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The Coffee Houses of Old London

From All About Coffee

THE COFFEE HOUSES OF OLD LONDON

Part One

The two most picturesque chapters in the history of coffee have to do with the period of the old London and Paris coffee houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Much of the poetry and romance of coffee centers around this time.

"The history of coffee houses," says D'Israeli, "ere the invention of clubs, was that of the manners, the morals and the politics of a people." And so the history of the London coffee houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is indeed the history of the manners and customs of the English people of that period.

# The First London Coffee House

"The first coffee house in London," says John Aubrey (1626–97), the English antiquary and folklorist, "was in St. Michael's Alley, in Cornhill, opposite to the church, which was sett up by one ... Bowman (coachman to Mr. Hodges, a Turkey merchant, who putt him upon it) in or about the yeare 1652. 'Twas about four years before any other was sett up, and that was by Mr. Farr. Jonathan Paynter, over-against to St. Michael's Church, was the first apprentice to the trade, viz., to Bowman."

Another account, for which we are indebted to William Oldys (1696–1761), the bibliographer, relates that Mr. Edwards, a London merchant, acquired the coffee habit in Turkey, and brought home with him from Ragusa, in Dalmatia, Pasqua Rosée, an Armenian or Greek youth, who prepared the beverage for him. "But the novelty thereof," says Oldys, "drawing too much company to him, he allowed the said servant with another of his son-in-law to set up the first coffee house in London at St. Michael's Alley, in Cornhill."

*The history of coffee houses, ere the invention of clubs, was that of the manners, the morals and the politics of a people.*

From this it would appear that Pasqua Rosée had as partner in this enterprise, the Bowman, who, according to Aubrey, was coachman to Mr. Hodges, the son-in-law of Mr. Edwards, and a fellow merchant traveler.

Oldys tells us that Rosée and Bowman soon separated. John Timbs (1801–1875), another English antiquary, says they quarreled, Rosée keeping the house, and his partner Bowman obtaining leave to pitch a tent and to sell the drink in St. Michael's churchyard.

Still another version of this historic incident is to be found in *Houghton's Collection*, 1698. It reads:

It appears that a Mr. Daniel Edwards, an English merchant of Smyrna, brought with him to this country a Greek of the name of Pasqua, in 1652, who made his coffee; this Mr. Edwards married one Alderman Hodges's daughter, who lived in Walbrook, and set up Pasqua for a coffee man in a shed in the churchyard in St. Michael, Cornhill, which is now a scrivener's brave-house, when, having great custom, the ale-sellers petitioned the Lord Mayor against him as being no freeman. This made Alderman Hodges join his coachman, Bowman, who was free, as Pasqua's partner; but Pasqua, for some misdemeanor, was forced to run the country, and Bowman, by his trade and a contribution of 1000 sixpences, turned the shed to a house. Bowman's apprentices were first, John Painter, then Humphry, from whose wife I had this account.

This account makes it appear that Edwards was Hodges' son-in-law. Whatever the relationship, most authorities agree that Pasqua Rosée was the first to sell coffee publicly, whether in a tent or shed, in London in or about the year 1652. His original shop-bill, or handbill, the first advertisement for coffee, is in the British Museum, and from it the accompanying photograph was made for this work. It sets forth in direct fashion: "The Vertue of the *COFFEE* Drink First publiquely made and sold in England, by *Pasqua Rosée* ... in St. *Michaels Alley* in *Cornhill* ... at the Signe of his own Head."

H.R. Fox Bourne (about 1870) is alone in an altogether different version of this historic event. He says:

"In 1652 Sir Nicholas Crispe, a Levant merchant, opened in London the first coffee house known in England, the beverage being prepared by a Greek girl brought over for the work."

There is nothing to substantiate this story; the preponderance of evidence is in support of the Edwards-Rosée version.

Such then was the advent of the coffee house in London, which introduced to English-speaking people the drink of democracy. Oddly enough, coffee and the Commonwealth came in together. The English coffee house, like its French contemporary, was the home of liberty.

Robinson, who accepts that version of the event wherein Edwards marries Hodges's daughter, says that after the partners Rosée and Bowman separated, and Bowman had set up his tent opposite Rosée, a zealous partisan addressed these verses "To Pasqua Rosée, at the Sign of his own Head and half his Body in St. Michael's Alley, next the first Coffee-Tent in London":

Were not the fountain of my Tears  
Each day exhausted by the steam  
Of your Coffee, no doubt appears  
But they would swell to such a stream  
As could admit of no restriction  
To see, poor Pasqua, thy Affliction.  
  
What! Pasqua, you at first did broach  
This Nectar for the publick Good,  
Must you call Kitt down from the Coach  
To drive a Trade he understood  
No more than you did then your creed,  
Or he doth now to write or read?  
  
Pull Courage, Pasqua, fear no Harms  
From the besieging Foe;  
Make good your Ground, stand to your Arms,  
Hold out this summer, and then tho'  
He'll storm, he'll not prevail—your Face  
Shall give the Coffee Pot the chace.

Eventually Pasqua Rosée disappeared, some say to open a coffee house on the Continent, in Holland or Germany. Bowman, having married Alderman Hodges's cook, and having also prevailed upon about a thousand of his customers to lend him sixpence apiece, converted his tent into a substantial house, and eventually took an apprentice to the trade.

Concerning London's second coffee-house keeper, James Farr, proprietor of the Rainbow, who had as his most distinguished visitor Sir Henry Blount, Edward Hatton says:

I find it recorded that one James Farr, a barber, who kept the coffee-house which is now the Rainbow, by the Inner Temple Gate (one of the first in England), was in the year 1657, prosecuted by the inquest of St Dunstan's in the West, for making and selling a sort of liquor called coffe, as a great nuisance and prejudice to the neighborhood, etc., and who would then have thought London would ever have had near three thousand such nuisances, and that coffee would have been, as now, so much drank by the best of quality and physicians?

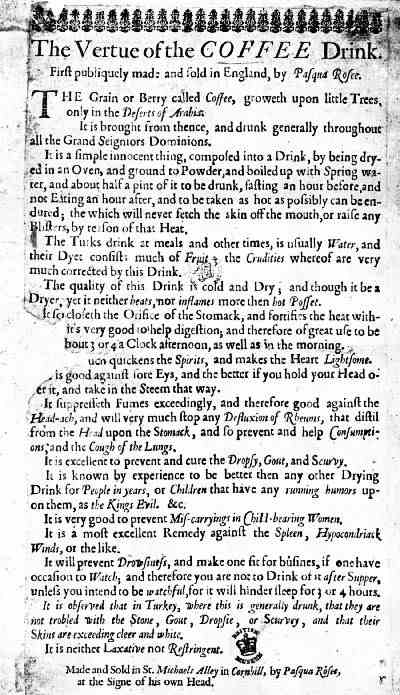


Figure 1: FIRST ADVERTISEMENT FOR COFFEE—1652

Handbill used by Pasqua Rosée, who opened the first coffee house in London From the original in the British Museum

Hatton evidently attributed Fair's nuisance to the coffee itself, whereas the presentment clearly shows it was in Farr's chimney and not in the coffee.

Mention has already been made that Sir Henry Blount was spoken of as "the father of English coffee houses" and his claim to this distinction would seem to be a valid one, for his strong personality "stamped itself upon the system." His favorite motto, "*Loquendum est cum vulgo, sentiendum cum sapientibus*" (the crowd may talk about it; the wise decide it), says Robinson, "expresses well their colloquial purpose, and was natural enough on the lips of one whose experience had been world wide." Aubrey says of Sir Henry Blount, "He is now neer or altogether eighty yeares, his intellectuals good still and body pretty strong."

Women played a not inconspicuous part in establishing businesses for the sale of the coffee drink in England, although the coffee houses were not for both sexes, as in other European countries. The London City *Quaeries* for 1660 makes mention of "a she-coffee merchant." Mary Stringar ran a coffee house in Little Trinity Lane in 1669; Anne Blunt was mistress of one of the Turk's-Head houses in Cannon Street in 1672. Mary Long was the widow of William Long, and her initials, together with those of her husband, appear on a token issued from the Rose tavern in Bridge Street, Covent Garden. Mary Long's token from the "Rose coffee house by the playhouse" in Covent Garden is shown among the group of coffee-house keepers' tokens herein illustrated.

## The First Newspaper Advertisement

The first newspaper advertisement for coffee appeared, May 26, 1657, in the *Publick Adviser* of London, one of the first weekly pamphlets. The name of this publication was erroneously given as the *Publick Advertiser* by an early writer on coffee, and the error has been copied by succeeding writers. The first newspaper advertisement was contained in the issue of the *Publick Adviser* for the week of May 19 to May 26, and read:

In *Bartholomew* Lane on the back side of the Old Exchange, the drink called *Coffee*, (which is a very wholsom and Physical drink, having many excellent vertues, closes the Orifice of the Stomack, fortifies the heat within, helpeth Digestion, quickneth the Spirits, maketh the heart lightsom, is good against Eye-sores, Coughs, or Colds, Rhumes, Consumptions, Head-ach, Dropsie, Gout, Scurvy, Kings Evil, and many others is to be sold both in the morning, and at three of the clock in the afternoon).

Chocolate was also advertised for sale in London this same year. The issue of the *Publick Adviser* for June 16, 1657, contained this announcement:

In Bishopgate Street, in Queen's Head Alley, at a Frenchman's house is an excellent West India drink called chocolate, to be sold, where you may have it ready at any time, and also unmade at reasonable rates.

Tea was first sold publicly at Garraway's (or Garway's) in 1657.

# Strange Coffee Mixtures

The doctors were loath to let coffee escape from the mysteries of the pharmacopœia and become "a simple and refreshing beverage" that any one might obtain for a penny in the coffee houses, or, if preferred, might prepare at home. In this they were aided and abetted by many well-meaning but misguided persons (some of them men of considerable intelligence) who seemed possessed of the idea that the coffee drink was an unpleasant medicine that needed something to take away its curse, or else that it required a complex method of preparation. Witness "Judge" Walter Rumsey's *Electuary of Cophy*, which appeared in 1657 in connection with a curious work of his called *Organon Salutis: an instrument to cleanse the stomach*. The instrument itself was a flexible whale-bone, two or three feet long, with a small linen or silk button at the end, and was designed to be introduced into the stomach to produce the effect of an emetic. The electuary of coffee was to be taken by the patient before and after using the instrument, which the "judge" called his *Provang*. And this was the "judge's" "new and superior way of preparing coffee" as found in his prescription for making electuary of cophy:

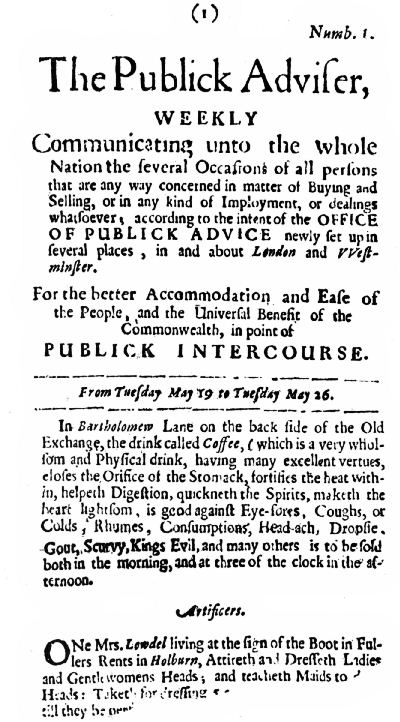
Take equal quantity of Butter and Sallet-oyle, melt them well together, but not boyle them: Then stirre them well that they may incorporate together: Then melt therewith three times as much Honey, and stirre it well together: Then add thereunto powder of Turkish Cophie, to make it a thick Electuary.

Figure 2: THE FIRST NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT FOR COFFEE—1657

A little consideration will convince any one that the electuary was most likely to achieve the purpose for which it was recommended.

Another concoction invented by the "judge" was known as "wash-brew", and included oatmeal, powder of "cophie", a pint of ale or any wine, ginger, honey, or sugar to please the taste; to these ingredients butter might be added and any cordial powder or pleasant spice. It was to be put into a flannel bag and "so keep it at pleasure like starch." This was a favorite medicine among the common people of Wales.

The book contained in a prefix an interesting historical document in the shape of a letter from James Howell (1595–1666) the writer and historiographer, which read:

Touching coffee, I concurre with them in opinion, who hold it to be that black-broth which was us'd of old in Lacedemon, whereof the Poets sing; Surely it must needs be salutiferous, because so many sagacious, and the wittiest sort of Nations use it so much; as they who have conversed with Shashes and Turbants doe well know. But, besides the exsiccant quality it hath to dry up the crudities of the Stomach, as also to comfort the Brain, to fortifie the sight with its steem, and prevent Dropsies, Gouts, the Scurvie, together with the Spleen and Hypocondriacall windes (all which it doth without any violance or distemper at all.) I say, besides all these qualities, 'tis found already, that this Coffee-drink hath caused a greater sobriety among the nations; for whereas formerly Apprentices and Clerks with others, used to take their mornings' draught in Ale, Beer or Wine, which by the dizziness they cause in the Brain, make many unfit for business, they use now to play the Good-fellows in this wakefull and civill drink: Therefore that worthy Gentleman, Mr. Mudiford, who introduced the practice hereof first to London, deserves much respect of the whole nation.

The coffee drink at one time was mixed with sugar candy, and also with mustard. In the coffee houses, however, it was usually served black; "few people then mixed it with either sugar or milk."

## Fantastic Coffee Claims

One can not fail to note in connection with the introduction of coffee into England that the beverage suffered most from the indiscretions of its friends. On the one hand, the quacks of the medical profession sought to claim it for their own; and, on the other, more or less ignorant laymen attributed to the drink such virtues as its real champions among the physicians never dreamed of. It was the favorite pastime of its friends to exaggerate coffee's merits; and of its enemies, to vilify its users. All this furnished good "copy" for and against the coffee house, which became the central figure in each new controversy.

From the early English author who damned it by calling it "more wholesome than toothsome", to Pasqua Rosée and his contemporaries, who urged its more fantastic claims, it was forced to make its way through a veritable morass of misunderstanding and intolerance. No harmless drink in history has suffered more at hands of friend and foe.

Did its friends hail it as a panacea, its enemies retorted that it was a slow poison. In France and in England there were those who contended that it produced melancholy, and those who argued it was a cure for the same. Dr. Thomas Willis (1621–1673), a distinguished Oxford physician whom Antoine Portal (1742–1832) called "one of the greatest geniuses that ever lived", said he would sometimes send his patients to the coffee house rather than to the apothecary's shop. An old broadside, described later in this chapter, stressed the notion that if you "do but this Rare ARABIAN cordial use, and thou may'st all the Doctors Slops Refuse."

As a cure for drunkenness its "magic" power was acclaimed by its friends, and grudgingly admitted by its foes. This will appear presently in a description of the war of the broadsides and the pamphlets. Coffee was praised by one writer as a deodorizer. Another (Richard Bradley), in his treatise concerning its use with regard to the plague, said if its qualities had been fully known in 1665, "Dr. Hodges and other learned men of that time would have recommended it." As a matter of fact, in Gideon Harvey's *Advice against the Plague*, published in 1665, we find, "coffee is commended against the contagion."

This is how the drink's sobering virtue was celebrated by the author of the *Rebellious Antidote*:

Come, Frantick Fools, leave off your Drunken fits.  
Obsequious be and I'll recall your Wits,  
From perfect Madness to a modest Strain  
For farthings four I'll fetch you back again,  
Enable all your mene with tricks of State,  
Enter and sip and then attend your Fate;  
Come Drunk or Sober, for a gentle Fee,  
Come n'er so Mad, I'll your Physician be.

Dr. Willis, in his *Pharmaceutice Rationalis* (1674), was one of the first to attempt to do justice to both sides of the coffee question. At best, he thought it a somewhat risky beverage, and its votaries must, in some cases, be prepared to suffer languor and even paralysis; it may attack the heart and cause tremblings in the limbs. On the other hand it may, if judiciously used, prove a marvelous benefit; "being daily drunk it wonderfully clears and enlightens each part of the Soul and disperses all the clouds of every Function."

It was a long time before recognition was obtained for the truth about the "novelty drink"; especially that, if there were any beyond purely social virtues to be found in coffee, they were "political rather than medical."

Dr. James Duncan, of the Faculty of Montpellier, in his book *Wholesome Advice against the Abuse of Hot Liquors*, done into English in 1706, found coffee no more deserving of the name of panacea than that of poison.

George Cheyne (1671–1743), the noted British physician, proclaimed his neutrality in the words, "I have neither great praise nor bitter blame for the thing."

# Coffee Prices and Coffee Licenses

Coffee, with tea and chocolate, was first mentioned in the English Statute books in 1660, when a duty of four pence was laid upon every gallon made and sold, "to be paid by the maker." Coffee was classed by the House of Commons with "other outlandish drinks."

It is recorded in 1662 that "the right coffee powder" was being sold at the Turk's Head coffee house in Exchange Alley for "4s. to 6s. 8d. per pound; that pounded in a mortar, 2s; East India berry, 1s. 6d.; and the right Turkie berry, well garbled [ground] at 3s. The ungarbled [in the bean] for less with directions how to use the same." Chocolate was also to be had at "2s. 6d. the pound; the perfumed from 4s. to 10s."

At one time coffee sold for five guineas a pound in England, and even forty crowns (about forty-eight dollars) a pound was paid for it.

In 1663, all English coffee houses were required to be licensed; the fee was twelve pence. Failure to obtain a license was punished by a fine of five pounds for every month's violation of the law. The coffee houses were under close surveillance by government officials. One of these was Muddiman, a good scholar and an "arch rogue", who had formerly "written for the Parliament" but who later became a paid spy. L'Estrange, who had a patent on "the sole right of intelligence", wrote in his *Intelligencer* that he was alarmed at the ill effects of "the ordinary written papers of Parliament's news ... making coffee houses and all the popular clubs judges of those councils and deliberations which they have nothing to do with at all."

The first royal warrant for coffee was given by Charles II to Alexander Man, a Scotsman who had followed General Monk to London, and set up in Whitehall. Here he advertised himself as "coffee man to Charles II."

Owing to increased taxes on tea, coffee, and newspapers, near the end of Queen Anne's reign (1714) coffee-house keepers generally raised their prices as follows: Coffee, two pence per dish; green tea, one and a half pence per dish. All drams, two pence per dram. At retail, coffee was then sold for five shillings per pound; while tea brought from twelve to twenty-eight shillings per pound.

# Coffee Club of The Rota

"Coffee and Commonwealth", says a pamphleteer of 1665, "came in together for a Reformation, to make 's a free and sober nation." The writer argues that liberty of speech should be allowed, "where men of differing judgements croud"; and he adds, "that's a coffee-house, for where should men discourse so free as there?" Robinson's comments are apt:

Now perhaps we do not always connect the ideas of sociableness and freedom of discussion with the days of Puritan rule; yet it must be admitted that something like geniality and openness characterized what Pepys calls the Coffee Club of the Rota. This "free and open Society of ingenious gentlemen" was founded in the year 1659 by certain members of the Republican party, whose peculiar opinions had been timidly expressed and not very cordially tolerated under the Great Oliver. By the weak Government that followed, these views were regarded with extreme dislike and with some amount of terror.

"They met", says Aubrey, who was himself of their number, "at the Turk's Head [Miles's coffee house] in New Palace Yard, Westminster, where they take water, at one Miles's, the next house to the staires, where was made purposely a large ovall table, with a passage in the middle for Miles to deliver his coffee."

Robinson continues:

This curious refreshment bar and the interest with which the beverage itself was regarded, were quite secondary to the excitement caused by another novelty. When, after heated disputation, a member desired to test the opinion of the meeting, any particular point might, by agreement, be put to the vote and then everything depended upon "our wooden oracle," the first balloting-box ever seen in England. Formal methods of procedure and the intensely practical nature of the subjects discussed, combined to give a real importance to this Amateur Parliament.

Figure 3: A Coffee House in the Time of Charles II

From a wood cut of 1674

The Rota, or Coffee Club, as Pepys called it, was essentially a debating society for the dissemination of republican opinions. It was preceded only, in the reign of Henry IV, by the club called La Court de Bone Compagnie; by Sir Walter Raleigh's Friday Street, or Bread Street, club; the club at the Mermaid tavern in Bread Street, of which Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Raleigh, Selden, Donne, *et al.*, were members; and "rare" Ben Jonson's Devil tavern club, between Middle Temple Gate and Temple Bar.

The Rota derived its name from a plan, which it was designed to promote, for changing a certain number of members of parliament annually by rotation. It was founded by James Harrington, who had painted it in fairest colors in his *Oceana*, that ideal commonwealth.

Sir William Petty was one of its members. Around the table, "in a room every evening as full as it could be crammed," says Aubrey, sat Milton (?) and Marvell, Cyriac Skinner, Harrington, Nevill, and their friends, discussing abstract political questions.

The Rota became famous for its literary strictures. Among these was "The censure of the Rota upon Mr. Milton's book entitled *The ready and easie way to establish a free commonwealth*" (1660), although it is doubtful if Milton was ever a visitor to this "bustling coffee club." The Rota also censured "Mr. Driden's *Conquest of Granada*" (1673).

# Early Coffee-House Manners and Customs

Among many of the early coffee-house keepers there was great anxiety that the coffee house, open to high and low, should be conducted under such restraints as might secure the better class of customers from annoyance. The following set of regulations in somewhat halting rhyme was displayed on the walls of several of the coffee houses in the seventeenth century:

The Rules and Orders of the Coffee House.  
  
Enter, Sirs, freely, but first, if you please,  
Peruse our civil orders, which are these.  
  
First, gentry, tradesmen, all are welcome hither,  
And may without affront sit down together:  
Pre-eminence of place none here should mind,  
But take the next fit seat that he can find:  
Nor need any, if finer persons come,  
Rise up to assigne to them his room;  
To limit men's expence, we think not fair,  
But let him forfeit twelve-pence that shall swear;  
He that shall any quarrel here begin,  
 Shall give each man a dish t' atone the sin;  
And so shall he, whose compliments extend  
So far to drink in coffee to his friend;  
Let noise of loud disputes be quite forborne,  
No maudlin lovers here in corners mourn,  
But all be brisk and talk, but not too much,  
On sacred things, let none presume to touch.  
Nor profane Scripture, nor sawcily wrong  
Affairs of state with an irreverent tongue:  
Let mirth be innocent, and each man see  
That all his jests without reflection be;  
To keep the house more quiet and from blame,  
We banish hence cards, dice, and every game;  
Nor can allow of wagers, that exceed  
Five shillings, which ofttimes much trouble breed;  
Let all that's lost or forfeited be spent  
In such good liquor as the house doth vent.  
And customers endeavour, to their powers,  
For to observe still, seasonable hours.  
Lastly, let each man what he calls for pay,  
And so you're welcome to come every day.

The early coffee houses were often up a flight of stairs, and consisted of a single large room with "tables set apart for divers topics." There is a reference to this in the prologue to a comedy of 1681 (quoted by Malone):

In a coffee house just now among the rabble  
I bluntly asked, which is the treason table?

This was the arrangement at Man's and others favored by the wits, the *literati*, and "men of fashionable instincts." In the distinctly business coffee houses separate rooms were provided at a later time for mercantile transactions. The introduction of wooden partitions—wooden boxes, as at a tavern—was also of somewhat later date.

A print of 1674 shows five persons of different ranks in life, one of them smoking, sitting on chairs around a coffee-house table, on which are small basins, or dishes, without saucers, and tobacco pipes, while a coffee boy is serving coffee.

In the beginning, only coffee was dispensed in the English coffee houses. Soon chocolate, sherbert, and tea were added; but the places still maintained their status as social and temperance factors. Constantine Jennings (or George Constantine) of the Grecian advertised chocolate, sherbert and tea at retail in 1664–65; also free instruction in the part of preparing these liquors. "Drams and cordial waters were to be had only at coffee houses newly set up," says Elford the younger, writing about 1689. "While some few places added ale and beer as early as 1669, intoxicating liquors were not items of importance for many years."

Figure 4: A London Coffee House of the Seventeenth Century

From a wood cut of the period

After the fire of 1666, many new coffee houses were opened that were not limited to a single room up a flight of stairs. Because the coffee-house keepers over-emphasized the sobering qualities of the coffee drink, they drew many undesirable characters from the taverns and ale houses after the nine o'clock closing hour. These were hardly calculated to improve the reputation of the coffee houses; and, indeed, the decline of the coffee houses as a temperance institution would seem to trace back to this attitude of false pity for the victims of tavern vices, evils that many of the coffee houses later on embraced to their own undoing. The early institution was unique, its distinctive features being unlike those of any public house in England or on the Continent. Later on, in the eighteenth century, when these distinctive features became obscured, the name coffee house became a misnomer.



Figure 5: Coffee House, Queen Anne's Time—1702–14

Showing coffee pots, coffee dishes, and coffee boy

However, Robinson says, "the close intercourse between the habitués of the coffee house, before it lost anything of its generous social traditions and whilst the issue of the struggle for political liberty was as yet uncertain, was to lead to something more than a mere jumbling or huddling together of opposites. The diverse elements gradually united in the bonds of common sympathy, or were forcibly combined by persecution from without until there resulted a social, political and moral force of almost irresistible strength."

## Coffee-House Keepers' Tokens

The great London fire of 1666 destroyed some of the coffee houses; but prominent among those that survived was the Rainbow, whose proprietor, James Farr, issued one of the earliest coffee-house tokens, doubtless in grateful memory of his escape. Farr's token shows an arched rainbow emerging from the clouds of the "great fire," indicating that all was well with him, and the Rainbow still radiant. On the reverse the medal was inscribed, "In Fleet Street—His Half Penny."

A large number of these trade coins were put out by coffee-house keepers and other tradesmen in the seventeenth century as evidence of an amount due, as stated thereon, by the issuer to the holder. Tokens originated because of the scarcity of small change. They were of brass, copper, pewter, and even leather, gilded. They bore the name, address, and calling of the issuer, the nominal value of the piece, and some reference to his trade. They were readily redeemed, on presentation, at their face value. They were passable in the immediate neighborhood, seldom reaching farther than the next street. C.G. Williamson writes:

Tokens are essentially democratic; they would never have been issued but for the indifference of the Government to a public need; and in them we have a remarkable instance of a people forcing a legislature to comply with demands at once reasonable and imperative. Taken as a whole series, they are homely and quaint, wanting in beauty, but not without a curious domestic art of their own.

Robinson finds an exception to the general simplicity in the tokens issued by one of the Exchange Alley houses. The dies of these tokens are such as to have suggested the skilled workmanship of John Roettier. The most ornate has the head of a Turkish sultan at that time famed for his horrible deeds, ending in suicide; its inscription runs:

Morat ye Great Men did mee call;  
Where Eare I came I conquer'd all.

A number of the most interesting coffee-house keepers' tokens in the Beaufoy collection in the Guildhall Museum were photographed for this work, and are shown herewith. It will be observed that many of the traders of 1660–75 adopted as their trade sign a hand pouring coffee from a pot, invariably of the Turkish-ewer pattern. Morat (Amurath) and Soliman were frequent coffee-house signs in the seventeenth century.

J.H. Burn, in his *Catalogue of Traders' Tokens*, recites that in 1672 "divers persons who presumed ... to stamp, coin, exchange and distribute farthings, halfpence and pence of brass and copper" were "taken into custody, in order to a severe prosecution"; but upon submission, their offenses were forgiven, and it was not until the year 1675 that the private token ceased to pass current.

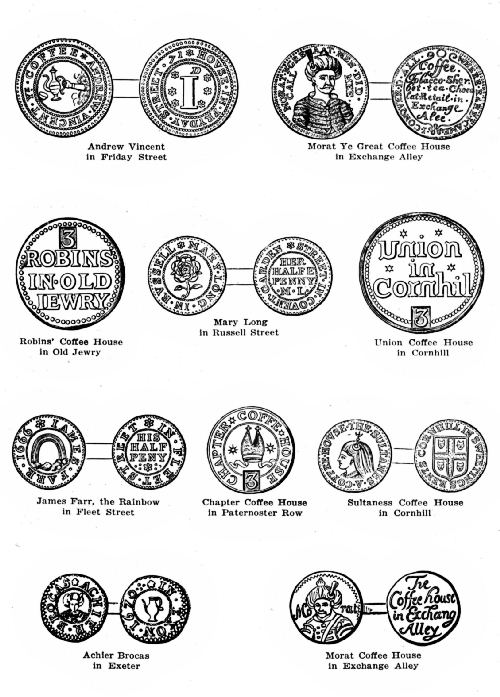


Figure 6: COFFEE-HOUSE KEEPERS' TOKENS OF THE 17TH CENTURY

Drawn for this work from the originals in the British Museum, and in the Beaufoy collection at the Guildhall Museum

A royal proclamation at the close of 1674 enjoined the prosecution of any who should "utter base metals with private stamps," or "hinder the vending of those half pence and farthings which are provided for necessary exchange." After this, tokens were issued stamped "necessary change."

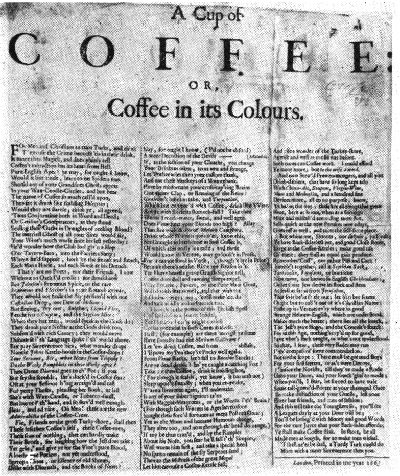
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Figure 7: A Broad-side of 1663