CHAPTER 13

Shells to Satire: The Career of Hannah Humphrey (1750–1818)

Tim Clayton

Hannah Humphrey was born in Wapping on 18 October 1750, the youngest surviving child of George and Elizabeth Humphrey.[1] In the earlier baptismal records of St John, Wapping, her father was described as a 'waterman', which might have meant one of the licensed boatmen who carried passengers across the Thames or out to ships, although originally the word was applied to all seaman and it is possible that it was being used in that sense; in the records for his younger children he was a 'grocer' – meaning a wholesale dealer. Before she was ten years old her family moved into the centre of London where, by 1757, her father had established a shop selling shells and other exotic goods in Hudson's Court at the St Martin's Lane end of London's principal shopping street, the Strand. The shop sold three types of shells: 'Collection Shells' were rarities for collectors for whom he also stocked corals and minerals; 'Flower Shells' were suitable for making sculptures of flowers out of shells in 'shell work' and Humphrey also supplied the implements used in making shell flowers and instruction on how to make them; finally, 'Grotto Shells' were supplied in bulk to people who wanted to make a grotto in their garden or cellar and by 1760 Humphrey could supply guidance from 'a person qualified for such an Undertaking' and all necessary materials. His stock then also included 'a neat assortment of Useful and ornamental China, lacquered Boxes, Fans, Pearl Necklaces, &c.', as well as 'some curious foreign dead Animals, Birds, Fishes and Insects, dried or preserved in Spirits &c.'[2]

The expert in Flower Shells who taught 'ladies' how to make shellwork was undoubtedly Hannah's eldest sister Elizabeth, aged twenty-five in

[1] Docklands Ancestors, via findmypast.co.uk (accessed September 2013).

[2] *Daily Advertiser*, 24 November 1757, 28 March 1760; *London Evening Post*, 2 March 1763; *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 18 January 1765. See B. F. Tobin, *The Duchess's Shells: Natural History Collecting in the Age of Cook's Voyages* (London: Paul Mellon Centre, 2014), 31–32.

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1760, who exhibited shellwork with the Free Society of Artists in 1762, 1764, 1766, 1767, and, as Mrs. Elizabeth Forster, in 1770 and 1772, giving her address in each case as the Shell Warehouse in St Martin's Lane to which George Humphrey moved in March 1762.[3] In 1764, George Humphrey confirmed that it was his daughters who taught ladies how to create shellwork, but the burden presumably fell chiefly on the elder sisters, Elizabeth and Ann, rather than on the thirteen-year-old Hannah.

The collecting side of the business was perhaps already in the hands of his third child and eldest son, George Humphrey II, born in 1739, who became a considerable expert in natural history and by 1770 was a principal advisor and supplier to the Duchess of Portland. From 1769 to 1772 he collaborated with the naturalist Emmanuel Mendes da Costa, then confined in King's Bench prison for defrauding the Royal Society, on what was intended to become an exhaustive guide to shells. When imprisoned for debt in 1754, da Costa had written a *Natural History of Fossils* (1757) and now he wrote a *Conchology, or Natural History of Shells*, depending for material on Humphrey's books and notes on specimens.[4] Humphrey organised the illustrations, commissioning some of them from his younger brother William, born in 1745. However, for various reasons the subscription was suspended after only a few parts had been produced.[5] George Humphrey is said to have been far too generous to be a good businessman.[6]

William Humphrey was trained as an artist: in 1764–1766 he won three prizes – one for an etching and two for mezzotints – awarded by the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.[7] His etched portrait of Robert Edge Pine's daughter Charlotte (BM 1852,0214.270)[8] together with other early work after Pine suggests that during the 1760s, he may have been a pupil of that painter, who lived a

[3] A. Graves, *The Society of Artists of Great Britain 1760–1791; The Free Society of Artists 1761–1783* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1907) 94, 125; *London Evening Post*, 26 March 1762, 2 March 1763, 1 January 1764.

[4] See R. Hayward, 'Emmanuel Mendes da Costa (1717–1791). A Case Study in Scientific Reputation', in A. Simões, A. Carneiro, and M. P. Diogo, eds., *Travels of Learning: A Geography of Science in Europe* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publications, 2003), 101–114; and Emanuel Mendes da Costa 1717–1791. The First Jewish Clerk of the Royal Society at https://artsandculture.google.com/story/emanuel-mendes-da-costa-1717-1791-the-royal-society/mAWBbodaZKtiIA?hl=en.

[5] See Tobin, *The Duchess's Shells*, 188–201. [6] Tobin, *The Duchess's Shells*, 135–6.

[7] *A Register of the Premiums and Bounties given by the Society instituted at London for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce* (London: J. Phillips, 1778).

[8] Copies of prints that I mention can be seen by putting their British Museum (BM) accession number into the search box at www.britishmuseum.org/collection.

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few yards away from the Shell Warehouse, opposite New Street. The Warehouse was on the east side of St Martin's Lane, at No. 50, nearly opposite Cecil Court. In 1770, Humphrey began to engrave and sometimes design comic mezzotints or 'posture prints', which later came to be known as 'drolls', for the printseller Robert Sayer and in 1772 he stopped working for Sayer and began to publish such prints himself, with the Shell Warehouse as his address.

By then, Hannah was twenty-one and was probably taking a hand in running the shop; she presumably knew her natural history, but from an early stage she shared her brother William's interest in art. Elizabeth had moved out, having married in 1768 a 'penniless' but resourceful German mineralogist, Jacob Forster, who would become the most important dealer in minerals in the world. With the help of a loan from Elizabeth's father, Jacob Forster established a London shop that Elizabeth managed, as Forster spent most of his time away travelling in search of minerals; he also had a shop in Paris that was run by his brother.[9] In 1774, William took a shop in Gerrard Street in Soho specialising in contemporary fine art prints and old portraits. Interestingly, for a few months the drolls that he published bore the St Martin's Lane address rather than his Gerrard Street address and it seems likely that Hannah was selling them from the family shop.

George Humphrey I died in 1775, leaving William and his daughters £300 each to be raised from the sale of his property, the residue of which was to go to his eldest son George II. A sale was held in early June 1776. In 1775 and 1776 William's prints were all sold from Gerrard Street which suggests that Hannah might have been working elsewhere. However, in 1777 George's new shop, a few yards further north at 70 St Martin's Lane, became a second source of supply for William Humphrey's satires and for mezzotints by John Raphael Smith that William co-published, which might imply that Hannah was again selling them from George's new shop while helping George and his wife Sarah to manage it. Certainly, that was Hannah's address on the first print to bear Mrs. Humphrey's name as publisher, *A New Academy for Accomplishments* (BM J,5.4), published on 7 May 1778.[10]

Although George Humphrey's business was disrupted by these sales, the 1770s were boom years for the natural history market, stimulated by the

[9] See M. P. Cooper, 'Keeping it in the Family: the Humphreys, Forsters and Heulands', *Matrix: A Journal of the History of Minerals*, 9(1) (2001): 5–8.

[10] Two prints by Rowlandson are dated 1774, but it seems 1774 was a careless mistake for 1784. It is certain that she did not have the Bond Street shop in 1774. See also, Chapter 14 by Nicholas JS Knowles in this volume.

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voyages of Captain Cook's ships *Endeavour* (returned 1771) and *Resolution* (returned 1775). Humphrey spent at least £150 on curiosities brought back by the crew of *Endeavour*.[11] In 1776, the sale of his father's stock included 'several Artificial Curiosities from Otaheite, New Zealand, and other newly discovered Islands in the South-Seas; consisting of the Cloth, Apparel, Ornaments, Weapons of War, Fishing Tackle, and other singular Inventions of the Natives of those Countries' as well as South Sea shells which became highly fashionable.[12] His possession of a large share of the shells from *Endeavour* and *Resolution* brought many prominent naturalists to the shop and some of Hannah's early clients for prints probably met her through natural history. The impression of *A New Academy for Accomplishments* in the British Museum was bought by Sarah Banks, sister of Sir Joseph, who acted as an assistant to her brother, as well as collecting both natural history and satirical prints in her own right.[13] She continued to buy many of Hannah's publications as they came out. Georgiana Keate, who later supplied her with some designs, was the daughter of George Keate who was a huge collector of shells and minerals.

In June 1778, Hannah Humphrey opened her first independent shop at 18 New Bond Street. As attested throughout this volume, many women had run print shops in the eighteenth century, most being the wives, widows, or daughters of printsellers or engraver-printsellers. Of those specialising in satire, two provided models that influenced Hannah's business: Mary Darly who is the subject of Chapter 10 by Sheila O'Connell in this volume, and Susanna Sledge. Darly set an example that Hannah emulated in two respects: first, Darly built up a relationship with her customers, including women, by inviting them to contribute ideas or designs that she would publish or arrange to have etched for publication; and second, she cultivated a specifically female clientele by publishing subjects such as female fashion that were of interest to women. Susanna Sledge, who never married and was referred to by one critic as a 'tyger turned painter',[14] had an important print shop at 1 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden from about 1768. She was herself an artist in silhouette and pastel and she took in a series of artist lodgers whose work she

[11] Cooper, 'Keeping it in the Family', 9. [12] *Daily Advertiser*, 3 June 1776.

[13] Sarah Banks's collection was given to the British Museum in 1818. See Arlene Carol Leis's fascinating 'Sarah Sophia Banks: Femininity, Sociability and the Practice of Collecting in Late Georgian England', PhD thesis, University of York (2013). Regrettably, Leis did not cover Sarah Banks's collections of caricatures or of natural history.

[14] *The Morning Post*, 10 May 1784.

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published, notably William Dickinson and Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (BM 1902,1011.721, J,5.104).[15]

Hannah's Bond Street address appeared as an alternative to John Raphael Smith's on mezzotints that he published that year. She and her brother either co-published these with Smith, owning a share in the plates, or they merely acted as retailers, increasing his sales through geographically spread outlets, and this arrangement continued until Smith established his own shop on Oxford Street. In 1779 and 1780, Hannah appears to have established a similar arrangement with Mary Darly. Smith and William Humphrey had cooperated for years in a way that suggests friendship, but whether there was a background of cooperation and friendship between Hannah and Mary Darly is uncertain. It is possible that Hannah had been one of those who provided Mary Darly with ideas and, indeed, it is perfectly possible that Hannah could also etch, as her brother could have taught her any techniques she needed to learn. It is tempting to speculate that she might possibly have worked for Mary Darly in 1775–1776, the two years when William's satires were not sold from George's shop.

In 1779, William Humphrey opened a shop at 227 Strand, just west of Temple Bar, the gate to the City of London and in 1780 several prints issued under William Humphrey's name give addresses at both 227 Strand and 18 New Bond Street, as if he had two shops, but he was not in charge of Hannah's. Her advertisement for *The Shilling or the Value of a P[riv]y C [ouncillo]r's Matrimonial Honor* (BM J,4.39) made no mention of William, but announced that she stocked 'a great variety of new humorous Prints'.[16] However, in March 1783, she and her brother jointly advertised a number of 'political' and 'humorous' prints (some with her publication line, some with his), and this indicates that William and Hannah were working in close collaboration.[17] But it is also noticeable that Hannah cultivated women in a way that William did not by publishing subjects that might be of interest to them and prints designed by them. The print of a fashionable woman and her phaeton, one of three designed by 'Agnes T—n', is an example (BM J,5.83). John Lockington engraved a trade card for 'Humphrey Printseller' of 18 New Bond Street which was updated when, in late 1782, Hannah moved to bigger premises at No. 51 (BM D,2.3381, D,2.3379).

In 1780, she first published prints by the most promising of the young satirical artists, James Gillray, although he had been working with her

[15] See, principally, N. Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800* (online edition: www.pastellists.com/Articles/Sledge.pdf).

[16] *Morning Herald*, 9 March 1782. [17] *The Morning Chronicle*, 14 March 1783.

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brother for at least two years. The first print by Gillray to carry Hannah's address rather than William's was *The Triumphant Britons* (BM 1851,0901.24) of March 1780, when Hannah was twenty-nine years old and Gillray twenty-four. From then until 1784 all his satirical prints were done for one of the Humphreys or for Elizabeth d'Achery, another briefly important female print publisher, who ran a shop in St James's Street in the early 1780s. In 1784 d'Achery died or retired and many of her plates were acquired by William Humphrey.[18]

In 1784, the Humphrey family took a prominent part in the hotly contested Westminster election campaign. That year Gillray had abandoned satire to engrave more ambitious prints of his own design in the dotted manner and so they worked chiefly with Thomas Rowlandson. They seem to have produced prints for both sides, but principally in support of Fox, and some of the Court prints with Humphrey's publication line were originally published by others and only later acquired and republished by him. *The Two Patriotic Duchess's on their Canvass* (BM 1851,0901.229) shows the Duchess of Devonshire kissing a voter and the Duchess of Portland in the background. This appears to have been published by Humphrey but *The Devonshire, or Most Approved Method of Securing Votes* was only republished by them, having been issued first by Elizabeth d'Achery (BM J,3.24). These prints might have been intended to support the Duchesses, but, if so, Humphrey may have miscalculated, and was afterwards very anxious to placate or please the Duchess of Devonshire, her sister Harriet (at that time Lady Duncannon), and the Duchess of Portland whose friends took exception to the way that, during the election, they were caricatured as granting sexual favours to Fox and his potential supporters.[19] *The Apotheosis of the Dutchess* [sic] (BM 1868,0808.5318) and *Liberty and Fame Introducing Female Patriotism to Britania* [sic] (BM 1868,0808.5320) made a statement of support for the Duchess of Devonshire. We know that William Humphrey voted for Fox and the *History of the Westminster Election*, for which he provided illustrations and had some hand in publishing, avowedly supported Fox.

A group of drawings for prints in the British Museum suggests that Hannah took part in the creative process of some of the prints that she

[18] For an explanation of Elizabeth d'Achery's methods, see T. Clayton, *James Gillray: A Revolution in Satire* (London: Paul Mellon Centre, 2022), 45–60.

[19] There is considerable literature on this subject deriving chiefly from Elaine Chalus's work. I think that more satire was paid for by interested parties than is generally realised and that this partly invalidates theoretical generalisations based on the idea that satires were independent observations from below: see book (above).

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published, including prints for this campaign. All of this group was etched by Rowlandson, some for Hannah and some for William or George Humphrey. The process begins with a schematic drawing of the subject to which writing for the title and labels has been added in ink. The drawings might be by anybody but the writing in several cases closely resembles Hannah's hand and in others William's. In one case, *Madam Blubber's Last Shift* (BM 1868,0808.5279), the writing resembles neither and the design (BM 1854,0513.295) was presumably a 'hint' from outside. The rough sketches were then turned into finished designs by Rowlandson with the writing transcribed neatly in his own hand before being etched. These 1784 designs suggest close collaboration between Rowlandson, Hannah, and William: words are in her handwriting and prints that finally come out as published by William have her name on them in Rowlandson's draft. The design for *The Westminster Mendicant* (BM 1854,0513.277) has words in Hannah's hand that appear on the final print, which is said to be published by Hannah from William's address (BM 1851,0901.222). This evidence suggests that in these cases the idea for the caricature was either invented by the publishers or hinted to them and the words that were written on the design by one of the Humphreys were probably also devised by them.

In about 1786, William Humphrey stopped publishing prints and Hannah continued alone, but his move to becoming principally a merchant trading with Holland may have concentrated her mind. She drew in several of the most talented engravers then at work on satire. John Barlow worked for her, notably interpreting designs supplied by Valentina Aynscombe of Cromwell House, Mortlake, daughter of a director of Sun Fire Insurance (BM J,5.144, J,5.145, J,2.53).[20] With George Townly Stubbs, son of the famous painter, she may at first have acted as retailer but several of his plates became her property after he had sold an initial edition from his own address (BM 1867,0713.398, 1851,0901.331). Several fine prints by John Boyne were published in alliance with the City publisher Edward Hedges of Cornhill (BM 1851,0901.307).[21] She also published some finely observed little etchings, such as *A Lady at a Card Party Who Does Not Play*, which might be by Gillray but are difficult

[20] Valentina Aynscombe was identified as the author by Sarah Banks in notes on BM J,2.53 and other prints.

[21] The prints by Boyne that he did not publish himself were usually published by either Hedges or Hannah Humphrey and these two publishers may have had a share in all of them.

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to attribute with any certainty (BM J,2.1). It is not impossible that she was the person depicted in this print.

She could not have existed on her own publications alone and must also have retailed satires produced by other publishers. It is also quite likely that, like her brother William, she also sold minerals and shells supplied by (or on behalf of) Elizabeth and George Humphrey: in 1785, William had advertised 'a large parcel of well preserv'd Minerals, Foreign and English; some shells from the New discover'd Islands in the South Seas; a few Obelisks, Vases &c. of the Derbyshire Manufactory' as well as 'the most numerous assemblage of Political Prints' and it is likely that her stock in trade was similar.[22]

In 1786, Gillray began to work with Hannah again, and although his main efforts in satire were reserved for William Holland and then for Samuel William Fores, in May 1787 she published his scintillating *La Belle Assemblée* (BM Y,5.27) which took up as targets women that Gillray had first etched for her in 1780. In 1788, she issued a series of six Westminster Election prints by Gillray that had been commissioned by the Court party, followed by his *Election-Troops, Bringing in Their Accounts, to the Pay-Table* (BM J,3.19), which presumably indicated a problem in extracting payment from the Treasury.[23] Her output in 1789 was strongly anti-ministerial and may have been subsidised by the opposition.

Gradually, between 1789 and 1791 she persuaded Gillray that she was a more reliable collaborator than any other publisher of caricatures. She moved to 18 Old Bond Street in 1790 and Gillray gave that as his address when he was issuing printed invective against Philip Thicknesse (see images attached to BM Y,5.25). In 1791, Gillray made his last prints for Samuel William Fores and from September that year Gillray was in full production for Hannah. We will probably never know just how close their relationship became. In 1793, Gillray gave Hannah a mahogany fire-screen with fifteen double-sided miniature caricatures on ivory discs.[24] In 1798, when Gillray was staying with Lord Bateman at Shobdon, Hannah wrote, in a way that suggests intimacy, that she wanted to pack herself in the box in which she sent his etching tools to him.[25] She was also visiting Gillray's aged father every few days while Gillray was away.[26] On 6 December

[22] *General Advertiser*, 4 February 1785.
[23] D. Hill, *Mr. Gillray the Caricaturist* (London: Phaidon, 1965), 32.
[24] Hill, *Mr. Gillray*, 39. In 1965 it was 'lately the property of Mr. H. Watkinson of Windermere'; I would be delighted to know where it is now.
[25] Letter from Hannah to Gillray, 9 August 1798, British Library (hereafter BL) Add MS 27337 f. 29.
[26] BL Add MS 27337 f. 29.

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1800, the politician George Canning reported to Gillray's friend John Sneyd that 'G.'s injured spirit has been soothed in the best way imaginable by £150 in Bank notes, left in the hands of his concubine yesterday'.[27] When he made a will in 1807 Gillray left everything to his 'dearest friend' Hannah.[28]

The unidentified editor of *The Caricatures of Gillray* (1824), who was better informed than most early writers, reported:

> Gillray, it is said, had more than once made nuptial overtures to the mistress of the house, which had not been refused. Indeed, it was asserted that they once proceeded to St James's Church, to be made one in the holy bands of matrimony, but, on approaching the door of the sacred place, he whispered to the good lady, 'This is a foolish affair methinks, Miss Humphreys – we live very comfortably together, and we had better let well alone,' when turning upon his heel, he returned to his old quarters, and went coolly to work on his copper . . .[29]

Twenty-five years later George Stanley, who claimed that when he was a child he had seen Gillray trying to commit suicide, wrote:

> It has been whispered that there was a *liaison* between Gillray and Mrs. Humphreys not essential to their relation as designer and publisher; it is due to the memory of the lady to contradict that slander: such a *liaison* did not exist. The editor asserts this from information derived from persons of the strictest morals, who were intimately acquainted with Mrs. Humphreys for more than thirty years, and at whose family table Gillray and Mrs. Humphreys dined on the Christmas day regularly, for more than the last twenty years of his life, previous to his insanity.[30]

Prurient interest is met with inscrutable discretion from Gillray and Mrs. Humphrey.

However, Gillray wasn't simply a lodger: at times he was evidently running the shop. In 1804 Hannah wrote to him, inviting him to join her at Brighton, having sent her servant and friend Betty Marshall home to take over the shop from him, as if he were her partner in the business: 'If you put two or three Guineas in your Pocket it wont [sic] make much odds at the years end.'[31] Johann Christian Hüttner, a German translator who

[27] J. Bagot, *George Canning and His Friends* (London: John Murray, 1909), 1:177.
[28] The National Archives (hereafter TNA) PROB 11/1569/361.
[29] *The Caricatures of James Gillray; with Historical and Political Illustrations, and Compendious Biographical Anecdotes and Notes* (London: Miller, 1824), 37.
[30] G. Stanley, ed., *A Biographical and Critical Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*, new ed. (London: Bohn, 1849), 283.
[31] BL Add MS 27337, f. 103.

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sent examples of Gillray's prints to the editor of the Weimar-based magazine *London und Paris* with explanations of their content, got to know Gillray quite well in consequence. After Samuel William Fores published copies of some Gillrays, Hüttner remarked that Gillray didn't prosecute because a caricature wasn't something to go to law about (meaning that the issue wasn't worth the expense). Hannah's name appears on the print as proprietor, indicating that she is the one who owned the copyright, but did Hüttner assume that Gillray had rights or could somehow act on behalf of Hannah?[32]

Hannah herself may not have been keen to surrender her financial independence to a husband. In her will she took great care to stipulate that legacies to her female relatives should be for their exclusive use, independent of any present or future husband. This indicates at least a concern for the financial independence of women, but she may well have had strong views on the subject.

Between May and July 1794 Hannah moved from 18 Old Bond Street to 37 New Bond Street, just south of Grosvenor Street. We know little about the layout and appearance of these two shops. The elevations of street views published by John Tallis in 1838–1840 give some idea of outward appearance.[33] 37 New Bond Street (numbered 41 in Tallis) was a spacious house with a three-window frontage, though it had only two floors and an attic above the shop which had a central door between two shop windows; 18 Old Bond Street (not renumbered) had been taller but narrower, with three floors and an attic above the shop.

In March 1797, Hannah moved for the last time to 27 St James's Street (later renumbered 24) which, with three pairs of windows and an attic over the shop, was probably the most spacious of Hannah Humphrey's houses.[34] The appearance of the shop front in 1807 is well known from *Very Slippy-Weather* (BM 1851,0901.1248) with a large bow window to the left of the door. Inside, the shop fittings sold in 1835 were quite probably those that were there in 1797: a mahogany counter 3.4 m long by 68 cm wide with nineteen drawers; a much smaller counter, 1.8 m long by 50.8 cm wide with nine drawers; a mahogany nest of fifteen drawers; four glazed sashes displaying prints, two panel doors, two cupboards with

[32] C. Banerji and D. Donald, *Gillray Observed: The Earliest Account of His Caricatures in 'London und Paris'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[33] P. Jackson, ed., *John Tallis's London Street Views 1738–40* (London: London Topographical Society, 2002), 54–55, 59.

[34] Ibid., 69.

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shelves, and two glazed show cases.[35] The sashes were presumably on some sort of runner behind the large bow window and designed to accommodate a changing display of prints. A number of surviving prints have prices and identifications of protagonists in Gillray's handwriting (and occasionally in Hannah's). There is a theory that these prints come from albums that were kept in the shop for customers to peruse and choose prints that they wanted to buy, and it seems logical that there should have been such an arrangement.

It is commonly supposed that we also know Hannah's appearance in 1796, but it is actually very doubtful that Hannah was the old lady portrayed in *Two-Penny Whist* (BM 1868,0808.6496). The print shows a scene at a card table in which Hannah's friend and servant, Betty Marshall is playing the ace of spades. All sources agree that this figure was Betty Marshall, but there is no reliable evidence that the 'old lady' was Hannah, then just turned forty-five. Gillray's biographer Draper Hill stated that the author of the text to *The Caricatures of James Gillray* of 1824 supported the identification, but this is not true: according to its description 'Betty is showing off, with her handful of trumps, to the astonishment of the old lady, and consternation of her German spouse, Mr. *****, an old resident naturalized, and localised to the spot'.[36] So, in this earliest account the old lady was the wife of the German.

The writer of an 1824 article about Gillray in the *Somerset House Gazette* spoke of 'a rubber at the expense of his good friend and kind landlady, the late Mrs Humphreys', but did not identify Hannah as the old lady; he went on to say that apart from Betty, 'one of the guests was a foreigner, now abroad, the others [*plural*] well-known in the neighbourhood of Bury-street'.[37]

In the *Illustrative Description of the Genuine Works of Mr James Gillray* of 1830, which identifies the German as 'Tholdal', 'the old lady is not now known'. This seems strange if she was meant to be Hannah, as her nephew George Humphrey could have been consulted by the author (if, indeed, he was not himself the author). It is possible that he might have been concealing the identity of a family member, but, if so, Hannah's fifty-nine-year-old sister Elizabeth is a more plausible candidate: she, at least,

[35] *Gillray's Drawings, Prints & Copper Plates. A Catalogue of the Entire Stock of Mrs. Humphrey, widow of the late Mr. Humphrey, printseller of St. James's Street* . . ., E. Foster & Son, 13–16 July 1835, 43.

[36] Hill, *Mr. Gillray the Caricaturist*, 38; *Caricatures of James Gillray*, 37.

[37] 'Reminiscences of Artists', *Somerset House Gazette*, 1(26) (1824): 410; repeated *verbatim* in *Reminiscences of Henry Angelo, with Memoirs of his late Father and Friends* (London: H. Colborn and R. Bentley, 1830), 1: 302.

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had a German husband who liked to play cards. The 'German' reappears in *Scientific Researches!* (BM J,3.59) in 1802.[38] In his article on Gillray for the second edition (by Michael Bryan, 1851), George Stanley identified the old lady as 'Mrs Turner', and Hannah had at least two friends of that name.[39] Only in the *Historical and Descriptive Account of the Caricatures of James Gillray*, written by Thomas Wright and R. H. Evans nearly sixty years after the publication of *Two-Penny Whist* and in Wright's later biography of Gillray, was the old lady identified as Hannah Humphrey.[40] Wright's identifications are often unreliable and in my view this one is incorrect.

The alliance with Gillray transformed Hannah from a retailer who dabbled with publishing into a major publisher and, effectively, made her fortune as well as his. In 1786, she published eleven prints, as far as we know, of which two were by Gillray; in 1791, she published forty-three prints of which thirty-eight were by Gillray; in 1795, she published sixty prints, fifty-two by Gillray and eight by James Sayers whose publisher she had now also become. Once the Portland Whigs joined William Pitt in office in 1794, she became the principal ministerial publisher (although this didn't stop Gillray from directing his satire at Pitt, who was a convenient ally, not a friend of the Portland circle). Once she was publishing on this scale with a print coming out every week, she must have had either a copperplate printer who was working entirely for her or several printers she could rely on to service her needs at short notice. Her houses were too small to accommodate printers as well as a shop and living quarters for at least three people, and no press was sold when the shop fittings were auctioned off in 1835.[41] That sale showed that the shop then carried a general stock of modern decorative prints and, as many of those listed

[38] *Illustrative Description of the Genuine Works of Mr. James Gillray* (London: Thomas McLean, 1830), 91; The fourth guest was Richard Mortimer, a picture dealer and a close friend of both Elizabeth Humphrey and Gillray, who reappears in *Connoisseurs Examining a Collection of George Morland's* (BM 1851,0901.1240). In her will (TNA PROB11/1578/261), Elizabeth Humphrey left money for mourning rings to both Richard Mortimer and Gillray.

[39] House of Lords Library, Gillray Collection, 6(23); in her 1816 will (PROB 11/1602/45) Hannah left money to her next-door neighbour Mrs. Turner as well as her much closer friend Mrs. Rebecca Turner of Charlotte Street, Portland Place, who is also mentioned BL Add MS 27337, ff. 104, 137. One of her children was Hannah's executor. Her sister Elizabeth left money to a Mrs. Sarah Turner, widow, in 1814 PROB 11/1578/261.

[40] T. Wright, and R. H. Evans, *Historical and Descriptive Account of the Caricatures of James Gillray* (London: H. Bohn, 1851), 424; T. Wright, ed., *The Works of James Gillray the Caricaturist, with a History of his Life and Times* (London: Chatto and Windus, n.d.), 16. I take the pair of portraits of Gillray and Humphrey (Hill, *Mr Gillray*, 38n), where hers is based on the old lady in *Two-Penny Whist* (BM 1864,0213.489) to be of much later date than Hill's 'about 1800'.

[41] *Gillray's Drawings, Prints & Copper Plates*, 43.

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dated from the 1790s, and even went back to the mezzotints by John Raphael Smith that carried Hannah's address, her shop had probably always carried such a general stock. The stock of caricatures, however, was much larger and not confined to prints published by the Humphreys.

It is likely that Hannah was an active participant in the publishing enterprise – that it was not just Gillray who was devising subjects for prints – for Gillray never published a satire on fashion when he was not working for Hannah and the logical deduction from this is that either he turned his mind to her special requirements or that she proposed subjects to him. In the early 1790s, Albinia Hobart, Cecilia Johnston, Sarah Archer, and Emma Mount Edgcumbe returned to the foreground of Gillray's satire along with the ministerial hostess, the Duchess of Gordon and the Royal Family with their hangers-on. The print "_____ *"And Catch the Living Manners as They Rise."* (Figure 13.1) was again designed by Valentina Aynscombe but now interpreted by Gillray, who also etched fashion satires by Georgiana Keate. Hannah Humphrey published social satires by W. O'Keeffe who, according to the inscriptions, etched them himself, although lettering was sometimes added by Gillray, and at the sale of William Dickinson's stock she bought a few copperplates designed by Bunbury, including two unfinished plates that Gillray finished for her.[42]

Gillray published noticeably more designs supplied by 'amateurs' after 1800, although the prints designed by women largely disappear after 1802, owing to Hannah losing interest or possibly to a change in sensibility that was rendering an interest in caricature improper for ladies. Gillray's output slowed down after a serious health crisis in 1807 caused him to make a will in favour of Hannah. He continued to make prints until madness overtook him in 1811 after which he produced nothing before his death in 1815. With the odd exception, James Sayers' last designs date from 1807 and so Hannah's output dwindled. She only started to try to replace Gillray and Sayers in 1811 and 1812 when she employed Rowlandson to etch some amateur designs, and she published a set of hunting prints designed and etched by Robert Frankland. In 1813, she employed the young George Cruikshank on a number of prints, principally a set of interpretations of Russian prints that were almost certainly a ministerial propaganda

[42] *Gillray's Drawings, Prints & Copper Plates*, 42, lots 1048–1050. *A Catalogue of the extensive and valuable Stock of Copper Plates with the Impressions (some of which are unpublished) the property of Mr. William Dickinson, late of Bond Street, Engraver and Print Seller*, Christie, 14–19 February 1794, 14, lots 87, 88, 90; and 25, lot 74.

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Figure 13.1 James Gillray after 'Miss Aynscombe', "_____ "*And Catch the Living Manners as They Rise.*" Published by Hannah Humphrey, 7 May 1794.
Etching & aquatint with stipple on wove paper, 34.4 × 24.8 cm. Courtesy of Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

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commission.[43] Her nephew George was beginning to design prints and he established a successful collaboration with Cruikshank. In 1814 and 1815, she published a lot of Cruikshank's caricatures and rather fewer in 1816 (the year in which her elder sister Elizabeth died) and 1817. By now she may only nominally have been running the business, but it was only after her death on 15 February 1818 that her nephew George got into full swing as a publisher.

Hannah Humphrey's will shows that she had at least £6,000 invested in five per cent bank funds as well as a small income from rented property and about £500 in cash on top of her book debts and stock in trade. This was above and beyond the invested money that Gillray had left to her, which would pass to his nearest relative after her death. She left carefully calculated legacies to all her surviving relatives and, as already mentioned, she made sure that any money given to women was secured to them personally, rather than to any father or husband. The biggest legacy, more than was given to any relative, leaving apart the residue and stock in trade bequeathed to her nephew George, was given to her servant Betty Marshall.

[43] T. Clayton and S. O'Connell, *Bonaparte and the British: Prints and Propaganda in the Age of Napoleon* (London: British Museum Press, 2015), 176–177.

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