



PROFILE OF THE HON. EDWARD CHARLES HOWARD (1744-1816) AT THE CENTRE OF AN ENGRAVING BY WILLIAM WALKER

ARISTOCRATIC SCIENTIST

SIR—I am writing to enquire if any readers of COUNTRY LIFE know of the whereabouts of a profile in bronze (probably a bronzed medallion) which I have been trying to locate for a number of years. The bronze—which was used as the basis of the engraving shown in the enclosed photograph—is of the Hon. Edward Charles Howard FRS (1774-1816), brother of the 12th Duke of Norfolk. Howard was a typical early-19th-century aristocrat-scientist whose financial independence and agility of mind enabled him to make major contributions in several unrelated fields. In 1799 he achieved fame for the discovery of mercury fulminate—an important, if unpredictable, explosive. Howard is also remembered for his contributions to the sugar industry. These were essentially techniques for purification. His third major field of endeavour was his work on meteorites, which resulted in one of the first papers on them and played a major part in establishing the authenticity of their fall and credibility of their serious scientific study.

The profile in bronze appears to have been the only portrait of Howard. In 1834, according to Henry Howard's *Indication of Memorials, Monuments, Paintings, and Engravings of Persons of the Howard Family*, it was in possession of the Earl of Surrey. In 1864 the London engraver

William Walker made a composite engraving of some 50 distinguished men of science and, for Howard's portrait, Walker copied the bronze. At that time it was said to belong to Charles Few, a solicitor to the Duke of Norfolk and agent for his Sheffield estate. It was also said to have been the work of Hayes, who the staff of the National Portrait Gallery tell me was John Hayes (1786-1866). In this case it must have been prepared posthumously.—DEREK SEARS (Dr), *Department of Physics, The University of Birmingham, Birmingham.*