

QUAKERS AND THE WORLD OF OBJECTS: THE ACQUISITION AND MAINTENANCE OF DANIEL BOULTER'S EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MUSEUM IN GREAT YARMOUTH

On 8 August 1778 Daniel Boulter, a Quaker shopkeeper living in Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, opened his Museum, an event that was recorded in the *Norfolk Chronicle*.¹ With a touch of understandable pride he confided, in his brief autobiography, that he had been collecting for about ten years but that many thought it to have been 'a work of much longer time'. 'Objects', as Neil Macgregor's radio series 'A history of the world in 100 objects' demonstrates, is a useful word to describe the contents of a museum, encompassing as it may both examples drawn from the natural world and those that have been hand-made. The contents of a museum are acquired, whether by gift or purchase, so the title of this address arose partly from a recollection of the title of the studies of eighteenth-century consumerism edited by John Brewer and Roy Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods*.² Elsewhere I have explored briefly how Daniel Boulter may have managed to combine his enthusiasm for collecting with his Quaker beliefs.³ In order to present a rounded study this article has to cover some of the same ground (and include some of the same quotations) but I welcome the opportunity here to extend my research by investigating the influences that may have encouraged Daniel Boulter, who began life as an unschooled Norfolk boy, to form his collection and eventually to describe himself as a 'Dealer in Curious Books Antiquities and Natural Productions'.⁴ By the time that a catalogue was published in 1794 the Museum covered the range of material that the eighteenth century understood by the descriptions 'natural history' and 'natural curiosities'. These terms included not only botanical, zoological and geological exhibits, but also artefacts made by men and women, for example items brought back from Captain Cook's voyages to the South Seas.⁵

Daniel Boulter (1740-1802) was born at Worstead, in northeast Norfolk, on 23.xi. [January] 1740/41, the eldest surviving son of Rachel (born Dekker) and Daniel Boulter, members of Lammas Monthly Meeting, which at that time consisted of two particular meetings, one in the village of Lammas, the other on the outskirts of the small market town of North Walsham, to which the Meeting

in the port town of Yarmouth would be added by transference from Norwich Monthly Meeting in 1763. Daniel's father was a butcher. Although, by the time his brother Joseph was of school age the family was able, with the help of the Monthly Meeting, to provide a school education for him, Daniel had no such opportunity. In the short autobiography that he wrote towards the end of his life Daniel stated that his mother, who came to live with him after her husband died, was:

very examperly & often praid to the Lord for the preservation of us all her children, & when through devin assistance would often advise us to be deligent in the atending of meetings for worship & discipline, which she was in the practice of when health permitted.⁶

Reading was a skill that was generally acquired separately from writing in the eighteenth century, and Boulter mentioned that it was his mother who taught him to read.⁷ In their study of women in early modern England Sarah Mendelson and Patricia Crawford have concluded that 'Godly mothers found it convenient to teach piety and reading... simultaneously' and that such instruction might begin very early in a child's life.⁸ There was at this time no catechism specifically aimed at the needs of young Quaker children - Abiah Darby's *Useful Instruction for Children, by Way of Question and Answer*, written in the 1750s for her own children, was published in 1763⁹ - but once Daniel had progressed beyond the early stages of letter and word recognition Rachel Boulter would probably have used biblical passages as the basis of instruction.

Boulter's own account of his Quaker childhood moves straight from his reference to learning to read on to his first employment, when he and his brother acted as draw-tiers (tying up the loose ends) for the local weavers in Worstead. It is only possible, therefore, to indicate some of the influences to which he may have been exposed. However few the printed works his family owned, as he grew older Daniel would have had opportunities to learn about the lives and writings of early Friends, either from printed sources or by oral transmission. Monthly meetings were being encouraged to build up collections of books and pamphlets that could be circulated among members and there is evidence that by the time Daniel was thirteen years old Lammas Monthly Meeting, of which the Boulters were members, had copies of standard Quaker works, for example George Fox's *Journal* and *Gospel Truth Demonstrated* (often known as his 'Doctrinals'), Robert Barclay's *Apology*, and volume one of Joseph Besse's first collection of accounts of the sufferings of early

Friends, the *Abstract of Sufferings*.¹⁰

A popular genre among those who had neither time nor inclination to read such substantial works, and one that interwove printed and oral tradition, consisted of collections relating the good lives and dying sayings of earlier Friends. By 1721 John Field's collection, under the title *Piety Promoted*, contained an account of the last days of Richard Ransome from Lammas Monthly Meeting, who had joined Quakers in about 1676 and who died in Bristol in 1716 while on a religious visit to Friends in the western counties.¹¹ Vivid accounts of Ransome's imprisonments for refusal to pay tithes or to swear oaths were written into the sufferings book of his home Monthly Meeting¹² and his grandchildren were prominent among its members, some of them being themselves Friends whose gifts in spoken ministry were recognised and who travelled as ministers, or 'public Friends'.

One cannot be certain to what extent young children would have encountered travelling ministers who came to Norfolk unless the visitors were lodging with their families, but some accounts probably spread orally. In 1748, for example, John Griffith (1713-1776), whose home was then in America, was on a visit to Friends in Britain and included Lammas and North Walsham in his itinerary. During the voyage, the vessel in which he was a passenger was captured by a French privateer, and he was held for some months before eventually being released.¹³ For modern historians the account that he wrote for his *Journal*, published after his death, raises issues relating to the author's perception of Catholic religious practice. For adult Quakers of his own time it revealed an instance of divine providence upholding the minister, and for young children it might, additionally, be a tale of adventure with a good outcome.

When he stopped working for the weavers Daniel Boulter lived for a while with his uncle, John Sparshall, who at that time was a farmer in Southrepps, northeast of Worstead.¹⁴ This can be shown to be a very significant family link. Firstly, John Sparshall was also uncle to the Quaker sailor Isaac Seeker (1716-1795), who had himself grown up within Lammas Monthly Meeting and who, in the early 1750s, was nearing the end of his years as a sailor, an occupation that had taken him to the Arabian Peninsula and the South Seas. After he retired from sailing in 1755, Seeker would marry and settle in Holt, a market town in north Norfolk, as a grocer, and write an account of his travels. Around 1800 a copy of this account was made for Daniel Boulter.¹⁵ Secondly, around 1755, Daniel became apprentice to John Sparshall's son Joseph (1723-1810), a grocer and tallow chandler in Yarmouth, for seven years. At some stage Joseph inherited a silver

pipe that, according to his son Edmund, had been given to his father by William Penn.¹⁶ When Joseph Sparshall died in Beccles, a town in Suffolk a few miles south of Yarmouth, in 1810, Edmund contributed a brief account of his life to the *Monthly Magazine* in which he stated, in a passage that is worth quoting at length, that his father had been:

an instance of what may be effected by the powers of a natural bent of the mind unassisted by the advantages of a liberal education. Of natural history in all its branches he was passionately fond; but Botany, Chemistry & Electricity, were his favourite studies. He wrote some essays on Philosophical subjects, one of which, giving an account of a remarkable Aurora Borealis, appeared in a volume of the *Philosophical Transactions*, and procured him the offer of becoming a member of the Royal Society, an honour he had the modesty to refuse.¹⁷

Further investigation has revealed that in 1750 Joseph Sparshall, who was then living within the compass of Wells Monthly Meeting in north Norfolk, sent his description of the Aurora Borealis to the Norwich naturalist William Arderon (1702/3-1767), and that it was Arderon, who forwarded the account to the Royal Society. In communicating with Arderon Sparshall was associating himself with a man who was acknowledged in his own time as one who was a diligent recorder of observations that were of interest to naturalists and antiquarians. The Society at that time was keen to extend membership widely, and Arderon had been elected in 1745.¹⁸ Edmund Sparshall ended his tribute to his father by commending his character: 'as a Christian he perhaps cannot be better designated, than in the words of our inimitable Poet, for "He look'd through Nature up to Nature's God".¹⁹ We shall return to Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* later in this paper.

The years following Boulter's apprenticeship were spent in a variety of short-lasting employments. In 1763 his Essex employer recommended him to a London firm of tallow chandlers in Aldersgate Street. There turned out to be no vacancy there, and Boulter, not being a City freeman, found it impossible to gain employment. He stayed in London for only about two weeks, to 'see a little of London'. This may, however, have been long enough to acquaint him with the location of the nearby Gracechurch Street Meeting in White Hart Court, where also the keen botanical collector Dr John Fothergill had his London home until 1767.²⁰ Back in Great Yarmouth Boulter stayed with 'either Joseph Sparshall or Edward Fuller, and

it was his 'good Friend' Edward Fuller who, in April 1764, told him of a trading opportunity to acquire the stock and fixtures of the late Jacob Master, situated on the Quay.²¹ The main focus of my study is on the cultural and religious rather than the economic aspects of Daniel Boulter's life as a museum-keeper, but it is instructive to examine briefly the little that is known about the financial aspects of his endeavour.

Jacob Master's business was acquired on an eleven-year lease at £14 per annum, and the stock was valued at £231. No accounts kept by Daniel Boulter have survived but it is possible that Edward Fuller provided some of the capital. Fuller, who was a grocer in the town, became known as someone who might be willing and able to lend money. When, in 1771, the doctor Syllas Neville was short of money he approached a Mr Wall who, being unable to help, 'mentioned Fuller, a Quaker and great friend of [Thomas] Deverson, who (he said he was certain) would let him have the money, but Deverson declined asking him'.²²

In 1777 Boulter sold his shop and stock on the Quay to his brother Joseph for an undisclosed sum, and bought a shop and premises in the Market Place for £884 together with stock valued at £279.9s.6d., - a total of around £73,124.40 in today's terms - and spent a 'considerable sum' refurbishing it. It was here that he opened the Museum, at a time when Yarmouth, as well as being an important port, was becoming a fashionable resort.²³ Not surprisingly he had to borrow to meet these outgoings, although his business was on the increase. Also in that year an 'unkind' Quaker whom he did not name called in a loan of £200 on bond, and Boulter was obliged to take a large parcel of his best books and expensive prints to London, where he was reduced to selling them in an (untraced) auction. Further difficulty came in 1783, when his bank, Mason and Woods of Yarmouth, failed, and he lost £43.15.0d. It does not appear that he transferred his account to the Yarmouth branch of Gurney's bank.²⁴ There is no mention in the autobiography of any specific difficulty in 1787, or of the advertisement that he placed in the issue of the *General Evening Post* for 13-15 September in which he offered his house, shop and Museum for sale, stating that he wished 'to retire from business'.²⁵ Perhaps, had he received a suitable offer he would indeed have realised all his assets for not only had he lost money from the failure of Mason's bank, but he had been contributing to the cost of his nephews' and niece's education over several years. Yet it seems unlikely that he did indeed expect to achieve a sale, for on 29 of September 1787 he took his nephew John as apprentice. Admittedly he received a £30 premium, but this was a seven-

year commitment. In 1794 he did resign his business, including the Museum, to his brother Joseph on behalf of Joseph's son John Boulter, at a cost of £1200 for the premises.²⁶

Daniel Boulter had personal as well as business difficulties. Having married in 1764 he was disowned in the same year when he acknowledged that he was the father of an illegitimate child, but his application for reinstatement was accepted in 1768, when Edward Fuller was one of the appointed visitors; he also suffered from ill health around this time.²⁷ Nevertheless, over the next ten years he built up his shop-keeping business. An advertisement that he used some years after the opening of the Museum stated that he sold goods 'in the newest taste... in the Jewellery, Cutlery and Toy Line;' as well as books, stationery, haberdashery and other goods.²⁸ The Revd James Woodforde of Weston Longville, who visited the shop on 4 June 1778, shortly before the opening of the Museum, recorded:

After breakfast we took a walk about Yarmouth, called at Boulter's shop in the Market Place and there I bought a fine doll for Jenny's little Maid. pd. for it 0. 5. 0 ... Boulter is a very civil Man and a Quaker. He is also an Antiquarian and has a good many Curiosities as well as Medals. He shewed me a complete set of Copper Coins of the 12 Caesars. He offered to sell them to me for 10 guineas, but I could not spare the money.²⁹

It was not only in London, where, for example, the British Museum, founded in 1753, had opened to the public in 1759, and to which Sir Ashton Lever transferred his extensive collections from just outside Manchester in 1775, that museums flourished in the eighteenth century.³⁰ One that owed its origins to collective sociability in the pursuit of learning was that founded by the members of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society, who had recorded in September 1727 that:

the presses being all filled up with locks and shelves and the instruments disposed therein according to their proper classes... the secretary requested... that the members would bethink themselves of what they had to contribute towards filling them with usefull instruments or curiosities in art or nature and promised to bestow upon the museum some specimens of each kind out of his collections.³¹

At the time when Daniel Boulter was gathering his collection a renowned private museum, housed in her homes in London and Buckinghamshire, was that of Margaret Cavendish Bentinck, Duchess of Portland. So extensive was this that when it was dispersed after

her death in 1785 the sale ran from 24 April 1786 'and the thirty-seven following days'.³² Another example is Richard Greene's museum in Lichfield, which was open to visitors by 1774, when Dr Johnson visited it.³³ That there were others similar to Boulter's is apparent from Peter Brears's description of two that opened in 1784, one in Keswick, where Peter Crosthwaite sold minerals and fossils in his museum, and one in Hawkshead, which also existed in the 1780s and was housed in the back of a shop.³⁴ Boulter, who described buying 'a collection of curious spars & ores with some polished Derbyshire ornaments' in 1781, may well have known of several such establishments.³⁵

In his account of the Museum the ornithologist Thomas Southwell counted 66 sections and 5,079 lots described in the 165 pages of the *Catalogue*.³⁶ These included collections of mammals, birds, fish, shells, minerals, Roman antiquities, crucifixes, mathematical instruments, coins, medals, dress (from North America), a collection 'from the new discovered Islands in the South Seas by Capt. Cook & others' and books, paintings and engravings. Unfortunately Boulter did not describe how he built up this substantial collection: perhaps, under the influence of Joseph Sparshall, he began by noticing interesting specimens, for example carnelians, found on Yarmouth beach.³⁷ Boulter had a keen eye for business opportunities and the presence in Yarmouth of collectors such as Thomas Deverson, who had a collection of 'shells, fossils, petrifications, and other curiosities', Syllas Neville, who in 1771 confided in his diary that he had

Bought more fine agates and fossils than I shall find it easy to pay for I wish I had more money or that such temptations would not fall in my way.

and John Barber, who had a cabinet of 'Greek, Roman, British, Saxon, English, Scotch, Irish and Foreign Coins and Medals' that was sold in 1786 after his death, may have provided additional motivation.³⁸ Andrew Moore, who has studied the Dutch and Flemish paintings in Boulter's collection, has referred to 'pictures' as among the stock that Boulter acquired from the stock of Jacob Masters. Although I dispute this reading of the passage in Boulter's autobiography, I owe much to Moore's investigation, which stimulated my interest in exploring the contents of the Museum and, importantly, has drawn attention to the significant role played by travelling dealers, notably in the period following the French Revolution when aristocratic collections of paintings were broken up and there was an 'influx of old masters from the continent'.³⁹ It may be that many of Boulter's paintings were a comparatively late acquisition.

In 2003 the British Museum published a collection of papers under the title *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by R. G. W. Anderson, M. L. Caygill, A. G. MacGregor and L. Syson that provides a scholarly and accessible overview of museums in Britain from the late seventeenth down to the end of the eighteenth centuries. In his contribution to this work, in which he has surveyed natural history in eighteenth-century British museums, Hugh Torrens also has referred to the part played by dealers, among them George Humphrey or Humphreys (1739-1826). Humphrey, who inherited his collection, principally of shells and minerals, from his father, had extensive connections with dealers within and beyond his family.⁴⁰ When Humphrey went bankrupt his collections were sold in 1779, and listed in a sale catalogue in which they were collectively given the title *Museum Humfredianum*, although it seems that, unlike Boulter, Humphrey did not admit visitors only to view.⁴¹ Among the dealers was Daniel Boulter, who listed George Humphrey of London among the donors to the Museum Boulterianum.⁴² It is rare for marked copies of sale catalogues, giving names of purchasers as well as prices, to have survived. Fortunately a copy of the *Museum Humfredianum* that has been so marked, and of which the Natural History Museum has a copy, is held by the University of Oslo. Daniel Boulter is not named - if he was present, he must have been an unnamed cash buyer - but someone identified as 'Roper', who bought extensively, chiefly shells and petrefactions, was named. Michael Cooper's *Robbing the Sparry Garniture* (cited in endnote 5) has greatly extended knowledge of dealerships, with particular reference to their dealing in minerals, through the years between 1750 and 1850. In the biographical section he devoted several pages to Boulter. He also mentions that George Humphrey catalogued John Fothergill's collection of shells, and refers to at least three Quaker collectors of minerals in Cornwall, Robert Were Fox (1754-1818) of Falmouth, and Silvanus James (fl. 1803) and William Jenkin, both of Redruth.⁴³

The sale of the Duchess of Portland's Museum in 1786, already mentioned, was considered of such interest to gentlemen and dealers that a marked copy with prices and the surnames of non-cash buyers was published and has survived in several copies.⁴⁴ Cambridge University Library has a copy that has been further annotated. The name of a [Mr] Boulter occurs on several days, and he was buying cautiously, chiefly from the collections of shells, in a way that would be consistent with a dealer hoping to attract small-scale purchasers who had caught the craze for shells as objects of display as well as those with a more learned, or 'curious' interest, but who (as we

have seen) may have been running short of money. Also present, on more occasions than Boulter, was a Mr Roper, who also was buying shells. Interestingly, in this copy the name 'Barker' has been changed in manuscript to 'Barclay'. It is impossible to determine whether the alteration was made by someone who had been present - in which case it would be tempting to suggest that the 'Barclay' may have been David Barclay of Youngsbury (1729-1809), and, even more speculatively, that the 'Roper' may have been John Roper of Norwich, who, according to James Jenkins, 'travelled for orders as a silk merchant for the firm Roper, Toll & co.' - a firm that had a notorious disagreement between the partners - and who would have had the opportunity to be in London.⁴⁵ The identification of Boulter as Daniel Boulter, a conclusion that Michael Cooper also drew, is rather more secure, partly because Boulter specifically identified himself as a dealer, and partly because his collection included a framed engraving of the title page of the sale catalogue.⁴⁶

In what was common practice, Boulter used various methods to promote the museum. One method was to use as a bookplate an adaptation of the title page of the Portland catalogue, showing the famous vase imprinted with Boulter's initials under which was displayed the description already mentioned; 'Dealer in curious books, antiquities and natural productions'.⁴⁷ Admission to the Museum was by ticket, priced at one shilling each person, the same fee that was charged for entrance to Peter Crosthwaite's Museum in Keswick in 1784. It was almost identical with that used by Sir Ashton Lever as a combined admission and lottery ticket when he was endeavouring to sell his collection in 1786 and showed a proprietor in cap and gown sitting among his exhibits and welcoming genteel visitors.⁴⁸ An advertising token, portraying the figures of Britannia and Europa, was issued by Joseph, Daniel and John Boulter in 1796.⁴⁹

A note stuck into one of the Cambridge copies of the *Catalogue* refers to the existence of a visitors' book. Unfortunately this has not survived, but a list of 59 donors, printed at the end of the *Catalogue*, gives some indication of the support Boulter received.⁵⁰ The listing of a donor does not necessarily imply direct personal contact but does reveal the network to which Boulter had access. The dealer George Humphrey, who gave the zoophyte known as a 'warted gorgon', has already been mentioned.⁵¹ Of the remaining donors at least eleven were Norfolk Quakers, and five (not all of whom were Quakers) were members of the Boulter family. Seventeen donors, including Daniel's apprentice, were of Yarmouth. At least one, Lilly Wigg of Yarmouth, who had worked in the local branch of the Gurneys' bank, was, like Boulter, self-taught.⁵² In addition

to Yarmouth neighbours of varying ranks there were London gentlemen, including Sir Ashton Lever.

Many of the donors were mentioned in the text of the *Catalogue*. 'Ashley' Cooper, who gave a skull with teeth, was identified by Thomas Southwell as Astley Cooper, the London surgeon.⁵³ Gifts from M. Branthwayt, a gentleman who lived just outside Norwich, included a pocket watch and a white satin purse embroidered with pearls. William Darton, the London Quaker, gave four items relating to slavery and the slave trade. Here Boulter demonstrated his agreement with the increasing opposition to this trade expressed by Friends by listing an 'iron mask' and printing the description 'which the head is locked up in at the pleasure of their cruel Oppressors'.⁵⁴ Captain Cook was the main source of the items from the South Seas, which Boulter apparently acquired by purchase, perhaps from members of the crew.⁵⁵ Joseph Sparshall donated a 'Norfolk plover or thick-knee'd bustard' and Edmund Sparshall gave items from Botany Bay. There were also examples of craftwork, such as the parrot cut in paper that was donated by H. Maria Sparshall.⁵⁶

The Museum continued to exist for about ten years after Daniel Boulter sold it to his nephew. Some of the portraits were sold at the end of 1803, in a joint sale with portraits from Samuel Tyssen's collection, and a further sale was advertised in 1804, but some items remained in the family.⁵⁷ After long years of war, and without Daniel Boulter's presence in the background to support its continued existence, it is perhaps not surprising if the number of visitors diminished and the Museum became unviable.

Thus far this study has focused on the connections and processes that enabled Daniel Boulter to acquire the exhibits in his Museum Boulterianum, and to maintain the collection. Now I need to return to the quotation from Pope's *Essay on Man* that Edmund Sparshall included in his tribute to his father, Joseph: 'He look'd through Nature up to Nature's God'. It was a sentiment that resonated with the sociably learned throughout the century. In the midst of the descriptions of natural curiosities and shells, Boulter's *Catalogue* included two inscriptions that provide evidence of the widely held belief that the divine hand was manifest in the works of nature:

In the Middle Room are the following Inscriptions, intended to remind the Spectator of the wonderful variety, beauty and oeconomy of Nature's Works, and of the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of their great Creator.⁵⁸

Two quotations followed. One, in Latin and printed without translation, was from Psalm 104: *Quam ampla sunt opera tua, O Jehova:*

Oh Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.⁵⁹

The second, from Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*, emphasized rational observation:

Go, from the Creatures thy instructions take:
Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
Learn from the beasts the physic of the field;
Thy arts of building from the bee receive;
Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave;
Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.⁶⁰

The intention was in accord with Quaker opinion as well as that of the wider society: William Penn, for example, advocated teaching children about the natural world and wrote that the world was 'wearing the Marks' of its Maker.⁶¹ It was also a shrewd juxtaposition that drew attention to the religious as well as the intellectual value of the exhibits.

In his introduction to *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War, and the Arts in the British World, 1750-1850*, Holger Hock has written that 'As Britain expanded its global empire, Britons also built empires in their cultural imagination'.⁶² As a Quaker in good standing with his Monthly Meeting, who endured distraint of the stock from his shop for non-payment of church rates, and probably only avoided similar exactions to support the navy during the French revolutionary war on account of his age, and the injury he had sustained in a coaching accident, Daniel Boulter would have disclaimed militaristic empire. How far his late-eighteenth-century viewers would have been thinking in terms of empire as rule, as distinct from expanding trade and the advantages of their own culture is a complex and debateable issue. In bringing together artefacts and natural objects from distant places, especially the newly-discovered areas of the South Seas, listing, and possibly keeping in stock, some of the learned works in which they were described, for example 'Parkinson's Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas, 4to. London: 1773' - the edition edited by Sydney Parkinson's brother - he was most certainly providing them with the opportunity to expand their understandings.⁶³

An eighteenth-century gentleman who was a keen collector of natural history would count paintings among that category and would also inherit or build up a library. There is no direct evidence of provenance for Daniel Boulter's books and paintings but Andrew

Moore, as we have seen, has drawn attention to the travelling dealers from whom he may have acquired at least some of them. At the end of the seventeenth century Friends were debating the morality of trading in fine goods: Henry Lombe of Norwich, for example, felt called upon to testify against taking part in making 'Figured and Gaudy Stuffs, whose end and Service was chiefly to satisfie the Vain and Proud Minds of Men and Women, that live in disobedience to God', although he lived in a city that was at the centre of such trade. There were too authors such as John Kelsall junior (1683-1743) who gave copious advice on personal conduct to Friends who were living in the midst of a popular culture of dancing, fiddle-playing and, at least in their eyes, extravagant styles of dress.⁶⁴ As will be shown below. Boulter did wear Quaker dress, but no evidence has survived to indicate that he had any hesitations about promoting the contents of his shop and Museum, and for the latter hesitations could be overcome by the use of the quotations he displayed. Accounts of travels and voyages are listed among his books, but, unlike the 'plays and romances', against the reading of which London Yearly Meeting cautioned in 1764, such works were, or, at least, could be assumed to be, factual accounts.⁶⁵ The threat of financial loss, even bankruptcy, on the other hand, would have had a more immediate impact upon Boulter and his family and had the potential to disrupt his relationship with Friends as well as his good standing.

Nevertheless there is one category, namely Boulter's collection of paintings, which calls for further comment within the Quaker context, although it is not possible here to give it the extended treatment that it deserves. In her study of Quakerism and visual culture Marcia Pointon has cited the practice of Dr John Fothergill as clearly illustrating 'the distinction between portraits as art and portraits as information, and between portraits of others and portraits of oneself', citing R. Hingston Fox's mention of Fothergill's possession of views as well as portraits. The Quaker John Scott of Amwell, wrote an 'Essay on Painting' in the form of a poem that had as a source Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses*. Scott did not, as far as is known, visit Daniel Boulter's Museum, but he did pore over engravings and visited many exhibitions. In addition Clare Haynes has recently published a perceptive study of the seeming contradiction apparent in the fact that English Protestants highly esteemed Catholic art. The Museum Boulterianum contained Catholic objects and paintings, catalogued without comment.⁶⁶ I raise the question whether Scott's poem, and perhaps (if researchers are very fortunate) correspondence between John and his brother Samuel, who was a minister, might shed light on how Friends viewed these items.

There is a sense in which Daniel Boulter, in his Quaker dress, was also on display. Whether he gave permission for the portrait of him, painted by James Butcher, the artist who painted a series of scenes of Yarmouth and who died in 1803, or whether it was painted from an engraving after Boulter's death in 1802 is unclear.⁶⁷ Neither version has survived, but the painting has been described by F. Duleep Singh. It showed him half-length, seated turned to the left, and wearing a 'snuff-coloured plain coat [no collar]'. He held a roll of paper, and there were books on shelves behind him, and on the table on which his hand rested.⁶⁸ For Boulter himself acting as a dealer and museum-keeper enabled him to engage in a learned and sociable activity that permitted him to have thousands of objects on display or in specially designed cabinets, without laying himself open to a charge of over-indulgence or arrogance. It has been suggested that he was a 'magpie' collector, a description that suggests that he picked up objects here and there as they caught his fancy.⁶⁹ This article has explored some of the early influences in his life that may have encouraged a more sustained interest in the natural world and motivated him to build up a collection that, on a scale suitable to a provincial town rather than a capital city, eventually covered the wide range of exhibits that that term implied. This was not only a source of income, albeit a precarious one, for a dealer it was, as Daniel Boulter wrote when thanking the donors, his 'favourite pursuit'.⁷⁰

Sylvia Stevens

Presidential Address given at Britain Yearly Meeting on 30 May 2010

ENDNOTES

1. Norfolk Record Office - hereafter NRO - MS 4415, p. 524; *Norfolk Chronicle*, 8th August 1778. Manuscripts and archives in NRO are quoted with permission of the Record Office and of Norfolk and Waveney Area Meeting of the Society of Friends.
2. Neil Macgregor, BBC Radio 4, 2010; John. Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1993).
3. In my study of Quakers in society in north-east Norfolk, 1690-1800, forthcoming from The Edwin Mellen Press. I am grateful to the Press for agreeing to some overlap of subject matter.
4. The description is taken from Boulter's bookplate, reproduced in Thomas Southwell, 'Notes on an Eighteenth Century Museum at Great Yarmouth "Museum Boulterianum" and on the Development of the Modern Museum', *The Museums Journal*, 8 (1908), p. 113.
5. *Museum Boulterianum. A Catalogue of the Curious and Valuable*

Collection of Natural and Artificial Curiosities in the Extensive Museum of Daniel Boulter of Yarmouth (London: To be had of Henry Gardner, No. 200, Strand; B. & J. White, Fleet Street; Darton & Harvey, No. 55 Gracechurch Street and Norwich: Yarrington and Bacon and R. Beatniffe, n.d.), cited hereafter as *Catalogue*. There is no date, but copy 7460.d.54 in Cambridge University Library has the manuscript note 'J. Haig 16 May 1794'. I am grateful to Hugh Torrens for drawing my attention to the advertisement in the *General Evening Post*, July 25-29 1794, which refers to publication 'this day', price one shilling, and to Michael P. Cooper's study: *Robbing the Sparry Garniture: a 200 Year History of British Mineral Dealers 1750-1950* (Tucson, Arizona: Mineralogical Record Inc., 2006). Cooper noted that the copy described by C. D. Sherborn in his article 'Museum Boulterianum' in *Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society* 12 (1924), 667-9, has a pencil date 1793 and is now in the Natural History Museum, London.

6. Quotation from NRO, MS 4415. The autobiography survives in a copy authenticated by 'D. T', the Yarmouth banker and antiquary Dawson Turner. For Joseph's education see NRO, SF 191, Lammas Monthly Meeting minutes, 21.3.1759, which recorded 5s 3d given for a quarter's schooling.
7. NRO, MS 4415, p. 519.
8. Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England 1550- 1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 90.
9. Abiah Darby, *Useful Instruction for Children, by Way of Question and Answer* (London: Luke Hinde, 1763).
10. Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity as the Same is Held Forth and Preached by the People Called, in Scorn, Quakers Being a Full Explanation and Vindication of their Principles and Doctrines*, 4th edn in English, (London: T. Sowle, 1701); Joseph Besse, *An Abstract of the Sufferings of the People Called Quakers*, vol. 1, [1650-1660] (London, Assigns of J. Sowle, 1733); George Fox, *Gospel-Truth Demonstrated, in a Collection of Doctrinal Books, Given forth by that Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ, George Fox: Containing Principles, Essential to Christianity and Salvation, Held among the People Called Quakers* (London: T. Sowle, 1706); *A Journal or Historical Account of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, Christian Experiences and Labour of Love in the Work of the Ministry of...George Fox* (London: Thomas Northcott, 1694).
11. John Field, comp. *Piety Promoted. The Fifth part: Being a Collection of the Dying Sayings of Many of the People Called Quakers* (Dublin: Sam. Fairbrother, 1721)
12. NRO, SF 194/1, Lammas Monthly Meeting book of sufferings, for example 31.8 [October] 1696
13. John Griffith, *A Journal of the Life, Travels and Labours in the Work of*

- the Ministry of John Griffith* (London: James Phillips, 1779), pp. 72-99.
14. NRO MS 4415, p. 519. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate the exact link between the Boulter and Sparshall families.
 15. NRO, YD 41/105 (original) and NRO, Rye MS 71 (copy). The copy may have been completed after Daniel's death, when it came into the possession of his niece Rachel Boulter.
 16. *Catalogue of the Select and Valuable Library, Paintings, Engravings, Coins, Medals, Curiosities, Plates, China &c which will be sold by Auction by William Wilde* (Norwich: Josiah Fletcher) [1848].
 17. NRO, MS 4415, pp. 531, copied by Edmund Sparshall, and enclosed with a letter to Dawson Turner dated Norwich, Pottergate Street, 13th April 1841, from the letter Sparshall had sent to the editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, September 1810.
 18. For William Arderon see the entry by Giles Hudson in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), vol. 2, p. 369. Sparshall's description is in The Royal Society of London, *Philosophical Transactions*, vol. 46 (1750), 502-505 [Johnson and Kraus reprint, 1963]. Arderon's own contributions to the *Philosophical Transactions* included accounts of the condition of the Roman camp at Caistor in Norfolk, and of a halo he had observed, which appeared together in vol. 46 (1749), 196-203. Papers relating to potential members who declined to join were not retained by the Society in the mid-eighteenth century.
 19. Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, ed. M. Mack (The Twickenham edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt, vol. 4) [1950] (London: Methuen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 331.
 20. NRO, MS 4415, p. 520; William Beck and T. Frederick Ball, *The London Friends' Meetings* [1869] facsimile reprint with a new introduction by Simon Dixon and Peter Daniels (London: Pronoun Press, 2009), p. 146; this was Fothergill's home until 1767: John Fothergill, *Chain of Friendship: Selected Letters of Dr. John Fothergill of London, 1735-1780*, ed. Betsy C. Corner and Christopher C. Booth (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press, 1971), pp. xxiii, 7.
 21. NRO, SF 191, Lammas Monthly Meeting minutes 12.1.1763, list of members of Yarmouth Meeting at the time of its transfer to Lammas; MS 4415, p. 520.
 22. Syllas Neville, *The Diary of Syllas Neville 1767-1788*, ed. Basil Cozens-Hardy (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1950), p. 96. There were other Quaker Fullers in Yarmouth in 1771 but Edward, whose occupation is given in his will, NRO, 1779 NCC, will register, Colls, 210, is the one whose age and standing fits Neville's description.
 23. NRO, MS 4415, p. 523. The sum of £73,124.40 is taken from the National Archives website www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, through

- the links 'site help, A-Z, currency converter, 1780', accessed on 8.2.2011.
24. The surviving records of Gurney's Bank are in the custody of Barclays Archive Services, Wythenshawe. I found no record of Boulter, but it is several years since I visited the Archive and further material may have become available.
 25. *General Evening Post* (London) 13-15 September 1787. I thank Hugh Torrens for this reference.
 26. NRO, MS 4415, pp. 525-7.
 27. NRO, MS 4415, p. 520 and SF 201, 25.6.1764, report of marriage to Margaret Sutton; 8.10, 12.11 and 10.12.1764 disownment; SF 201, 8.2. and 9.5.1768 reinstatement; MS 4415, p. 521.
 28. *Catalogue*, advertisement in copy CUL 7340.c. 18.
 29. James Woodforde, *The Diary of a Country Parson: the Reverend James Woodforde, 1758-1781*, ed. J. Beresford (London: Humphrey Milford, 1926), p. 226. For Boulter's description of his business as 'respected in the neighbourhood for our sivelity [civility] and strict attention to business' see NRO, MS 4415, p. 522.
 30. R. G. W. Anderson, introduction to R. G. W. Anderson, M. L. Caygill, A. G. MacGregor and L. Syson (eds). *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century* (London: British Museum Press, 2003), p. 2, and C. Haynes, 'A "Natural" Exhibitioner: Sir Ashton Lever and His Holophusikon', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 24 (1) (2001), pp. 135, 137.
 31. Dorothy M. Owen (ed.). *The Minute Books of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society 1712-1755* (Lincoln Record Society 73, 1981), p. xii.
 32. Skinner and Co., *A Catalogue of the Portland Museum, lately the Property of the Duchess Dowager of Portland, Deceased, which Will Be Sold by Auction... at her late Dwelling House...in... Whitehall* [London: 1786].
 33. M. A. Hopkins, *Dr Johnson's Lichfield* (London: Peter Owen, 1956), pp. 225-6. I am grateful to Clare Haynes for this reference.
 34. Peter Brears, 'Commercial Museums of Eighteenth-Century Cumbria: the Crosthwaite, Hutton and Todhunter Collections,' *Journal of the History of Collections*, 4 (1) (1992), 107-26.
 35. NRO, MS 4415, p. 524.
 36. Southwell, 'Notes on an Eighteenth Century Museum', p. 114.
 37. *Catalogue*, p. 28.
 38. Charles J. Palmer, *The Perustration of Great Yarmouth*, 3 vols. (Great Yarmouth: George Nail, 1872-1875), vol. 1, 381 [Deverson]; Sylas Neville, *The Diary*, p. 116; *A Catalogue of the Genuine and Entire Cabinet of Greek, Roman, British, Saxon, English, Scotch, Irish and Foreign Coins and Medals... of the Late Mr John Barber, of Great Yarmouth, Deceased: which Will be Sold by Auction, by Mr Paterson... London... 25 July, 1786*. There is a marked copy in the British Museum, Department

- of Coins and Medals. Boulter is not named as a purchaser and although he may have been a cash buyer, and therefore unnamed, it is equally possible that Barber bought some of his specimens from Boulter.
39. Some of the paintings are included in a study by Andrew W. Moore, *Dutch and Flemish Painting in Norfolk*, Norfolk Museums Service (London: HMSO, 1988).
 40. Hugh S. Torrens, 'Natural History in Eighteenth-Century Museums in Britain', in R. G. W. Anderson, M. L. Caygill, A.G. MacGregor and L. Syson (eds), *Enlightening the British: Knowledge, Discovery and the Museum in the Eighteenth Century* (London: British Museum Press, 2003), pp. 81-89.
 41. *George Humphrey, Museum Humfredianum: a Catalogue of the Large and Valuable Museum of Mr George Humphrey... which will be sold by auction* (London: S. Paterson, 1779). Copy 3 in the Natural History Museum, London.
 42. *Catalogue*, p, 165.
 43. M. P. Cooper, *Robbing the Sparry Garniture*, pp. 19 [Fox], 77-79 [Boulter], 193 [Fothergill]. 198 [James], 199 [Jenkin].
 44. Skinner and Co., [Portland sale] Cambridge University Library, marked copy, with MS annotations.
 45. James Jenkins, *The Records and Recollections of James Jenkins*, ed. J. W. Frost, (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984), p. 289.
 46. *Catalogue*, p. 165.
 47. This and the admission ticket are reproduced in Southwell, 'Notes on an Eighteenth Century Museum...' pp. 112-13.
 48. I am grateful to Clare Haynes for drawing my attention to these similarities. Sir Ashton Lever's lottery ticket is in the Wellcome Library (Surrey Rotunda ephemera book 50274/D/3). Boulter's ticket differs only in its border. George Shaw produced a description of specimens from Lever's collection. *Museum Leverianum, Containing Select Specimens from the Museum of the Late Sir Ashton Lever Kt. with Descriptions in Latin and English* (London: J. Parkinson, 1792).
 49. The token is described in Southwell, p. 11, and illustrated, with a quotation from Southwell, by Cooper, p. 76.
 50. The note, apparently referring to a Dawson Turner sale, is pasted inside the front cover of the Cambridge University Library copy 7340:18.
 51. *Catalogue*, p. 22.
 52. Anne Secord, 'Nature's Treasures: Dawson Turner's Botanical Collections', in Nigel Goodman (ed.), *Dawson Turner: a Norfolk Antiquary and his Remarkable Family* (Chichester, West Sussex: Phillimore, 2007), p. 45.
 53. Southwell, p. 115. Sir Astley Paston Cooper (1768-1841) was born in Norfolk and spent part of his youth in Yarmouth.

54. *Catalogue*, pp. 59, 160 [Branthwayt], p. 56 [Darton].
55. Southwell, p. 116; *Catalogue*, pp. 76-81 [Cook].
56. *Catalogue*, p. 3 [Joseph Sparshall], p. 23 [Edmund Sparshall], p. 50 [H. Maria Sparshall].
57. Daniel Boulter, *A Catalogue of a...Collection of English and Foreign Portraits... from the Collection of Mr Daniel Boulter... and of Samuel Tyssen Esq [of Narborough in west Norfolk]... which Will Be Sold by Auction by Mr King... December 22, 1803* [London, 1803]. I am grateful to Hugh Torrens for drawing my attention to an advertisement in the *Ipswich Journal*, 1 September 1804, for an auction of the stock in trade. Museum and household furniture to be conducted by William Seaman on 16 September and following days, by order of the trustees. I have restricted my research to Boulter's lifetime, but it appears that, although, as Southwell records, some items indeed descended down the family, his statement (on p. 111) that the collection was not sold by auction needs modification.
58. *Catalogue*, p. 10. For a discussion of such arguments in relation to Quakers see Arthur Raistrick, *Quakers in Science and Industry* (Newton Abbot, Devon: David and Charles Holdings Ltd, 1968), chapter 8; Geoffrey Cantor, *Quakers, Jews, and Science: Religious Responses to Modernity and the Sciences in Britain, 1650-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), chapter 6.
59. Verses 24, 25.
60. Pope, *An Essay on Man*, ed. M. Mack, vol. 3, pp. 110-11.
61. William Penn, 'Some Fruits of Solitude' in *A Collection of the Works of William Penn in Two Volumes: to Which Is Prefixed a Journal of his Life* (London: Assigns of J. Sowle, 1726), vol. 1, pp. 820-21.
62. Holger Hooock, *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War, and the Arts in the British World, 1750-1850* (London: Profile Books, 2010), p. 3.
63. *Catalogue*, p. iv.
64. Henry Lombe, *An Exhortation Given forth at the Requirings of the Lord: in Tender Love to All that Have Been in Any Measure Turned unto Truth* (London: T. Sowle, 1694), p. 5. For Kelsall see Richard C. Allen, "'An Alarm Sounded to the Sinners in Sion": John Kelsall, Quakers and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Wales' in Joan Allen and Richard C. Allen (eds). *Faith of Our Fathers: Popular Culture and Belief in post-Reformation England, Ireland and Wales* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 52-74.
65. *Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in London*, 2nd edn (London: W. Phillips, 1802), pp. 11-12.
66. Marcia Pointon, 'Quakerism and Visual Culture: 1650 – 1800' in *Art History*, 20 (1) (1997), 397-431, p. 413, citing R. Hingston Fox, *Dr John Fothergill and His Friends* (London: Macmillan, 1919), pp. 216, 367; David Perman, *John Scott of Amwell: Dr Johnson 's Quaker Friend* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Rockingham Press, 2001), pp. 233-5; Clare

Haynes, *Pictures and Popery: Art and Religion in England. 1660-1760* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006). See also chapters in Emma Jones Lapsansky and Anne A. Verplanck (eds), *Quaker Aesthetics: Reflections on a Quaker Ethic in American Design and Consumption* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

67. I am grateful to Samantha Johns of Yarmouth Museum for information on the fate of the portrait and on James Butcher's paintings. In 1796 Butcher donated his painting of the Market Place to the Mayor and Corporation. The Boulter portrait may also have been a donation.
68. F. Duleep Singh, *Portraits in Norfolk Houses*, ed. E. Farrer. 2 vols (Norwich: Jarrold, 1927), vol. 2, p. 407. Singh's dating of the portrait to 1750-1760, and of a man aged 50, is questionable: Boulter was twenty years old in 1760, and 50 in 1790. The collarless coat indicates that Boulter was probably dressed in Quaker style. The portrait was destroyed in an air raid. There was an engraving, but no copy has so far been traced.
69. Andrew W. Moore, *Dutch and Flemish Painting*, p. 25.
70. *Catalogue*, unnumbered page after page 165.