

# Acknowledgments

On a wet day in 1979, when looking at a garden in Co. Donegal, I met and took refuge under the umbrella of the late William Klein, then Director of the Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia. While waiting for the rain to clear, he told me of his plans for the Arboretum to celebrate the tercentenary of the founding of Pennsylvania by staging an exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1982. I offered to do anything I could to help. As a result, months later, I was asked to recruit enough volunteers to man the exhibit throughout the show. In this way I first met Elizabeth McLean, who was involved in organizing the exhibit.

Prior to meeting Elizabeth, I had written an article on Peter Collinson that had been published in *Country Life* and was eager to write more. Elizabeth, who had read my article, introduced me to Alan Armstrong who, at the time, was beginning to edit the correspondence of Peter Collinson. The result of his endeavors was *"Forget not Mee & My Garden": Selected Letters 1725–1768 of Peter Collinson, F.R.S.*, published by the American Philosophical Society in 2002.

For obvious reasons writing a biography such as this entails a great deal of research. On Elizabeth's advice I applied to the American Philosophical Society, from which I received a grant to enable me to travel to America to carry out the necessary research. It is impossible for me to express how much I owe to the Society and to Elizabeth and her husband Bill for their tireless help and encouragement. The same can be said of Alan Armstrong, who introduced me to a great deal of Collinson's correspondence with European botanists. For several years Elizabeth continued to help—so much so that eventually the work became a joint exercise. We have been fortunate to have the criticism and advice of Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., former Librarian and Executive Officer emeritus, of the American Philosophical Society. To have Whit as our principal critic and adviser is a privilege that we would both like to acknowledge and to offer our sincere thanks.

In addition, we are indebted to the following public and private libraries and their librarians. Their generosity in giving us access to their manuscripts and books is something for which we are profoundly grateful. In particular, I would like to mention the late and present Earls of Derby for allowing us to work at Knowsley Hall; the Gloucestershire Record Office, which holds the John Player Papers; the Chichester Record Office, for access to the Richmond papers; as well as to the librarian at Goodwood House, who provided us with useful information concerning Goodwood and Peter Collinson's links with the second and third Dukes of Richmond.

Furthermore, in Britain, we must record our gratitude to the libraries, librarians, and staff of the Royal Society; the Linnean Society, especially Gina Douglas, at the time Librarian and Archivist; as well as to the Manuscript Collections of the British Library; the Natural History Museum; the National Library of Wales; the Society of Antiquaries, all of which proved to be bottomless pits of information; the Passmore Edwards Museum, London, which holds the Petre garden catalogue; the Library at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; the Library of the Society of Friends, London; and the National Archives, Kew.

For the information found in letters between Collinson and his numerous European correspondents, we have been able to draw on the Burgerbibliothek, Bern and the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Darmstadt, Germany. Research in their collections has enabled us to bring to light the way the botanists and naturalists in Europe depended to a great extent on Peter Collinson as their link to the American colonists interested in botany and natural history.

In the same way, in America we are indebted to the wealth of information found in the libraries of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia; the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; the Beinecke Library at Yale University; the New-York Historical Society, New York City; the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore; and the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

We have received the assistance of many who have become friends in the course of helping us in different ways. I would like to thank the following: Margaret Stones, Mavis Batey, Susan Campbell, Penny David, Ray Desmond, and Penny Hobhouse. If I have omitted to mention anyone by name I beg to be forgiven. I would also like to include my own family who have borne with me for so long the inconvenience I have often caused them. Finally I must end with a tribute to my late husband, Terence. He supported me from the start, suffering many disruptions to his life. In the early stages, far from damping my enthusiasm for Peter Collinson, he encouraged it. He gave me my first computer, which I was ill-equipped to use; needless to say, it has proved to be an invaluable asset. Without his backing I might never have embarked on the work that has taken so long to emerge as *Peter Collinson and the Eighteenth-Century Natural History Exchange*.

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As Jean mentioned, our association was serendipitous and our interest in Collinson mutual. Jean did the major part of the research, and my own research was mainly on this side of the pond—with the notable exception of some happy times when we worked together at Lord Derby's library at Knowsley, the Linnean Society, the National Library of Wales, and the Botany Library at the Natural History Museum. I built on her deep knowledge of Peter Collinson. Once our manuscript was conditionally accepted for publication, I helped organize and edit the final version.

I wish to echo Jean's thanks to Whitfield Bell, who has been godfather to the manuscript from its very beginning. The encouragement of Richard and Mary Dunn, now Executive Officers Emeriti of the American Philosophical Society, and John Van Horne, Director of the Library Company of Philadelphia, has been invaluable.

I also want to thank the librarians at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and Charlotte Tancin, Librarian at the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Pittsburgh. Penny David's thoughtful editorial suggestions and auxiliary research were invaluable. A gardener, like the authors, she understands Collinson's point of view. Alfred E. Schuyler, Emeritus Curator of Botany at the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, gave new insights and very helpful advice on eighteenth-century botanical science. I also wish to thank his colleague Dr. Gary Rosenberg, Vice-President of Systematics and Library. Chris Van Horne was a superb copy editor and helped enormously with the final details of publication.

I would also like to thank the anonymous reader, whose very specific and helpful suggestions on an early draft of the manuscript have made this a much better book.

I am grateful to the creators of the Internet and particularly the inventors of Google. When we started this biography, longer ago than we would like to admit, we had computers that did not talk to each other. We progressed from floppy discs, to CDs, adding e-mail attachments along the way. In the last throes of checking footnotes, I was aided by Google and, when that was inadequate, I relied on the personal attention—via e-mail—of Gina Douglas and Lynda Brooks at the Linnean Society, Rupert Baker at the Royal Society, and Josef Keith and Tabitha Driver at the Library of the Society of Friends in London, to mention just a few.

That said, there is nothing like seeing the original sources, to have the experience of sitting beside Jean, going through Collinson's copies of Miller's *Dictionary*, and reading his notations in the now familiar hand. I hope we have made the personality that we both feel close to come alive in these pages.

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Since this acknowledgment was written, Jean O'Neill died on July 15, 2008, after two strokes, at the age of ninety-three. As Peter Collinson wrote of Sir Hans Sloane, she was "hearty" almost to the end. She shared many characteristics with Peter Collinson, especially integrity, love of natural history, and generosity of spirit. Like Collinson, she was self taught in botany, but had the respect of professionals and amateurs alike. Her great hope, expressed to the last, had been that she would be able to see this book before she died. My great regret is that I could not present her hard-earned copy to her.

E.P.McL.