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GEORGIAN
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Brian Allen, 'Francis Hayman and The Supper-Box
Paintings for Vauxhall Gardens', *The Rococo in England*,
Georgian Group Symposium, 1984, pp. 113–133

FRANCIS HAYMAN AND THE SUPPER-BOX PAINTINGS FOR VAUXHALL GARDENS

Brian Allen

Whilst interest in the rococo style has fluctuated with the balance of taste throughout recent generations, Vauxhall Gardens has had a consistent appeal as one of the most fascinating aspects of eighteenth century social history. In the last few decades alone several books and exhibitions have been devoted exclusively to the subject.¹

My intention in this paper is to establish a chronology for the execution of the fascinating series of paintings which decorated Vauxhall's supper-boxes and to examine also the complex question of authorship of some of the better-known pictures. In order to attempt this we must begin by glancing at the physical arrangement of the gardens.

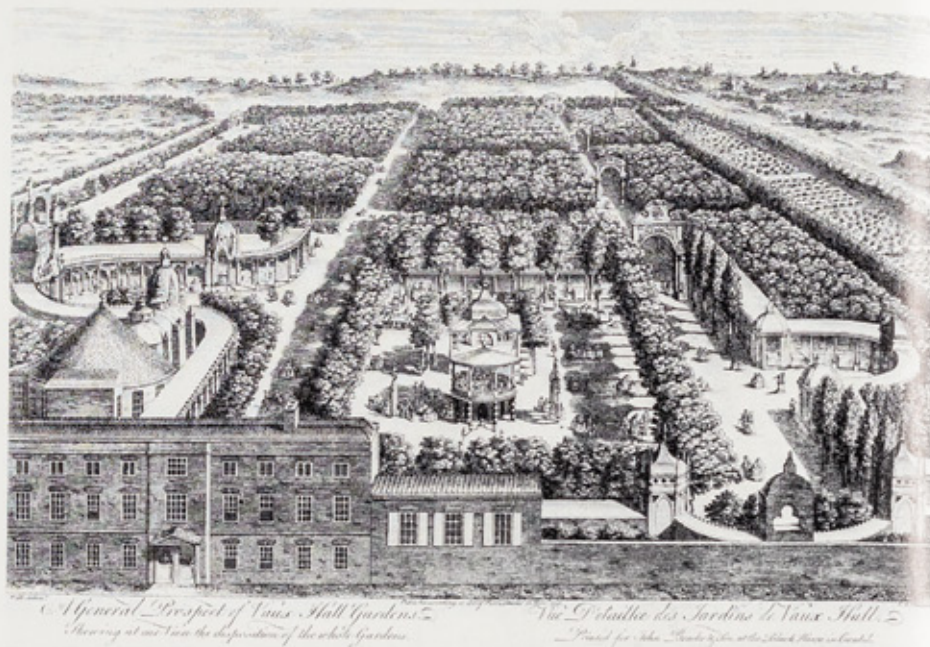
In many ways, Jonathan Tyer's Vauxhall Gardens were a sort of open-air Theatre (Fig. 1). The curving Pavilions formed amphitheatres of a kind; the buildings from which the orchestra performed in the centre of the Grove; the Rotunda, or Music Room as it was sometimes known; the Triumphal Arches spanning the so-called Italian-Walk and later the illusionistic *trompe l'œil* scenes which arrested the spectators attention at every turn – all these created a distinctly theatrical flavour reminiscent of the flimsy stage scenery of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres. So too did Francis Hayman's famous supper-box pictures executed in the early 1740s.

Several recent writers on Vauxhall have concluded that the main series of paintings date from the mid-1730s onwards² – that is within a few years of Tyers becoming proprietor in 1728 – but there is sufficient evidence, both written and visual to prove

1. A modern scholarly survey is, however, still needed. The most comprehensive studies to date are W. Wroth, *The London Pleasure Gardens of the Eighteenth Century*, (London 1896); J. G. Southworth, *Vauxhall Gardens. A Chapter in the Social History of England*, (New York 1941); W. S. Scott, *Green Retreats: The Story of Vauxhall Gardens 1661-1859*, (London, 1955); Sudbury, Gainsborough's House *The Muse's Bower, Vauxhall Gardens 1728-1786* (Exhibition catalogue, 1978 by D. Coke); T. J. Edelstein and B. Allen, *Vauxhall Gardens*, Yale Center for British Art (1983) and most recently D. Coke, 'Vauxhall Gardens' in *Rococo - Art and Design in Hogarth's England*, Victoria and Albert Museum (London 1984) pp. 74-98 (hereafter *Rococo*).

2. L. Gowing, 'Hogarth, Hayman and the Vauxhall Decorations', *Burlington Magazine*, XCV, (January 1953), pp. 4-19 (hereafter Gowing) and more recently R. Paulson, *Hogarth, His Life, Art and Times*, 2 vols (New Haven and London 1971), I, p. 348.

FIG. 1 J. S. Muller after Samuel Wale, *A General Prospect of Vauxhall Gardens*, pub. 1751.



that, with a few exceptions, they were executed *c.* 1741–42. The exceptions were Hayman's larger Shakespeare pictures for the Prince of Wales's Pavilion, painted according to Vertue *c.* 1745, and the four gigantic canvasses illustrating episodes from the Seven Years War in the annex to the Rotunda, painted in the early 1760s. Both these later series are beyond the scope of this paper and I shall here concentrate solely on the main series of supper-box paintings.

What are the available facts that enable a chronology for the painted decorations to be drawn up? First, the so-called Vauxhall Fan, published in 1736³ and a separately published engraving of about the same date with a very similar composition (Fig. 2)⁴ show quite clearly that the supper-boxes on each side of the Grove were flimsy, canopied and open structures with no walls upon which to hang pictures. The sole architectural feature identifiable from Wale's aerial view of fifteen years later (Fig. 1) is the cylindrical Palladian-style orchestra pavilion in the centre of the Grove.

A fascinating description of the supper-boxes prior to 1742 survives in the form of a record kept by a German visitor, Baron Jakob Friedrich von Bielfeld who visited London in 1737 and

3. See *Rococo*, p. 83, F.5.

4. Impression illustrated here as Fig. 2 is from the Grace Collection, in the Dept of Prints and Drawings, British Museum (portfolio XXXV) which is inscribed in a ms. pencil note '1737'.

again in 1741; the latter time as a member of the Prussian Embassy. Bielfeld recorded at length his impressions of a visit to Vauxhall during his second sojourn in London. Having described the illuminations with great relish he went on to record:

'To prevent . . . the inconvenience of supping in the open air, the projector of Vauxhall has contrived to cover all his boxes with wax'd cloth. When the clock strikes nine, there is heard a third sound of the whistle, and immediately there rises, as out of the earth, a vast number of rollers, which unfolding themselves as they rise, cover all the boxes in three of their sides, and fasten themselves in the extremitys of each box. All these coverings are painted with elegant designs, in lively colours, so that each box is enclosed by three large pictures, and at the same time that they completely protect the company from the injurys of the air, present a numerous collection of grand and pleasing paintings . . .'⁵

The paintings to which Bielfeld refers are clearly not the well-known Hayman series but appear to have been decorative in the strictest sense, rather than figurative.

The first mention of what are clearly the paintings associated with Hayman occurs in the anonymous verses set to music by

5. J. F. von Bielfeld, *Letters of Baron Bielfeld* (trans. from the German by Mr W. Hooper), 4 vols, (London 1770), IV, pp. 166-67.

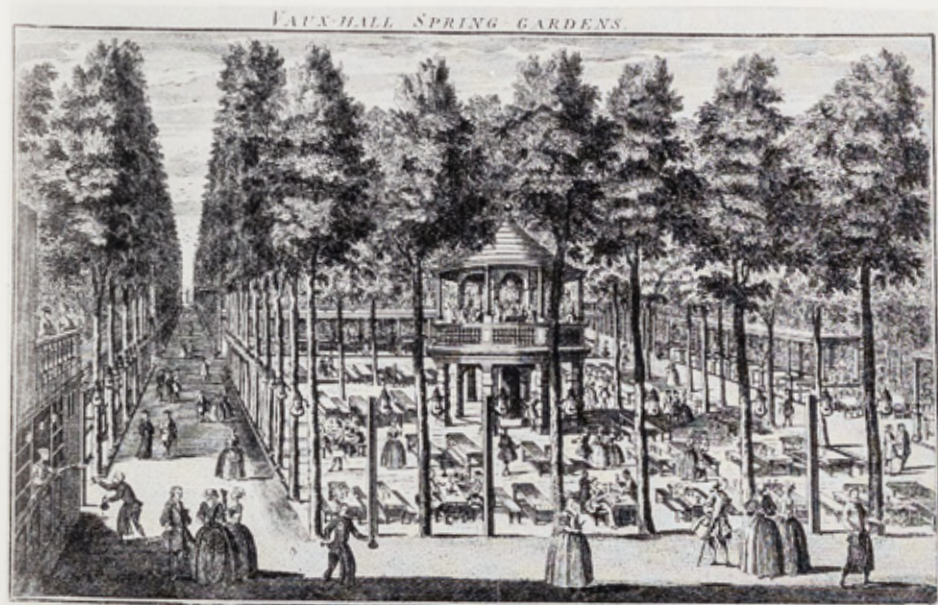


FIG. 2 Anon. engraving, *Vaux-Hall Spring Gardens*, c. 1737. Department of Prints & Drawings, British Museum (Crace Collection, portfolio XXXV).

6. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, XII, (August 1742), p. 440.

7. *The Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 27 April 1738: 'The same day (the 26th) a Statue of Mr Handel in marble, was carried over the Water, to be put up in Vauxhall Gardens'. For the Vauxhall *Handel* see T. Hodgkinson, 'Handel at Vauxhall', *Victoria and Albert Museum Bulletin*, I, no. 4, (October 1964), pp. 1-13 (reprinted as a separate pamphlet by the V & A in 1969).

8. The Rotunda was designed by William Jones (d. 1757) who in 1752 became Surveyor to the East India Company. The bills and contracts in connection with the erection of the Rotunda are among the Chancery Masters Exhibits in the Public Record Office (C 105/37/32).

9. Repr. W.G. Constable, *Canaletto*, 2 vols, (Oxford 1976), I, pl. 77, nos. 420, 421.

10. *A Description of Ranelagh Rotunda and Gardens*, (London 1762) p. 8.

Gladwin entitled *GREEN-WOOD - HALL: or Colin's Description (to his wife) of the Pleasures of SPRING GARDENS*, published separately as an engraved plate in the manner of those from Bickham's *The Musical Entertainer* and the text subsequently reprinted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August 1742.⁶ These verses indicate that by the summer of 1742 some of the pictures were in place, since several are alluded to. Second, in the spring and summer of 1743 a series of eighteen large engravings with elaborate letter-press were published after the Vauxhall pictures.

In the winter of 1741-42 there must have been a campaign of rebuilding and redecorating at Vauxhall and this is evidenced by the publication in 1744 of Maurer's engraving which shows that the fabric of the supper-boxes had been made more substantial than those seen on the Vauxhall fan, presumably to accommodate Hayman's paintings. During the first decade of his proprietorship, Tyers was constantly looking for ways of improving his facilities and attractions at Vauxhall. The arrival in 1738 of Roubiliac's celebrated statue of Handel,⁷ greeted with such critical acclaim, must have made Tyers aware of the novel, crowd-pulling appeal of works of art displayed in public. We should recall that there was still no public picture gallery in England. The establishment of a gallery of pictures by artists of the St Martin's Lane Academy at the Foundling Hospital was still almost a decade away.

It is surely not a coincidence that Hayman's pictures at Vauxhall were unveiled c. 1742, the year Ranelagh Gardens opened on the opposite bank of the Thames, a short distance upstream. The comfort of Ranelagh's enormous and comparatively sturdy amphitheatre was in sharp contrast to the flimsiness of Vauxhall's structures.⁸ The interior, so well known from Canaletto's painting,⁹ resembled in size the present British Library Reading Room and contained forty-eight supper-boxes at gallery-level on the first floor.¹⁰ Furthermore, it could be used in all weathers and at all times of the year.

The importance of establishing as accurate a chronology as possible for this phase of the Gardens' development is in order

to explain why, after further major redecorations later in the decade, some of the supper-boxes did not contain pictures – a fact rarely commented on by historians of Vauxhall. Prior to c. 1750 the original fifty or so paintings probably filled each of the existing boxes on all but the west side of the Grove where the Prince's Pavilion with its own paintings occupied the prime position. Significantly, after the further redecoration of c. 1750 – when the place took on its curiously hybrid Chinese-Gothick look – Tyers commissioned no further pictures of the same scale and type from Hayman and his studio.

The supper-box pictures began close to the entrance to the Gardens in the north-west corner of the Grove where a colonnade ran parallel with the lower reaches of the Grand Walk. Each of the first eighteen supper-boxes contained a painting as far as the first of the semi-circular colonnades of supper boxes which interrupted the regularity of the Grove.¹¹

These 'Chinese' pavilions as they were called were constructed c. 1750 and with a few exceptions were not decorated with pictures. The original series of paintings by Hayman, painted some seven or eight years before were presumably re-arranged to suit the architectural modifications.¹²

The eight boxes behind the Orchestra and 'Turkish Tent', on the eastern side of the Grove also each accommodated a picture. The pictures then continued on the west side of the Grove as far as the second semi-circle of pavilions. None of the compartments in this piazza contained pictures either but a short range of five boxes ran from its western extremity towards the south-west corner of the Grove. At this point a walkway ran southwards towards the other entrance to the Gardens in Kennington Lane. Five boxes to the eastern side of this walkway were decorated with the remaining pictures.

Those facts established let us examine the complex question of authorship. According to well established tradition¹³ it was the entrepreneurial Hogarth who first suggested to Tyers that he might revive his flagging fortunes at Vauxhall by enlivening the

11. See Gowing pp. 11–12 for titles of pictures.

12. Sophie von la Roche noted in 1786 that those boxes without pictures had a mirror instead (*Sophie in London 1786 being the Diary of Sophie v. la Roche* [trans. from the German with an introductory Essay by Claire Williams and a foreword by G.M. Trevelyan], [London, 1933], p. 280.)

13. See J. Nichols and G. Steevens, *The Genuine Works of William Hogarth*, 3 vols. (London 1808–17), I, p. 47.

14. NPG 5588. See J. Ruch, 'A Hayman Portrait of Jonathan Tyers's Family', *Burlington Magazine*, CXII (August 1970), pp. 495-97.

15. For further details see *The London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, 22 May 1736.

16. *The Enraged Vixen of a Wife* (The Play of Skittles) now in City of Birmingham Museum; *Ladies Angling* in the Collection of Dudley Snelgrove Esq. and *The Cutting of Flour* in the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester.

Gardens with works of art. Apparently during the early years of Tyers's stewardship Vauxhall was not a commercial success. We do not know when, or even if it was Hogarth who introduced Tyers to Hayman but they were certainly acquainted by 1740 for in that year Hayman painted the charming group portrait of Tyers and his family, recently acquired by the National Portrait Gallery.¹⁴

By the later 1730s the young Frank Hayman, trained and practising as a scene painter, had a considerable reputation based on his naturalistic stage designs for Henry Giffard at Goodman's Fields and subsequently Drury Lane Theatres. Tyers may well have witnessed one of the few stage spectacles with which we can firmly associate Hayman's name. Although no visual record survives, we know that Hayman painted and designed scenes for what the *London Daily Post* described as 'A New Entertainment after the Manner of Spring Garden, Vaux-Hall, with a scene representing the place', performed on 22 May 1736.¹⁵

Hayman's talent as a designer and painter of stage scenery was particularly appropriate for Vauxhall Gardens which, under Tyers's management, was imbued with a powerfully theatrical dimension.

In 1953, when Lawrence Gowing published his pioneering article on the Vauxhall pictures in the *Burlington Magazine*, he was then able to account for the designs of about thirty of the original group of fifty or so paintings. Only about fifteen of these were the original canvasses but with the aid of engravings and some of Hayman's drawings he was able to provide an invaluable summary of the existing evidence. Since 1953 three more drawings¹⁶ and another engraving have surfaced as well as a great deal of information about the later pictures in the Prince's Pavilion and the Rotunda annex.

Professor Gowing argued that the supper-box paintings were begun in the early 1730s and that the scheme was executed over the course of the following decade. We have now seen that the pictures were probably not begun until the early 1740s and it is extremely unlikely that they were produced over the span of a decade. In the first instance Tyers relied on a constantly changing

visual spectacle to draw customers to Vauxhall and, in the early 1740s, he urgently needed to counter the rival threat of Ranelagh. Second, Hayman would hardly have been prepared to allow what must have seemed an ephemeral scheme to occupy his attention over such a long period. He was increasingly active in other spheres and far from dependent on Tyers as a patron. One suspects that Hayman approached the scheme in much the same manner as scene painting. That is to say that, like stage scenery, the pictures needed to be completed quickly for the new season and therefore there was insufficient time for attention to minute detail.

There can be little doubt that the bulk of the labour was not undertaken by Hayman alone. Both John Lockman, the poet and author of the 1752 guide to Vauxhall,¹⁷ and the anonymous author of the 1762 *Description of Vauxhall*¹⁸ hint that this was the case, informing their readers that the pictures were executed from the designs of Hayman and Hogarth. Despite the letter-press on the engravings attributing the execution to Hayman, we should take this as a reference to the artist and his studio. Very few of the surviving canvasses retain much trace of Hayman's easily identifiable hand.¹⁹ Those fragments that do survive are horribly crude and have done little to enhance Hayman's reputation. Much of their present disfigurement is the result of re-touching and overpainting to which they were more prone than even the most vulnerable pictures in less public settings. As early as 1755 the *Gentleman's Magazine* reported that 'At Vauxhall ... they have touched up all the pictures, which were damaged last season by the fingering of those curious Connoisseurs, who could not be satisfied without *feeling* whether the figures were alive.'²⁰ By the time the surviving pictures were dispersed at auction in 1841,²¹ some of them were described as 'nailed to boards, and much obscured by dirt.'²² It is not difficult to imagine the damage wrought on them by a combination of immoderate behaviour and the effect of London's climate. Even though the pictures were removed in winter it is highly unlikely that they were stored away each night during the season, which ran from the beginning of

17. [J. Lockman]. *A Sketch of Spring-Gardens, Vaux-Hall. In a Letter to a Noble Lord* (London n.d. [1752]). Hereafter Lockman.

18. [Anon.] *A Description of Vauxhall Gardens*, (London 1762). Hereafter *Description 1762*.

19. A later writer, Edward Dayes, confirms this: 'His [Hayman's] pictures in Vaux Hall Gardens (I mean the large ones (i.e. the four large Histories, for the others though sometimes attributed to him, are not his) possess excellencies that would not discredit an artist of the present day ...' (E. Dayes, *The Works of the late Edward Dayes ... etc. ...*, London 1805, p. 331).

20. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, XXV, (1755), p. 206.

21. By Messrs. Ventom and Hughes, 12 October 1841 on the premises (the pictures comprised lots 180-201 and lot 206).

22. J. Timbs, *The Curiosities of London ... etc. ...* (London 1876), p. 814.

23. When Frederick Kielmansegge visited Vauxhall in November 1761 he noted that 'In most of them [the supper boxes] are said to be paintings by Hayman, which are removed in winter, especially the four large and fine pieces representing scenes from Shakespeare's plays, which are in the large pavilion (Count Frederick Kielmansegge, *Diary of a Journey to England in the Years 1761-1762*, trans. by Countess Kielmansegge, (London 1902), p. 167.

24. See illustrations in Gowing, figs 10, 22.

May through to the end of September.²³

Amongst the worst to suffer yet survive is the *Scene from 'The Mock Doctor'* which is now at Sizergh Castle and so disfigured that were the design not known to be Hayman's through an engraving it would be entirely inadmissible as his work. The same must be said of *The Devil to Pay*.²⁴

Eight pen and brown ink drawings for the Vauxhall pictures have been identified to date and, significantly, they are all autograph works by Hayman. They provide an important clue to the complex issue of authorship. Several are squared up for transfer and one of them, *Flying the Kite* (Fig. 3) is inscribed in Hayman's own clear hand 'the Figures 2 ft 5 In: or 6'. This is of some significance since had Hayman planned to execute the pictures himself he would hardly have required such basic instructions. No doubt drawings existed for all the supper-box pictures, acting as aids to Hayman's assistants. The sheer bulk of canvas – each c. 58 × 96 inches – was far too great for one artist to handle. Hayman's rôle, apart from supplying most of the designs, must have been mainly supervisory, although he clearly had a hand in some of them. For example, *The Milkmaid's Garland*, now in the

FIG. 3 Francis Hayman, *Flying the Kite*. Pen and brown ink with grey and brown wash, 30.3 × 19 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.





FIG. 4 Francis Hayman, *The Milkmaids' Garland*. Oil on canvas, 137 × 233 cm. London, Victoria & Albert Museum.

Victoria & Albert Museum and still in reasonable condition, shows how delicate these works could be when the greater part of the work was Hayman's (Fig. 4). Similar, although badly rubbed and crudely re-touched, particularly in the heads, is the surviving fragment of *The Wapping Landlady* which retains those characteristic, deeply folded draperies – the hallmark of Hayman's portraits and conversation pieces.

But what of Hogarth's contribution? The controversial question of Hogarth's involvement with the painted decorations for Vauxhall was the basis of Lawrence Gowing's article in 1953.

Gowing drew attention to John Lockman's veiled statement in his *Sketch* 'that the Hint of this rational and elegant *Entertainment*, was given by a *Gentleman* whose *Paintings* exhibit the most useful Lessons of Morality, blended with the happiest strokes of *Humour*'.²⁵ Doubtless Lockman was referring to Hogarth and scholars have interpreted the statement as an indication of considerable involvement on Hogarth's part. There is no reason to doubt the tradition that the impetus for the scheme came from Hogarth and that he was a regular visitor using his free admission token presented by Tyers,²⁶ but Lockman's statement need only refer to the instigation, at Hogarth's suggestion, of the first *Ridotto al fresco* held in the summer of 1732. Having described the four

25. Lockman, p. 2.

26. See *Rococo*, p. 83 f. 4.

27. Lockman, p. 4.

28. *Description* 1762, p. 28.

29. J. Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, (London 1781), p. 29.

30. Sale (on premises) by Maple & Co., 29 April 1947, lot 1855.

31. Hogarth's original painting is in the collection of the Earl of Ancaster. See R. Paulson, *Hogarth, His Life, Art and Times*, op. cit., I, pl. 149b. See also R. Paulson, *Hogarth's Graphic Works*, 2 vols, (New Haven and London 1965), I, p. 180, II, pl. 166.

large Shakespearean pictures in the Prince of Wales's Pavilion, which are known to be entirely by Hayman, Lockman tells his readers that the supper-box pictures were by the same artist 'to whom we owe ... the Designs of most of the Others in the Gardens.'²⁷ The author of the 1762 *Description of Vaux-Hall Gardens* is the first to actually name the painters, stating that the pictures were 'from the designs of Mr Hayman and Mr Hogarth'.²⁸ Again, this need not imply that Hogarth's contribution was any more than allowing his *Times-of-the-Day* designs to be copied. Hogarth's biographer John Nichols recorded in 1781 that Hayman had copied the *Four Times-of-the-Day* for Vauxhall and that *Evening* and *Night* were still there.²⁹ The copies of *Morning* and *Noon* had evidently been removed by Tyers before 1762, or perhaps were displayed privately since they are not recorded as in the supper-boxes in the guidebook published in that year. All that survives is the right hand fragment of *Evening*, last seen at the Lowther Castle sale in 1947.³⁰ It is a crude and much simplified copy of



FIG. 5 Attrib. to Francis Hayman and William Hogarth, *Fairies dancing on the green by moonlight*. Oil on canvas, 127.6 × 151.1 and 144.2 × 92.1 cm. Collection of Major A. S. C. Browne, Callaly Castle.

Hogarth's design, derived from Baron's engraving of Hogarth's episode from the *Four-Times-of-the-Day*.³¹ Since they were about aspects and conditions of London life, Hogarth's designs were ideally suitable subjects for Vauxhall.

Equally suited, though capturing an entirely different aspect of the gardens' atmosphere, was the mysterious *Fairies dancing on the green by moonlight* (Fig. 5). Professor Gowing's article was dominated by the notion that Hogarth was the author of this strange picture.³² *Fairies dancing* is certainly very different from the other Vauxhall pictures in style, subject and mood. Professor Moelwyn Merchant argued that the subject was taken from Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,³³ but more recently Robin Simon has pointed out that, in the first instance, the *Fairy Queen* was not performed in the eighteenth century because the score was lost from shortly after Purcell's death in 1695 until early this century and, second, there are too many discrepancies of detail from Shakespeare's text for it to be seriously considered as an illustration to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.³⁴ The subject probably does not have a specific literary basis and might simply be Fairies dancing, because evocations of fairyland were alluded to by Lockman in his guidebook where, for instance, the music in the 'Rural Downs' is described as 'Fairy Music'.³⁵

Recently a ms. poem by Lockman, in which the author firmly attributes *Fairies dancing* to Hayman has appeared in the Bienecke Library at Yale.³⁶ But even without this seemingly conclusive evidence the attribution to Hogarth alone which hinged on stylistic criteria, is not entirely convincing. In common with most of the surviving Vauxhall canvasses, *Fairies dancing* is in almost ruinous condition, making judgments of attribution even more hazardous. At some point, probably soon after its appearance at Christie's in 1860, it was cut into two parts subsequently reunited in one frame. It is severely rubbed, heavily retouched and coarsely mended in several places.

Professor Gowing maintained that the authorship of the central

32. Gowing, pp. 4-6.

33. M. Merchant, *Shakespeare and the Artist*, (Oxford 1959), p. 45.

34. R. Simon, 'Hogarth's Shakespeare', *Apollo*, CIX, (March 1979), p. 45.

35. Lockman, *op. cit.* p. 19.

36. [J. Lockman], *Poems on several Occasions*, Vol. 1, finished 12 January 1762, The Osborn Collection, Bienecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. See T. J. Edelstein and B. Allen, *Vauxhall Gardens*, Yale Center for British Art, (1983), p. 43, no. 66.

37. Repr. Gowing, Fig. 5.

38. A. Smart, 'Hogarth or Hayman, Another look at the Fairies Dancing on the Green by Moonlight', *Apollo*, CIX, (March 1979), pp. 208-212.

39. Repr. Gowing, fig. 19.

FIG. 6 Bolswert after Rubens, *The Dance of the Italian Peasants*. British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.



group of *Fairies dancing* could hardly be doubted as Hogarth and this idea seems entirely possible. An x-ray of the canvas, published by Gowing, revealed a group of figures painted with the canvas reversed, in the upper left of the larger fragment.³⁷ The grotesque profiles revealed here recall the figures in the *Harlot's Progress* and the earlier plates for Butler's *Hudibras* and it is difficult to imagine who else they could be by but Hogarth. However, the two foreground figures, the Nightwatchman and the boy piping in the tree are quite acceptable as the work of Hayman. Professor Alastair Smart has recently drawn attention to the 'double lighting' of moonlight and candlelight that occurs frequently in Hayman's work.³⁸ For instance, the Innkeeper in Hayman's *Don Quixote Knighted by the Innkeeper* compares well with the Nightwatchman in *Fairies dancing*. A similar wide-eyed, fat-lipped figure appears in the first of Hayman's plates (*Satan calling his Legions*) for the Newton editions of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Even the dog in *Fairies dancing* is characteristic of Hayman and can be paralleled in other Vauxhall pictures like *Leap Frog*.³⁹ Similarly, the boy perched in the tree playing the pipe is close to the boy on the see-saw in the Vauxhall picture of that subject. The composition as a whole may owe something to Bolswert's engraving of Rubens' *Dance of Italian Peasants* (Fig. 6) which also has a boy piping in a tree.⁴⁰ So there remains the intriguing possibility of collaboration between Hogarth and Hayman in *Fairies dancing* – perhaps the only canvas where their work meets. Was *Fairies dancing* one of the earliest group of pictures, painted c. 1742? It is recorded at Vauxhall by 1762 but Hayman's contribution to this canvas has more in common with his looser style of the 1750s suggesting perhaps that he made alterations to a picture that was originally begun by Hogarth.

Although, for the most part, the subjects of the pictures fall into a number of distinct and remarkably novel categories; children's games, scenes from plays and novels, rural amusements &c., there does not appear to be any adherence to a specific iconographic programme. Teri Edelstein has suggested in a recent essay that the essential theme appears to have been the vanity of worldly

pursuits depicted through games of risk and chance.⁴¹

It is not a coincidence that several of the plays which formed the basis of Vauxhall pictures were written by figures who moved in the political circles of the Opposition. Henry Fielding's comedy *The Mock Doctor, Or the Dumb Lady Cur'd*, adapted from Molière's *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the 1730s and 1740s and Robert Dodsley's *The King and the Miller of Mansfield* with its jibes at courtiers, was certainly anti-government in tone and met with popular approval from the political opposition centred around Frederick, Prince of Wales. Writers for the Opposition like Dodsley, Fielding, Mallet and Brooks all turned to drama as the means of attacking Walpole, the ministry and corruption among officials close to the King. After the Theatre Licensing Act of 1737 an office of censorship, under the authority of the Lord Chamberlain was established and only occasionally did plays with outspoken attacks on the government escape prohibition.⁴²

The King and the Miller of Mansfield, although one of the first Vauxhall pictures to be engraved, was evidently removed from the gardens before 1762 since it does not appear on the list published in that year or in subsequent listings of pictures. Either Tyers found the picture to his taste and removed it to his private collection or, more probable, it became politically too sensitive.

The other theatrical scenes were less controversial and relied, like Charles Coffey's *The Devil to Pay; or, The Wives Metamorphos'd*, on comedy. *The Devil to Pay* was one of the most popular ballad-operas of the mid-century, averaging twenty-five performances every year at the patent houses.⁴³

Apart from the four large pictures in the Prince's Pavilion, painted just a few years later, only two of the supper-box pictures exploited Shakespeare as subject matter. Two comic scenes from *Henry IV, part 1*; *Falstaff in the Buck-basket* and *Falstaff's Cowardice Detected* were entirely suitable episodes for the light-hearted atmosphere of Vauxhall. *Falstaff in the Buck-basket* was adapted from the design, or perhaps *vice-versa*, for the Hanmer edition of Shake-

40. See Rome, Villa Della Farnesina all Lungara, *Rubens e l'Incisione* (1977), [exhibition catalogue by D. Bodart], p. 58, Cat. 94. The original picture, with F. T. Sabin in 1951, was engraved three times in the eighteenth-century (see 'The Dance of the Italian Peasants by Peter Paul Rubens', *Connoisseur*, CXXXVIII, (1951), p. 5).

41. T. J. Edelstein, 'The Paintings' in *Vauxhall Gardens*, Yale Center for British Art, (1983), pp. 25-32.

42. See J. Lynch, *Box, Pit and Gallery - Stage and Society in Johnson's London* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1953), p. 250.

43. For a list of performances up to 1750 see 'Handlist of Plays 1700-1750' in A. Nicholl, *A History of Early Eighteenth Century Drama* (Cambridge, 1925), p. 315.

44. 'Pamela telling the housekeeper of her wishes to return home, whilst Mr B hides behind the curtain'.

45. See R. M. Wiles, 'Middle-Class Literacy in Eighteenth-Century England: Fresh evidence' in R. Brinsenden (ed.) *Studies in the Eighteenth Century - Papers presented at the David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar Canberra 1966*, (Canberra 1968), pp. 49-65. Also R. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public*, (Chicago 1957).

46. See W. Graham, *English Literary Periodicals*, (New York, 1930); G. F. Barwick, 'Some Magazines of the Eighteenth Century', *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, X, (1908-9), pp. 109-140 and J. Sutherland, 'The Circulation of Newspapers and Literary Periodicals, 1700-30', *The Library*, series IV, no. 15 (1935), pp. 110-124.

47. See I. Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles 1967).

48. J. H. Plumb, 'The Public, Literature & the Arts in the 18th Century', in *The Triumph of Culture: 18th Century Perspectives*, ed. P. Fritz and D. Williams, (Toronto 1972), p. 37. See also the same author's *The Commercialisation of Leisure in Eighteenth-century England*, The Stenton Lecture (University of Reading

spare, the illustrations of which had been designed but not published when the pictures were first placed in the supper-boxes. Book illustrations were also the basis for the designs of the two pictures illustrating episodes from Samuel Richardson's immensely popular novel *Pamela*, published in 1740. Only one of the two original paintings survives - *Pamela flying to the Coach* - and this is in such appalling condition that it is wiser to consult the book illustration for a clearer idea of the original appearance of the picture. Although the other picture has presumably perished, the description published in 1762 is sufficiently graphic for us to be sure that it corresponded with Hayman's engraved plate, which first appeared in the six volume octavo edition of Richardson's novel in 1742 (Vol. 1, facing p. 123).⁴⁴

Tyers's audience at Vauxhall was deeply rooted in the newly literate middle class public to whom Richardson addressed his novels.⁴⁵ The exclusivity of late-seventeenth/early-eighteenth century culture in England had been largely broken down, aided by Addison and Steele whose periodicals *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* fully exploited the new and expanding middle class audience.⁴⁶ By the 1740s the public that devoured the social realism of Richardson and Fielding was far more numerous than could have been forecast in the late-seventeenth century.⁴⁷ As Professor Plumb has remarked: 'For the first time there was a leisured middle class to exploit - not rich enough to enjoy their pleasures as the aristocracy had traditionally enjoyed theirs, but longing for the same cultural activities.'⁴⁸

This middle class culture absorbed a certain amount from both ends of the social spectrum, taking a fair amount from the peasantry. Particularly during the first half of the eighteenth century the leisure activities of many gentlemen were not too far removed from those of the common people and were still deeply rooted in the experiences of rural life.⁴⁹ Indeed the country gentleman was perfectly content to accept the traditional festivities of his community. At Vauxhall, a number of Hayman's pictures dealt with rural traditions and pastimes; *Country dancers round the Maypole*,

Blindman's Buff, *The Milkmaid's Garland* (Fig. 4) as well as *Bird-nesting* and *Bird Catching* are all examples of the sort of harmless holiday activities which were not a challenge to public order.

Sport provided a common denominator for all classes of society and the fashion is reflected at Vauxhall in several pictures: *The Play of Skittles*, now only known through Hayman's drawing,⁵⁰ was an amusing interpretation of a popular sport. Much more refined and suitable for the gentle sex was fishing and *Ladies Angling* is a delightful rendering of sport suitable for Richardson's heroine Pamela, who in one of Hayman's illustrations to the 1742 edition is shown throwing a carp back into the stream.⁵¹ Interest in the sport in the mid-century is reflected in publications like John Williamson's *The British Angler . . . &c.* of 1740 which had a frontispiece by Bickham.⁵²

Cricket also had a genteel following by the 1750s. The placing of Hayman's *The Play of Cricket* near the Prince's Pavilion at Vauxhall was probably a deliberate act on Tyers's part to please the Prince of Wales whose passion for the game was well known. *The Grub Street Journal* noted in 1735 that Prince Frederick was a regular player and captain of the Surrey team.⁵³ One French visitor to England remarked about the same time 'everyone plays it [Cricket], the common people and also men of rank.'⁵⁴ Even Lord Chesterfield exhorted his son to excel at games as well as learning '... if you have right ambition, you will desire to excel all boys of your age, at cricket ...' he wrote in 1741 when the boy was only nine years old.⁵⁵ The formalising of the rules in 1744 made for a satisfactory blend of energetic activity and dignity of behaviour which did not offend the standards of genteel propriety.

The theme of youth figured prominently in many of the Vauxhall paintings. By the mid-eighteenth century parents were prepared to lavish considerable sums of money on children, not only for education but for entertainment and amusement.⁵⁶ This is borne out in painting where after about 1730 children are frequently shown playing, reading, fishing or picnicking with their parents. A glance at some of the earlier conversation pieces of Hogarth,

1973) and more recently, N. McKendrick, H. Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society. The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-century England* (London 1982).

49. On this point see R. W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850*, (Cambridge 1973), pp. 68-9. Also J. Loftis, *Comedy and Society from Congreve to Fielding*, (Stanford 1959), pp. 69-76.

50. Pen, ink and bistre and grey wash $5\frac{1}{8}$ & $8\frac{1}{2}$ ins. in the City of Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

51. Vol. 1, facing p. 214. Hayman's drawing for the Vauxhall picture of *Ladies Angling* is in the collection of Dudley Snelgrove Esq. (see *Vauxhall Gardens*, Yale Center for British Art (1983), p. 42, cat. 52.

52. See H. Hammelmann, *Book Illustrators in Eighteenth Century England*, (New Haven & London 1975), p. 16.

53. *The Grub Street Journal*, no. 289, (10 July 1735).

54. *A Foreign View of England in the Reigns of George I and George II: The Letters of Monsieur Cesar de Saussure to his Family*, ed. Mde van Muyden (London 1902), p. 295.

55. Lord Chesterfield to his son, 1741. See *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope 4th Earl of Chesterfield*, ed. with an intro. by Bonamy

Dobr e, 6 vols (Oxford 1932), II (1712-1745), no. 696, p. 453.

56. The most useful general studies of childhood in the eighteenth-century are R. Bayne-Powell, *The English Child in the Eighteenth Century*, (London 1939); J. Somerville, 'Towards a History of Childhood and Youth', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, III (1972), pp. 438-447; L. de Manse (ed.), *The History of Childhood*, (New York 1974) and I. Pinchbeck and M. Hewitt, *Children in English Society*, 2 vols, (London 1969-73).

57. The best edition is *The Educational Writings of John Locke* (ed. J. L. Axtell), (Cambridge 1965). *Some Thoughts ... &c.* was reprinted nineteen times before 1761.

58. Anon., *Dialogues on the Passions, Habits, Appetites and Affections, etc., Peculiar to Children*, (London 1748), p. VIII. Quoted by J. H. Plumb in his useful essay 'The New World of Children in Eighteenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, no. 67, (May 1975), pp. 64-93 (p. 69). See also N. Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (London 1951).

59. E. Dacier and A. Vuaffart, *Jean du Jullienne et les Graveurs de Watteau au XVIII si cle*, 4 vols (Paris 1929), III, cat. no. 269 and IV, p. 269.

J. F. Nollekens, Devis and indeed Hayman himself is evidence of this shift in attitude towards greater emotional involvement of parents with their children. A new social attitude towards children had begun to strengthen in the early years of the century, given substance by the works of philosophers like John Locke whose influential *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, published in 1693, remained important throughout the eighteenth century for its educational theory.⁵⁷ Educational facilities, designed to amuse and instruct, especially for the commercial classes, grew steadily as did the numerous handbooks on the care and education of children 'to teach them the Government of themselves, their Passions and Appetites.'⁵⁸

The Vauxhall pictures concentrated on the leisure aspect of children's lives. *Flying the Kite* (Fig. 3), *Battledore and Shuttlecock*, *Sliding on Ice*, *Leap Frog* and *See-Saw* are all energetic examples of children and youth at play whilst *Thread my Needle*, *Hunt the Whistle*, *Bob-Cherry*, *Hot Cockles* and *The Cutting of Flour* were traditional party-games with a particular, although not exclusive appeal to the young.

French rococo painting, with its emphasis on artifice and pleasure, provided numerous hints for Hayman and his assistants. The mildly erotic *Play of See-Saw* is particularly French in spirit and *Blindman's Buff*, *Bird-nesting* and *Bird-catching* all have precedents in the art of Watteau and Lancret. Judging from the engravings, *Mademoiselle Catherina* and *The Gipsy Fortune Teller* were similar in manner; in both cases Hayman's conversation piece style was adapted in imitation of the French *sc ne-galante*. The reclining sailor in *The Wapping Landlady* also owes something to French art in the form of L pici 's engraving after Watteau's portrait of *Antoine de la Rogue*, published in 1734.⁵⁹

In the early 1740s the French taste in painting reached its peak in England. Gravelot played a major r le by injecting a note of French elegance into the shaky tradition of English draughtsmanship. The Frenchman evidently found painting a difficult skill to master and was never at his best with anything other than

small-scale graphic work. The few authentic paintings by him, like *Le Lecteur* at Marble Hill House,⁶⁰ suggest that he acquired something of the colour-range of his master Boucher, but they are tame efforts compared to Boucher or even the best of his own graphic work, wherein that characteristic sinuous, spidery line could enliven the most mundane subject matter.

Hayman's debt to Gravelot can be seen not only in his book illustrations but in his early figure style where the range of poses frequently derive from the graceful and waspish elegance of the Frenchman's assured pencil. We might have been surprised had

60. See *Rococo*, p. 58, D.20.

FIG. 7 Truchy after Gravelot, *Building Houses with Cards*. Engraving published 1743.



It betel innocently Youth their hours beguile,
And joy to raise with Cards the wondrous pile;
Altogether lost, makes the whole fabric vain,
And all too flat, to be begun again.

Building Houses with Cards

Ambition thus erects in paper Hoops,
Wild schemes of Power, & Wealth, & endless cares;
Some change takes place, the labourer's plan retards,
All drops — Illusion! All — an House of Cards.

61. Gowing, p. 11.

FIG. 8 Grignion after Gravelot, *Quadrille*.
Engraving published 1743.

Gravelot not been involved at Vauxhall. Professor Gowing noted that Truchy's engraving of *Building Houses with Cards* (Fig. 7) credited Gravelot with the design,⁶¹ although Hayman (or more likely his studio) was named as the painter. Even without the inscription a French hand might be suspected for *Card Houses* has none of Hayman's manner that is retained in many of the Vauxhall engravings. The graceful disposition of the figures round the table illustrates the ease with which Gravelot assembled his compositions. The large Vauxhall canvas is still intact although in such a poor state that the engraving is a more satisfactory interpretation



of Gravelot's design.⁶² Like its companions, the large canvas was largely the work of Hayman's assistants, although the quality of the seated man led Professor Gowing tentatively, but not unreasonably, to propose Thomas Gainsborough, then Gravelot's teenage pupil as its author.⁶³

Gravelot also designed *The Game of Quadrille*. When Professor Gowing wrote in the early 1950s he was unaware of Grignon's engraving in the first series of prints⁶⁴ which stated 'H. Gravelot Invt F. Hayman Pinx . . .' (Fig. 8). The engravings were re-issued later but the plates had been cut and the new letterpress omitted Gravelot's name altogether. Even without the evidence Gowing judiciously remarked 'If Quadrille were not designed by Gravelot it evidently followed his example closely.'⁶⁵

Although in marginally better condition than *Card Houses*, *The Game of Quadrille*, acquired by the City Art Gallery, Birmingham in 1955 is also a rather second rate production from Hayman's studio and has lost much of Gravelot's French grace and elegance captured by Grignon's engraving from it. The engraving compares well with works by the Frenchman J. F. De Troy such as *Reading from Molière*, which is now in the collection of the Dowager Marchioness of Cholmondeley. It is interesting that the two pictures of the fashionable world of the Drawing Room were both designed by Gravelot whose knowledge of French Salon interiors and decoration gave him a decided advantage over his English colleagues. It is unlikely that such an obviously French interior as that depicted in *Quadrille* existed in England in the early 1740s. The few interiors in the French style produced in England like Chesterfield House invariably date from the later 1740s. Similarly, the elaborate interlaced chairbacks with their *rocaille* motifs may have been of Gravelot's own invention.⁶⁶

At least one further design was almost certainly Gravelot's. Although not usually credited to him, the *Scene from 'The Mock Doctor'* has many of the same characteristics (Fig. 9). The figure style in particular is much closer to Gravelot than Hayman. The stooping figure of Gregory covertly accepting the fee from Sir

62. Truchy's engraving is in fact based on an intermediary stage, a small painting, possibly by Gravelot himself, of the same proportions as the engraving.

63. Gowing, p. 11.

64. See the explanatory note on the engravings of the Vauxhall pictures in Gowing, *ibid.* p. 6, 9.

65. *Ibid.* p. 11.

66. See D. Fitz-Gerald, 'Gravelot and his influence on English Furniture', *Apollo*, XC, (August 1969), pp. 140-147.

67. The best known of these is F. Nivelon's *Rudiments of Genteel Behaviour*, published in London in 1737. Gravelot was originally approached to illustrate this work but, perhaps because he did not stick closely enough to the text, the commission eventually went to Bartholomew Dandridge whose designs were engraved by Boitard (see H. Hammelmann, 'A Georgian Guide to Deportment', *Country Life* CXLVII, (16 May 1968), pp. 1272-3 and D. Mannings, 'A Well-Mannered Portrait by Highmore', *Connoisseur*, CLXXXIX, (1975), pp. 116-118.



When tender young Virgins look pale & complain,
You may send for seven great Doctors in vain;
All give their opinions and pocket their fees,
Each writes her a Cure, but all miss her Disease.
Powders, Drops, Julips, & Symps,
A Charge of Poison from Physick, & Shaps.

The Mock Doctor
OR THE
Dumb Lady Cur'd.

Sho' they Physick to Death the unhappy poor Maid,
What's that to the Doctor—since he must be paid?
Would you know how you may manage her right?
Our Doctor has brought you a Vostri'm to-night.
Never vary, nor missevery,
If the Nurse be but the Apothecary.

FIG. 9 Truchy after Hayman, *The Mock Doctor or the Dumb Lady Cur'd*. Engraving published 1743.

Jasper is nearer to the type of figure found in the engraved plates for etiquette books than any of Hayman's more mannered productions.⁶⁷ The standing women have much more in common with equivalent figures in the engraving of *Card Houses*. The original canvas of *The Mock Doctor* at Sizergh Castle is in ruinous condition and has been almost entirely repainted. It is quite impossible to make any judgment about its former appearance. However, a reduced version exists, possibly even painted by

Gravelot himself as a modello for the engraver Truchy, for it is very close in style and handling to those few tiny paintings known to be by him (Fig. 10).⁶⁸

When Gravelot returned to France in 1745 Hayman was once more busy at work for Tyers, this time engaged to paint the four large Shakespearean pictures for the Prince's Pavilion. Fifteen years later Tyers, still with an eye for the newsworthy, brought Hayman back to endorse public patriotism with the four enormous canvasses depicting episodes from the Seven Years War. But these works must await examination on another occasion.

68. The Gravelot attribution was first suggested by Ralph Edwards in 'Conversation Pieces in Search of a Painter', *Apollo*, LXVI, (October 1957), p. 93.

FIG. 10 Attrib. to Gravelot, *The Mock Doctor*. Oil on canvas, 27.6 x 36.8 cm. Private Collection.

