

The design and decoration of bespoke carriages in late eighteenth-century Dublin

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AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, THE WEALTH AND STATUS OF IRELAND'S elite class was often distinguished by the elegance of the carriages they maintained. From the matched team of magnificent horses drawing the coach to the liveried footmen at its rear, every inch of the equipage proclaimed the importance of its owner (Plate 3). To date, the production of these expensive carriages for private individuals has received scant attention. Focusing on the carriage-design cards used in the manufactory of John Hutton (1756-1830), this article aims to shed light on the coach-making industry in Georgian Dublin.

To date, research devoted to coach and carriage design in Ireland has focused on the ceremonial carriages manufactured for the Lord Mayor and the Chancellor of Dublin, beginning with Walter Strickland's pioneering article of 1921 which provided a wealth of detail on the names and locations of coach-makers operating in Dublin in the eighteenth century.¹ More recent articles by John Cornforth and Lisa Marie Griffith have continued the focus on ceremonial coaches, while others, such as J.L. McCracken and Constantia Maxwell, have examined the realm of public transport and how travel was conducted generally in the eighteenth century.² Aspects of the design process were first described in an article by Desmond Guinness in 2004, who drew attention to a rare collection of mid-eighteenth-century carriage drawings found among the Leinster Estate papers, most likely drawn up for James Fitzgerald, 20th Earl of Kildare and, from 1766, 1st Duke of Leinster.³ More recently, William Laffan has annotated a collection of carriage-design cards from the coach manufactory of John Hutton, now in a private collection.⁴ In fact, a history of the Hutton firm was published in 1993, but concentrated on family history rather than carriage design.⁵ This paper will build on this literature by focusing on material preserved

1, 2 – John Hutton, *design for a postchaise, and detail revealing customer options*
signed in pen by Rudolph Ackermann (private collection / photos: Dara McGrath)

3 – Engraving by Henry Brocas (1762-1837),
from a drawing by Samuel Brocas (1792-1847),
VIEW OF THE BANK OF IRELAND, COLLEGE GREEN,
DUBLIN, 1820s (detail)

(courtesy National Library of Ireland)

This drawing provides a glimpse of carriages in use in
Dublin in the early nineteenth century, including a
curricule (centre) and a private town coach (right).



from the coach manufactory of John Hutton & Sons.⁶ It also draws on editorials and advertisements placed in *Saunders' Newsletter* between 1779 and 1821, and contextualises this material with reference to the extant records of the Dublin Coach-makers' Guild. The aim, therefore, is to explore how a coach-maker may have gone about the business of making and marketing his wares in late eighteenth-century Dublin.

THE COACH-MAKING BUSINESS IN DUBLIN

STRICKLAND'S ARTICLE ON EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COACH-MAKING, WITH ITS STREET-by-street account of coach-makers, reveals an industry centred on the north side of Dublin, just beyond Sackville Street (O'Connell Street Upper), and close to Henrietta Street and Rutland Square (Parnell Square).⁷ Twenty-two coach-makers had their workshops in streets such as Great Britain Street (Parnell Street), Dominick Street and Henry Street in 1789, with another six coach workshops scattered around the south side of the city, closer to Dublin Castle. Writing at the end of the nineteenth century, the Irish economist Robert Dennis estimated that in 1799, coach-making in Dublin 'gave employment to between 1700 and 2000 hands', which would imply that the average carriage workshop had around sixty workers.⁸ Coach-makers relied on a range of specialist trades, including harness-makers, blacksmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights, upholsterers and painters. Glass-makers Richard Williams & Co, of Marlborough Green, advertised in



1779 that they supplied and fitted coach glass plates: ‘The company requests that the coach makers will send their frames to their warehouse to be fitted which will prevent delay and disappointment.’⁹ In 1785 the Umbrella and Oil-Cloth Manufactory at Trinity Street was selling ‘elegant varnished hammer-cloths [for covering the coach-driver’s seat] equal if not superior to any ever imported’, while, in the same year, Costello & Vimy, ‘Timber Benders’ of Henry Street, were producing carriage wheels that were ‘neater, lighter, stronger and from their elasticity giving a peculiar ease to all carriages to which they are applied’.¹⁰

Analysis of carriage advertisements placed in *Saunders’ Newsletter* between 1779 and 1821 indicates that there was keen competition for business with a fairly rapid turnover of coach workshops.¹¹ Coach-making was an expensive trade. Outlay on costly materials such as leather, iron, timber and silks was generally not recouped until the bespoke carriage was completed. Writing in 1761 in his *Parents and guardian’s directory*, Joseph Collyer cautioned that ‘a master may set up with £500 but it will require £2000 to carry on a considerable business’.¹² Moreover, members of the upper classes, for whom coaches were designed and built, were often slow to settle their accounts. Robert Campbell’s *The London Tradesman*, published in 1747, commented that ‘the coachmaker is a genteel profitable business ... but requires a great stock of ready money to set up and continue trade; they deal with none but Nobility and Quality and according to their mode must trust a long time and sometimes may happen never to be paid.’¹³ This is borne out by the surviving papers of at least three Irish families, which contain accounts of large sums

owing to coach-makers. The 1687 account furnished to the executors of the late Earl of Ossory by Thomas Brigham, coach-maker, related to the making of up to ten coaches over a number of years, and ran to several hundreds of pounds.¹⁴ On his untimely death in 1795, Colonel Bruen of Oakpark, Carlow, owed £61 15s 1½d to coach-makers Collier & Bond of Kevin Street, Dublin, for three years' maintenance of his postchaise, while in 1812 Nathaniel Trumbull owed £61 19s 4d to a coach-maker for carriage repairs carried out during a single year.¹⁵

The National Library of Ireland holds the eighteenth-century records of the Corporation of Saddlers, Upholders, Coach and Coach-Harness Makers, also known as the Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Apprentices served five years to a master coachman, whereas a son of a master coach-maker could be admitted to the guild by reason of birth.¹⁶ The guild regulated the industry, issuing a series of by-laws for its members and ensuring that certain standards were maintained by imposing fines on transgressors. *The Book of Byelaws*, frequently updated between 1769 and 1792, reveals the system of fines imposed on transgressors; a fine of forty shillings, for example, was exacted from upholsterers using 'Fenn Down or Thistle Down' instead of feathers, while a similar amount was imposed for using old materials instead of new. By-law 24 dealt with restrictions in the types of materials used in the upholstery of coaches:

That every brother of the said guild who shall mingle or cause to be mingled any flocks or Feathers together to put to sale or cause Goats Hair or Cows Hair to be used instead of Curled Hair or shall put to sale or cause or offer to be put to sale any Corrupt or Stinking Feathers in any Bed, Boulster, Pillow, Cushions, Chair, Stools or otherways and shall not Cause his or her feathers to be Cleans'd of Dust and Quils before the Same be put to sale, shall pay for such offence the penal sum of Forty Shillings.¹⁷



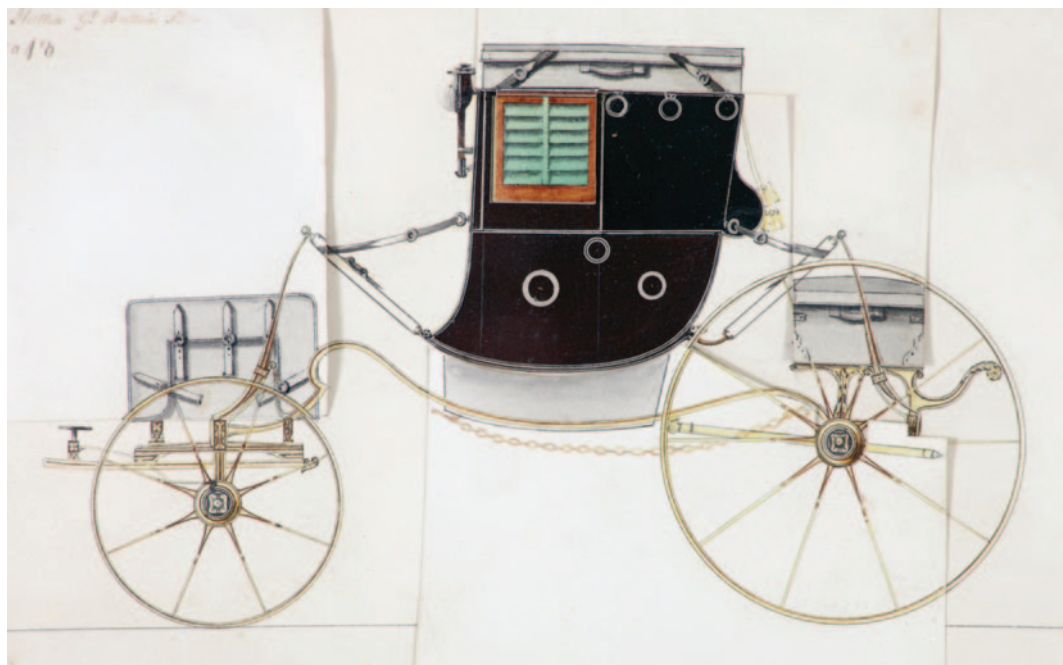
4 – John Hutton, design for a town coach, signed by Rudolph Ackermann, c.1789
(courtesy Ardgillan Castle Collection / photo: the author)

DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE

ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY DROVE THE MARKET FOR CARRIAGES AS IMPROVEMENTS in axle design and carriage springs transformed the speed, comfort and appearance of the carriage from the huge, slow, lumbering coach in use at the beginning of the eighteenth century to the light, smart and speedy curricle of the last decades of the century. The Dublin Society, founded in 1731, was to the forefront in technological experimentation and exploration. One of its members was Richard Lovell Edgeworth, who had been experimenting in improvements to wheeled carriages from the early 1770s and was a renowned pioneer of carriage technology.¹⁸ In the 1750s, the Dublin Society established a drawing school of landscape and ornament, where students, mainly from artisan backgrounds, learned the basics of drawing, engraving and design work. The first head of the department in 1756 was James Mannin, a landscape artist who was also a skilled carriage designer.¹⁹ Members of several coach-making families, bearing surnames such as Bond, Collier, Dodd, Dalton, Harrick and Strong, appear in the list of eighteenth-century students attending the Society Schools, alongside four members of the Hutton coach-making family – John (in 1769), Thomas (1772), Daniel (1775), and Robert (1797).²⁰

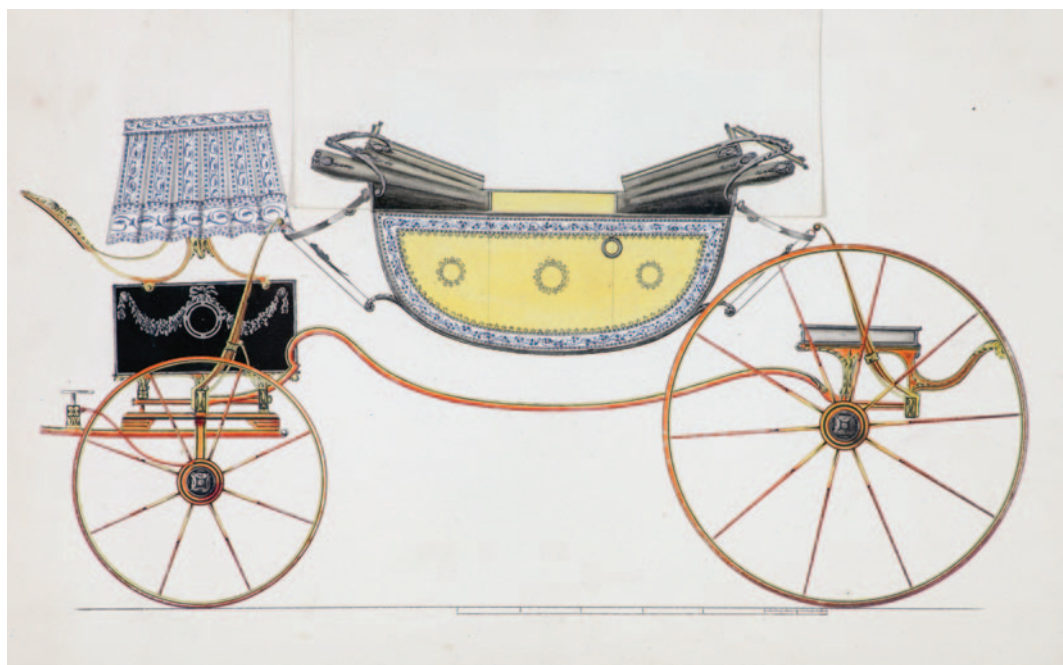
An understanding of design and pattern-making was essential for Dublin coach-makers, who provided a variety of carriage types to serve different purposes. While the names of carriages varied over the years, most elite families at the end of the eighteenth century aspired to a town coach, a large and substantial four-wheeled vehicle with fixed roof and two seats facing each other; this could accommodate four to six passengers, and bring a family comfortably from its country estate to Dublin (Plate 4). The decoration of this carriage was often elegantly co-ordinated, the hammer-cloth covering the driving seat being richly decorated to match both the coachman's livery and the painted finish of the coach, which usually featured the family armorials on its doors. Similar in style to the town coach was the lighter postchaise, which was faster and could comfortably accommodate three or four people (Plate 5). As it did not have a driving box, it was steered by a postilion mounted on one of the front horses. The landau was a light, elegant, open four-wheeled carriage, with a cup-shaped body and twin hoods which could be pulled up in wet weather (Plate 6). This type of vehicle was ideal for short trips into the country or for shopping and visits around town, and was driven by a coachman. The phaeton was a light carriage which seated two people, one of whom took the reins (Plate 7). High-perch phaetons had the coach body perched above the front wheels and were quite challenging to control. Young men favoured the curricle, a light, stylish two-wheeler, designed to seat two people and drawn by two horses of matched gait and size, harnessed side by side (Plate 8). The curricle could achieve speeds of up to sixteen miles per hour on the open road; it was the equivalent of today's sports car.

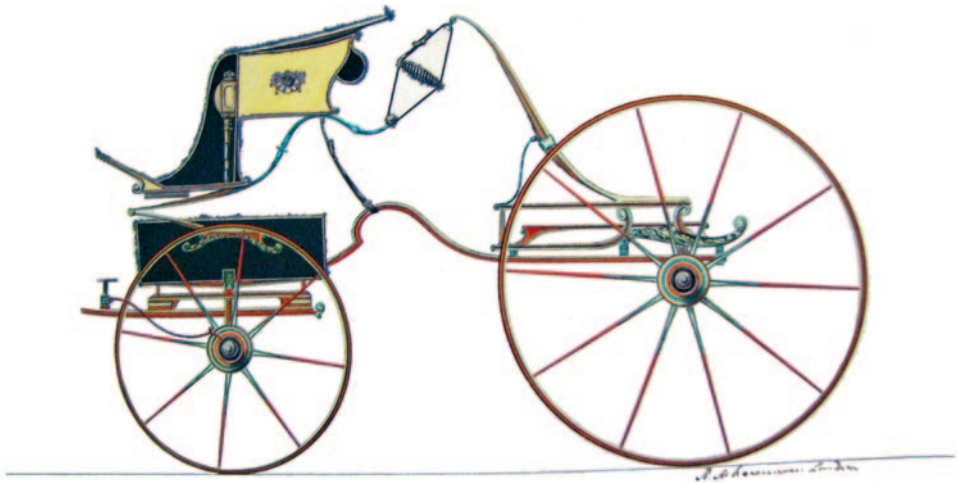
It was of crucial importance that the master coach-maker was fully cognisant of the latest developments in carriage technology, styling and decoration. As with Thomas Chippendale's *The Gentleman's and Cabinet Maker's Director* published in 1754 for



John Hutton

*5, 6 – Designs for a postchaise and a landau
(both private collection / photos: Dara McGrath)*

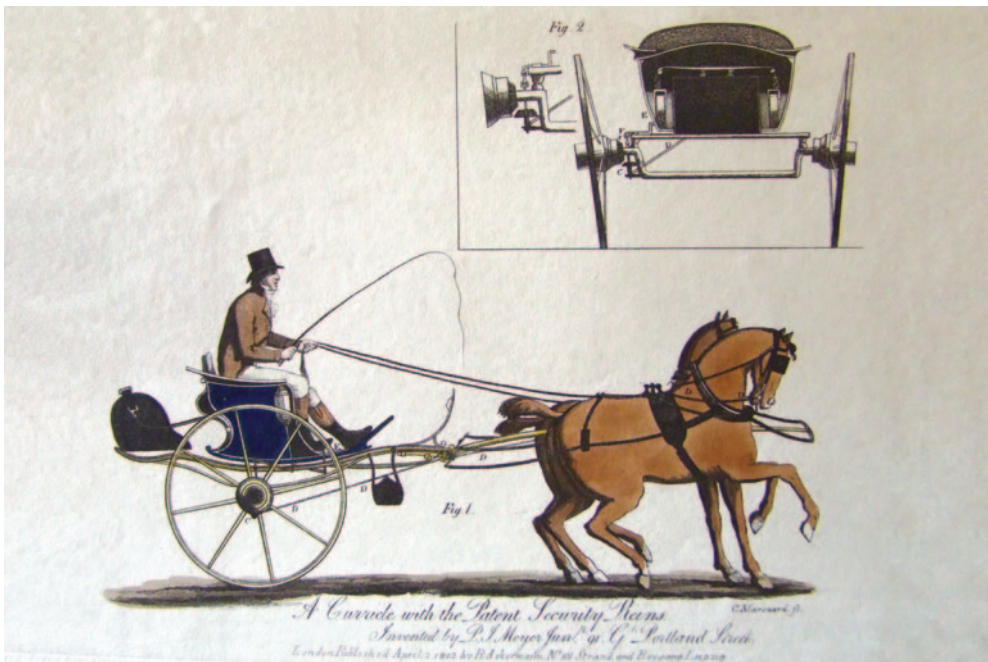




7 – John Hutton, design for a phaeton, signed by Rudolph Ackermann

8 – Image of a curricle from an advertisement for security reins in Rudolph Ackermann's
SIX IMITATIONS OF DRAWINGS OF FASHIONABLE CARRIAGES, 1800

(both courtesy Ardgillan Castle Collection / photos: the author)

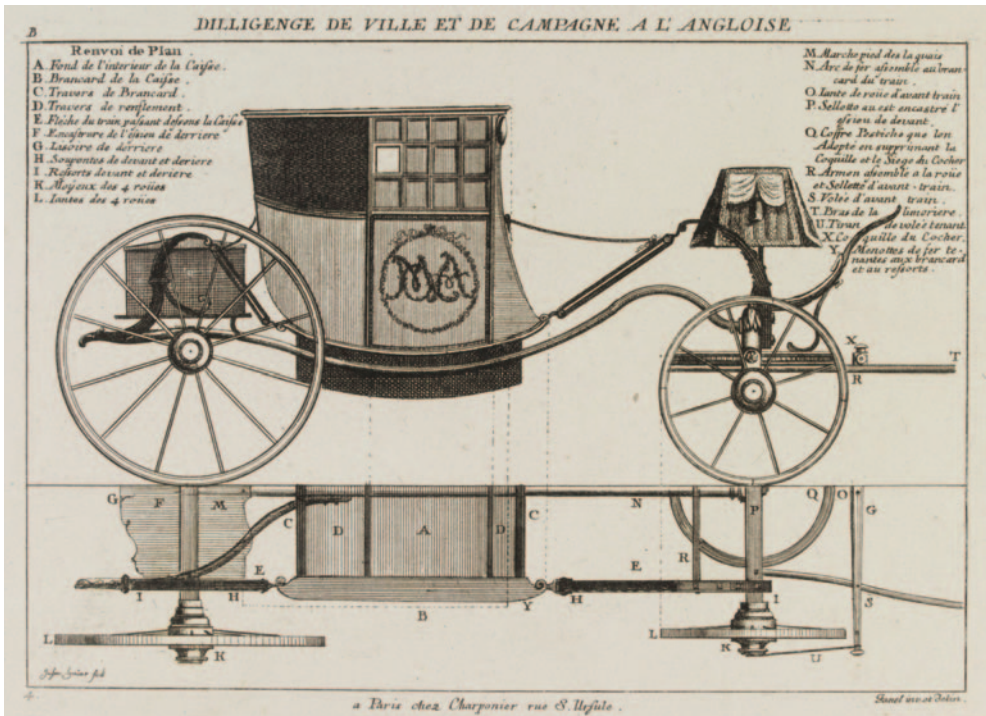
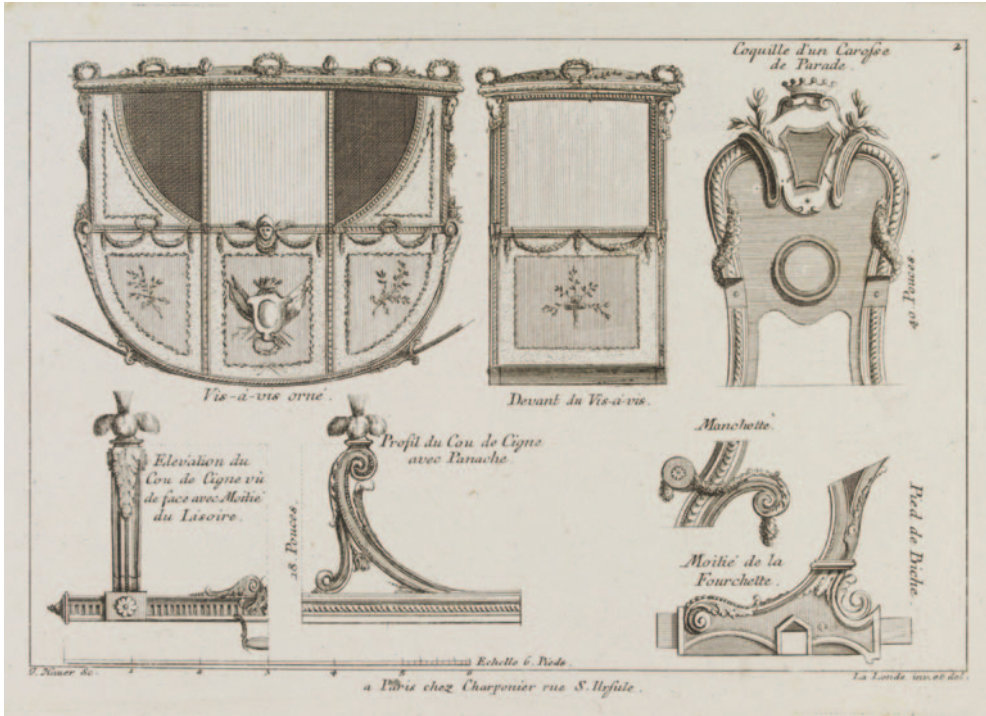


furniture-makers, coach-makers were guided in the important business of manufacturing by reference to catalogues. Here the emphasis was firmly on carriage technology, dealing with problems such as turning in a tight space and hauling heavy loads, and titles included Jacob Rowe, *All sorts of wheel-carriage improved* (London, 1734), and A. Webley, *The nobleman and gentleman's director and assistant, in the true choice of their wheel-carriages* (London, 1763). Webley's book, for example, addressed the problem of drawing a heavy coach uphill, noting that 'many a fine horse [has] been totally spoiled by going up great ascents, and all owing to fixing improperly the wheels and axis'.²¹ These catalogues provided diagrams of the latest in carriage technology, but lacked guidance on decoration. This changed when the first in a series of beautifully engraved and aquatinted carriage catalogues was produced in London in 1791 by Rudolph Ackermann, who would later become famous as publisher of *The Repository of Arts* periodicals (pub. 1809-29). Ackermann was born in Leipzig in 1764, the son of a coach- and harness-maker. He trained as a carriage designer in Hueningen, near Basle, before moving to work in Paris in 1783 where he was employed by the fashionable carriage-maker Antoine Carassi. Arriving in London sometime between 1783 and 1786, Ackermann brought Parisian ideas of elegance and style to the business of carriage-designing in London. He published a series of catalogues between 1791 and 1814. Unlike previous catalogues, each Ackermann catalogue contained images in full-colour of the most up-to-date carriage forms, and an important introductory page where he dictated what was then fashionable in the styling, bodywork, colour and upholstery of carriages for a particular season. Such information was valuable to both carriage makers and their clients alike.

By the end of the eighteenth century there had been a dramatic expansion in the use of two-dimensional paper plans for the sophisticated designs required by coach-builders.²² Soon coach-makers were advertising their use of such patterns. In 1810 the coach-maker Michael Gorman of Boot Lane advertised 'a variety of new fashionable gigs made on the most improved plans'.²³ In the same year, Benjamin Stephens of Bishop Street boasted of 'a whole variety of cars on the most approved plans, the whole manufactured under own immediate inspection', while Bennet & Son of Aungier Street were selling 'a Landau built after the latest pattern from London'.²⁴ A rare collection of engravings after the designs of Richard de Lalonde (1740-1830) and Janel, published in Paris at the end of the eighteenth century, is now in the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.²⁵ These plates illustrate the numbered and named parts for the various sections of a vehicle, and indicate how they fit together (Plates 9, 10). Such patterns were then sized up, the full-sized drawings being used as templates for the individual parts of the carriage. While the coach was being built, these diagrams with measurements were chalked on blackboards on the walls of the workshop by the master coach-builder so that workers could see how the sections would dovetail together.²⁶

9, 10 – *Cutting patterns after the designs of Richard de Lalonde and Janel*

from *CAHIER DE BERLINES*, published in the late 18th century by Johann Thomas Hauer (courtesy Victoria & Albert Museum)



JOHN HUTTON & SONS

A RARE COLLECTION OF CARRIAGE DESIGN CARDS FROM THE COACH MANUFACTORY OF John Hutton & Sons sheds further light on the design and decoration of carriages made in Ireland at the end of the eighteenth century (Plates 1, 2, 11-13). In 1779, John Hutton (1756-1830), then a young coach-builder of twenty-three, set up in business in Great Britain Street [(now Parnell Street), the heart of the coach-building industry in Dublin. It seems likely that this enterprise was made possible on the strength of an inheritance from his late father, a successful leather currier, who had died that year.²⁷ Hutton appears to have achieved success quite early in his career, winning the competition to supply the prototypes for the first mail-coaches to be used in Ireland in 1788 and being awarded the contract to supply all of the coaches for Ireland's postal routes the following year. On the strength of this contract, he moved his workshop to Summerhill, where he continued to manufacture elegant carriages in a separate premises beside his mail-coach manufactory and timber-yard. He was joined in the business by his sons Robert and Thomas, and from 1811 onwards the company was known as Hutton & Sons. An English industrialist was impressed by a tour, in September 1813, of 'the extensive coach manufactory of Mr Hutton who gives employment to more than five hundred people', and concluded, approvingly, that 'in point of execution, the work is nowhere exceeded in London: the order and regularity with which so large a concern is conducted I beheld with great pleasure.'²⁸ The Hutton manufactory continued successfully until 1926. Among their notable clients were Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert, who were provided with a carriage in 1851; known as the Irish State Coach, it is still used today when Queen Elizabeth II travels from Buckingham Palace to the Palace of Westminster to formally open the new legislative session of the British parliament.

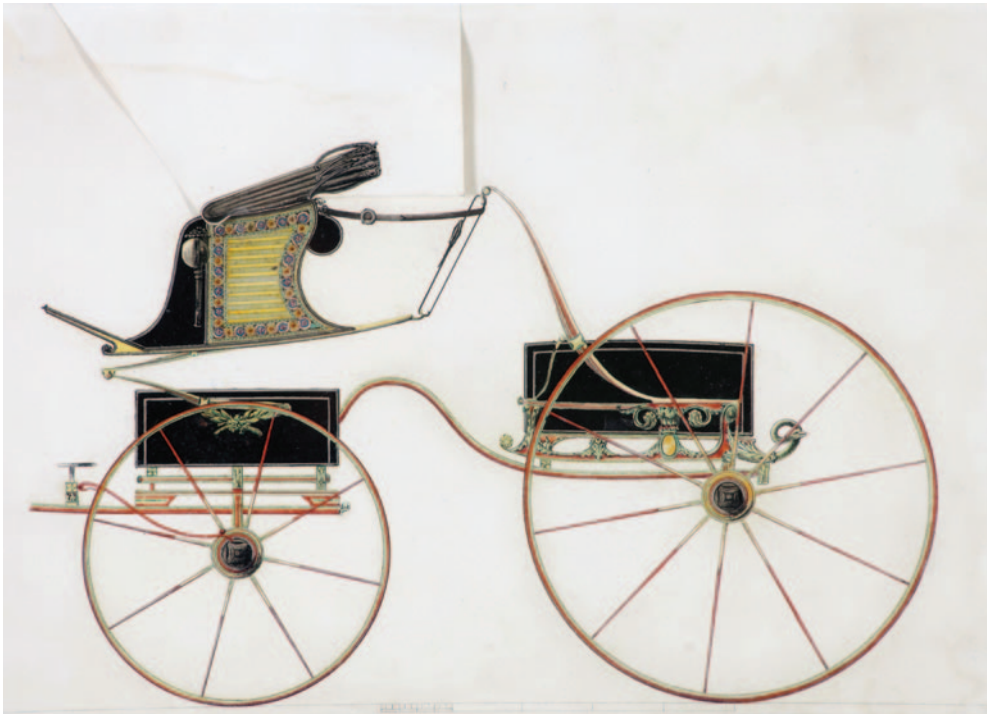
Documentary material relating to the Hutton & Sons coach manufactory is scattered over a number of repositories, and includes a number of carriage-design cards at Ardgillan Castle, near Balbriggan, county Dublin, and in a private collection. Many of these cards are numbered, indicating different sets of cards being used at various times. Some of the designs, now in a private collection, carry John Hutton's name and the address of 'Great Brittain [*sic*] Street', and will form the focus of the following description. Individually drawn, the outline and details were first delineated in red ink, and they were then carefully coloured using watercolours and, in some cases, the type of oil paints used on coaches. As John Hutton moved premises from Great Britain Street to Summerhill in 1789, it is possible to accurately date these particular designs.

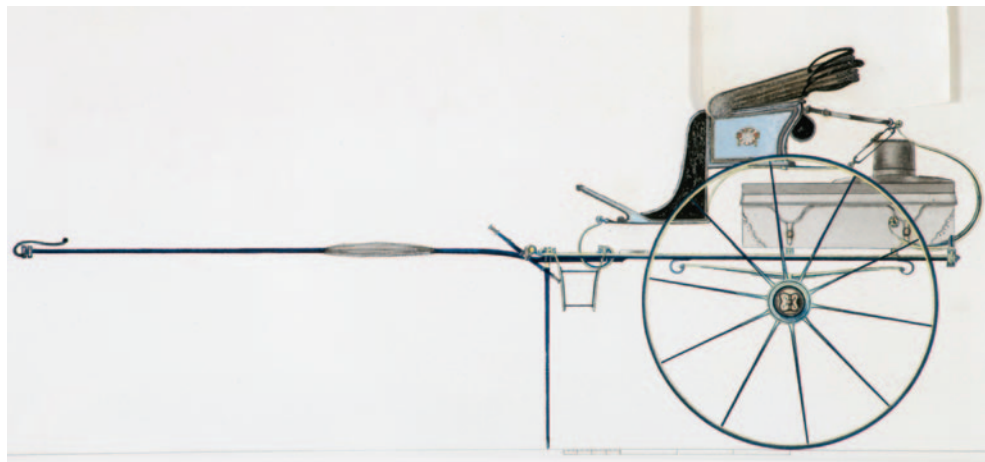
The six cards in this collection follow the convention employed in carriage catalogues by presenting a diagrammatic side view of the carriage, with a measurement scale. The designs illustrate a town coach, a landau, a curricle, a high-perch phaeton and two postchaises. Although they do not appear to be a matched set, they are all executed to a very high standard and are contemporary with each other in style. The size of the cards varies slightly, averaging 18 x 32 cm, with three being numbered and bearing the Great



John Hutton

11, 12 – Designs for a town coach and a phaeton (private collection / photos: Dara McGrath)





13 – John Hutton, design for a curricle (private collection / photo: Dara McGrath)

Britain Street address. Adding to their appeal, five of the six carriage cards include ingenious cardboard tabs, which, on being lifted, reveal the carriage in alternative modes, presenting the client with a variety of options. Evocative marginalia on some of the designs in the Ardgillan collection further suggests that they may have been used as a focus of discussion with a client.²⁹ Here, the pencilled notes allude to types of handles selected, and to colours, dates and prices, suggesting the importance of these cards in the decision-making process.

A design for a postchaise, signed in pen by Rudolph Ackermann, is the most elaborately designed card in this private collection and has four lift-up sections, unveiling new elements of the carriage as each section is peeled back (Plate 2). The postchaise, on first view, is displayed as it would look when travelling a distance, and shows the carriage with two travelling boxes strapped to the roof and Salisbury boots (luggage compartments) front and back. The rear Salisbury boot then lifts to reveal the option of a slim sword case, essential for the gentleman's sword that he would remove while travelling. When the tab over the front trunk is raised, an optional protective trunk cover of oiled silk or canvas is revealed, and when this cover section itself is raised, a coach-driver's seat, complete with hammer-cloth, cleverly transforms the whole design from that of postchaise to a town coach driven by a coach-driver. The sheer ingenuity of the complex folding design is reminiscent of the landscape designs of Humphry Repton (1752-1818), with their system of overlays to show 'before' and 'after' views. Autographed designs by Ackermann are in fact very rare, and little is known of his early career in London. In 1790 he received his first major commission from London coach-maker Philip Godsall, which was to design a coach for the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.³⁰ Such a prestigious commission must have been preceded by designs for other coachmakers in London in the years 1783 to 1790, and the Hutton cards with the Great Britain Street address date from this period.³¹ This is significant, as once Ackermann began to produce his catalogues, as

he did from 1791 onwards, Hutton would have been able to produce cards with similar or even identical designs.³²

Although the nature of the relationship between John Hutton and Rudolph Ackermann has yet to be established, Hutton was no doubt aware of Ackermann's reputation in London, where, from 1783 onwards, he was beginning to make a name for himself in the carriage-design business. Whether these designs were produced by Ackermann for Hutton directly or were acquired by other means, it is clear that John Hutton was keen to benefit from the most important carriage designer then in London. In 1818 'Messrs Hutton of Dublin' was the only Irish company among a host of eminent English coach-building firms testing Ackermann's new 'patent moveable axles',³³ and Hutton is known to have employed English craftsmen at his manufactory in Summerhill.³⁴

These carriage cards are remarkably well preserved, and retain their original freshness of colour and decorative detail. William Laffan has noted that 'in places, the water-

14 – Decoration details on a landau (Plate 6), a town coach (Plate 11) and a postchaise (Plate 1)





15 – Rudolph Ackermann, ‘Section of a design for a Drawing Room’
 pl. XVII, *DESIGNS FOR ARCHITECTS, UPHOLSTERERS, CABINET MAKER, ETC.* (London, 1801)

colour is heightened with gold, emphasising the sheer opulence of the drawings as works of art in their own right, but also giving an indication of the splendour of the completed coaches themselves.³⁵ The decoration is both striking and astutely handled. The attractive lines of the landau in vibrant yellow, for example, is enhanced by a delicate tracery border of blue and white (Plates 6, 14). This blue and white colouring is repeated in a matching hammer-cloth thrown over the driving seat, where the stylised blue acanthus leaves are interspersed with ropes of blue on a white background. The design for a town coach is similarly attractively finished, the sparkling decoration drawing attention away from the size and weight of the carriage, which was built to accommodate up to six people (Plates, 11, 14). A broad border of tightly furled purple acanthus leaves, edged with ropework, marks the division between upper and lower sections. Once again the pattern on the coach’s hammer-cloth echoes the colours and patterns of the coach’s painted panels, and presumably a matching fabric was intended to line the interior. An apple-green postchaise features a border incorporating an interlaced diamond pattern (Plates 1, 14), similar to a frieze featured in Ackermann’s *Designs for Architects, Upholsterers, Cabinet makers etc.* of 1801 (Plate 15).³⁶ This geometric approach to decoration continues in the design for the high-perch phaeton, the striped design being softened by a surround of stylised flowers and bead-work (Plate 12). The metalwork is further embellished with

festoons of foliage, wheat heads and an entwining snake's head. A striped finish was evidently fashionable at this time. In January 1788, the *London Chronicle* commented in glowing terms on 'a most superb coach' belonging to the Spanish ambassador, describing panels 'decorated with perpendicular stripes of a ruby colour and gold with a beautiful variegated border'.³⁷

SALE AND DISPLAY

NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS FROM 1779-80, THE YEAR JOHN HUTTON BEGAN HIS business in Dublin, provide some insights into Irish coach-building and selling practices. Sweetman of Park Street, for example, was selling new carriages which could be 'finished in a few days to the purchaser's fancy', while John Nowlan of Wood Street was selling a carriage 'bespoke by a gentleman gone abroad who gave five guineas earnest for it', indicating that a relatively small deposit was required before work commenced on a bespoke carriage.³⁸ William Whitton reminded customers that 'being lately returned from London, [he] is well acquainted with many of their methods and hopes with his care and attention to merit the Approbation of the Nobility, Gentry and the Public'.³⁹ Descriptors used in advertisements indicate the priorities of the consumer, with 'neat', 'light', 'fashionable' and 'elegant' being most frequently used. Other terms, like 'little worse than new' and 'on its first wheels', hint at a popular trade in second-hand vehicles. (Hutton himself used the newspapers to sell second-hand carriages.) One advertisement, referring to an uncollected bespoke carriage made by John Costello of Henry Street, provides rare descriptive detail of both the exterior and interior furnishings of an elegant carriage manufactured in Dublin in 1780:

A notice to the gentleman who some time ago bespoke an elegant crane neck vis a vis at my yard, painted a fine green, high varnished, elegantly gilt, lined with flowered crimson damask and interlined with green lustring; all the trimmings, tassels, fringes and lace of best Ballandine Silk, a crimson velvet hammer-cloth trimmed with silver lace and some other appendages, that unless he does pay for the same before the 20th day of next month, the said vis a vis will be sold at the Tholsel of the City of Dublin to the best and fastest Bidder.⁴⁰

CARRIAGES ON PARADE

IN FACT, NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS, AS OPPOSED TO ADVERTISEMENTS, PROVIDE THE BEST descriptions of eighteenth-century carriages. The high point of the coach-making business in London was the annual parade of carriages for the King's Birthday; many gentlemen ordered new carriages or had their coach repainted for this occasion, which was

a competition in all but name. Each carriage deemed worthy of note was described in detail, the name of its owner, its paintwork, its decoration, its embroidered lace, its lining and its hammer-cloth all receiving comment. In 1787, the *Morning Herald* announced that

The Duke of Cumberland has just built an elegant vis a vis against the Birthday; the panels are dark green diversified with small Fleur de Lys in gold, the border contains among other ornaments the tail feathers of a peacock painted to imitate nature pretty correctly; the hammer cloth is edged with an embroidered lace in which peacock's feathers are also introduced; the carriage is a crane neck of red and gold.⁴¹

These papers also provide tantalising glimpses of Irish-made vehicles, indicating that they were just as eye-catching and worthy of comment as those produced in London. In January 1788, the *London Chronicle* described a number of the Irish carriages which had taken part in a parade through London to celebrate the official forty-fourth birthday of Queen Charlotte.

Lady Gormanstown's coach does credit to the artist and her ladyship's taste: it is on a perch carriage, the body is an olive tintured with white; the panels are charged with cinque foils round which is a beautiful variegated border, a silver moulding runs round the roof ornamented with coronets; the lining is white with festoon curtains ... The coach of Lord Donegall is an apple green with a variegated border around the panels, the [under-]carriage and wheels are stone coloured with green edging ... Mr La Touch [*sic*] the Dublin banker exhibited a plain light coloured handsome coach with a border of wreathed variegated flowers, lining and hammer cloth white. Lord Carysfort displayed a chariot of a light green colour with ensigns of the Order of St Patrick round his Lordships arms.⁴²

Reporting on the Queen's Birthday celebrations at Dublin Castle in March 1788, *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* noted

There were very few new carriages, the only ones worth particular notice were a most elegant carriage of Lord Valentia's made by Collier, cream coloured ground, a border upon a blue fillet, flowers twining around a ribbon, with silver mouldings round the frame and a very handsome carriage of Lord Delvin's, salmon colour ground, plated framings round the frame with large mantels upon the panels.⁴³

CONCLUSION

IN THE CLOSING DECADES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, DUBLIN WAS HOME TO A THRIVING coach-building industry, with around twenty-eight carriage workshops employing approximately 2,000 hands. Competition was intense, with coach-makers vying for business against one another and also against London companies. Master coach-makers in Dublin availed of catalogues illustrating the latest technology and the most fashionable

patterns produced in London, then regarded as the centre of excellence of the carriage industry. From 1791, the catalogues of Rudolph Ackermann, in particular, had a profound impact on the design and manufacture of coaches made in Dublin manufactories.

John Hutton opened his carriage workshop in the heart of Dublin's coach-building industry at a time of increasing confidence in Ireland's business world in the late eighteenth century.⁴⁴ Despite the fact that he was the first of his family to set up in the coach-building business, Hutton's workshop thrived and within ten years had moved to larger premises in Summerhill. Hutton & Sons successfully remained in business even after the market for expensive carriages contracted in the years following the Union of Ireland and England in 1800, staving off competition from rail and tram companies over the course of the nineteenth century before finally succumbing to the impact of the motor-car trade and closing its doors in early 1926.

The design cards employed by the coach manufactory of John Hutton in the 1780s and 1790s provide tantalising clues concerning the purchasing of these elaborate, bespoke vehicles. As the focus of a design consultation, the cards, through a number of lift-up tabs, displayed the carriages in varying modes, and so demonstrated how vehicles might be customised to satisfy individual requirements. The clarity and attractiveness of these designs also allowed a client to visualise the finished form and decoration, and confirm the importance of visual communication when dealing with a genteel consumer base.⁴⁵ Moreover, these cards, arguably, reveal as much about John Hutton as his products: while accurately illustrating the different types of vehicles made and assembled by the company in the late Georgian period, these cards also underline Hutton's design sophistication and business acumen. The design and decoration of these carriage cards confirm that, for Ireland's elite, an elegant, co-ordinated equipage was of paramount importance for reflecting their individual social status. Dublin's leading coach-makers successfully supplied their needs with panache and style.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Walter G. Strickland, 'The State Coach of the Lord Mayor of the City of Dublin and the State Coach of the Earl of Clare, Lord Chancellor of Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, XI, 1921, 49-67.
- ² J. Cornforth, 'Coaching Forth a Masterpiece', *Country Life*, 187, no. 3, January 1993, 36-37; Lisa Marie Griffith, 'A Victory for Irish Manufacture: The Lord Mayor's State Carriage, 1791', *History Ireland*, 17, no. 3, 2009, 22-23; J.L. McCracken, 'Transport and Travel in the Pre-Railway Age in Ireland', *Donegal Annual*, 6, no. 2, 1965, 129-37; Constantia Maxwell, 'Bianconi and his Irish Cars', *Country Life*, 103, no. 2674, April 1948, 776-77.
- ³ Desmond Guinness, 'Mobile Thrones', *Country Life*, 198, no. 3, January 2004, 52-53. These drawings

- were unsigned and their author(s) remains unidentified.
- ⁴ William Laffan, 'John Hutton: Set of Six Designs for Coaches' in William Laffan (ed.), *The Age of Elegance in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 2007), 38-42.
 - ⁵ Jim Cooke, *John Hutton and Sons, Summerhill, Dublin 1779-1925* (Dublin, 1993).
 - ⁶ This material is in various locations. Some carriage cards are on public display in Ardgillan Castle, Balbriggan, county Dublin, with a small amount of background material not available to the public. There is also a group of six carriage cards in a private collection. There are some Hutton family photographs in the National Library of Ireland (NLI) photographic collection, while a few Hutton carriage accounts are dispersed among various family papers in the NLI manuscripts collection, including the Baker Papers, MS 21,017, and the Smyth Papers, MS 18,932.
 - ⁷ Strickland, 'The State Coach of the Lord Mayor of the City of Dublin'.
 - ⁸ Robert Dennis, *Industrial Ireland: a practical and non-political view of Ireland for the Irish* (London, 1887) 134.
 - ⁹ *Saunders' Newsletter*, 26th January 1779.
 - ¹⁰ *ibid.*, 6th January 1785.
 - ¹¹ Fiona Ahern, unpublished masters thesis 2013, National College Art & Design, Dublin, Appendix C.
 - ¹² Joseph Collyer, *The parents and guardian's directory and the youth's guide in the choice of profession or trade* (London, 1761) 105.
 - ¹³ Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (London, 1747) 229.
 - ¹⁴ NLI, Ormonde Papers, MS 2520, 'Fourteen Itemised Bills of Work done for the Earl of Ossory (aft. 2nd Duke of Ormonde) by Thomas Brigham Coachmaker 1683-1687'.
 - ¹⁵ NLI, Bruen Papers, MS 21831, 'Account of Wm. and James Collier and Wm. Bond, coachmakers, Kevin Street, Dublin, with the executors of Henry Bruen of Oak Park Carlow, 1793-1795'; New York Public Library, Trumbull Papers, MS 3039, 'Coachmakers Account to Nath. Trumble Esq. 1812-1813'. My thanks to Dr Anna Moran for drawing my attention to this manuscript.
 - ¹⁶ NLI, MS 82, 'Record of the admission of freemen to the Corporation of Saddlers, Upholders, Coach and Coach Harness makers, etc., or Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dublin, 1776-1792'. Among the names inscribed there is that of Irish patriot Wolfe Tone, one of the leaders of the 1798 rebellion, the only coach-maker to have a statue erected in his honour in Dublin The statue by Edward Delaney was erected in St Stephen's Green, Dublin, in 1967. Theobald Wolfe Tone graduated as a coach-builder on the 12th October 1789, by virtue of being son of coachbuilder Peter Tone.
 - ¹⁷ NLI, MS 81, 'Lists of bye-laws of the Corporation of Saddlers, Upholders, Coach and Coach Harness Makers, etc., or Guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Dublin, approved in 1769 and in 1792'.
 - ¹⁸ Richard Lovell Edgeworth, 'Letter to Rev. Henry Ussher, giving an account of some experiments on wheel carriages. With 1 plate', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy, Science*, 2, 1787-88, 73-80.
 - ¹⁹ James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *The Dictionary of Irish Biography, from the earliest times to 2002*, 9 vols (Cambridge, 2009) VI, 345.
 - ²⁰ Gitta Willemson, *The Dublin Society Drawing Schools: students and award winners, 1746-1876* (Dublin, 2000).
 - ²¹ A. Webley, *The nobleman and gentleman's director and assistant, in the true choice of their wheel-carriages* (London, 1763).
 - ²² John Styles, 'Manufacturing, Consumption and Design in Eighteenth-Century England', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York and London, 1994) 527-55: 544.
 - ²³ *Saunders' Newsletter*, 30th March 1810.
 - ²⁴ *ibid.*, 17th February 1810; 27th April 1810.

- ²⁵ Victoria and Albert Museum, London, E.1436-1906 to 1444-1906. Designers Richard (de) Lalonde and Janel worked for the carriage workshop of Charponier in Paris around 1788. *Cahier de Berlines* was published by printmaker Johann Thomas Hauer (1748-1820) in the late eighteenth century.
- ²⁶ Orazio Curti, 'Carts and Carriages', *A History of Industrial Design*, 3 vols (Milan, 1990) 1, 270-78: 270.
- ²⁷ Jim Cooke, *Ireland's Premier Coachbuilder* (Dublin, 1993) 5.
- ²⁸ J.C. Curwen, Esq. MP, *The state of Ireland: a series of letters written on a tour through that country* (London, 1818) letter XLV.
- ²⁹ The carriage cards held in Ardgillan Castle, Balbriggan, county Dublin, are possibly the leftovers of sales material: they are annotated with numbers suggesting that they came from a variety of sets of cards used over several years.
- ³⁰ John Ford, *The Business of Art, 1783-1983* (London, 1983) 25.
- ³¹ An original Ackermann design for a chariot dating from 1794 is in the collection of the Huntington Museum in San Marino, California. Writing in 1983, this was described by Ackermann's biographer, John Ford, as being 'the only original drawing of Ackermann that survives.' Since then, this set of six designs for coaches by John Hutton has been brought to light by William Laffan. See Laffan 'John Hutton: A Set of Six Designs for Coaches'.
- ³² There is a remarkable similarity between the earliest of the unsigned Hutton carriage cards and Ackermann's catalogue images, being both similarly executed and coloured.
- ³³ Rudolph Ackermann, *Observations on Ackermann's patent moveable axles for four wheeled carriages* (London, 1818) 6.
- ³⁴ Cooke, *Ireland's Premier Coachbuilder*, 8, 10.
- ³⁵ Laffan, 'John Hutton: A Set of Six Designs for Coaches', 38.
- ³⁶ Rudolph Ackermann, *Designs for architects, upholsterers, cabinet makers Etc.* (London, 1801) pl. XVII, 'Section of a design for a Drawing Room'.
- ³⁷ *London Chronicle*, 17th January 1788.
- ³⁸ *Saunders' Newsletter*, 30th April 1779.
- ³⁹ *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 7th August 1779.
- ⁴⁰ *Saunders' Newsletter*, 26th June 1780.
- ⁴¹ *Morning Herald* (London), 26th May 1787.
- ⁴² *London Chronicle*, 17th January 1788.
- ⁴³ *Walker's Hibernian Magazine*, March 1788.
- ⁴⁴ 'The last great spurt in output for nearly half a century occurred in the late 1780s and early 1790s. These were years of visible expansion throughout the economy, a time of cheap money and investment starts in many sectors. They coincided with an exceptional industrial advance in Britain.' David Dickson, *New Foundations, Ireland 1660-1800*, 2nd edn. (Dublin (1987), 2000) 116.
- ⁴⁵ The communication between retailers and consumers is a discrete area of scholarship. See, for example, Jon Stobart, *Sugar and Spice: the grocers and groceries in provincial England 1650-1830* (Oxford, 2012), and Claire Walsh, 'Shop, Shopping and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth Century England', in John Styles and Amanda Vickery (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven and London, 2006) 151-77.