



Thomas Pitts

A Neo-Classical Centrepiece

George III

London, 1783

Maker's mark of Thomas Pitts

The crest of Olliphant

Length: 40 cm, 5.7 in.

Weight: 1240 g, 29 oz 16 dwt

The centrepiece on four fluted feet conjoined with a beaded wire and terminated in acanthus foliage. The plain boat-shaped body bearing two neo-classical plaquettes with scenes of Psyche and Cupid together with the eternal flame and butterfly symbolising the reward of eternal love and happiness.

Artist description:

Son of Thomas Pitts of the Parish of St. Mary Whitechapel, apprenticed to Charles Hatfield 6 December 1737 and turned over to David Willaume (II) February 1742. Free, 16 January 1744. The mark now attributed here to him must have been entered not long after the start of the missing register of 1758-73, and he appears as plateworker, Air Street, St. James's, in the Parl. Report list 1773. He is recorded as working silversmith and chaser, Golden Cup, 20 Air Street, Piccadilly, 1767-93. The 'Workmen's Ledgers' of Parker and Wakelin (Garrard MSS., Victoria & Albert Museum) contain many

pages of accounts from Pitts for epergnes from 1766, from which the identification of the mark, formerly attributed to Thomas Powell, in absence of any other evidence was natural enough. His three sons,

Thomas, William and Joseph were all apprenticed to him in Air Street, 1767, 1769 and 1772. It is interesting to note that Joseph was apprenticed to his father and turned over the same day to Philip Day plate casemaker and leatherseller and described as plate casemaker on attaining his freedom in 1781.

The continuous need for cases for the output of epergnes and centrepieces must have led to a close connection with Day probably a desire to have a member of the family sharing in the business arising.