represented in our silver collection.
- 4.10 The casters will be displayed within our silver galleries at the Museum of Edinburgh.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 If the Committee approves the purchase of the set of casters, it is intended that an application for grant aid will be submitted to the National Fund for Acquisitions and possibly to the Art Fund

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The original asking price was £9,000. The owner is offering a 10% museum discount making the final asking price £8,100.
- 6.2 Funds for this purchase will come from the Jean F Watson Bequest.
- 6.3 The cost will be incurred in the 2023/4 financial year.

## **7. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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- 7.1 Not applicable

## **8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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- 8.1 Not applicable

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 Not applicable

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 <https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/our-services/national-fund-for-acquisitions/>

## **11. Appendices**

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- 11.1 None