

## LLANBLETHIAN COTTAGE INVENTORY, 1819

The attached transcription of this inventory is accompanied by a glossary and notes on those items which might be unfamiliar or require explanation to the general reader. Of several other gentry-house inventories of the same time or area, those from Old Hall, Cowbridge of 1762 and 1778 have been mainly chosen for comparison because some things had changed considerably during the intervening 40 years, and others notably had not.

As one might expect, the furniture was of different periods and styles, although the minimal descriptions made by the inventory takers often obscures such changes. So, a "mohogany chair" could describe two very different items at the two different times, but the "fancy chairs" in 1819 are very much nineteenth century things, as is the "sofa table", not made before about 1790.

The area where no particular differences are apparent is the domestic appliances, mainly trivial items of daily life which have a fascination for us because they seem to put us in touch with the intimate details of people's lives, which thereby seem more real to us. Some such things are specified in detail, such as Sheraton's descriptions of different sorts of tray. Others, such as brewing equipment and the methods one can deduce from them, would repay comparison with a wide range of inventories at different levels.

In general the inventory covers a comprehensive range of furniture and equipment, although rather short on carpets and curtains and entirely lacking tableware and silver. Curtains in particular were fashion items at the time, often elaborately draped on pole cornices or "French rods", with cord pulls. Presumably all these things were retained by the Courtenays.

### *An Inventory of Household Furniture etc. the property of C Courtenay Esq. sold by auction at Llanblethian on Wednesday the 4th day of August 1819 by John Awbrey Auctioneer*

Note: original spelling has been retained throughout.

1. 6 Pickling jars	0-4-6	20. Steelyard	0- 6- 0
2. 2 Tin coffee pots	0-1-5	21. 2 Knife trays	0- 1- 0
3. Coffee mill	0-4-5	22. 2 Japan waiters	0- 0- 6
4. Pair of iron candlesticks	0-0-8	23. 6 table mats	0- 2- 6
5. Tin candlestick, Snuffers & stand	0-1-2	24. Plate rack	0-11-0
6. Gridiron & 2 forks	0- 6- 0	25. Deal kitchen table	0-16-0
7. Iron footman	0-10-6	26. 6 Kitchen chairs	0-18-0
8. Two Iron boilers	0-10-0	27. 1 Clothes horse	0-11-0
10. Iron digester	0- 5- 0	28. 3 Green chairs	0-13-0
11. Two Iron saucepans	0- 4- 0	29. 2 Elbow Do.	0- 9- 6
12. Bell mettle kettle	0- 4- 0	30. Barometer	1-2-6
13. Tin saucepan and copper tea kettle	0- 4- 0	31. 6 Elbow chairs	1-13-0
14. Frying pan dripping pan & 2 skimmers	0- 5- 0	32. Mahy. card table	1-2-0
15. Japan canister & 1 Do.	0- 4- 6	33. Pier looking glass	1-10-0
16. Cheese bonnet & cullinder	0- 3- 6	34. Sett of fire irons, fender & hearth brush	0-7-6
17. 3 Flat irons & stand	0- 3- 0	35. Sett of mahy. tables	3-3-0
18. Iron box & stand	0- 3- 0	36. Mahy. card table	1-11-6
19. Brass warming pan	0- 6- 0	37. Do. Work table	0-12-0
		38. Do. Celeret	0-15-0
		39. Do. Sofa	4- 4- 0

40. Pair of curtains	0 - 7-0	87. Coal skurtle and box	0 -5- 0
41. Piece of carpeting	0-11-0	88. Plate basket and bellows	0 - 7- 0
42. 8 rush botom chairs	1-15-0	89. Chamber bucket & duster	0- 4- 0
43. A telescope	5-0-0	90. 3 Candlesticks	0- 3- 0
44. Sett of fire irons, fender & hearth brush	0-8-0	91. Pewter dish & 2 plates	0- 2- 0
45. Eight day clock	7- 7- 0	92. Coat jack	0-1-6
46. 2 clothes flasks	0- 6- 0	93. Stable bucket & 2 pails	0- 6- 3
47. Beech tent bedstead	2- 6- 0	94. 4 Doz. Of bottles	0- 8- 8
48. Bed wt. 76 lb. @ 1/6	5-14- 0	95. 4 Doz. of Do.	0- 8- 8
49. Pair of blankets	0-10-5.	96. 4 Doz. of Do.	0- 8- 8
50. Mahy. Chest of drawers	3-13-6	97. Bottle rack	0- 5- 6
51. Wash hand standbasin & ewer	0-13- 0	98. Chopping board & knives	0- 2- 6
53. Deal dressing table	0- 4- 6	99. Stool and chairs	0- 2- 0
54. 2 Fancy chairs	0- 4- 0	100. Vat	0-14-0
55. Sett of fire irons, fender & hearth brush	0- 6-0	101. Cooler	0- 4- 6
56. Bed wt. 102 lb. @ 1/7 lb.	8- 1- 6	102. 2 Tubs	0- 6- 0
57. Do. Do. 38 lb. @ 1/6	2-17-0	103. Funnel, mashing stick & cross stick	0-2-0
58. Pair of blanketts	1- 6-0	104. Wheelbarrow	0-10-0
59. Bedside carpet	0- 9- 0	105. Large screen	0-14-0
60. Do. Do.	0-12-0	106. Handbarrow	0-4-0
61. Mahy. Bidet	0-6-0	107. Watering pot	0-2-6
62. Do. Night stool	0-14- 0	108. Dog house	0-12-0
63. 3 Fancy chairs	0- 7- 0	109. Flower stand	0- 4- 6
64. Dressing table	0-14- 0	110. Cucumber frame	2- 2- 0
65. 3 Fancy chairs	0- 7- 0	111. Half barrel	0-8-0
66. Bootjack& clothes horse	0- 3- 0	112. Do. Do.	0-9-6
67. Basin & ewer	0-1-6	113. Do. Do.	0-7-6
68. Bedstead & furniture	3- 3- 0	114. 3 small casks	0-9-0
69. Bed wt. 60 lb. @ 1/10	5-16- 0	115. Kneading trow	0-1-8
70. Pair of blankets	1-6-0	116. Safe (of) hops & sieve	0- 4- 0
71. Mahy. Chest of drawers	2-12-6	117. Sett of fire irons	<u>0- 6- 6</u>
72. Deal dressing table	0-13-0		100-18-0
73. Mahy. Night stool	0-13-0	Total amount of disbursements	72- 0- 5
74. 2 Fancy chairs	0- 4- 0		
75. Wash hand stand, basin & ewer	0-7-0	<i>Disbursements</i>	
76. ....Bedstead	0-7-6	Paid for the carriage of the catalogues	0- 1- 4
77. 6 Fancy chairs	1-1-0	Paid Cryer	0- 2- 0
78. Oak bedstead	0-10-6	Paid Jenkins as per bill	1- 8- 7
79. 1 Table	0- 2- 0	Paid (David) Jenkins	0- 3- 6
80. Dinner service of ware	1-8-0	Duty	5- 1- 0
81. Wooden clock	0-8-0	Making a catalogue, selling	
82. Toasting screen	0- 6- 6	collecting the money &c.	4- 4- 0
83. Plate warmer	0- 4- 9	Cash advanced	<u>61 -0-0</u>
84. Coffee (oven)	0- 8- 0		72 -0-5
85. Dinner tray	0- 6- 0		
86. 5 Baskets	0- 8- 6		

## Glossary and Notes

### 7. Iron footman.

"A four-legged trivet, of wrought iron with a flat top, used as a muffin or kettle stand. The top was level with a fire in a grate. Also used to keep plates hot". \*\* In Old Hall (1762 inventory) there was an "iron footman" in the kitchen. For other references, see under "plate warmer" below.

### 10. Iron digester

A stock-pot, for boiling down bones etc.\*

### 12. Bell mettle.

Bell metal, a tin, copper and zinc alloy resembling bronze.

### 15. Japan.

"Japanning, a kind of painting".\*\*\*. Most frequently black, and in general derived from the Japanese painting, as opposed to lacquering, fashionable from the late 17th century onwards.

### 21. Knife tray.

"Mahogany knife trays of the best kind have two partitions, with a brass handle which clasps over the edges of two partitions, and screws to the sides, which are 3 or 3½ inches deep; the inside length 14 inches, and the width from 10 to 12 inches; observe, the sides of these knife trays are square up, not sloped as formerly". \*\*\*

### 22. Japan waiters.

Presumably, at only 6d., small painted metal trays or salvers.\* In the Old Hall (1762) inventory there were "3 small mahogany waiters" in the kitchen, and in the 1778 sale there were "A large waiter" and "Two small ditto" in the Butler's pantry. Also, in 1762 under "plate", a "Pontypool tea board" (a metal tray with Pontypool japanned decoration) and a "Waiter D[itt]o". Mrs Margaret Gamage had a "small waiter" in the kitchen and another under "silver plate" (Cilybebyll inventory, 1778).

An intriguing item in the Old Hall 1762 inventory is "7 mahogany stands to hold dishes on the table" in the hall. These would appear to be self-service things, perhaps for dessert, enabling the room to be early vacated by the servants; very necessary when business talk and gossip were the rule!

### 28/29. Green chairs.

Very likely to have been Windsor chairs. Green painted examples were popular in gentry house for casual use, often out-of-doors.

### 33. Pier looking glass

A tall looking glass, occupying a pier between windows.

### 38. Mahy. Celeret

A small mahogany chest, probably with sloped sides, having an inner lining divided into six or more partitions to hold wine bottles. An item of dining-room furniture. Many sideboards had "cellaret drawer" for this purpose.

### 45. Eight day clock.

A long-case movement running eight days before winding. Simpler, cheaper movements were wound every 24hrs, and very superior ones might be month-going or even longer. From its value at 7gns., it is quite likely to have been a Henry Williams, Llancarfan piece.

### 46. Clothes flasks. Clothes baskets.\*

### 47. Beech tent bedstead.

A folding bed-frame of beech-wood, with a removable canopied tester etc. Tent or camp beds were in general use in bedrooms during the first half of the 19th century. Their attractive "snug yet genteel look" (Boswell 1762) gave them an appeal beyond their original purpose, although they were extensively used for travelling, to avoid verminous beds in inns.

### 53. Deal dressing table.

Dressing-tables in smart bedrooms were often of deal (pine) because they were entirely covered with a fine cloth, usually white, called a "toilet".



**54. Fancy chairs**

Light-weight, ornamented chairs, probably cane-seated or upholstered.

**56. Bed wt etc**

The "Bed" refers in general to the movable mattresses, feather bedding if used, and the bolsters and pillows. \*\*\* Unusually, there is no reference to the materials used (eg. Hair, flock) but it was usual for the better class of bedding to have two or more mattresses. The practice of selling by weight is so far unknown elsewhere, and may be simply a local auctioneer's convenient way of putting it together in lots. The different prices per pound (1/6d, 1/7d and 1/10d) must reflect varying quality.

**68. Bedstead & furniture.**

The bed framing and attached upholstery, as curtains, tester, valance etc., as opposed to the separate bedding laid on it.

**81. Wooden clock.**

A rare reference at this time. British movements, with wheels cut in hard close-grained woods such as box-wood, were known in the 18th century but the majority found are later 19th century items imported from the Black Forest region of Germany. The low value of 8/- probably indicates a cheap foreign import, even at this date. Wooden clocks were made as early as the late 17th century in Britain, and at least 50 years earlier than this example in Germany (Information from Michael Legg). Furthermore, wooden clocks were brought into Britain by itinerant clock-sellers from Germany as early as 1800. (Information from William Linnard).

So, it is likely that this was a German clock.

**82. Toasting screen.**

Probably a vertical open rack to hold toast in front of the fire, possibly supported on a metal stand, like a "roaster" or "Dutch oven". Possibly a local auctioneer's term, describing what he saw. In Old Hall (1762 inventory) there is "1 brass toaster" and "4 steel ditto" in the kitchen.

**83. Plate warmer.**

A device which stood before a fire, holding plates to be warmed or kept warm. There were various forms, a common one being a "cat", six turned spindles projecting from a turned ball centre; which ever way you put it down it stood on its feet (hence the name) and the three uppermost spindles supported the plates. In Old Hall (1778 sale) there was an "Iron cat" in the great parlour, perhaps used there to warm plates before the "Bath stove" in that room. Also in Old Hall (1762) there were "two twig plate warmers", in the kitchen, probably open wicker-work baskets, one later described by the auctioneer in 1778 as "a basket to warm plates before the fire", as well as a separate "wicker plate basket", a "copper plate warmer", and a "footman".

**85. Dinner tray.**

"The Dinner Tray is for taking up dishes and plates to the dining table; their sides are 3½n" deep all round, with handle holes in each side which may be made of good Honduras (mahogany), but the bottoms should be of Spanish... The length of the largest dinner trays are 32", and width 2 feet; full-size tea trays are nearly the same". \*\*\* In Old Hall (1778 sale) there were "One mahogany dinner tray" and "one ditto glass ditto" and "one ditto small ditto".

**88. Plate basket.**

A china plate basket. "Such baskets, made of mahogany, with fretwork sides and a brass hooped handle, were used for carrying heated plates from the kitchen to the dining-room, where they could be transferred to the haster (aka a plate warmer, or a footman, qv) set down by the fire to keep them warm. The basket had an octagonal base and seven vertical panels or facets, the eighth being omitted to allow the plates to be piled and lifted out easily". \*\*

**92. Coat jack.**

Possibly one of the uses of this term as a lifting or holding device, ie a coat stand or hanger.

**93. Stable bucket & 2 pails.**

The terms "bucket" and "pail" were apparently synonymous

**100. Vat.**

A vessel, probably wooden, for brewing the malt (mashing) and, after boiling and cooling, to contain the fermenting wort. This use of a dual-purpose vessel indicates a modest, farmhouse-scale production, probably making both strong ale and "small beer".. \*

**101 Cooler.**

A shallow vessel, having a large surface area, for cooling the hot wort after boiling with hops and before fermenting it.

**103. Funnel, mashing stick and cross stick.**

Brewing equipment. The funnel was probably for delivering the loose hops. The "mashing stick" was probably a stick with other short sticks fixed through it, to make a stirrer to stir the hot mash. The "cross stick" was probably a split stick which, laid across the mash tub, provided a spring grip to hold the wort stick as it was gradually raised to allow the wort to run out. See: William Cobbett, "Cottage Economy", 1821.

Old Hall had a brewhouse where we find, in 1762, "3 brewing vates, "2 trandells" (unidentified) and two "brass boylers", together with pails etc.

**115. Kneading trow.**

A trough for kneading dough.

**116. Safe(of) hops.**

Hops in a container.

**Key to References:**

\* Oxford English Dictionary

\*\* "A Short Dictionary of Furniture", John Gloag, 1969

\*\*\* Thomas Sheraton, "The Cabinet Dictionary", 1803.

Other references named.

*Luke Millar*