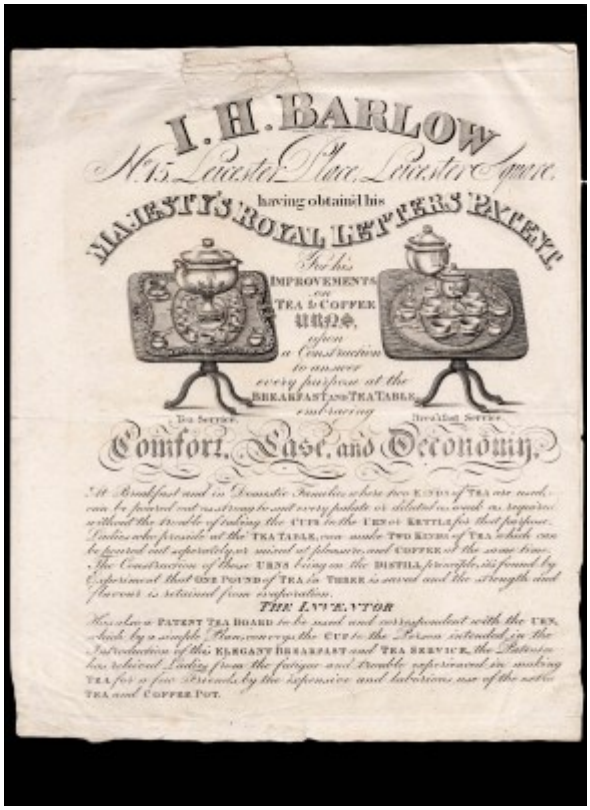

Engraved trade card.

U IS FOR URN IMPROVER

I.H. Barlow... having obtain'd his Majesty's Royal Letters Patent, for his improvements on Tea & Coffee Urns, upon a Construction to answer every purpose at the Breakfast and Tea Table embracing Comfort, Case, and Oeconomy.

Author
BARLOW, I[ohn] H[awkins]

Publication date
[1816].

Publisher
No.15. Leicester Place, Leicester Square,

Publication place
[London],

Physical description
Engraved trade card.

Dimensions
(sheet) 255 by 210mm (10 by 8.25 inches); (plate) 240 by 190mm (9.5 by 7.5 inches).

Notes
June 27, 1816 John Barlow patented his new innovation: an urn that allows all members of a party to drink whichever beverage they choose at whichever temperature. The present trade card presents images of Barlow's new urn as part of a tea service and a far more extensive breakfast service. It

then explains the functions of the urn at length:

“At Breakfast and in domestic Families where two Kinds of Tea are used, it can be poured out as strong to suit every palate or diluted as weak as required without the trouble of taking the Cups to the Urn or Kettle for that purpose. Ladies who preside at the Tea Table can make Two Kinds of Tea which can be poured out seperately, or mixed at pleasure, and Coffee at the same time. The construction of those Urns being on the Distill principle, it’s found by Experiment that One Pound of Tea in Three is saved and the strength and flavour is retained from evaporation. The Inventor Has also a Patent Tea Board to be used and correspondent with the Urn, which by a simple Plan, conveys the Cup to the Person intended in the Introduction of this Elegant Breakfast and Tea Service, the Patentee has releived Ladies from the fatigue and trouble experienced in making Tea for a few Friends by the expensive and laborious use of the extra Tea and Coffee Pot.”

Despite the obvious temptation to Georgian women who were otherwise bound to be fatigued by the effort of pouring from separate tea and coffee pots, Barlow’s invention was not a success. In fact, a document from August 11, 1818 records ‘John Hawkins Barlow late of Vere Street and of Oxford Street, Middlesex, now of Grange Court, Casey Street, Middlesex, pearl stringer and jeweller, [as] bankrupt’.

The present trade card was engraved by one of the Ovendens, a family of engravers spanning at least three generations, all of whom worked at some point at their workshop in Newcastle Court, as found here. Barlow’s dates coincide most appropriately with those of Thomas Ovenden, who also engraved satirical prints.

Bibliography
BM Heal 85.12

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 17966

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