



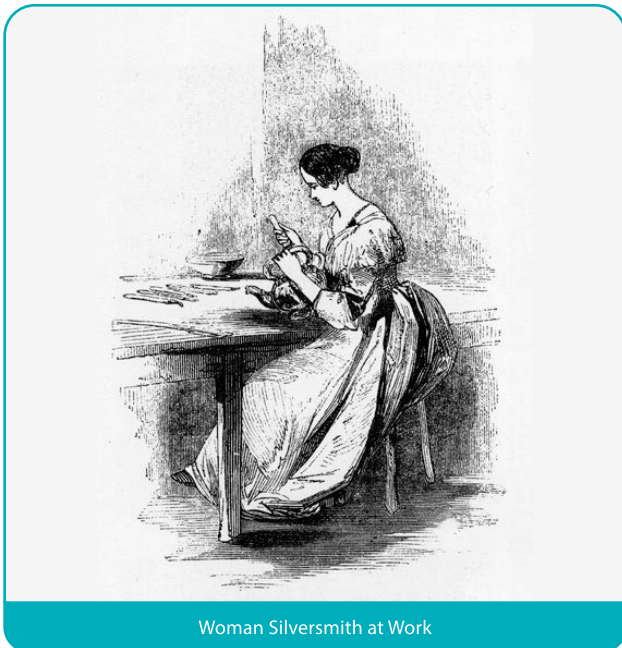
**DOERR DALLAS
VALUATIONS**



Jenny Knott
Silver & Jewellery Specialist

FEMALE SILVERSMITHS

Does this title sound a little niche? One would hope not in the 21st century, but what about the preceding generations? If you have the slightest interest in silver, it is likely that you will have heard of the prolific maker and great matriarch Hester Bateman. She certainly deserves the recognition. She led the Bateman firm during the second half of the 18th century, during which time the company flourished, innovated, and was eventually taken on by her sons, daughter in law and ultimately her grandson, when, in 1800 the mark of Peter, William and Ann Bateman was registered.



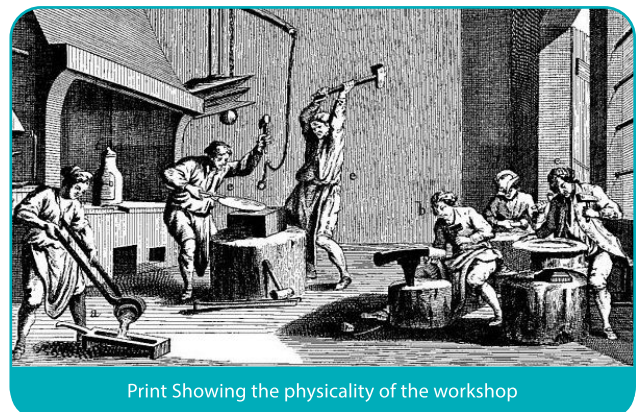
Woman Silversmith at Work

It is often assumed that female silversmiths, goldsmiths and other prominent female woman in trade and industry acceded to prominence by association with their husbands, or families. In the case of Hester Bateman this is true, she married a gold chain maker called John Bateman and it was his death which catapulted her into the running of the firm. However, there were many women working in

trades during the 18th century and earlier and not all of them were there by matrimonial or familial association. Although men dominated in commerce, and both the law and custom gave men precedence in most areas, there were successful woman who pursued business in their own right.

Women were occasionally apprenticed to learn a trade and although the majority of female silversmiths and goldsmiths would have learnt their trades through a family connection and without formal indentures, 14 woman silversmiths have been identified in the registry of London makers whose names appear to bear no connection to any male counterparts.

In her work 'Woman Silversmiths 1685-1845' Philippa Glanville writes of Welthian Goodyear, a Bristol spoon maker, Ellen Dare of Taunton and Elizabeth Haslewood of Norwich acting as 'autonomous agents' with their own workshops and selling their pieces locally. She goes on to say that this is known about as there are records of them being fined for sub-standard work by the Goldsmiths Company, taking apprentices and buying insurance for their shops, workshops, and stock.



Print Showing the physicality of the workshop

The work of silver smithing is physical. Silver is beaten out with heavy hammers; female silversmiths would have needed to be fit and strong to undertake the process. They would undoubtedly have had to do this themselves, especially if they hoped to enter their touch mark at the Goldsmiths' Hall.

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Elizabeth Godfrey's Business Card

Although women had far more obstacles to overcome to succeed, this sometimes gave them an edge. Hester Bateman's work is elegant and has been thought of as delicate, even feminine. This is not wholly justified, as those attributions might easily be ascribed to many of the neo-classical pieces produced at the end of the 18th century, including furniture and ceramics. Hester Bateman was, however, instrumental in producing the first machine for flattening or as it was then called 'flattening' silver. In contrast to the 'feminine' style of Hester Bateman, her near contemporary Elizabeth Godfrey championed a heavy Rococo style, influenced by her first husband, a French Huguenot. Elizabeth outlived two husbands and ran a successful business in Norris Street, where her prestigious clientele were served by beautifully mannered staff, who were courteous and bilingual, able to converse in both French and English. Her elaborate card shows that she was no shrinking violet, rather, an astute businesswoman.



Tea caddies by Elizabeth Godfrey

Rebecca Emes was the most commercially successful female silversmith of the 19th century. She, with partner Edward Barnard formed the formidable firm Emes and Barnard, which in turn became the Barnard Brothers whose pieces turn up in almost every silver auction in the country on a regular basis. Their skill was in producing high quality domestic silverware, a prerequisite in every household of substance in the 19th century.

Happily, today women silversmiths are not a rarity or an anomaly. A quick Google search on the topic reveals the following as the top two results.

- Women in Silver smithing at the V&A (an exhibition in 2018).
- Meet the 10 emerging jewellers and silversmiths who are set to shine at New Designers One Year In – (sponsored by The Goldsmiths Hall). This is particularly interesting as the category is not gender specific, it just happens that of the ten artists featured 9 are women.



Jocelyn Burton Wall Sconce

In selecting examples of contemporary female silversmiths, I am spoilt for choice. This is as it should be. Jocelyn Burton who died in 2020, was originally rejected from the Sir John Cass College in London when she applied for their silversmithing course in 1966, on the basis she was a woman. Instead, she enrolled on a jewellery course and studied silversmithing a night school. Such was her eventual success that she was commissioned to produce pieces for the Fishmonger's Hall, The Butcher's Company and Lichfield Cathedral.



Rauni Higson Candelabra for The Weavers Company

Rauni Higson is a particular favourite of mine. Her candelabra for the Weavers' Company and The Goldsmith's company rosewater dish show an affinity between nature and silver that is intrinsic to much of her work.

Today we should not need to differentiate male and female silversmiths, we should instead concentrate on the craft of the silversmith. It should be remembered however, that this owes much to the female forebears who forged their trade against the significant obstacles of the day.