


regency silver



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Lifestyles evolve, interior decoration changes, currencies stop working, but the timeless beauty of English antique silver endures.

When the masterpieces of the Regency period shown here were made, they were innovative both in style and technique. They still have the power to delight and amaze us with their imagination and superb craftsmanship. Here we invite you to look at Regency masterworks in a new way, as we did with rococo silver in our last book.

On the covers: wine cooler, one of a pair by Paul Storr, 1809 (front); soup-tureen by John Bridge, 1824 (back)

Left: handle detail of urn by Paul Storr, 1814

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Unlike rococo, the term Regency refers to a period rather than a style.

In fact the silver made during the first quarter of the nineteenth century is splendidly diverse. Much of it was startlingly new, using the motifs of classical decoration in revolutionary ways, while many pieces revived renaissance, mannerist and especially rococo decoration but with an entirely fresh twist.

Strictly speaking, the Regency lasted from 1811 to the death of George III in 1820. Yet one can detect a distinct period commencing at the end of the 1790s and extending to the late 1820s. Much of this was thanks to the influence of the Prince Regent himself, who was not only a discerning collector but an enlightened patron of contemporary architects, painters and silversmiths. The new and old silver he amassed remains one of the glories of the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace.

The Regency period was a time of tremendous commercial and industrial expansion, when Britain really did rule the waves. The country may have lost one empire with the American Revolution, but it was eagerly expanding elsewhere. At home, the steam engine was revolutionizing industry, as well as travel on both land and sea.

Economically, it was an era of boom and bust – the Napoleonic Wars dramatically drove up the price of grain, and thereby rents, making landowners cash rich. They invested in splendid silver. War heroes were presented with magnificent cups, tureens and wine-coolers. It was a time of vibrant artistic endeavour, with sculptors and painters competing to provide designs for silver.

Central to this activity were the two great London firms, the Royal Goldsmiths Rundell, Bridge & Rundell



**Detail of the spout
of the urn by Paul
Storr, 1814**

and their rivals, Garrard's. Philip Rundell and John Bridge were astute in realizing that the only way to dominate the market was to take great artists and craftsmen directly on to their payroll. Men like Paul Storr were hired to lead workshops of five hundred or more highly specialized skilled craftsmen and artists.

The result was an excellence and cohesiveness of both design and

workmanship that have not been seen since. The masterworks of the Regency cannot be repeated, for the craft skills no longer exist. And the fact that these masterworks are the product of so much specialization in no way lessens our appreciation of their achievement. Great art, such as a Regency soup-tureen, a classic Rolls-Royce or a great Hollywood musical, is not necessarily the work of one pair of hands.

four **salts**

silver gilt

London, 1819

Robert Garrard for Garrard & Co.

L 5.5 cm

These spectacular salts are based on those in the famous Marine Service made for Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1742 and now at Windsor Castle. The rockwork and characterful crustacea were probably cast from life, using the lost-wax process. In the twentieth century, the salts belonged to the noted collector Francis Stonor.







tea urn

silver, ivory

London, 1814

Paul Storr for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

H 58.5 cm

This elegantly simple urn is dominated by the highly decorative nature of its heraldic engraving. The arms are those of Thomas Hay-Drummond, 11th Earl of Kinnoull (1785–1866), who served as Lord Lyon King of Arms, one of the Great Officers of State in Scotland. Lord Kinnoull was also Lord Lieutenant of Perthshire. He rebuilt the family seat, Dupplin Castle in Perthshire, after a fire destroyed the house in 1827.



twelve **dessert plates**

silver gilt

London, 1821

Philip Rundell for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

D 23 cm

These highly unusual plates combine classical with renaissance motifs. They formed part of an extensive service in both silver and silver gilt commissioned by Sir Richard Sutton (1798–1855), who had inherited his uncle's extensive land holdings at the age of four in 1802. A great sportsman, he was known as "King of the Chase". Dessert plates are very rare in Regency silver.





inkstand

silver gilt

London, 1807

Benjamin Smith for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

L 33.5 cm

Rundell's had set up a design studio and manufactory in

Greenwich in 1804 under the direction of Digby Scott and Benjamin Smith.

Many of their designs came from the French designer and painter **Jean-Jacques Boileau**, such as the elegant snake handles on this inkstand.





centrepiece

silver

London, 1824

John Bridge for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

H 38 cm

This magnificent shell is a tour de force of the modeller's art.

The design can be attributed to the great sculptor John Flaxman (1755–1826), who supplied designs to the Royal Goldsmiths for a number of years.

The sheer naturalism of the design demonstrates a new trend in Rundell's designs, which were becoming increasingly exotic. This example, and its mate

hallmarked a year earlier and now in the Art Institute of Chicago, attracted the King, who ordered four similar shells for the Royal Collection in 1826.







Two of four **wine-coasters**

silver gilt

London, 1803

Digby Scott & Benjamin Smith for Rundell & Bridge

D 14.5 cm

Hugh Montgomerie, 12th Earl of Eglintoun (1739–1819), whose crest is engraved on these coasters, was a career soldier. The “sodger Hugh” of Robert Burns’s poem, he also did much to develop his native Ayrshire, building the harbour at Ardrossan and the Paisley Canal.

soup-tureen and pair of sauce-tureens

silver

London, 1807–8

Paul Storr for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

L 53.3 and 26 cm

Stern-visaged lions figure prominently on these monumental tureens. Inspired by engravings by **Giovanni Battista Piranesi** published in 1778, they silently guard the elegant vase forms, on which Roman and Egyptian decoration is combined.







four **vases**

silver gilt, cut glass
London, 1823

John Bridge for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell
H 20.2 cm

The naturalism of the grape-vines that form the handles of these beautiful and rare vases contrasts with the stylized Greek motifs of acanthus and water leaves on the covers. The vases were made for Hugh Percy, 3rd Duke of Northumberland (1785–1847), a prodigious acquirer of silver and silver gilt from the Royal Goldsmiths. As Special Ambassador to France for the coronation of Charles X in 1825, he entertained magnificently. These vases were probably intended for *confiture* on his breakfast table.



tray

silver gilt

London, 1805

Digby Scott & Benjamin Smith for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

L 59 cm

This superb tray is embellished with grape-vines and lion masks based on designs by Jean-Jacques Boileau, a French painter who had come to London to work on the Prince of Wales's new palace, Carlton House. Boileau's collaboration with Scott and Smith was highly successful.

The techniques used in the making of this tray were innovative. The border, where each leaf or bunch of grapes has been separately cast and soldered to a wire frame, has a strong three-dimensional quality. But the tray itself is a backdrop for the armorials of Charles Chetwynd-Talbot, 2nd Earl Talbot of Hensol (1777–1849), who served as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland during his diplomatic career. The hounds which act as supporters of the shield are talbots.







eight **salts**

silver gilt
London, 1809

Paul Storr for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell
D 9.5 cm

These salts represent one of the earliest instances of the rococo revival.

In the year these salts were sold by Rundell's, their rivals, Garrard's, copied a pair of rococo soup-tureens for Lord Gwydir. The following decade would see a growth in interest not only in the rococo, but in other styles of the past. A set of eight Storr salts is very rare.

pair of **candelabra**
and pair of **candlesticks**

silver gilt
London, 1802
Paul Storr
H 51 cm

This elegant suite was made for Charles Chetwynd-Talbot, 2nd Earl Talbot of Hensol (1777–1849), who commissioned the tray shown earlier. The design is based on French ormolu examples by **Pierre Gouthière** (1732–1813), the most celebrated *ciseleur-doreur*, or worker in gilt bronze, of his time.







pair of **sauce-boats**

silver

London, 1812

Paul Storr for Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

L 25 cm

These naturalistic sauce-boats are inspired by originals made in 1764 for George III and still in the Royal Collection.

They in turn were based on even earlier designs published by Adam van Vianen in 1650. Storr used the model again some years later: an identical pair of 1819 is in the Portland Art Museum in Oregon, and a set was made for a Portuguese statesman, the Conde da Póvoa, in 1823.





pair of **wine-coolers**

silver gilt

London, 1825

Benjamin Smith

H 27.5 cm

These wine-coolers present a riot of naturalism and should be regarded as much as sculpture as silverware. They were made for John Campbell, 1st Marquess of Breadalbane (1762–1834), who for much of the 1820s was engaged in rebuilding his ancient family seat, Balloch Castle in Scotland, as a romantic stronghold overlooking the River Tay. Built on a lavish scale in the neo-Gothic style, the castle was where Queen Victoria and Prince Albert spent their honeymoon in 1842.

While the form of these coolers, and many of the motifs on them, are reminiscent of French rococo of the mid-eighteenth century, their exuberance and crisply modelled naturalism are unique.







basket

silver
London, 1810
Paul Storr
D 33 cm



four **candlesticks**

silver
London, 1806
Richard Cooke
H 26 cm

The delicate classicism of these candlesticks, of unusually small scale, owes much to French influences. Richard Cooke entered his mark in 1799 with an address in Carey Street, near Chancery Lane. Cooke was evidently not a retailer but a maker; and probably supplied finished silver to Rundell, Bridge & Rundell.

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Right: detail of the rim of one of the plates by Philip Rundell, 1821





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