

# John Townsend

Likely active period:

**1826-1841**

Born/baptised : Unknown

Died : Unknown

Responsible for a diverse range of silverware. He worked together with his brother, Thomas Lock Townsend, in 1824 and 1825, and pieces made by this partnership bear their joint maker's mark.

Flatware is mainly fiddle pattern, but other patterns are occasionally found (e.g. Old English with beaded edge, fiddle-and-thread) as well as pieces that don't confirm to any of the major patterns (e.g. cast handles). In addition to table and dessert- spoons and forks and teaspoons, flatware includes konfynt forks, soup- and sauce ladles, salt spoons, mustard spoons, butter knives, sugar tongs and basting spoons.

I have seen only three snuff boxes. Two are rectangular, with cast floral border or thumbpiece and engraved decoration; one with an oval agate panel inset into the lid. The third is a silver-mounted cowrie shell with engraved wrigglework borders and foliate decoration.

Townsend was probably responsible for a more diverse range of items than any other silversmith working during Welz's "English period (1830-1900)". Many of these were in the English taste, but were not limited to this and even a Tessie bears his mark. Some are quite plain, some have moulded borders of reeding or gadrooning, and others are extensively decorated with cast borders and feet or engraved decoration.

Objects found include beakers, christening cups (which appear to have been quite popular), cruet frames, pepper casters, wine labels, pap boats, presentation cups, tessies and presentation trowels. Welz also recorded a covered entrée dish, a coffee pot, drum-type mustard pots and sugar crushers.

Welz describes a number of items that were altered by Townsend. These include a teapot with a plated bowl, handle apparently from another piece and silver lid by Townsend, and an inkstand with a tray of Indian origin and three cut-glass bottles with silver mounts by Townsend.

## Spoons and forks

Fiddle pattern



Serving flatware

Konfyf Forks



Sauce ladle



Salt Spoons



Mustard Spoons



Butter Knife



Basting spoons



Snuff boxes



Other pieces

Beaker



Cruet Frame



Wine Label



Pepperette



Christening Mugs



Pap Boat



Presentation Cups



The inscription reads: "The Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society, instituted in 1831" / "Presented to Mr IJ Marais, of Groot Drakenstein on the 22 June 1833 for the best sample of Wine"



Engraved on one side with an image of the Machtenburg Gardens and the Lodge building, titled "MACHTENBURG SOCIETY", and on the other with four golfers dressed in top hats and tail coats within a rectangular playing field bordered by trees and buildings, titled "GOLF GROUND", the bell-shaped cover engraved "THIS CUP WAS PRESENTED BY JOSEPH DAY, TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MACHTENBURG SOCIETY ON THE 13TH FEBRUARY 1830".

Tessie



Presentation trowel



The trowel is gilded, and the inscription reads : "Presented to his Excellency Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole GCB & c by the Consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church at the laying of the Corner Stone of the new church in Cape Town on the 18th of April 1833"

**Marks**



## Rarity indicator

Flatware	Available	Snuff boxes	Scarce	Other items	Available
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Note: a set of flatware of the same category and by the same maker is counted as a single item.

Key (relative rarity within each category):

Available	more than 5% of items in our database
Scarce	1 to 5% of items in our database
Rare	fewer than 1% of items in our database
None	No items encountered

## Auction price history

Note: only sales of single items by public auction, including online auction platforms, are shown here. Unsold lots and job lots have been excluded. This list does not purport to be complete.

Sale date	Item category	Item description	Price realised	Price type *
1991/02/11	Ladles - soup	Fiddle pattern soup ladle by John Townsend, 170g	ZAR1200	1
1992/03/12	Trowel	Presentation trowel by John Townsend, the spade engraved with a presentation inscription "Presented to his Excellency Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole GCB & c by the Consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church at the laying of the Corner Stone of the new church in Cape Town on the 18th of April 1833", the shaft cast with acanthus leafage, turned ebony grip, 22cm long, gilded.	ZAR5500	2
1995/03/29	Snuff boxes	Rectangular snuff box by John Townsend, the slightly dished hinged lid engraved 'Ellen Feeney' flanked by two birds and with leaf engraving above and below, floral thumbpiece, the sides engraved with scrolling leafage, the base with cross-hatch engraving centering a flowerhead and with continuous scroll borders, 70g, 6,2cm wide	ZAR5500	2
2006/01/25	Mugs - christening	Cylindrical mug, with a foliate scroll handle, inscribed 'Edith Mary,' by John Townsend, 3.75in (7cm) high. 4.25oz.	GBP400	1
2011/03/07	Beakers	Beaker, John Townsend, the tapering cylindrical body engraved "PGP Born 27th July 1827", with rolled rim, 100g, 6,5cm high. PROVENANCE: The Du Plessis family collection. Barend Louis du Plessis (1753 -?) of Stellenbosch married Elisabeth Blignaut in 1774. Johannes Petrus du Plessis (1778 - ?) married Susanna Sophia de Villiers in 1823. Jan Hendrik du Plessis (1826 - 1891) married Harriet Barker. Johannes du Plessis (1868 - 1935) married Aletta Helena Albertyn in 1917. Jean Henri du Plessis (1917 - 1981) married Elise van Heerden in 1947. Thence by descent to the current owners. NOTES: Jan Hendrik du Plessis (1826 - 1891) served as N G Kerk minister at Cradock from 1861, commissioner of the N G Kerk at Cape Town from 1884 to 1887 and temporary minister at Pietermaritzburg where he died. He married Harriet Barker (1831-1900), daughter of the Rev George Barker, a well-known LMS missionary at Theopolis, at Bethelsdorp and Paarl. It was at du Plessis' prompting that the NG Kerk in Cradock is based on the model of James Gibb's church of St. Martins-in-the-Fields, London. Johannes du Plessis had an extraordinary career as N G Kerk minister, traveller in Africa, missionary expert, author and professor of theology. The well-known heresy case against him was based on his views as professor at Stellenbosch, on the inspiration and authority of the Bible, the acceptance or rejection of the results of the "higher criticism", and the divine authority of Jesus. Proceedings in the Presbytery of Stellenbosch then in the Synod of the N G Kerk and finally in the Cape Supreme Court, continued from 1928 until his eventual dismissal from the Seminary in 1932. There was considerable support for du Plessis at Stellenbosch and his supporters commissioned a life-size statue of him in rose-pink marble which became popularly known as "Pink Piet". The statue by Florenci Cuairan stood until recently in the gardens of the Stellenbosch museum and is now in the grounds of the N G Kerk.	ZAR8197	3
2011/03/07	Cruet frames	Cruet frame, John Townsend, square, with gadrooned rim, on leaf-scroll feet, the four ring holders connected by shell motifs with reeded central handle, 270g, 17cm wide; two later sauce bottles, a silver-mounted and glass pepper pot and a mustard pot, Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Co, London, 1909; and a Cape silver Fiddle pattern mustard spoon, John Townsend, 15g	ZAR12254	3
2011/03/07	Mugs - christening	Christening mug, John Townsend, cylindrical with reeded rim, engraved with a band of scrolling foliage, with a floral cartouche engraved with the initials 'D.A.E.M', the sides applied with a reeded scroll handle, 145g, 8cm high	ZAR38990	3
2013/02/04	Presentation cups	Presentation covered cup, John Townsend, of baluster outline, engraved with an image of the Machtenburg Gardens and the Lodge building, titled MACHTENBURG SOCIETY, the reverse engraved with four golfers dressed in top hats and tail coats within a rectangular playing field bordered by trees and buildings, titled GOLF GROUND, the bell-shaped cover engraved THIS CUP WAS PRESENTED by JOSEPH DAY, TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MACHTENBURG SOCIETY ON THE 13TH FEBRUARY 1830, raised on a stepped domed circular foot, gilt interior, 570g, 21,5cm high. NOTES: The gentlemen in the engraved view are playing 'kolf', a centuries old game which originated in the Netherlands and was particularly popular there in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The kolf course has a wooden post positioned at each end and the aim of the game is to hit the post at the far end, striking the ball with your club from the opposite post, return the ball to the post from which you started and then again strike it towards the far end. This had to be done in three strokes. Kolf is tied to the development of golf and it is probable that in the Cape in the 1830s the name 'kolf' had been anglicised by the English speaking community to golf, thus the inscription 'GOLF GROUND'. Joseph Day was a haberdasher in Plein Street, Cape Town. He, in partnership with the Baron Von Ludwig and Matthew Donough, purchased the Machtenburg Gardens, situated in LooYers Plein, in 1830. The purchase included the Masonic Lodge, De Goede Trouw, with its avenue of trees depicted on the front of the cup. Baron Von Ludwig housed his vast collection of natural history specimens in part of the Lodge, thus establishing the	ZAR534720	3

		first known museum at the Cape. In 1839 the gardens and Lodge was sold to the Catholic community who celebrated their first service there.		
2014/03/17	Presentation cups	Presentation cup and cover, John Townsend, the sides applied with ram's-head handles, to a knopped stem and spreading circular foot, the domed cover moulded in relief with vine and leaf border, with detachable grape and leaf finial, the body engraved 'The Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society, instituted in 1831.', the reverse engraved 'Presented to Mr IJ Marais, of Groot Drakenstein on the 22 June 1833 for the best sample of Wine', 620g, 23,5cm high. NOTES: "Established in 1831, the Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society was the first agricultural association to encourage wine farmers to make better wine, many cups and prizes being awarded. This tradition was followed by agricultural societies from 1833. During 1832 branches of the Association were founded in Stellenbosch, Worcester, Tulbagh and Swellendam. On 22 June 1833, at the annual general meeting, the first prize was awarded to IJ Marais, a wine farmer from the Waterval Farm, Groot-Drakenstein. Mr Marais won 100 Rixdollars for the best sample of Cape Madeira wine. The Chairman, Sir John Wylde, also presented him with a silver cup. This competition was not held again until 1843 when the first prize was awarded to Willem Herold, a young wine farmer from Cloetesdal, Stellenbosch. Isaac Marais (who won first prize in 1833) won the second prize. The Association held a competition once again on 6 September 1845. Competing for a £25 cup, a £20 cup and a £15 cup, Isaac Marais won the £20 cup. The Cape of Good Hope Agricultural Society was at the forefront in offering prizes, such as cups, to encourage better brandy production. Apparently (for various reasons) there was not great enthusiasm for this competition among wine farmers. Consequently the competition was terminated in 1848, after which the cup became the property of IJ Marais from the Waterval farm, Groot-Drakenstein, as he had won the competition three times before' ....". van Zyl, DJ. (1975) Kaapse Wyn en Brandewyn 1795-1860, HAUM. Excerpt from a letter dated 6 January, 1983, from the Director, South African Cultural History Museum, Cape Town, to Mr CJ Retief (translated from the Afrikaans).	ZAR250096	3
2016/03/14	Mugs - christening	Christening mug, John Townsend, the lobed body engraved 'H.M' and raised on a spreading circular conforming foot, applied with a leaf-capped scroll handle, with moulded rims and gilt interior, the base inscribed 'From S.S.B.', 175g, 8,8cm high	ZAR20463	3
2016/03/14	Wine labels	Port label, John Townsend, oval, the central plaque engraved 'PORT' between floral sprays, enclosed by a pierced rope-twist border, to a chain, 15g, 5,5cm wide	ZAR7612	3
2018/04/09	Ladles - sauce	Fiddle pattern sauce ladle, the terminal engraved with an armorial, split to the bowl, repairs, dents, 200g	ZAR4690	3
2020/07/06	Forks - konfynt forks	Pair of fiddle pattern konfynt forks, one with a repair, 30g	ZAR4925	3
2021/04/11	Pap boats	Pap boat, John Townsend, repair, dents, 12,7cm long, 90g	ZAR9380	2
2021/04/11	Spoons - basting	Fiddle & Shell pattern basting spoon, John Townsend, 145g	ZAR7622	2

\* Price types:

1 - Auction result hammer price

2 - Auction result including buyer's commission

3 - Auction result including buyer's commission and VAT