

The club at the Temple Coffee House revisited

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ABSTRACT: A club which met at the Temple Coffee House, near Fleet Street in London, during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries is now well known and is considered to be the “earliest natural history society in Britain”. Probably initiated by Hans Sloane (1660–1753) and his close friends, it is referred to in manuscripts as a botanic club, and drew together some of the most active natural historians of the day. Evidence of its business was originally found in remarks scattered through their correspondence. Errors, however, were later discovered in the way this material was interpreted, leading to the assumption that more was known about the club’s activities than the facts supported: a membership of forty is an often repeated mistake. This reappraisal of the documentation is made in the light of further research. Some authors concluded that meetings were merely informal gatherings, but comments in *The transactioneer* (1700), a satirical tract against Sloane, reveal details about the organisation of these occasions. Together with additional archival references, they show that, even when the initial evidence is re-assessed to take account of earlier inaccuracies, the club was indeed a significant focal point for scientific virtuosi and for promoting botanical knowledge.

KEY WORDS: botany – *The transactioneer* – Sloane – Petiver – evidence.

INTRODUCTION

John Macky (d. 1726), writing of his travels around England in the early eighteenth century, described London as having “an infinity of clubs or societies for the improvement of learning and keeping up good humour and mirth” (Clark, 2000: 1; Macky, 1724: 1: 269). Between 1689 and about 1706 naturalists from across the country and abroad clubbed together in the convivial surroundings of the Temple Coffee House to pore over plant specimens and discuss the latest botanical discoveries from the New World and beyond. Two names associated with the club throughout its existence were those of **Hans Sloane (1660–1753) and the apothecary James Petiver (c.1663–1718)**. Completing his medical studies in France, Sloane rapidly established his name in scientific circles and was elected to the Royal Society in 1685. He was appointed as its secretary in 1693 (MacGregor, 1994). Petiver concluded his apprenticeship in the same year as Sloane’s election, setting up his own shop in the City soon afterwards. Although hampered by little “Academicall Learning”, he was an extraordinarily dedicated naturalist and collector, specializing in botany and entomology; through Sloane’s influence he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1695 (Stearns, 1952).

A club was defined by Samuel Johnson (1755) as “An assembly of good fellows, meeting under certain conditions” (Clark, 2000: 10) but the sketchy records of the club at the Temple Coffee House leave a great deal of ambiguity about its participants and their activities. When Jessop (1989a; 1989b) was investigating the life of the amateur naturalist and horticulturist **Charles du Bois (1658–1740)¹, a possible member**, he discovered that a number of interpretations of this material gave the impression that more is known about the club than the facts support. Jessop (1989b) advised that until more data were found, a cautious approach to defining its functions was necessary. This paper re-examines the evidence following further research, and shows that an early eighteenth-century satire in particular substantiates the existing documentation while shedding additional light on the club’s activities.

EVIDENCE IN *THE TRANSACTIONEER*

The transactioneer, a satirical tract, was published anonymously in 1700 but later attributed to the lawyer and humorist, William King (1663–1712), an associate of Jonathan Swift. King set out to poke fun at the Royal Society, mocking the quality of the Society's *Philosophical transactions* and attacking their editor, who was then Hans Sloane, and the contributions of his friends. Sloane's relationship with the poorly educated Petiver, ridiculed for his lack of erudition, was especially singled out. Cast as "The transactioneer" in dialogue with a "Gentleman", Sloane was made to exclaim: "I can never be to seek where to begin, as long as there is such a Personage as Mr. J-Pet-r in the Philosophical World. He is a F. of the R. S. indeed! I made him so. 'Tis my way of Rewarding my Friends and Benefactors" ([King], 1700: 33). In the lines that follow, the apothecary was presented as the "Darling of the Temple-Coffee-House Club", and "The transactioneer" went on to berate his unenlightened interrogator ([King], 1700: 34):

Oh, lay! Why don't you know? Where can you have lived? Why you must be an utter Stranger to Philosophy, and all pretty Things! Never heard of the Temple Club? Oh for shame, lets see you there a Friday night. I'm President there, and I'll assure you there are many odd Things. And Mr. Pet-r is, Gad he's every thing. He is the very Muffti, the Oracle of our Club.

The mocking words of King's parody may belittle the group's purpose, but they provide a valuable printed record of the club's existence and tell us how it was run.

Pasti² discovered the club at the Temple Coffee House when he was researching a biography of the distinguished botanist William Sherard (1658/9–1728). Stearns (1952) supplemented these findings in a paper on Petiver. King's satirical observations are consistent with Stearns' (1952: 253) conclusion that meetings were held on "Friday evenings" to "mix social intercourse with the exchange of botanical information, specimens, and communications from correspondents at home and abroad." The satire also implies, however, that the club was sufficiently ordered by 1700 to require officers rather than being "unofficial, probably without formal organization" as Stearns thought (1952: 253).

According to Clark's survey (2000: 252), professional men were particularly well placed to found societies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, operating as they did "on the flank of the upper and middle-classes, able to move and mediate between different social groups". The energetic Sloane – with his Royal Society connections, and a web of contacts within virtuosi circles – was an obvious president of a club that brought together not only amateur collectors like Sherard, but also apothecaries who depended on plant knowledge for their trade. Sloane's own reputation as a naturalist was boosted after he spent 15 months in the West Indies, where he was personal physician to the Duke of Albermarle, governor of Jamaica. During this time he collected a great many plants, drying "as fair Samples of them as I could" to bring home. His return in 1689 with a rich haul of 800 specimens, "most whereof were New" to show off to "all lovers of such Curiosities", perhaps provided the incentive for the founding of the club (Sloane, 1707: 1: preface).²

Petiver's role was not precisely specified, but at the most basic level of organisation a society had just one or two stewards to set up the meetings (Clark, 2000). He was conceivably in charge of arranging the evening's proceedings. Fanatical in his devotion to the study of natural history and to collecting, he was exceptionally well placed to provide novelties for members to discuss. John Ray (1627–1705) believed he had "the greatest correspondence both in East and West Indies of any man in Europe" (Armstrong, 1954: 28; Gunther, 1928:

279). Sloane found Petiver indispensable, a fact not lost on the pair's humorous tormentor, as the following extract shows ([King], 1700: 34):

Sir, he and I are all one. You must know we club Notions, laying them up in a kind of Joynt Stock, and have all things in common: Sometimes he draws, and sometimes I, as we have occasion. But he pays in most plenteously. By my good-will, I would never be without him. I call him the Philosophick Sancho, and he me Don.

Petiver's shop at the "sign of the White Cross in Aldersgate Street" was familiar to "shipmasters, merchants, planters, physicians, surgeons, ministers of the gospel", or anyone going abroad, whom the apothecary pressed into sending back "hundreds of consignments of seeds, dried plants, insects, serpents, birds, fishes, and small animals" (Stearns, 1952: 243). All "Curious Persons and Lovers of Natural History", not only overseas but also at home, were asked to add to his collections (Stearns, 1952: 260; Petiver, 1695). It is clear that sometimes club members were entertained by travellers such as the Cambridge fellow William Vernon (c.1667–c.1715) when he returned from Maryland in 1698 with a beautiful collection of dried plants to discuss.³ Or Sherard, who wrote on the way back from Italy that he had "something to show them at my return tho not so much as they can me, or as I had y^e last voyage".⁴ The stay-at-home Petiver, however, relied on his many contacts for a continuous supply of curiosities to interest his scientist friends.

INTERPRETING THE SOURCE MATERIAL

Described by Allen (1976: 10; Laird, 2000: 98) as "the earliest natural history society in Britain and probably in the world", and "an unofficial outgrowth of the Royal Society", the club at the Temple Coffee House was a significant body, existing for about 15 years. And yet no set of rules, list of members, or any formal papers have ever come to light. Lack of such evidence led Allen (1976) to conclude that it was purely an informal gathering of friends. Clark (2000) found, however, that the survival of official records from clubs and societies of the early modern period is rare. Data are more likely to come from a "pot-pourri of external sources: diaries and correspondence, sermons, ephemera like poems, tickets for the feast day ... and newspapers" (Clark, 2000: 9), while club life was a favourite subject for caricature, whether in cartoons or literature, fact or fiction. It is consistent with these findings that references to the club were first discovered amongst the archives of correspondence and then corroborated by a satire.

Pasti² came across references to the group scattered through the letters of late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century naturalists amongst Sloane's manuscripts in the British Library, London. He found further evidence in Sherard's papers in the Royal Society and in Ashmole's and Lister's manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Stearns (1952) later added to these discoveries. Subsequent authors paraphrased their accounts, most notably Henrey (1975) and Allen (1976), whose own works are also frequently quoted by others. The serious doubts raised by Jessop (1989b) about their conclusions have prompted this re-investigation of the source material.

Name

The name by which the club was known remains uncertain, and possibly this was never officially determined. Pasti² referred to "The Temple Coffee House Club", and Stearns (1952) to "The Temple Coffee House Botany Club", but as Jessop (1989b) pointed out,

neither author provided supporting evidence for their choices. Pasti's title, however, appears in *The transactioneer* ([King], 1700: 34), which gives it some authenticity. Manuscript sources often mention the "Club" ("Clubb" or "Clubbe"), but occasionally the "Botanic (or "Botanick") Club" and even the "Botanic Societie".⁵ Stearn's interpretation is, therefore, also plausible.

Location

Even the identity of the Temple Coffee House, Jessop (1989b) suggested, was not entirely clear. Lillywhite (1963) mentioned several similarly named establishments existing in the Fleet Street area in the early eighteenth century but was unable to discover whether there was any connection between them. There was also the Temple Exchange Coffee House near Temple Bar. The chances of confusion are confirmed in a letter to Petiver from the Scottish botanist George Preston (1665/6–1749) who, missing an opportunity to see him one evening, protested in exasperation⁶:

I came to the Temple Coffee-house before 7 o'clock last night and there stayed til it was past 9 and then I found out my mistake that it was not the Coffee house within the Temple where it seems you was but it was not my fault for I thought that there had not been any other.

It is more than likely, however, that the venue was in Devereux Court, near the Fleet Street end of the Strand, because Sloane used this address as a poste restante, as did Dr Richard Myddleton Massey (c.1678–1743) when he visited London in 1704.⁷ The coffee house must have been close to the famous Grecian, a favourite haunt of Royal Society members (Ellis, 1956).

Membership

A claim that there were 40 members of the club in 1691 is not true, and resulted, Jessop (1989b: 268) discovered, from a misreading of a manuscript. This document described "the examination of forty plants by an unspecified number of people" rather than "the examination of plants by forty botanists".⁸ It referred to a set of illustrations of South African species that were shown at a club meeting. These were given to Henry Compton (1632–1713), the Bishop of London, during his visit to The Netherlands earlier that year.⁹ Jessop (1989b: 273) also found that Pasti² and Stearns (1952) did not strictly separate activities carried out by the club from those "undertaken by the group of naturalists that existed in the London area in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century". According to Stearns (1952: 253; Jessop, 1989b: 269) "On Sundays and occasional holidays during the summer months members of the Botany club often embarked upon botanizing expeditions". But Petiver's instructions to Joseph Dandridge, Joseph Miller, Mr Tindsley and Mr Boucher, one of the manuscripts he cited, made no mention of the club: "We meet this Evening between 6 & 7 at Waltons Coffe house in Warwick lane the corner of Newgate markt, in order to goe from thence to Morrow morning at 4 of y^e clock to Chistlehurst bogg, a herborizing."¹⁰

The archive material is particularly ambiguous when it is used to identify the membership. This is clearly apparent when David Krieg (1669–1710), a German surgeon and naturalist who travelled to Maryland at the same time as William Vernon, asked Petiver to pass on¹¹:

My humble Service to all Friends especially to Dr Sloan, Dr Lister, Dr Haar, Dr Woodward, & the noble club att the Temple Coffe house. to Mr Watts, Mr Ayrey, Mr Doody, Mr Stapphes [Staphorst] at the Apothecary hall, Mr Dare, Mr Adare: etc. etc.

His greetings say something about London botanical circles but, although he mentioned the club, it is impossible to say which of those named were connected with it. Dr John Woodward (1665–1728), for example, was unlikely to be a member as he and Sloane were enemies, openly feuding over Royal Society matters (MacGregor, 1994). Woodward also vindictively blocked William Vernon's application to Archbishop Tenison (1636–1715) for a post as a physician and naturalist in the West Indies because the Cambridge fellow "kept company" with Sloane, Robinson, and Lister, and "that would not doe". Vernon refused to "take leave of my Club friends on Fryday night".¹²

Apart from Sloane and Petiver, whose connection with the group is evident from their correspondence and confirmed by King's satire (1700), documentation about the regular members and the extent of their commitment to the club remains sparse and inconclusive. Vernon's grievances indicate that Dr Martin Lister (1639–1712), a Fellow of the Royal Society and an amateur zoologist, was probably a member. Sloane's close friends Dr Tancred Robinson (c.1657–1748), another Royal Society Fellow, and the collector and dealer William Courten (olim Charleton) (1642–1702) were clearly involved from the early days; sometimes meetings were held in Courten's house. Petiver's good friend and fellow apothecary Samuel Doody (1656–1706), who succeeded John Watts (fl. 1670s–1701) in 1692 as keeper of the Apothecaries' Garden at Chelsea, was also included. Doody was elected to the Royal Society at the same time as Petiver. There is evidence that Captain Charles Hatton (1635–c.1705) took part; a keen horticulturist, he was the younger son of Christopher, first Baron Hatton (c.1605–1670) of Kirby, Northamptonshire, and like Sloane, Robinson and Lister, he was a patron of John Ray. Sir John Hoskins (1634–1705), "a most learned virtuoso" according to John Evelyn (de Beer, 1951: 4: 296), and a Vice-President of the Royal Society, is also mentioned in connection with the club.¹³ It has already been noted that Sherard, and Vernon, were both active supporters when in London.

A degree of flexibility towards membership is apparent as visitors were also welcomed to evenings at the Temple Coffee House to enjoy "pleasant and virtuous conversation", which was considered "the soul of good living".¹⁴ Meetings were valuable opportunities to make one's mark with like-minded men (Hunter, 1992) and a number wrote later asking to be remembered to "ye Gentlemen of ye Clubb". Their backgrounds were diverse. Among them was Dr Charles Preston (1660–1711) from Edinburgh, Thomas Tanner (1674–1735), a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford who became Bishop of St Asaph in 1732, and Gedeon Bonnivert (fl. 1673–1703), a trooper in King William's army in Ireland. Bonnivert was a keen botanist and found time when not soldiering to correspond with Sloane and send observations to the Royal Society.¹⁵ The Scottish surgeon and naturalist James Cuninghame (fl. 1698–1709), one of Petiver's correspondents, wrote from China in 1700 also recalling the club.¹⁶ And Krieg, newly arrived in Riga, was "so unhappy" at leaving London that he could not bring himself to say goodbye to Sloane, and missed the company of his friends at the "Temple Coffe House".¹⁷

Further material is more conjectural but nevertheless worth considering. Archival and printed sources indicate that meetings were held on Friday evenings, which could help identify others who were connected with it ([King], 1700).¹⁸ Stearns (1952) thought Nehemiah Grew (1641–1712) was a member. He may have based this on Grew's request to Sloane: "if you intend to be at our Club this afternoon, pray, as you go will you call on me?" But the letter concerned was dated 17 March 1691/2, a Thursday, and the botanist was perhaps referring to a different meeting-place (Bond, 1866).¹⁹ Petiver, on the other hand, could have been describing

a Temple Coffee House gathering to the Danzig merchant Jacob Breyne (1637–1697) when he wrote, on Saturday 24 December 1692, of a “worthy meeting of Botanick friends” that took place the previous night.²⁰ Sloane, Robinson and Doody, all actively involved, were present, while others attending included Dr Leonard Plukenet (1642–1706) who was appointed Queen’s Botanist in 1689; the apothecary and physician Samuel Dale (1659–1739), John Ray’s neighbour in Essex; London botanist Dr James Newton (1639–1718); and the City merchant Charles du Bois, a collector of exotic rarities in his garden at Mitcham. Four years earlier, Plukenet, du Bois, Petiver and Doody each paid Tancred Robinson two shillings and sixpence towards subscriptions for a new edition of Gabriel Grisley’s *Viridarium lusitanum*, a work on plant species found in Portugal first published in 1661. The four men’s receipt was dated 20 December 1689, a Friday, and it is tempting to wonder whether the occasion of this exchange was an early meeting of the club at the Temple Coffee House.²¹

Activities

Evidence that the club’s aims were ever stipulated is slight, but members were avid collectors of *naturalia*, both for their cabinets of curiosity and also for scientific classification. Given the participants’ wide range of interests, and the sparseness of surviving data, the possibility that discussion turned to zoology, entomology or even mineralogy cannot be ruled out. Manuscripts indicating the club’s purpose, however, mention plants and botany (Jessop, 1989b). The rules of John Martyn’s (1699–1768) botanical society, which began in the Rainbow Coffee House in Watling Street in 1721, specified that members took turns to demonstrate plants, naming them and explaining their uses. This activity reflected their largely medical concerns (Allen, 1976). The pursuit of collecting dried plant specimens for *horti sicci* united many of the Temple Coffee House fraternity, and most of the botanists connected with the group are listed as contributors in Dandy’s (1958) account of Sloane’s herbarium. Spencer Savage, librarian to the Linnaean Society, summarized the motives of the seventeenth-century collector as obtaining “new plants somewhat in the same way as the ardent stamp-collector obtains new issues of postage stamps”. The incomplete and sometimes chaotic arrangement of certain volumes in Sloane’s vast collection perhaps led Savage to conclude somewhat sweepingly that often “no serious attempt” was made “to determine taxonomically the plants obtained – it sufficed that he had the rarest plants” (Dandy, 1958: 10).

In the early days of the club members discussed the possibility of sponsoring their own collector. Edward Lhwyd (1660–1709), who longed to escape his tedious job as keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, learned with excitement in the summer of 1690 that “the Botanic Club in London have entertain’d some thoughts of sending me to the Canarie Islands to make what Discoveries I can in Plants”.²² But England was at war with France, and the enemy fleet lay menacingly in the Channel, “masters at sea”, as Evelyn vividly recounted, “with that power as gave terror to the whole nation, in daily expectation of a descent”.²³ A plant-collecting expedition was out of the question. Lhwyd discovered that the club’s plans amounted to no more than “wishes and talk, without any real & fix’d intention”, until the return of “quiet and settled times”.²⁴

No indication has been found that any similar undertakings were ever carried out, although members continued to support plant-collecting endeavours abroad throughout the 1690s. The Temple Coffee House provided valuable opportunities for overseas travellers to meet sponsors as well as to show off their discoveries on their homecoming. Before leaving Maryland in 1698, Vernon wrote to inform Sloane that he proposed to “bring

every Fryday night a collection of plants to be discussed by ... y^e Honourable Club” on his return.³ Vernon’s specimens and those brought back by David Krieg were eventually divided between Sloane and several other botanists.² Hugh Jones (c.1671–1702), who was sent as a minister to Maryland in 1696, was also familiar with the club. In order to prepare him for the post, Jones, Lhwyd’s young deputy at the Oxford museum, was given extremely perfunctory training as both a clergyman and a naturalist. During this time he was befriended by Petiver and other members of the London botanist circle, and perhaps attended Friday night meetings in the weeks before he left (Frick *et alii*, 1987). Jones certainly knew about the club, as a letter to him from Petiver concerning Vernon’s impending return from the colony indicates: “Mr Vernon ... says he will ... bring over as many Plants, Shells, Insects, Fossils, Serpents &c. as will take our Botanick Club and Royal Society a Twelve month the lookin’ over.”²⁵

James Cuninghame, already mentioned in connection with the club, sent plant specimens from China to English botanists including Sloane, Petiver, Plukenet and du Bois (Dandy, 1958; Mabberley, 2004). Alexander Stuart (c.1673–1742) collected for Sloane and du Bois when he was employed as a ship’s surgeon in Asia; he too was familiar with the Temple Coffee House.²⁶

Demise of the club

The club probably broke up in about 1706: after that date references to it disappear from the naturalists’ correspondence. As Petiver became more involved with the running of the Apothecaries’ Garden in Chelsea by the end of that year, it is conceivable he no longer had time to devote to club matters (Hunting, 1998). He was still taking part in 1704, however, when Thomas Greenhill, a surgeon, wanted proposals distributed for a book he intended to publish, and told him “if y^e please to think of it at y^e Club, I believe several will subscribe”.²⁷ Sherard, who left England in 1703 to take up a consularship with the Levant Company in Smyrna, sent good wishes to “friends at y^e club” when writing to Sloane in 1706. But as he was no longer in close touch with events back in London, his evidence is unreliable.²⁸ Myddleton Massey continued to address letters for Sloane to the coffee house until 1708, but did not mention the club.²⁹

Many of those closely associated with the group either died or left London during the first decade of the eighteenth century. Courten died in 1702, Sir John Hoskins in 1705, and Charles Hatton also at about that time. Plukenet and Doody followed them in 1706. Vernon returned to Cambridge in 1702 (Dandy, 1958), but it is possible that within a few years he too was dead.³⁰ Lister moved to Epsom in 1702 (Woodley, 2004), and Sherard remained abroad until late 1717.² As support for the meetings became evermore depleted, it seems likely that the club simply ceased to carry on.

CONCLUSION

Jessop’s (1989b) examination of works discussing the club at the Temple Coffee House revealed that certain errors about its history were being perpetuated. He discovered in particular that activities were attributed to it without foundation, and that the idea that there were 40 members in 1691 was the result of a mistake in transcription. When the archival sources were re-examined for this paper, only ten or eleven participants were definitely identified, together with various visitors. Circumstantial evidence, however, points to the possible involvement of a number of others from amongst the naturalists’ circles.

No official papers relating to the club's business were found, but it is apparent from the pages of *The transactioneer* ([King] 1700) that proceedings were not as informal as previously thought. By 1700 at least, there were two officers, including a president, at the Friday evening meetings. The satirical comments indicate, furthermore, that the club was sufficiently well-known to justify a mention in a popular work. They also show that Hans Sloane and James Petiver, leading figures in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century scientific circles, were crucial to its organisation.

Analysis of the minutes of John Martyn's Botanical Society revealed that those taking part were principally middle-class young men "with medico-botanist interests" (Laird, 2000: 108; Allen, 1967). Although details of subscribers to the club at the Temple Coffee House are sketchy, it was clearly a gathering of virtuosi, and not confined to the medical fraternity. Gentlemen, academics and a variety of professional men were associated with it, and many were not exclusively interested in the study of plants; some members also belonged to the Royal Society. King (1700: 34) referred simply to "The Temple-Coffee-House Club" but it was described in contemporary correspondence on several occasions as a "Botanic" club. The amount of evidence about its activities is small, given that the club existed for about 15 years, but plants were plainly a leading topic for discussion. It flourished, however, during a period when there was enormous enthusiasm for collecting all kinds of natural objects, and the possibility that other areas of natural history were also debated cannot be ruled out. Even though no documents were found to indicate that it ever succeeded in financing a botanist or naturalist to go abroad, the Friday night gatherings also provided a congenial venue for collectors travelling overseas to meet their supporters and clientele.

It remains wise to exercise caution regarding activities attributed to the club at the Temple Coffee House in the light of such scattered documentary fragments (Jessop, 1989b). The gradual accumulation of material about its meetings nevertheless confirms that the club was a significant focal point for scientific virtuosi, and for the proliferation of botanical knowledge in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Mark Laird of Harvard University for his generous help in the preparation of this paper, and for bringing Les Jessop's article on the club (1989b) to my attention. Thanks also to Dr Jane Ridley of the University of Buckingham for her valuable advice.

NOTES

¹ Du Bois' date of birth is usually given as c. 1656 (Desmond and Ellwood, 1994). This was calculated from the inscription on his tombstone at Mitcham, Surrey, which was engraved "20 Oct. A.D. 1740, aetat. 83" (Jessop, 1989a: 7). The revised date was taken from the baptismal records of the parish of St Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury (Bannerman, 1931: 1: 161), where he was brought up, which state that he was born on 28 August 1658, and baptized on 10 September in the same year.

² PASTI, G. Jr, 1950 *Consul Sherard: amateur botanist and patron of learning, 1659–1728*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Illinois.

³ William Vernon to Hans Sloane (hereafter HS), 24 July 1698: Sloane MSS 4037, ff 102–103, British Library, London (hereafter BL).

⁴ William Sherard (hereafter WS) to HS, Paris, 7 October 1699: Sloane MSS 4037, ff 340–341, BL.

⁵ For example, WS to HS, Dublin, 11 June 1692: Sloane MSS 4036, f. 126; George Preston to HS, Edinburgh, 17 March [?] 1698/9: Sloane MSS 4037, f. 233; and Gedeon Bonnivert to HS, Cork, 5 August 1703: Sloane MSS

4039, f. 167, BL, are amongst many instances where only the club is mentioned. On the other hand, Edward Lhwyd to Martin Lister, 1 July 1690: Lister MSS 36, f. 11, Bodleian Library, Oxford (hereafter Bod.), referred to “the Botanic Club in London”; James Cuninghame to James Petiver (hereafter JP), Chusan, 20 December 1700: Sloane MSS 3321, f. 65, “the Botanic Societie”; and JP to Hugh Jones, 6 October 1698: Sloane MSS 3333, ff 170–171, BL, wrote of the “Botanick Club”.

⁶ Preston to JP, no date: Sloane MSS 4067, f. 114, BL.

⁷ Vernon to HS, 15 February 1698/9: Sloane MSS 4037, ff 209–210. Richard Middleton Massey to HS, 4 September 1706: Sloane MSS 4040, f. 215, BL, addressed the letter “to be left at the Temple Coffee-house in Devreux Court, High Temple Bar, London”. Massey used the address frequently when writing to Sloane, and for his own correspondence when in London, for example, he told Lhwyd, 23 February 1703/4: Ashmole MSS 1816, f. 346, Bod.: “When y^e write next pray to direct to be left at the Temple Coffee-house in Devreux Court for y^r obliged servant”.

⁸ Jessop (1989b: 269) cited Sloane MSS 3961, f. 41, a draft letter from W. C. [William Courten or Charleton] to Mr Sherwood [Sherard], 11 May 1691:

I wisht (wish we could have had) [~~crossed out~~] yow at our club y^e other night for an Hower or 2 to have had a sight of a curious book of plants (of y^e Cape of good Hope) in miniature presented by y^e States to ye Bishop of London. There were to y^e number of 40–& as (y^e learned said not [~~crossed out~~]) our cheif Botanists said most of y^m not described.

Pasti (note 2 above) misread the letter to mean that “in the spring of 1691 ... forty members were present at one of their regular Friday meetings.” This claim was innocently repeated by Stearns, (1952: 254), Henrey, (1975: 2: 78) and Allen (1976: 10). Allen (2001: addenda et corrigenda) drew attention to Jessop’s (1989b) findings.

⁹ There are copies of these illustrations in Sloane MSS 5286, BL.

¹⁰ Jessop (1989b: 269) repeated a note cited by Stearns (1952) of 7 July 1707 from JP: Sloane MSS 3336, f. 11, BL.

¹¹ Jessop (1989b: 267) repeated an undated letter cited in Pasti’s thesis (see note 2 above) which is from David Krieg to JP: Sloane MSS 4067, f. 7, BL.

¹² Vernon to HS, 28 December [1698]: Sloane MSS 4061, ff 233–234, BL.

¹³ The following manuscripts were cited by Pasti (see note 2 above) WS to HS, 11 June 1692: Sloane MSS 4036, f. 126: “My humble service to all at our clubb particularly to Mr Charleton Dr Robinson and Mr Doody”; Krieg to HS, 12 July 1699: Sloane MSS, 4037, f. 299: “all Gentlemen that use to come on Fryday to the Temple Coffe-house and to Mr Charleton adress”; WS to HS, 25 October 1694: Sloane MSS 4036, f. 186; WS to HS, 9 May 1698: Sloane MSS 4037, ff 64–65, BL.

¹⁴ Krieg to JP, no date: Sloane MSS 4067, f. 7, BL.

¹⁵ Charles Preston to HS, 11 September 1697: Sloane MSS 4036, f. 349, BL; Thomas Tanner to Martin Lister, 13 November 1699: Lister MSS 36, f. 237, Bod.; Gedeon Bonnivert to HS, 4 September 1702: Sloane MSS 4039, f. 21, BL; Journal Book Copy 9: 3, 28 October 1696; Journal Book Copy 10: 17, 27 January 1702/3, Royal Society.

¹⁶ James Cuninghame to JP, Chusan, 20 December 1700: Sloane MSS 3321, f. 65, BL.

¹⁷ Krieg to HS, 12 July 1699: Sloane MSS 4066, f. 299, BL.

¹⁸ Friday is, of course, mentioned in *The transactioneer* and also in Vernon’s letter to HS, 24 July 1698: Sloane MSS 4037, ff 102–103; WS to HS, 20 September 1698: Sloane MSS 4037, f. 123; Krieg to HS, 12 July 1699: Sloane MSS 4037, f. 299, BL.

¹⁹ Nehemiah Grew to HS, 17 March 1691/2: Sloane MSS 4036, f. 113, BL.

²⁰ JP to Jacob Breyne, Christmas Eve, 1692: Sloane MSS 4067, f. 81, BL. As Jessop (1989b: 271; Bond 1889, 240–241) pointed out the gathering referred to took place on a Friday.

²¹ Sloane MSS 4019, f. 164, BL.

²² Lhwyd to Lister, 1 July 1690: Lister MSS 36, f. 11, Bod.

²³ 17 July 1690 (de Beer, 1951: 5: 29).

²⁴ Lister to Lhwyd, 10 July 1690: Ashmole MSS 1816, f. 81, Bod.

²⁵ Frick *et alii* (1987: 20), citing JP to Hugh Jones, 6 October 1698: Sloane MSS 3333, ff 170–171, BL.

²⁶ Alexander Stuart to HS, no date: Sloane MSS 4061, f. 144, BL.

²⁷ Thomas Greenhill to JP, 8 June 1704: Sloane MSS 3321, f. 142, BL.

²⁸ WS to HS, 29 June 1706: Sloane MSS 4040, f. 187, BL.

²⁹ 4 September 1706: Sloane MSS 4040, ff 214–215; 5 May 1708: Sloane MSS 4041, f. 134, BL.

³⁰ John Ray, who was for years such a brilliant inspiration to natural historians and to Sloane and his friends in particular, died in 1705. Vernon's death is usually given as c.1715 (Desmond and Ellwood, 1994), but Petiver wrote to Joseph Pitton deTournefort 29 June 1706: MSS 3335, f. 22, BL: "Dr Plukenett is lately dead, and is Mr Ray and Mr Vernon some time since", which suggests it may have occurred earlier.

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Received 13 September 2005. Accepted 5 December 2005.