



*1 – James Caulfield, 1st Earl of Charlemont, by John Dean  
(engraving after a painting, c.1783, by Richard Livesay) (courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)*

# Letters between friends: Lord Charlemont's library and other matters

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JANE MEREDITH

RECENTLY, A PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN LETTER FROM LORD CHARLEMONT SURFACED in a private collection. It was written by Charlemont (Plate 1) in London in January 1773 to his friend Andrew Caldwell in Dublin (Plate 2), and concerned his new library at Charlemont House which was at that stage nearing completion. As if that was not exciting enough, it then transpired that the letter from Caldwell to Charlemont dated 24 February 1773, which is among the Charlemont papers in the Royal Irish Academy, is in reply to this very letter.<sup>1</sup> Both letters are fully transcribed in the appendix to this article, and form its subject.

To those interested in eighteenth-century Dublin there is little doubt that the name Lord Charlemont (1728-99) will be familiar. He was without doubt the most cultured and sophisticated patron in Ireland in the second half of the eighteenth century. However, it is unlikely that that of Andrew Caldwell (1733-1808) will carry any comparable weight. Yet throughout his life Caldwell played an active part in Dublin affairs, and especially those of Charlemont himself.

## ANDREW CALDWELL AND LORD CHARLEMONT'S LIBRARY

Andrew Caldwell grew up in Dublin, studied at Glasgow University, went on to the Middle Temple in London, and was called to the Irish bar in 1760. At the time that this correspondence took place, Caldwell was still living with his family in Henry Street and practicing as a barrister. Three years later, on the death of his father Charles (1707-76), he inherited, as the eldest son, not only the family estate of Newgrange but also the appointment as agent for Lord Bessborough's estate in Ireland, and from then on could afford to spend more time pursuing his other interests.<sup>2</sup> In 1773 he was already a member of the Dublin Society, but much more was to come. He was to sit on the Paving Board from June 1774 to May 1784, be a Wide Streets Commissioner from December 1784 until his death, and MP for Knock-



2 – Andrew Caldwell by Robert Woodburn (fl.1792-1803)  
(courtesy National Gallery of Ireland)

topher from 1776 to 1782 and for Downpatrick from 1783 to 1790. He became known for his promotion of the fine arts in Dublin and for his knowledge and expertise in things architectural, and was reputed to have been the anonymous writer of the important 'Observations on architecture' published in *The Freeman's Journal* between December 1768 and February 1769 during the Royal Exchange competition. Although this is an extremely likely attribution, it cannot as yet be confirmed. In 1804, together with his great friend and cousin by marriage, Frederick Trench, and Sackville Hamilton, Under-Secretary in the civil department of the Chief Secretary's office, he was appointed an adjudicator in the important architectural competition for the adaptation of Parliament House to the purposes of the Bank of Ireland.

Although Caldwell was to share his friendship and his absorbing interest in books and literary matters with many well-known bibliophiles of the day, including Joseph Cooper Walker (1761-1810), Thomas Percy, Bishop of Dromore (1729-1811) and Edmund Malone (1741-1812), with his friend Charlemont he also shared his great love of architecture. Not having undertaken the Grand Tour,<sup>3</sup> Caldwell's first-hand experience of architecture abroad could not match Charlemont's, but in spite of this, as mentioned above, he became a respected authority on architectural matters. Like Charlemont, and maybe because of him, his admiration for William Chambers and his work knew no bounds. Not only was he in a position to observe the construction of the beautiful Casino at Marino (1758-76) and Charlemont's town house on Rutland Square (now Parnell Square) (1762-75), but also to follow the development of the villa at Roehampton (1762-68/9) which Chambers designed for Lord Bessborough (1704-93) and to which his father, as Lord Bessborough's agent, was a frequent visitor, and where he, in his turn, was often to stay.

How long Charlemont and Caldwell had been friends is not clear, but it is obvious from the tone of these letters that by the beginning of 1773 they were already on terms of comfortable familiarity with each other. By this date Charlemont had been happily married to Miss Mary Hickman for four and a half years and their first child had been born, while Caldwell was to remain a confirmed bachelor for the rest of his life.<sup>4</sup> As we will see, Caldwell felt an obligation to protect his friend from overspending, especially where books were concerned, which, together with his bachelor state, probably prompted Charlemont, who loved to tease his friends in verse, to pen the following lines:

The Blessings of Life  
To Andrew Caldwell, Esq.

A Heart without Guilt, and a Friend without Guile,  
A wife, who still meets you adorn'd with a smile,

A Bevy of Children, good humour'd and spritely,  
 The Males strong and healthy, the Females all sightly,  
 A Genius, whose Strength, tho' it glory refuse you,  
 Suffices, at least, to instruct and amuse you,  
 A Temper not easily fretted by Trifles,  
 Still open to Hope, while black Pressage it stifles,  
 A character, even by envy unsullied,  
 A courage not boistrous, nor yet to be bullied,  
 Philanthropy, Health both of Body and Mind,  
 The Love of your Friends, and esteem of Mankind,  
 Say – would not these blessings to Thankfulness win ye,  
 Do you know of ought better? – Quoth Caldwell – a Guinea.<sup>5</sup>

While Charlemont experienced difficulty with public speaking,<sup>6</sup> he was never happier than with a pen in his hand, and surely no better example of the elegance and humour of his prose could be found than in the long drawn-out metaphor with which he began his letter to Caldwell. Likening his library to his favourite mistress, he wrote of 'the advantage which accrues from choosing rather to confide what we love to the charge of a trusty friend, whose abilities and experience enable him to enter into the character and value of his Charge, than, after the eastern fashion, to trust the Object of our affection to the limited and ignorant care of a servile eunuch' (Plates 3).

There can be no doubt of the importance that Charlemont attached to Caldwell's guardianship of this 'mistress' in his absence, both in protecting her from the crowds flocking to see her and in studying her carefully in order to assess any 'defects' or deficiencies which might mar her perfection. Caldwell had always been a prolific reader, and by 1773 he had obviously acquired such a wide-ranging knowledge of what the contents of an ideal library should be that he was in a position to make a list for his friend of what he considered to be missing. Although in 1773 he had still not come into his inheritance, and was consequently more involved with his court work than in later years, he nevertheless set to with a will to deal with all the time-consuming tasks requested of him in Charlemont's letter. This article is not the place for discussion of the many books mentioned in the exchange of letters, which must await another time and another writer. However, what emerges from Caldwell's meticulous attention to his friend's 'commands' is his anxiety, already referred to, that unnecessary funds should not be expended on his behalf, and that he should be protected from those attempting to exploit him because of his title. He thought it important that in future, when Charlemont himself was bidding at an auction, that he should 'keep as close behind the Curtain as possible', as in Caldwell's

My dear Caldwell

London <sup>Harford Street</sup>  
<sup>May Fair</sup>  
 Jan<sup>r</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> 1773.

However modestly I may think of my own Discernment  
 I can not avoid allowing myself some little share of  
 Applause for the excellent Choice which I have made  
 of a Friend to whose kind Care to entrust an Object  
 so highly interesting to me as my Library; nor indeed  
 was ever Confidence more amply repaid; Not content  
 with preserving this my favourite Mistress, confided to  
 your guardianship, from the many Mistakes to which my  
 Absence and the crowds of Company which, as you tell me,  
 she has been oblig'd to admit, have made her liable, you  
 have done much more - You have studied her thoroughly,  
 found out her Defects, and put it into my Power to remedy  
 by them - So great is the Advantage which accrues from  
 choosing rather to confide what we love to the Charge  
 of a trusty Friend, whose Abilities and Experience en-  
 able him to enter into the Character and Value of his  
 Charge, than, after the eastern fashion, to trust the Object  
 of our Affection to the limited and ignorant Care of a  
 servile Slave - If such your Merit, Judge then what

3 - Page from Lord Charlemont's letter to Andrew Caldwell of 16 January 1773  
 where he likens his library to his favourite mistress (private collection)

experience, 'when they [the auctioneers] found out who I bid for, they all swore they would push me up & said why should a Lord get Bargains'. Then, unable to resist teasing his friend, he added, 'I own it discomposed me a little but on reflection I see it was only comme il faut, for we Plebians should on all occasions keep down you Patricians.'

So Charlemont's magnificent library was the pride of his life, and Caldwell its unpaid caretaker and guardian who revelled in its delights. In his design for the library Chambers had excelled himself, using the long garden behind the main

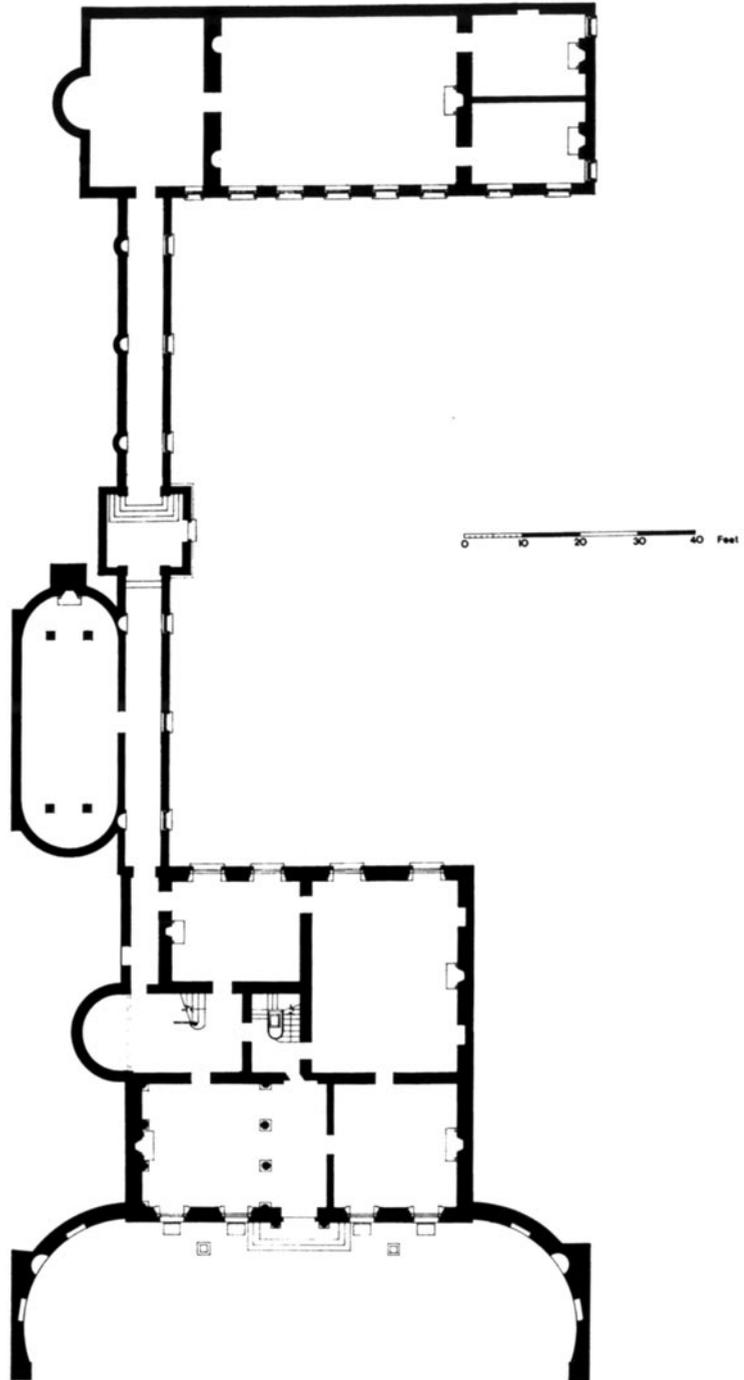
house to its fullest effect (Plate 4). As can be seen from the plan, the pavilion, which was to house not only his books but the treasures he had brought home from his travels, lay parallel to the main house at the bottom of the garden, the two buildings being joined by a long passageway. This approach to the library was lit on the right by six windows looking out onto the garden. Opposite each was a niche containing sculpture. Half way along, to provide for the rise in ground level, Chambers designed a square vestibule with ascending steps to and from it, in the centre of which was a bronze copy of Giovanni de Bologna's *Mercury*, providing a point of interest for those coming from either direction (Plate 5).<sup>7</sup> The corridor continued on from the vestibule and led to what became known as the Venus Library, so called because a full-scale copy of the Venus de' Medici, sculpted, according to Thomas Malton, by Joseph Wilton from the original, occupied an alcove to the left of the entrance (Plate 6).<sup>8</sup> As we shall see, Caldwell had something to say about the Venus in his reply to his friend's letter. This anteroom to the main library was a thing of beauty in itself. In an undated letter to William Chambers, written almost certainly in the late 1760s, Charlemont expressed his anxiety that Cipriani was dragging his heels over the completion of the 'chiaroscuros' which were to adorn the walls of 'the Great Room', and discussed, with an accompanying sketch, his ideas for lighting 'this beautiful room' (the anteroom) at night-time.<sup>9</sup> A photograph, taken before the regrettable demolition of the entire library complex in 1929 shows how daylight was introduced through the ten windows set into the richly ornamented central lantern (Plate 8).

A central pedimented doorcase opposite the Venus led into the splendid main chamber (Plate 7), the lower part of which was lit by five windows looking out onto the garden, and the upper by arched windows facing north and south in the gallery above. Maurice Craig writes that the bookshelves were punctuated by 'a noble Corinthian order of wooden pilasters', one of which may be seen in Plate 7, with a Cipriani grisaille on either side of it.<sup>10</sup> Doors flanking the chimney piece at the far end of the library, in the east wall, led into the two smaller rooms which completed what John Harris called 'this connoisseur's suite'.<sup>11</sup> This incorporated one room for 'pictures and antiquities' and the other for 'medals and bas-relievos'.<sup>12</sup>

The medal room, which looked out onto the garden, contained Charlemont's famous medal cabinet, the subsequent whereabouts of which was for many years unknown (Plate 9). It eventually surfaced in Elvedon Hall, Suffolk, where, in May 1984, Christie's conducted a sale of the entire house contents. The cabinet, together with three of Chambers's original drawings for it (Plate 10), was sold to the

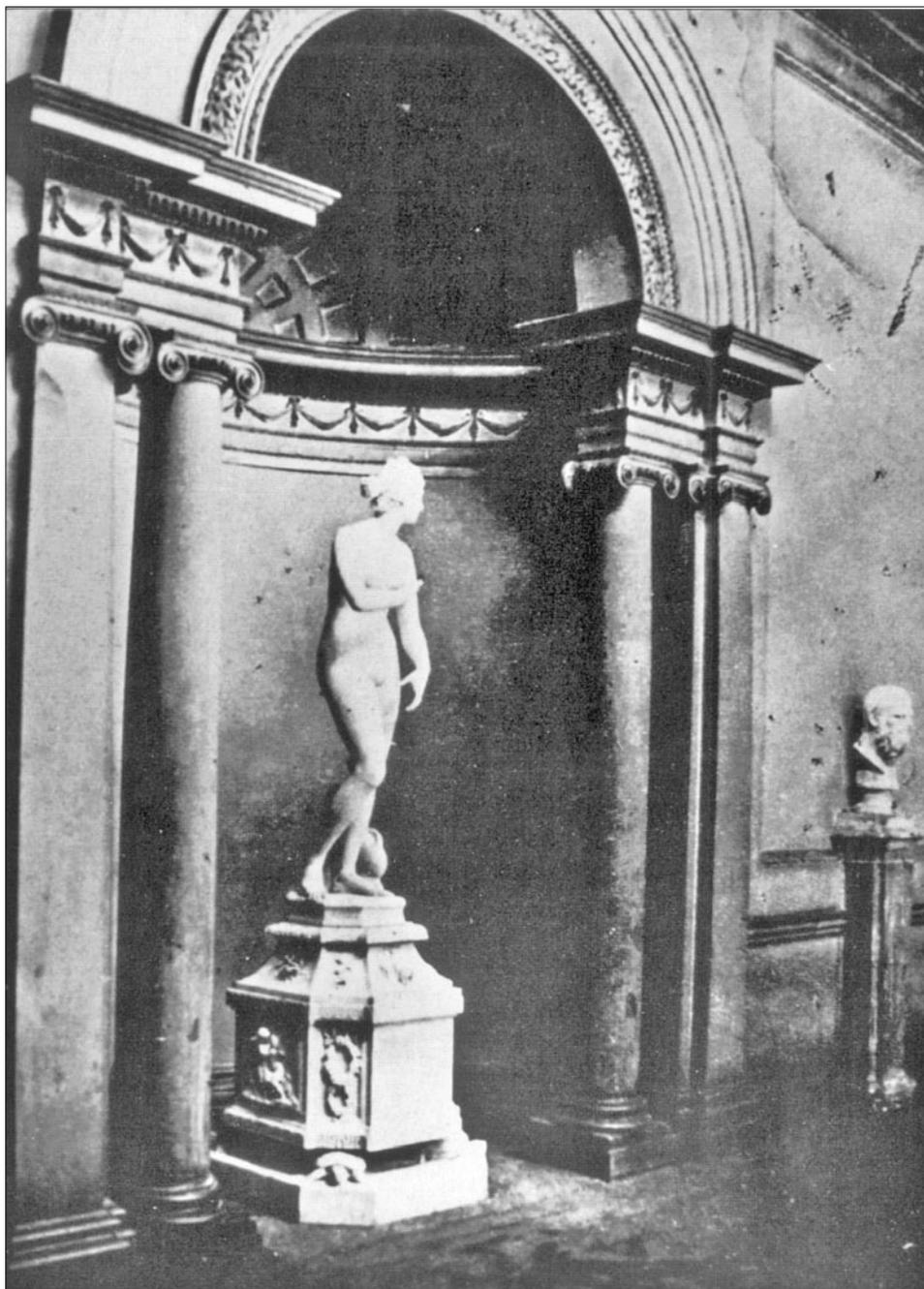
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4 – Charlemont House and library, Rutland Square (now Parnell Square), Dublin: reconstruction of ground plan as it appeared c.1785 (drawn by F.M. O'Dwyer, 1974)

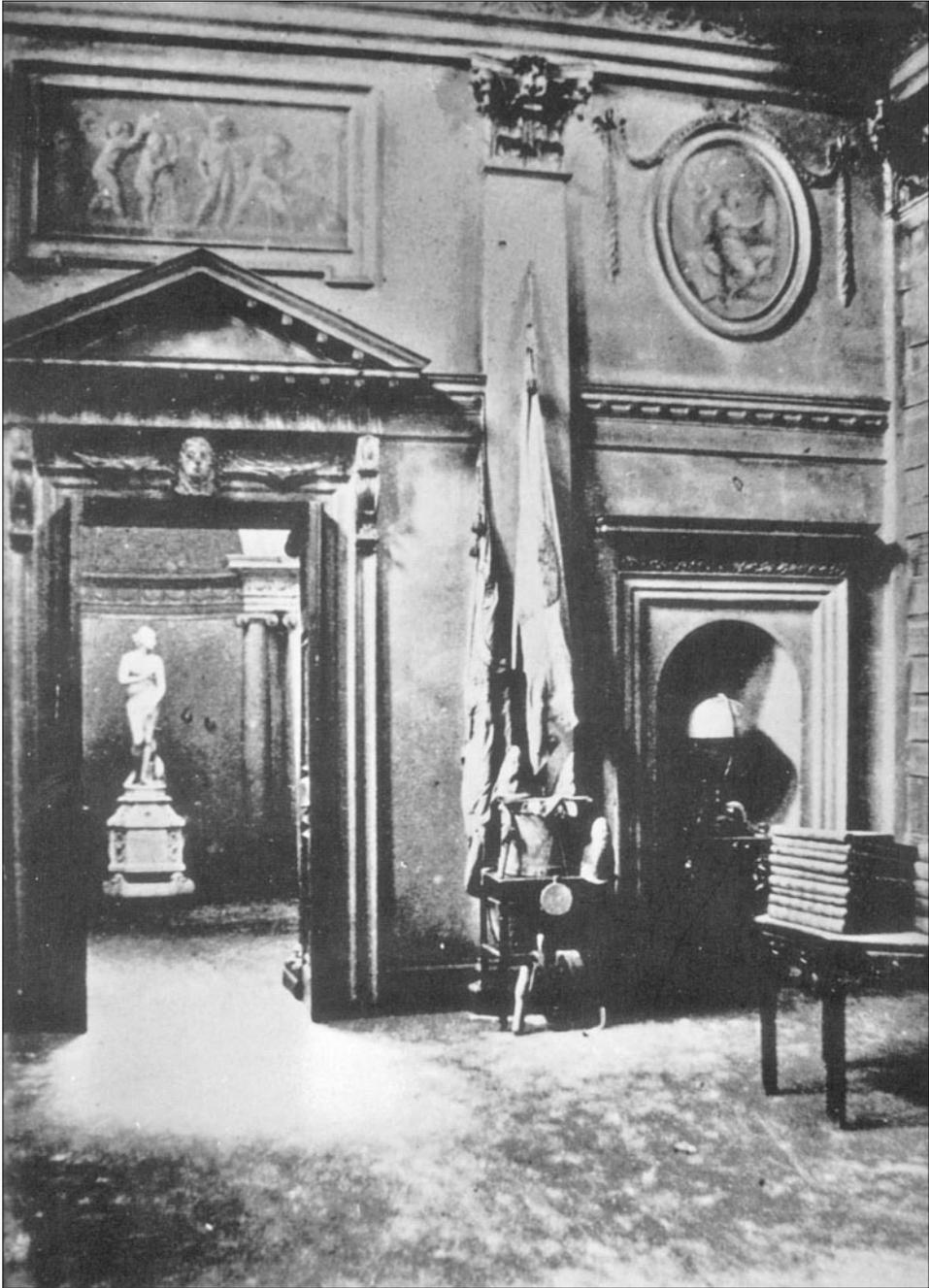




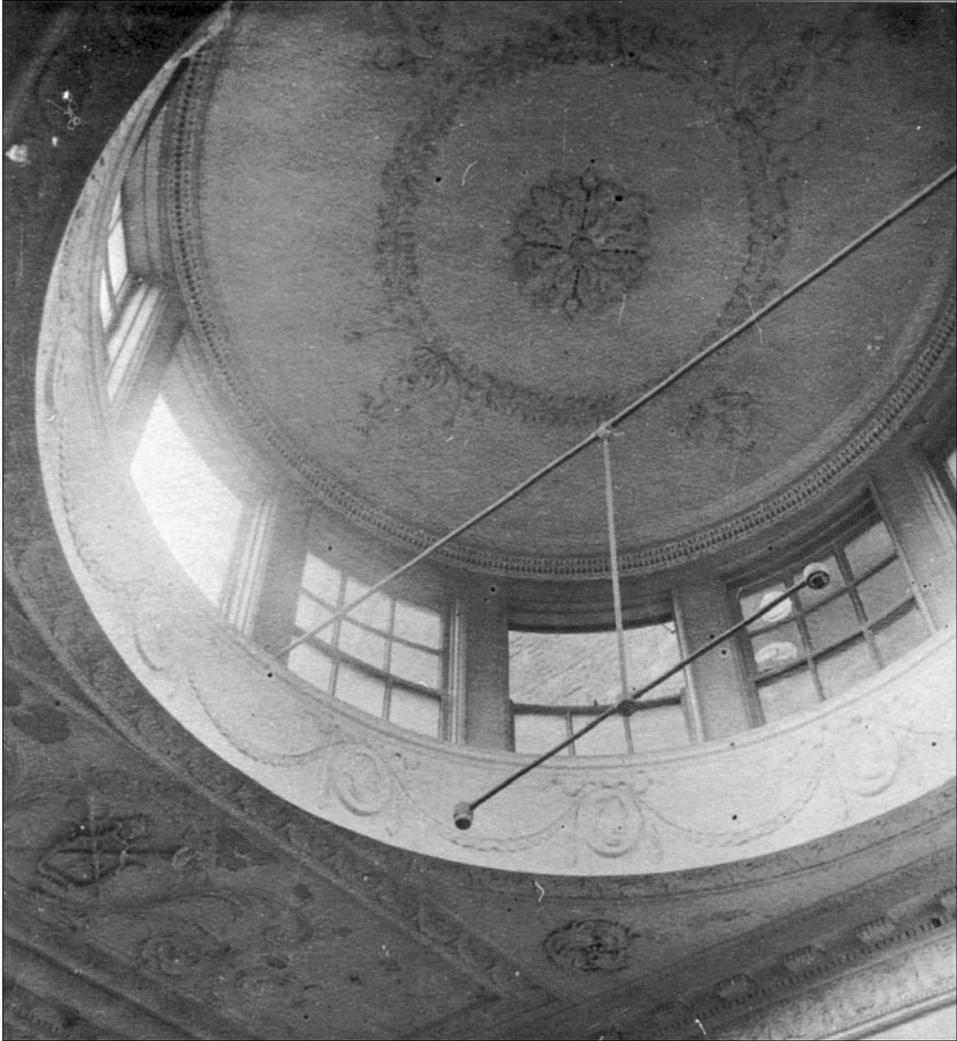
*5 – Charlemont House: corridor link to library with Mercury standing in the vestibule dividing the two halves of the corridor (courtesy Royal Irish Academy)*



6 – Charlemont House: the Venus Library  
(courtesy Royal Irish Academy)

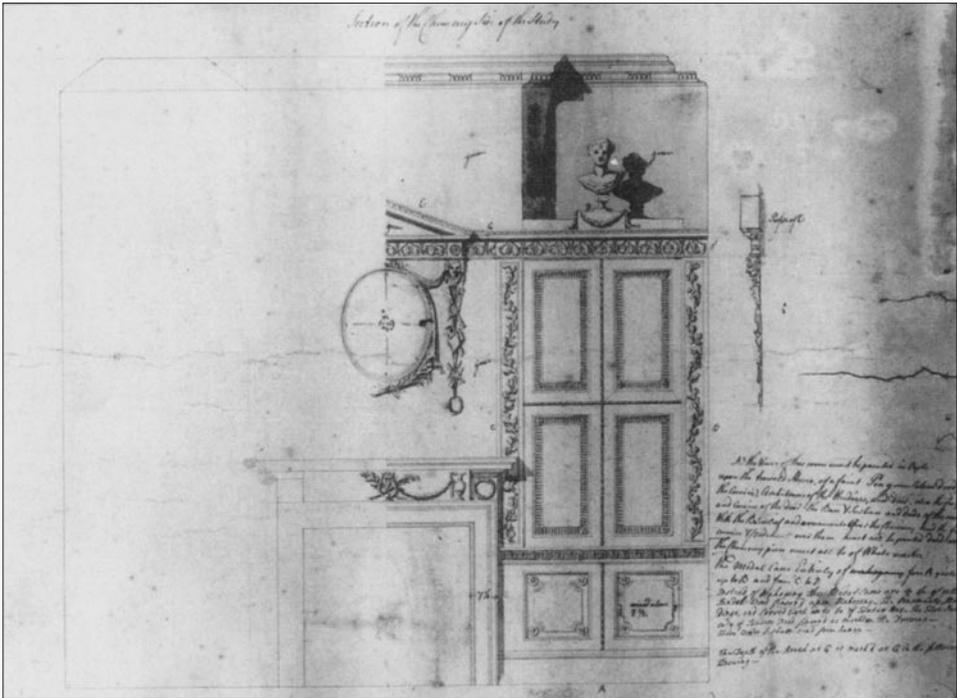
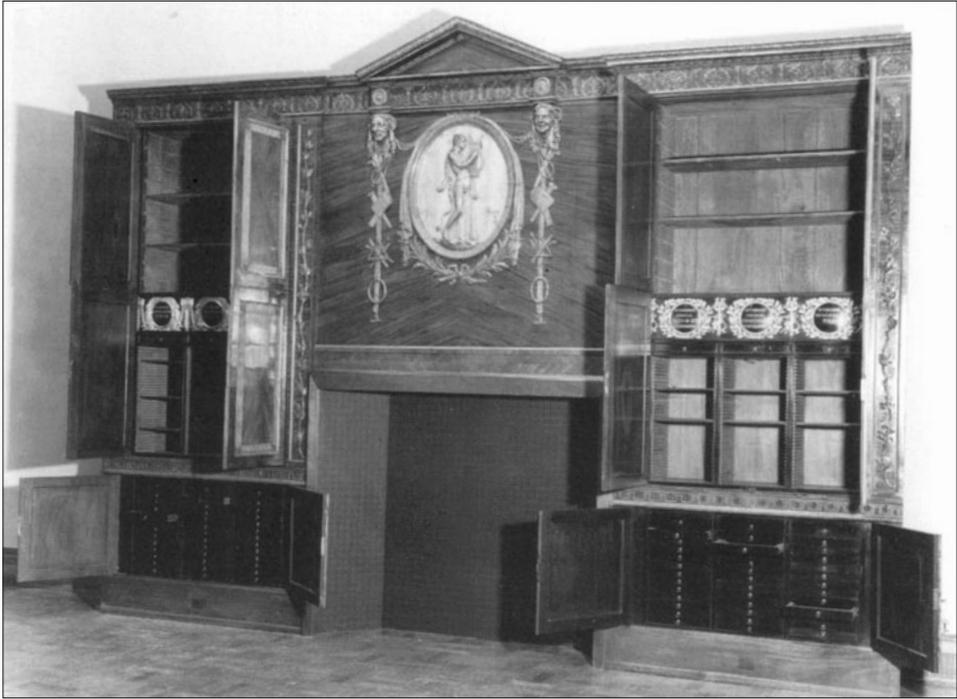


7 – Charlemont House: looking from the main library towards the Venus Library  
(courtesy Royal Irish Academy)



8 – Charlemont House: the Venus Library ceiling and lantern, c.1929  
(courtesy Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery, Dublin)

Courtauld Gallery in London's Somerset House for £90,000. As the room for which the cabinet was designed no longer exists, it is a comfort to know that at least it has found a resting place in a Chambers building. Designed to occupy the whole of the east chimney piece wall, Hugh Roberts describes it as 'noble and monumental', perfectly illustrating 'in its finely orchestrated iconography, sober styling and immaculate detail the care which Chambers was prepared to lavish on furniture which he intended should play a significant architectural role'.<sup>13</sup> The cabinet (constructed by an unknown cabinetmaker) was made of mahogany, sandalwood and boxwood, the



interior being of ebony and fitted with drawers to house Charlemont's collection of coins and medals. Chambers himself supervised its ornamentation by Alken and Anderson, with the 'spirited carving' of the former and the 'exquisite metalwork' of the latter combining to make an object of great beauty.<sup>14</sup>

## THE LETTERS

The scene is now set for discussion of some of the matters raised in the friends' letters, reprinted in full below, starting with those relating specifically to the library. Charlemont's elegant thanks to Caldwell for his stewardship was followed by matters relating to his book collection, which, as mentioned earlier, are not appropriate for inclusion in this article. He then relayed to Caldwell the suggestions which his friend Lord Shelburne – admired by him for his political opinions but not his taste in architecture – had made (Plate 11):

'Pilasters of Ichaiola [Scha[gl]iola?] would, in my opinion, have a bad effect in the library – they would look too cold and cutting. I know not well how to express it, but they would, I think, produce that sort of effect which may be called a rawness. I know my own meaning, which probably none but myself can conceive from my mode of expression. Marble pilasters would be improper and cold, and that which exactly imitates them would probably have an effect equally displeasing. I am preparing colours here, under Chambers' directions, to paint the whole body of the library. I have already chosen them, modest, I think, and proper, and I believe that you will not disapprove my choice'.<sup>15</sup>

As we know, Charlemont settled for wooden pilasters which, we learn from his comments, were to be painted the same overall colour as the rest of the library. It is surprising to discover that at this late date the library had still not been painted, and we have no means of knowing what other work was outstanding. We know for certain, from Caldwell's letter, that the Venus was *in situ* in her niche, and surely the five commissioned Cipriani grisailles must have been received by then, for as early as March 1769, Chambers, writing to his friend Baretti, bemoaned the fact that although the paintings had been promised for the previous November they had still not arrived, and 'meanwhile my library remains unfinished'.<sup>16</sup> From Caldwell's

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9 – Lord Charlemont's medal cabinet, designed by Sir William Chambers  
(courtesy Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art)

You do not esteem it such, none is necessary -  
 Lord Shelburne is not yet come to Town, when He does I will  
 ask him about the Pamphlets - However I may admire him  
 as a Politician, I can not say that I have much Confidence  
 in his Taste - Pilasters of Schiavola wood in my Opinion have  
 a bad Effect in the Library - They would look too cold and cutting  
 I know not well how to express it, but they would, I think,  
 produce that sort of Effect which may be call'd a Rawness  
 I know my own Meaning, which probably none but myself  
 can conceive from my Mode of Expression - Marble Pilasters  
 would be improper and cold, and that which exactly criticise  
 them would probably have an Effect equally displeasing -  
 I am preparing Columns here, under Charlemont's Direction, to  
 paint the whole Body of the Library - I have already chosen  
 them, modest, I think, and proper, and I believe that you  
 will not disapprove my Choice -

11 – Lord Charlemont’s letter to Andrew Caldwell of 16 January 1773 discussing Lord Shelburne’s suggestions for the decoration of Charlemont’s own library (private collection)

comment that he did not mix easily with the world, but as often as he could retired to ‘a certain Bibliotheque’ where he was always delighted to be, we can assume that by now the books were in place. We can also imagine his exasperation when his quiet times were invaded by sightseeing crowds, and he was forced to ‘discover’ his friend’s ‘belle inconnue to the Vulgar gaze’.

One can also detect a measure of considerable irritation in Caldwell’s comments when he comes to discuss the cleaning of the medal room. Having felt that there was no occasion for it to be cleaned in the first place, but powerless to stop it, he was then forced to deal with the consequences, a responsibility he did not relish. How it could have taken ten whole days for the two ‘Garçons’ to clean such a relatively small room and leave it in a worse state than when they started is hard to imagine, but it was enough for Murphy and Caldwell to dismiss them ‘in a passion’.<sup>17</sup> While happy to protect his friend’s interests by caring for the books and warding off the crowds, such domestic responsibility was not to his taste, or else something he wished not to undergo again, hence his plea to Charlemont ‘that you will not hereafter order any thing to be done either here or at Marino till you are on the spot yourself’.<sup>18</sup> His equilibrium was quickly restored, however, as he proceeded to allude, tastefully and with good humour, to the graffiti perpetrated on the statue of Venus, writing that it was ‘not be to suppos’d that two Garçons, fresh and healthy

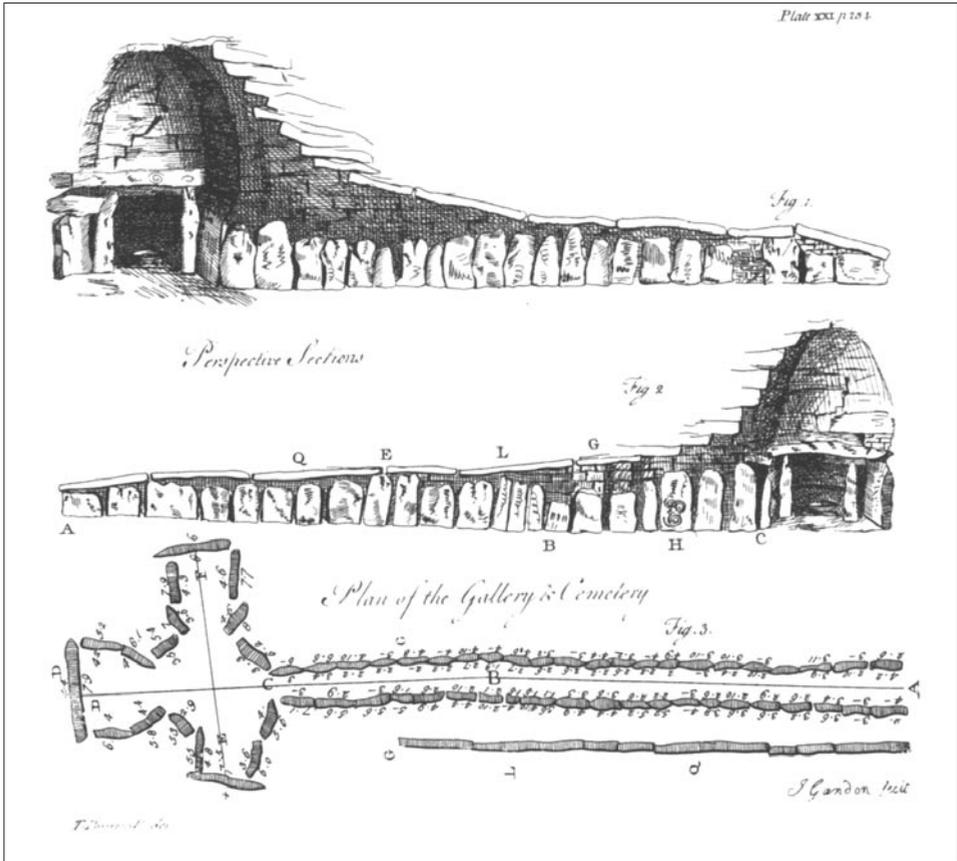
could be so long shut up there [in the library] and not sensible to the charms of the Venus, your Lordship will find whatever the Sculptor might have omitted the Pencil has now amply supplied, nay I am not sure but the same accident has happen'd to the Venus de Charlemont that happen'd long ago to the Venus of Praxiteles'.

Referring, finally, to some of the other topics discussed in Caldwell's letter, how carefully he nurtured his friendship with Charlemont is well illustrated in the second paragraph where he mentions 'a late distressing event'. This must surely refer to the duel that took place in London on 2 February 1773 between lords Townshend and Bellamont. In a letter to Henry Flood (1732-91) of 30 December 1772,<sup>19</sup> Charlemont described his role in the affair, which was initiated by Bellamont 'in consequence of an improper message delivered to him by lord Townshend's aid-de-camp'. On Bellamont's instructions, Charlemont carried a message seeking satisfaction of Lord Townshend to that lord. Although Charlemont professed to be honoured by this commission, he was in fact deeply disturbed and unhappy about the whole situation. When he believed that the two men had come to an understanding, and that the 'disagreeable business' had been happily settled 'to the honour of all parties', he was inordinately relieved.<sup>20</sup> He may still have felt this to be the case when writing to Caldwell on 16 January 1773, but by the time of Caldwell's reply on 24 February the duel had gone ahead after all, and Bellamont, incapacitated by Townshend's first shot which lodged in his groin, had had to be carried from the field.<sup>21</sup> Although he must have been agog for details, the whole affair having been the talk of the town, Caldwell hastened to assure his friend that he felt entirely free from 'impertinent curiosity', and would only hear the details if his Lordship thought it proper to impart them. Meanwhile, he considered that Charlemont's printed narrative of the affair was a 'Chef-d'Oeuvre' for its 'clearness and elegance of Stile', and he had 'laid it by amongst my choice things'.<sup>22</sup>

There was no need to hold back when it came to discussing plans for the proposed new Blue Coat Hospital, as they were both of one mind: the man for the job should be William Chambers, just as they felt he should have been for the Royal Exchange, which, by that time, was being built to the plans of the English architect Thomas Cooley.<sup>23</sup> Letters for and against the many plans submitted for the Blue Coat School competition abounded in *The Freeman's Journal* of December 1772 and January, February and March 1773. Although Thomas Ivory's plans were the most highly commended and he was awarded the first premium, there was, as Caldwell indicates in no uncertain terms, general dissatisfaction with the standard of entries, and Ivory's appointment was not immediately confirmed. Caldwell seemed rather pleased with himself about the decision not to execute any of the plans when he wrote, 'I have had some small share of merit towards carrying that Point'. Indeed, just as he seemed to have been in a position to influence the governors of

the Blue Coat Hospital against employing Ivory, an Irish architect, so he hoped that his ‘intrigues’ would lead to an application being made to his ‘favourite and admir’d Sr Wm. Chambers’. He was not pinning too much hope on these efforts, however, as he felt that ‘ill fate seems to attend Ireland’, from which he presumably meant the appointment of Thomas Cooley as architect of the Royal Exchange over Chambers. Indeed, his pessimism was well founded, for Chambers did not submit a design and Ivory was duly appointed architect of the Blue Coat Hospital, the first stone being laid by the Lord Lieutenant, Simon, Earl Harcourt, on 16 June 1773.

As mentioned in the introduction to this article, Caldwell inherited his Newgrange estate, on which was sited the famous Irish passage grave and mound of the same name, in 1776. He was an absentee landlord, and neither he nor his father had ever lived on the estate, although his grandfather, also Andrew Caldwell, had lived there as a youth under the wing of the previous owner of Newgrange, the lawyer Charles Campbell, who was eventually to become his brother-in-law.<sup>24</sup> Caldwell’s reference to Newgrange in this letter is one of only very few found among his papers which mentions the ‘Ancient Monument’, which does not seem to have figured very largely in his scheme of things. Governor Thomas Pownall (1722-1805) (wrongly spelt Pownell by Caldwell) did indeed visit Ireland, and the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, the *Dublin Journal* and the *Dublin Gazette* of 1769 all recorded the occasion. Pownall was a politician and antiquary, and his pamphlet on Newgrange, entitled *A Description of the Sepulchral Monument at New Grange, near Drogheda, in the County of Meath in Ireland*, was read at the Society of Antiquaries in London on 21 and 28 June 1770.<sup>25</sup> Dr Richard Norris, who was headmaster of Drogheda grammar school from 1753 to 1789, conducted him to the site and presumably entered the chamber with him.<sup>26</sup> The article makes fascinating reading, and recounts how they inched their way along the tunnel on hands and knees having at one point ‘to turn upon our sides, and edge ourselves on with one elbow and one foot’. Pownall, who was known to be skillful with his pencil, made some sketches while on the site, and the *Dublin Gazette* reporter wrote that ‘This curious and worthy Gentleman took Drawings upon the Spot, will have them engraved in London to make Presents to the Antiquarian and other learned Societies.’<sup>27</sup> Three of these drawings appeared in Pownall’s pamphlet, and on two of them the name J. Gandon appears as the engraver (Plates 12, 13). Edward McParland points out that ‘Gandon – always interested in print-making – published in 1767 six designs of frizes’.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, he has observed that in Gandon’s collaboration with Wolfe on their first volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus*, Gandon drew thirty-two plates and engraved nine.<sup>29</sup> Although there is no doubt about Gandon’s engraving ability, by 1769 he was absorbed with the design and execution of the County Hall at Nottingham, and in that year also won the Royal Academy gold medal in architec-



12, 13 – Thomas Pownall, drawings made on site during his visit to Newgrange in 1769 (engraved by James Gandon)



ture for his triumphal arch to commemorate the victories of the last war. If, indeed, this was Dublin's James Gandon, why would he have agreed to take on such a small commission? The answer must be that he did it for a friend. His great friend, the artist Paul Sandby, painted and engraved in 1761 'Eight Views in North America and the West Indies' from drawings 'made on the spot by Governor Pownall and others'.<sup>30</sup> Sandby also 'siezed every opportunity of introducing him to such friends as could forward his views', and, known for his enormous hospitality, it seems quite probable that Gandon and Pownall could have met at his house, where Gandon agreed to carry out this small task.<sup>31</sup> Charlemont is also known to have been among those Irishmen who frequented Sandby's convivial *conversazione* in the 1770s, and it seems very probable that Caldwell was there too. Indeed, his name is listed in the manuscript version of *The Life of James Gandon*, though not in the printed version.<sup>32</sup>

The friendship between Lord Charlemont and Andrew Caldwell was maintained until Charlemont's death in 1799. As men of 'Elegant Taste'<sup>33</sup> and 'Perfect Connoisseur[s] in the polite Arts',<sup>34</sup> their Dublin paths often crossed, but it was their mutual passion for books and their contents which was the mainstay of their friendship. After his friend's death, Caldwell, rather sadly, continued until the end of his own life to make use of that 'certain Bibliotheque' which had given them both so much pleasure.

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#### CODA: TRANSCRIPTION OF LETTERS

The following is a transcription of the letters exchanged between Lord Charlemont (16 January 1773)<sup>35</sup> and Andrew Caldwell (24 February 1773).<sup>36</sup> The spelling, contractions and capitalisation are given literally. Footnotes have been added to elucidate comments in the letters.

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*Letter from Lord Charlemont, Hertford Street, Mayfair  
to Andrew Caldwell, no address, 16 January 1773.*

My dear Caldwell,

However modestly I may think of my own discernment I can not avoid allowing myself some little share of applause for the excellent choice which I have made of a Friend to whose kind care to entrust an object so highly interesting to me as my Library; nor indeed was ever confidence more amply repaid; not content with

preserving this my favourite Mistress, confided to your guardianship from the many Mischiefs to which my absence and the crowds of company which, as you tell me, she has been obliged to admit, have made her liable, you have done much more – you have studied her thoroughly, found out her Defects, and put it into my power to remedy them – so great is the advantage which accrues from choosing rather to confide what we love to the charge of a trusty friend, whose abilities and experience enable him to enter into the character and value of his Charge, than, after the eastern fashion, to trust the Object of our affection to the limited and ignorant care of a servile eunuch – If such your Merit, judge then what must be my gratitude! – Indeed, my dear Caldwell, I am, without farther figure, most exceedingly obliged to you for your kind attention, and particularly for that list of deficiencies you were so good as to send me, which I shall endeavour, in this wonderful place, where everything is to be found, to supply; but, before I can proceed upon my search, I must beg that you would ask Valance the Bookseller,<sup>37</sup> whether he has as yet procured for me those books for which about two years ago I gave him a commission, which he has promised at twenty different times to execute. What these books were I do not exactly recollect, but suppose that he has a catalogue of them. The principal, I know, were the remaining volumes of the Encyclopedia – Valance purchased for me the Nouvelle Bibliotheque, and told me that he had mislaid the first volume. This however he ought to be accountable for. You will find, among the Italian poets, two editions of Boyardo's Orlando. They are very scarce, and I bought them at a great price. The first Vol. of Bollingbroke and that of Palladio are lost – I do not know how, but the Greaves is lock'd up in one of my drawers – I do not know whether my commission to Vallance extended to the French Accademies and to the Philosophical Transactions, but at all events I wish you would let me know what modern volumes are wanting in order that I may compleat them to the present time – You see, I am by no means sparing of your trouble, neither will I attempt to make you any apology – if you really esteem it a trouble, no excuse would be sufficient, and if, as I rather believe, you do not esteem it such, none is necessary – Lord Shelburne is not yet come to Town. When he does I will ask him about the Pamphlets. However I may admire him as a Politician, I can not say that I have much confidence in his taste – Pilasters of Ichaiola would, in my opinion, have a bad effect in the library – they would look too cold and cutting. I know not well how to express it, but they would, I think, produce that sort of effect which may be called a rawness. I know my own meaning, which probably none but myself can conceive from my mode of expression. Marble pilasters would be improper and cold, and that which exactly imitates them would probably have an effect equally displeasing. I am preparing colours here, under Chambers' directions, to paint the whole body of the library. I have already chosen them, modest, I think, and proper,

and I believe that you will not disapprove my choice.

Be so good as to look over Boydel's<sup>38</sup> Prints, and let me know what is the last number, in order that I may compleat them – I can not hear anything of Hamilton's undertaking – Upon consulting the Booksellers here I find that I may be able to dispose of the duplicates of my library to some advantage, whereas in Dublin I never should get anything for them – I beg then that you would be so good as to order that they should be carefully pack'd in a box, and sent by sea to London the first opportunity, directed to G. Cadell,<sup>39</sup> Bookseller, in the Strand – These duplicates you will find lying in my Dressing Room above stairs, or in the room within it; and there is also at Watson's in Capel Street a compleat set of Montfaucon's Antiquities in board, which may be sent with them, as they also are duplicates.

Since I began to write this letter I have found a receipt from a bookseller in Paris, which intitles me to the remaining Volumes of the Encyclopedie so that, if Valance has not already sent them home, I beg that you would tell him that he need give himself no farther trouble about them, as I shall get them from Paris; and be so kind, as soon as you can, to inform me whether or not Valance has actually deposited them in the Library, in order that I may immediately take my measures accordingly – I fear much that he is a sad fellow, having already been disappointed by him in almost every commission I have given him.

It is happy for you that my paper is at an end, for if it were imperial folio it would be fill'd with trouble for you – yet I know you will excuse me, for your goodness is as great as my indiscretion. Farewell, my dear Caldwell, Believe me ever

Your most obliged affectionate and faithful friend and servant, Charlemont.

Lady Charlemont and Miss Hickman<sup>40</sup> are very well and both desire their compliments to you – mine to all friends."

.....

*Letter from Andrew Caldwell, Dublin,  
to Lord Charlemont, London, 24 February 1773.*

My dear Lord,

I determined not to write 'till I could say that I had to the utmost of my Power executed all your Lordships commands, as the letter you favour'd me with arrived just as the Term began, my attendance on the Courts and some other matters compell'd me to a Delay contrary to my inclinations, and I am uneasy now least your Lordship should have suffer'd some inconvenience on that account. I collected all the Duplicates I could find and pack'd them myself in a large chest which was

sent away yesterday, it is directed to your Lordship to the care of T. Caddell in the Strand, and put on board the Lucy and Lucretia Richd. Walker Captain. There were a few Articles that I disposed of here, and some odd volumes that I kept as being not worth the carriage and it is likely that when you return you may be able to find out where the remaining ones are. Enclosed with this are Catalogues both of the Books that are sent away and of such Articles as are wanting to compleat Sets in the Library.<sup>41</sup> I consulted Osborne and White's Catalogues and mark'd the Prices of your Duplicates that you might know their value, and tho' the Booksellers would not in Money pay the full Price, I think they ought to give Books in exchange without any Abatement to so good a Customer as your Lordship. I presume Bibliotheca Smithiana deprived you of some of your spare Cash, tho' indeed I doubt whether your Lordship or anyone else ever experienced what that was in London, according to that Catalogue I believe your Muratori is not perfect, there were 28 Vols. mark'd there, and I think your Lordship has only 25, perhaps there have been some Additions of a later publication. I must just observe here that there is neither Olivets Cicero, nor any other capital Edition of that Author in the Library, which amongst the ancient Classic's is a material Deficiency. I procur'd some things for you at Debrises auction that are not quite common, & without running you to an expense of more than two Guineas, one thing happen'd there which I wished to have hinted to you for Smith's auction & all future occasions, which is that your Lordship should keep as close behind the Curtain as possible, for when they found out who I bid for, they all swore they would push me up & said why should a Lord get Bargains, I own it discomposed me a little but on reflection I see it was only comme il faut, for we Plebians should on all occasions keep down you Patricians.

I have felt much for your Lordship on a late distressing Event, it has ever since been the universal Topic of conversation here, and there is so much misrepresentation, want of Candour and violence in all Parties, that the subject is to me horridly disgusting; if your Lordship favours me with an answ. be assured I am clear from any impertinent curiosity and wish never to have it mentioned, unless your Lordship thinks proper to do it viva voce. This is the fourth Age in which Truth, after the example of Astrea, seems to have absolutely taken her Flight. If it was known that a friend of your Lordship's had any account from you, he would be harass'd to Death and the second time the story was repeated it would be entirely changed. The printed Narrative for clearness and elegance of Stile is a Chef-d'Oeuvre, it is much admired, for my part I have laid it by amongst my choice things.

Your Lordship sent orders that the Medal Room should be cleaned, in my opinion there was no sort of occasion for it & I objected, but would not directly fly in the face of Government, the Work Men were there ten days and made such Dirt

that if anything the Room is rather not so well as before, at length back'd by your friend Murphy in a passion we dismiss'd them; let me recommend it to your Lordship, nay entreat that you will not hereafter order any thing to be done either here or at Marino 'till you are on the spot yourself. It is not to be suppos'd that two Garcons, fresh and healthy could be so long shut up there and not sensible to the charms of the Venus, your Lordship will find whatever the Sculptor might have omitted the Pencil has now amply supplied, nay I am not sure but the same accident has happen'd to the Venus de Charlemont that happen'd long ago to the Venus of Praxiteles, which old story yr Lordship knows they have vamp'd up at Rome relative to a statue on the Tomb of one of the Popes, the worst of it is, it will bring great inconvenience on Prudes before company, I mean your Venus my Ld.

The Governors of the Blue Coat Hospital have distributed the Premiums for Plans, in which they have acted generously in encouraging the labours of young Artists, but they were all detestable & they resolved not to execute any of them, I have had some small share of merit towards carrying that Point, and am now intriguing busily to have an application made to my favourite and admir'd Sr Wm. Chambers, if I succeed I shall immediately acquaint your Lordship with it, but do not mention this to him for fear we should miscarry, which I rather expect we shall, as ill fate seems to attend Ireland.

I must request the favour of your Lordship or perhaps my friend Sr Lucius O'Brien<sup>42</sup> to bring me over Governor Pownells Letter to the Royall Society on the Ancient Monument at New Grange, you are to know my Lord that Mon t. belongs to my Father and is on his Estate, therefore I am somewhat interested in the Pamphlet, Mr. Pownell has done great honour to that piece of antiquity, but it is most vexatious that I had no opportunity of shewing him any civilities, nor even heard he had been in this country 'till long after he had been gone, indeed my Father at that time happened to be in England with Lord Bessborough, so that it was out of his Power.

I see with surprize my Paper is already fill'd, yet this stupid Town has not assisted me with the slightest occurrence to enliven my epistle or to recompense for its prolixity. Here is neither Politicks, Gallantry, nor Virtu. I dont mix with the World but as often as I can I retire to a certain Bibliotheque where I am always delighted; but some how or other I am continually found out and intruded upon; many a hearty but I hope involuntary curse I foresee your Lordship will bestow on me for the scrape I have involv'd you in, my discovering your belle inconnue to the Vulgar gaze.

According to usual forms I should now say I had trespass'd on your Lordships Patience and appologise, but that is so trite I disclaim it, rather with good Irish effrontery I do acknowledge that I wrote on so far because something or other

came into my Mind, and I find a pleasure in corresponding with your Lordship.

Towards the conclusion of your Lordships letter there is an expression that I can not pass without notice; you say if you had an imperial Folio you would fill it; for Heaven's sake my Lord, the next time don't stint yourself, gratify me with this Imperial Treat, I know your Lordship at all times is generous, but on this occasion I beg you may be profuse.

I am my Lord with great respect Your Lordships faithfull friend and Humble Servant, Andw. Caldwell.

I have read the Memoires of Petrarch by the Abbe de Sade, 'tis a Book I think very curious & entertaining, yr Lordship only has the two first Vols. therefore should compleat it, I borrow'd the remainder from Dr. Kearney,<sup>43</sup> and he has been impos'd upon his wants several Pages, so People should look sharp. Barretti will take care of it for you. I am glad of an opportunity to mention him because I want yr Lordship to give him a Lecture, I esteem his Abilities much but fear he writes pro fame rather than pro fama,<sup>44</sup> what a mean thing his introduction to the Italian Language, his Specimen of Swift is the meanest that could be chosen, but hardly worse than what he has given from his own Writers. Tell him if he had given a fuller Account of Madrid in its improv'd state, what Police the King of Spain introduced & how he contrived to Clean the Streets, it would have made his Book much more usefull & instructive, especially to the Citizens of Dublin.

Happily for your Lordship I really am fatigued and shall at last have mercy on you.

.....

*The following note accompanied the catalogue appended to Caldwell's letter:*

Most of those Books were in the Room above Stairs, there some others dispos'd of here that I shall give an account of when yr Lordship returns; According to my Calculation the above books should bring yr Lordship near forty pounds, which in common justice ought to be repaid to the Library, whatever you may plead I wont allow your Lordship to sport it away in any other manner.<sup>45</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once more, my thanks are due to the owner of the Caldwell papers for her trust, generosity and friendship throughout the year I researched them. I would also like to thank my supervisor Dr Edward McParland for drawing my attention to the papers in the first place and for his continuing help and guidance. I acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Charles Benson, John Cornforth, Bevan Lamb and Siobhán O’Rafferty.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Royal Irish Academy (RIA), Dublin, Charlemont correspondence, 12/R/10 38.
- <sup>2</sup> Charles Caldwell also held the post of solicitor to the customs until shortly before his death.
- <sup>3</sup> Caldwell’s travels were limited to one trip to Rotterdam and Dusseldorf in the summer of 1773.
- <sup>4</sup> This child died early in 1774, Historic Manuscripts Commission (HMC), *HMC 12th Report*, x, appendix, 317.
- <sup>5</sup> Private collection.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Georgian Society Records of Eighteenth Century Domestic Architecture and Decoration in Dublin (GSR)*, 5 vols (Dublin 1909-13) iv, 28.
- <sup>7</sup> This was a copy of Giovanni Bologna’s *Medici Mercury*. Parker, Charlemont’s agent in Rome, wrote to him on 4 October 1758 to inform him ‘that the bronze figure of Mercury is finished and sent off to Leghorn’ (*HMC 12th Report*, appendix, 250). The Rockingham Library, seen on the plan to the left of the passage leading to the vestibule, had not yet been built at the time of this correspondence. It was designed by Gandon in the late 1780s, the only domestic commission he carried out in Dublin, and named after Charlemont’s friend the Marquess of Rockingham.
- <sup>8</sup> *GSR*, iv, 31.
- <sup>9</sup> RIA, Charlemont correspondence, 12/R/30(a).
- <sup>10</sup> Maurice Craig, *The Volunteer Earl* (London 1948) 132.
- <sup>11</sup> John Harris, *Sir William Chambers* (London 1970) 66.
- <sup>12</sup> *GSR*, iv, 31.
- <sup>13</sup> Hugh Roberts, ‘Sir William Chambers and Furniture’ in J. Harris and M. Snodin (eds), *Sir William Chambers: Architect to George III* (London 1996) 173.
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> With reference to the term ‘ichaiola’, John Cornforth suggests (in correspondence with the writer) that Charlemont surely intended ‘scagliola’, and that he had probably not seen this word written but only heard it in conversation.
- <sup>16</sup> *HMC 12th Report*, appendix, 293.
- <sup>17</sup> Murphy was Charlemont’s friend and former tutor who had accompanied him on the Grand Tour.
- <sup>18</sup> ‘Marino’ was Charlemont’s home in Donnycarney, given to him by his stepfather Thomas Adderley in October 1756. Chambers provided designs for additions which were carried out, forming wings to north and south. This project appeared in Chambers’ *Treatise on Civil Architecture*, published in March 1759.
- <sup>19</sup> *HMC 12th Report*, appendix, 313.

- <sup>20</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> James Kelly, *That Damn'd Thing Called Honour: duelling in Ireland, 1570-1860* (Cork 1995) 110.
- <sup>22</sup> Efforts to find this printed narrative have met with failure. It was probably published anonymously.
- <sup>23</sup> *HMC 12th Report*, appendix, 290.
- <sup>24</sup> That is when Caldwell married Campbell's sister, Catherine.
- <sup>25</sup> Thomas Pownall, 'A description of the sepulchral monument at New Grange near Drogheda...', *Archaeologia*, 2 (1773) 236-75.
- <sup>26</sup> Michael Quane, *Drogheda Grammar School* (Dundalk, n.d.).
- <sup>27</sup> *Dublin Gazette*, 12-14 September 1769.
- <sup>28</sup> Edward McParland, *James Gandon, Vitruvius Hibernicus* (London 1985) 8.
- <sup>29</sup> Their first volume appeared in 1767 and their second in 1771. This followed the first three compiled by Colen Campbell, whose third and final volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* had appeared in 1725.
- <sup>30</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*, Thomas Pownall (1722-1805).
- <sup>31</sup> James Gandon Jr and T.J. Mulvany, *The Life of James Gandon, Esq.* (Dublin 1846) 24.
- <sup>32</sup> Dublin City Library, manuscript version of *The Life* (Gilbert Collection Ms 135, 236-7).
- <sup>33</sup> J. Agnew (ed.), *The Drennan-McTier Letters* (Dublin 1999), ii, 269, William Drennan to his sister Martha McTier (10 October 1796 postmark).
- <sup>34</sup> Private collection. Letter of introduction for Caldwell to carry with him on his proposed trip to England and the Continent, from R. Ward, Dublin Castle, 7 May 1773.
- <sup>35</sup> Private collection.
- <sup>36</sup> RIA, Charlemont correspondence, 12/R/10 38.
- <sup>37</sup> Presumably James Vallance (1766-1808), auctioneer and bookseller.
- <sup>38</sup> Presumably John Boydell (1719-1804), engraver and print publisher.
- <sup>39</sup> Presumably T. Cadell, bookseller and publisher.
- <sup>40</sup> Lady Charlemont's sister, who lived with them.
- <sup>41</sup> This list was attached to the original letter but has not been included here.
- <sup>42</sup> Also a good friend to Lord Charlemont. Lucius O'Brien's brother Edward was married to Charlotte, Lady Charlemont's sister.
- <sup>43</sup> Probably John Kearney (1742-1814), elected fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1764, held the chair of oratory from 1781 until his appointment as provost in 1799; he was appointed Bishop of Ossory in 1806. His brother Michael (1733-1814) was also a fellow of the college and became Archdeacon of Raphoe in 1798.
- <sup>44</sup> Caldwell is enjoying word play here, which, roughly translated, means 'more for gain than fame', or perhaps 'more out of greed than for distinction'.
- <sup>45</sup> This is another instance of Caldwell attempting to control his friend's spending.