

DR JOHN LEE OF HARTWELL AND HIS SWEDISH JOURNEY 1807–1809

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Travels by Dr John Lee (John Fiott until 1815) in Sweden and its Grand Duchy of Finland in 1807-1809 were funded by a travelling Fellowship from the University of Cambridge and are described here for the first time. They are set against the background of Anglo-Swedish relations of the day and of the military situation in the Baltic arena. There is an excursus on the geological specimens that Dr Lee collected in Sweden. The twelve illustrations include nine sketches reproduced from among the forty of varying quality in a sketchbook held by St John's College Cambridge.

PROLOGUE

The personal interest in Dr John Lee's travels in Sweden in 1807-9 began as a result of a volume written to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of Aylesbury Grammar School¹. It seemed logical that John Lee – man of science, lawyer and keen educationalist – should have had a connection with the school. He had been instrumental in establishing Aylesbury's first primary school, and organising some of the first adult educational lecture series in Aylesbury. Dr John Lee held what today we would call residential seminars for distinguished scientists at Hartwell House. He was an amateur astronomer of international repute (with his own observatory), an Egyptologist and antiquarian of national renown, with Hartwell House overflowing with his collections. Nevertheless he still found time from his professional legal activities to do many good works in the Vale of Aylesbury. Despite all this, there is no reference to him in the nineteenth century records of Aylesbury Grammar School.

While looking for possible clues in the fascinating biography of John Lee by Hugh Hanley, reference was noted to Scandinavian sketchbooks in the British Library and the Library of St John's College, Cambridge.² A link was immediately struck with two geological specimens which had been on display in the County Museum several years previously. The captions on them read "Magnificent specimen of crystals and cobalt presented to me by Mr Thomas Swedenstierna for my private collection" and "Tourmaline from Käringsbricka. I collected it from Thomas

Swedenstierna, a director of the Swedish mining company".

How to account for the Scandinavian journeys and the mineral specimens of Dr John Lee – or John Fiott (1783–1866) as he was until in compliance with an uncle's will, he changed his name in 1815? And what kind of record did he leave for anyone interested in Anglo-Scandinavian relations to unravel?

The story starts in Cambridge in 1806, the year that John Fiott graduated from St John's College as fifth wrangler in the mathematics tripos. The result led to the award of a William Warts Travelling Fellowship, which was worth a hundred pounds annually for three years. The recipient was expected to give an account of "The religion, learning, laws, politics, customs, manners and rarities, natural and artificial, which shall be found worth observing in the countries through which the holders shall pass". Recipients were also required to "write a letter once a month to the Vice Chancellor in Latin". John Fiott had already developed an interest in Egypt and the Levant, but in 1807 it was impractical to travel either to the Mediterranean or to most of mainland Europe. Fiott's friend, Fred Willoughby, wrote to him on 23 August 1806 sympathising about the problems raised for travellers in Europe by Napoleon, "the Arch Emperor, the Sovereign of Sovereigns, the father of Europe, his pre-eminent irascibility, void of all titles that have a shred of humility"³. In fact, the only part of mainland Europe accessible for a British traveller was Scandinavia – more precisely, Sweden. John Fiott arrived in Gothenburg in July 1807.



FIGURE 1 The route followed by John Fiott during his Swedish journeys 1807–8, 1808–9. (Reconstructed from the dates on his sketches).

1807, the year of Tilsit, was a Napoleonic high water mark. It brought Russia into the Continental System. Denmark / Norway and Sweden / Finland were consequently caught between continental land power and British maritime power. Both Denmark and Sweden had been major European powers in the seventeenth century: both had declined by the end of the eighteenth century. There was, moreover, domestic instability in each country. In 1793, the Swedish “sun king” Gustavus III had been assassinated. His successor Gustaf IV Adolf propped up an unstable regime for which there had even been British treasury support. Moreover, there had been attempts in the Grand Duchy of Finland for that country to escape from Sweden to independence. In Denmark, the situation in the controlling court circles was even less stable, while Norway was waiting for the opportunity to escape from its union. Strategically, Denmark was ripe to fall into Napoleonic hands.

Meanwhile, the British concern was to maintain access to the Baltic area, its principal source of naval supplies; Canada was, as yet, in no position to function as a substitute. Six thousand British ships paid tolls annually to sail through the Danish Sound. British maritime power was supreme and was employed on two occasions to take control of the entrance to the Baltic. The second and critical occasion resulted in the assault on Copenhagen and the surrender of the Danish fleet in 1807. These events took place soon after John Fiott’s arrival in Sweden. Indeed, throughout Fiott’s time in Sweden, there were units of the British fleet in the Baltic.

It seems unlikely that Fiott was acquainted with the background to the Anglo-Swedish relationship before he arrived in Sweden, but he must have had some inkling of this nation of three million inhabitants (about a third of them in the Grand Duchy of Finland), because Sweden had a considerable reputation in British Maritime, commercial and intellectual circles. Its powerful ironmasters’ association, a cartel maintaining a levy on all iron exports, still controlled a critical source of British iron. Reciprocally, Britain received a steady succession of Swedish visitors with a special interest in metallurgy.⁴ Indeed, visitors such as Reinhold Rütger Angerstein and Sven Rinman, author of *Berkwerks Lexicon* (Stockholm, 1788–9) a standard work on mining, were eighteenth-century equivalents of industrial spies. Eric

Thomas Svedenstierna⁵ and Gustaf Broling⁶ were prominent members of the next generation, and both published accounts of their travels in Britain. At a later stage, both also wrote about the challenge to Sweden’s pre-eminent position in the face of Britain’s development of large-scale methods of smelting – Broling in 1808 and 1817, Svedenstierna in 1813. The recommendation was that Sweden should concentrate on the production of high-quality charcoal iron and leave Britain to deal with the mass output from coal-fed furnaces.

At the same time, Sweden’s reputation was high among British natural philosophers, with the renown of Carl Linnaeus still at a peak. Peter Collinson, a distinguished naturalist, wrote of Sweden as “a fountain of knowledge from which many streams flow”, while in 1791 the celebrated geologist James Hutton considered a “pilgrimage to Sweden (was) among the duties of a naturalist”. A substantial Swedish colony in London of both merchants and intellectuals kept the name of their homeland before the public at large. For example, Sir Joseph Banks, a central figure for two generations, engaged Daniel Solander and subsequently Jonas Dryander as his librarians, while Gustav Brander was a founder member of the British Museum. There is no direct evidence that John Fiott was aware of these significant Swedish connections. His decision to go to Sweden was largely dictated by the political situation of the time.

THE SKETCHBOOKS AND NOTEBOOKS

Between graduating and taking up the travelling fellowship, John Fiott spent eight months in Ireland, during which he kept a diary illustrated with sketches. The Swedish journey, which began in July 1807 and ended in June 1809, yielded two sketchbooks. They were kept principally during 1807–08. The British Library sketchbook (ADD MS47493D) contains most of the drawings made in 1807.⁷ At the front of the book is a note that if found it should be returned to Mons. H Smith in Gothenburg or Mons. le Bon in Stockholm. The St John’s College sketchbook (3RA242), prefaced with a note that, if found, it should be returned to Mr Blom, in Stockholm, contains the majority of the sketches from 1808. At times the two sketchbooks appear to have been used side by side. The notebooks are of little consequence. So far as is

known there are neither associated diaries nor related correspondence.

It is remarkable how widespread drawing and painting as amateur activities were two centuries ago. The Fiott sketches belong to the tradition. They are of very mixed quality. Those in pencil are often faded, smudged and difficult to decipher. Those in Indian ink, despite Fiott's complaint about the quality of Swedish supplies, have usually retained their quality. The style of the sketches is not always consistent. It seems possible that someone other than Fiott drew several sketches and that Fiott copied several from existing sources. Thus the sketches of the Åland Island, dated 13 March, 1809, must be copies. Fiott could not have been at Kastelholm and Jomala farm at that time because Åland was occupied by Russian troops. Moreover, in March the islands were only reached by way of an extremely hazardous ice bridge.

In neither sketchbook are the drawings in strict chronological order, though most are dated. From the dates it is possible to reconstruct the itinerary. There are also notes on most of them, some of which consist of detailed descriptions of the colours of various features, as though Fiott had thought of making paintings of them in the future.

The notebooks contain little more than references to music and poetry. The first (ADD MS47493D) includes references to a romance (*Til Helene*), a 'wals' and 'Andantino', a madrigal, a song in Finnish (*Sydänemmeni*) – "chanson finnoise corrigé par M. le Professeur Porthan and published by Col. AF Skiöldebrand in his Journey to the North Cape (1802)". The second notebook (ADD MS47493B) which, from its content Fiott must have taken with him on his northern journey, refers to "chanson finnoise répété par M. le Pastor Aemelius; "chanson *Hämeen lauloja* que m'a donné M. Julin à Uléåborg, Adagio quondam fennica and a madrigal de Mademoiselle Holteman". Fiott must also have copied from the appendix to Joseph Acerbi's *Travels* "Finsk dans vid Kuivaniemi spelad på Fiol av en blind gubbe". Bearing in mind Fiott's musical interests at the time and the convivial evenings that he would appear to have spent in Uppsala, it is curious that there is no reference to the songs of the highly popular Swedish composer of the day – Carl Michael Bellman.⁸

THE SWEDISH JOURNEY 1807–8

The beginning of Fiott's Swedish sojourn is dealt with in fair detail in his obituary by HW Buxton, a fellow lawyer. Its contents must have been obtained orally. Buxton noted how Fiott "delighted to recall the youthful experiences of his life". It is unlikely that Buxton could have used any of the monthly reports that Fiott should have sent to the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University.

At any rate, Fiott's journey is reported as beginning in Gothenburg in July 1807, where he probably had contact with the British Consul, Mr Fenwick, and some of the merchants engaged in trade with Britain. Buxton reported that Fiott spoke of Gothenburg as "resembling a Dutch town the lower part lying on a marshy plain the streets generally good, the houses well built and substantial". His attention was directed principally to the shipbuilding "which greatly flourished". In the obituary, Buxton wrote that Fiott "sought out and purchased all books upon that subject he thought might be useful to his countrymen and this collection, it is believed, he subsequently transmitted to Cambridge".¹⁰

The system of posting would have presented no problems for Fiott was accustomed to dealing with horses. Presumably, he travelled alone and in the type of vehicle that he drew in his sketch of July 1808 (Fig. 2). The travelling conditions on the roads south of Gothenburg had been described by Sir John Carr three years earlier.¹¹ The small Swedish horses were good and they were able to gallop full speed "as if Cinderella's protective genius had waved her wand". In 1809, another British traveller James Macdonald described the roads as excellent, the distances as exactly measured and the absence of tolls and turnpikes, except for some bridges.¹²

The first excursion made by Fiott was to Trollhätten and beyond its waterfall (of which there are smudged sketches) to Lake Vänern. The British engineer, Thomas Telford, already renowned for the Caledonian Canal, was also in Gothenburg in 1808 as a technical adviser on the Göta Canal project.¹³ From Vänern, it was over 100 miles south to Helsingborg by way of the coastal towns of Warburg and Halmstad. When James Macdonald was in Helsingborg he wrote that the view "from the old tower of Kärna above the town is very fine and embraces a considerable portion of Zealand" the



FIGURE 2 The type of vehicle used by John Fiott when travelling in Sweden, sketched by him in July 1808.

main island of Denmark. This was a view sketched from several points by Fiott (Fig. 3). Macdonald crossed between Helsingborg and Elsinore in January. He travelled in an ice boat manned by six Danes after “a tedious detention of eight days by drift ice”. Fiott crossed in summer, nevertheless, “in consequence of bad weather and bad winds” his passage was also delayed. As a result, he came ashore “to the distant roar of artillery in the direction of Copenhagen”. The British fleet seems to have arrived two days before Fiott. He had intended to visit the university and other institutions in the Danish capital, but having walked to within five miles of the city, became a witness to the bombardment and the resulting conflagration. Thirty thousand troops had landed north of Copenhagen and Fiott must have been somewhere in their neighbourhood. According to his friend Buxton, Fiott encountered two Cambridge acquaintances – an undergraduate from St John’s and a Fellow of Trinity College. Even after the flag of truce was raised on 5 September, Fiott appears to have been frustrated in

his efforts to visit the Danish Royal Society, renowned for its mathematicians and physical scientists, and the Royal Society of Antiquaries. Buxton recorded that later in life Fiott “frequently referred to the questionable policy of the British government towards Denmark in 1807”.¹⁴

So, leaving behind “the damp, disagreeable and unhealthy” Danish climate (as he described it), Fiott returned to Sweden by way of the island of Hven, where it pleased him to tread the ground made famous by the sixteenth century astronomer Tycho Brahe. The full significance of Brahe’s astronomical observations and the network of relationships that he developed with his distinguished contemporaries must have become evident to Fiott when he subsequently became Britain’s best known amateur astronomer. Sadly, at the time of Fiott’s visit, *Tychonus domus* was a neglected ruin.¹⁵

Lund, *urbi celebris*, occupied his attention from 3 October for several days. At its university, the origins of which he described incorrectly, he found a good library. There were also collections of

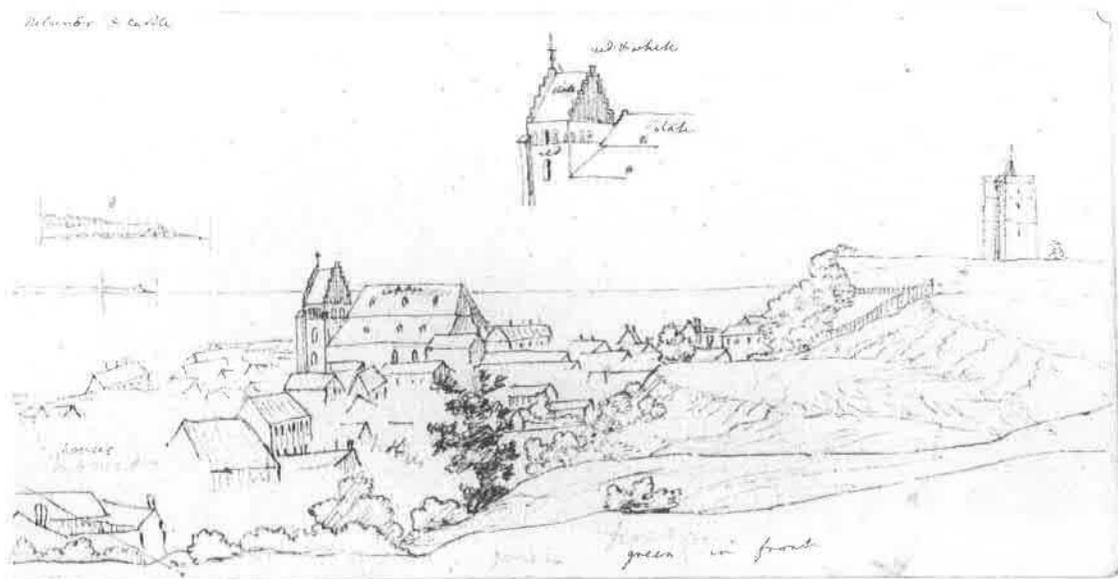


FIGURE 3 One of several views across the Sound from Helsingborg towards Elsinore. There is also a sketch of the church and castle at Helsingborg.

antiquities and coins which were of interest to him. There were no sketches from Lund, Christianstad Kalmar or Carlskrona, where on 15 October, he went to see the “naval docks excavated out of solid rock”, and which were favoured by a simple sketch. Along the route several features of the countryside caught his attention and he made sketches of a milestone, a well-pole, a poor box, “an instrument” to clear snow from the road, machines at a mine, a “method for boring a cannon” (at Carlskrona), a *kakehungen* or Swedish stove and post houses in the woods where he stayed. October 22 found Fiott in Jönköping from where he proceeded via Vadstena (2 November) (Fig. 4), Norrköping, Nyköping and Mariefred (4 November) to Stockholm and Uppsala (about 10 November). In Uppsala, Buxton recorded that Fiott received “the highest consideration and hospitality” from the professors. As a souvenir of the Uppsala sojourn, Fiott produced good ink sketches from Gamla Uppsala with its impressive prehistoric burial mounds – “the sepulchre of the Gods” as he described them (Fig. 5).

A GEOLOGICAL EXCURSUS

There is evidence that some time between his arrival in Uppsala and his departure for Cambridge

in February 1808 Fiott visited Bergslagen, the rich mineralogical district in south central Sweden. This may have been prompted by Eric Thomas Svedenstierna, the link with whom calls for a digression.¹⁶

In the catalogue of John Lee’s Hartwell mineralogical collection,¹⁷ Eric Thomas Svedenstierna (1765–1827) is described as “a great mineralogist at Stockholm who has a beautiful collection”. He is the only Swedish person for whom there appears to be evidence of personal contact. At the time that Fiott was in touch with him, Svedenstierna was in charge of the output of Sweden’s iron foundries (1805–11). He had also been involved with the Trollhätten canal project in 1800 and in 1800–03 made extensive journeys in England and France.¹⁸ During his English journey, Svedenstierna visited the Mineralogical Society of London, private mineralogical collections and no less than five shops in London dealing with specimens. In Edinburgh he saw the collection of a Mr Jameson – “an authority on geological and mineralogical ‘systems’”. Svedenstierna is described as having a special interest in cobalt and he published related contributions in the *Transactions of the Geological Society of London* in 1816. After his death and through the Swedish crown, Svedenstierna’s miner-



FIGURE 4 Vadstena 'palace' from the side and looking west.

ological collection was acquired by the University of Uppsala. The only piece of evidence discovered confirming a connection between Fiott and Svedenstierna is a letter filed with the sketchbooks at St John's College. It was dated 25.4.08 and enquired if Fiott could supply Svedenstierna with books, to be "made up with minerals in exchange". There is no record of any Svedenstierna correspondence with Fiott in *Jernkontorets* archive in Stockholm during the period that Fiott was in Sweden.¹⁹

It is possible that the bulk of the collection listed in the catalogue of Fiott's mineral specimens and identified as "Sweden" derived from the exchange prompted by Svedenstierna's letter. They include garnets from Dannemora, silver malm and asbestos from Sala, porphyry from Elfvedal (including "a set of buttons of Swedish porphyry – a specimen of Swedish industry"), petrifications from Dalecarlia, tourmaline from Käringsbricka, iron ore from Österberg and copper from Adelfors. A variety of mineral specimens bear less familiar names – automonolite and Falunite (from Falun), Uton from Södermanland and Gadolinite (Gadolinium) from Finnbo – named after a Finnish scientist Johan Gadolin. A new variety of the Hornstone of Linnæus "brought in by Dr Lee from Sweden" was

"therefore named" Leclite by no less a person than Edward Clarke, Professor of Mineralogy at Cambridge.

The possibility that this collection derived from Svedenstierna is also supported by the fact that Fiott does not appear to have stayed long enough in Bergslagen to have collected specimens from all of the sources identified. The Hartwell catalogue refers to specimens being obtained from Mr Melling's house in Sala (if so Fiott would have heard of Sir John Carr who visited the 'mines of Dannemora and the foundries of Salahutta' in 1804). In fact, Fiott sketched the mineshaft as well as "shape of the opening of the mine at Dannemora" on 11 November 1807. There are references to the automonolite of Falun as having been discovered by the Swedish chemist and mineralogist J G Gahn, whose brother was well acquainted with Britain, and to the pyroliths from Finnbo as having been analysed by the distinguished Swedish natural scientist J J Berzelius. Among specimens acquired personally in Bergslagen, was "a present of iron ore from Kungsgård given by a Mr Uhr". The blue spar and green feltspar from Finland were sent by Eric Svedenstierna.

H W Buxton wrote that "Dr Lee was an indefati-

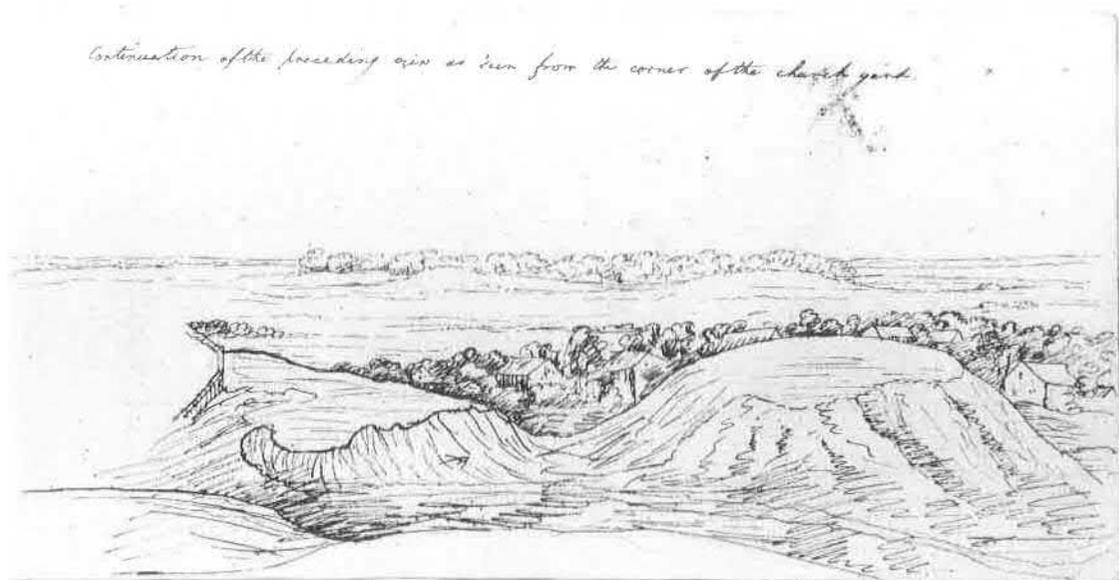


FIGURE 5 The prehistoric burial mounds at Gamla Uppsala called "The Sepulchre of the Gods". One of four sketches of Gamla Uppsala.

gable collector of geological specimens" and that he assembled "innumerable objects calculated to illustrate the boundless range of this science". It is uncertain when the enthusiasm for mineralogy emerged. There is no evidence of it from the Cambridge days. It is more than possible that it developed in Sweden where he made sketches from Sven Rinman's *Bergwerks Lexicon*. Although, later in life Fiott's mineralogical interests yielded principally to Egyptology and astronomy, he was nevertheless elected a fellow of the Geological Society in March 1841 and (his obituarist noted) he made "frequent appearances" at its meetings.

In February 1808, Fiott travelled to Gothenburg en route to Cambridge "to fag for a fellowship", as he put it. It must have been by sleigh, an unusual experience for him, but there are no sketches to confirm it. Back at Cambridge, he was elected Foundress Fellow on 12 April. The apparent absence of the expected monthly reports in Latin does not appear to have prejudiced his candidature.

THE SWEDISH ITINERARY 1808-09

In May 1808, Fiott returned to Sweden, arriving in Stockholm on 21st. Buxton's source lacks any details save that he proceeded immediately to

Uppsala. By the summer of 1808, Anglo-Swedish relations were in a confused state. Finland had been invaded by Russia. A British fleet carrying 10,000 troops had arrived in Gothenburg in May. The commander, Sir John Moore, had proceeded to Stockholm to discuss their employment.²⁰ No agreement could be reached over their command. Sir John, threatened by Gustaf IV Adolf with incarceration, made a hurried escape to Gothenburg (June 2-11).²¹ The fleet departed for the Peninsular War (where Sir John was killed at the Battle of Corunna). It is difficult to believe that Fiott was unaware of at least some of these events.

For a month or so before he set out on his Lapland journey, Fiott was based in Uppsala and Stockholm and made a number of sketches of varying quality in the vicinity of Stockholm. He visited the estate of Skeppsta of the Ironmaster JD Wahrendorf. At Rosenberg, a royal estate, he made pencil drawings of the hermitage, the grotto and a tomb - all in the best picturesque fashion of the time. The royal palace in Stockholm and Bishop Nordin's garden at Stenhammar were also sketched. It is likely that Fiott met Nordin through their common mineralogical interests. Fiott never had any official status at the University of Uppsala. He was, of course, no longer a student and there-

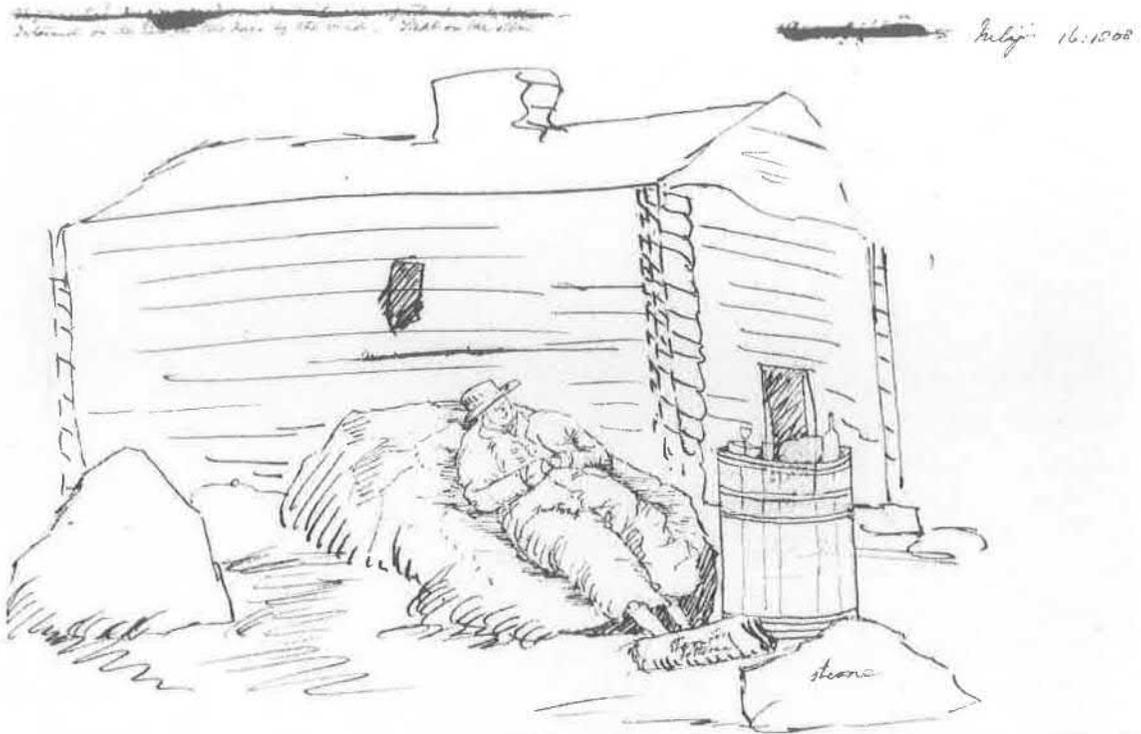


FIGURE 6 A fisherman's hut "Fiott on the stone" on Finhamn at the Kvarken crossing of the Bothnian Sea where John Fiott was "detained for two days by the wind" in July 1808.

fore does not appear in the *Matrikel* of the university (1800–1911).²²

The most intriguing part of Fiott's journey now began. It may be introduced with his sketch of the horse-drawn vehicle (Fig. 2) in which he journeyed to Umeå. There follow several sketches which he made along the road on his six day journey. There is a good ink drawing from a roadside in Ångermanland. It bears the note "Light trees, dark green pines, smoke from furnaces" (more likely from charcoal burning). There follow fading pencil sketches of ferries at river crossings. Fiott stayed in Umeå for several days. There is a good panorama drawing from across the river (12 July) and a view down river (15 July). Umeå was a busy place while he was there. There must have been a considerable number of refugees from Finland as well as of Swedish military personnel. It is conceivable that Fiott would have heard something of John Paterson, representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society,²³ who was there at the time, and of

the aid to be distributed to the refugees from a fund established in the City of London²⁴. British provisions for "the North Finnish Army" (not least tobacco and spirits) were also imported to Umeå. A note accompanying a sketch of a harvest frame "on which residents hang up their hay and corn that the wind may dry it" is attributed to General Döbeln (could Fiott possibly have made contact with this legendary Finnish figure?)

The crossing to Finland by way of the Umeå archipelago and the twenty miles of open water of the Kvarken to the stony Vasa archipelago, was interrupted by rough weather (Fig. 6). It took three days, but provided the opportunity for Fiott to produce several of the best of his drawings, with accompanying notes in Swedish as well as English. In the town of Vasa, he had contact with the apothecary Nicholas Krantzar. Russian troops had been in occupation of Vasa a few weeks before Fiott's arrival and Krantzar seems to have been something of a civilian intermediary.²⁵ Indeed, the Ostrobothnian coastlands

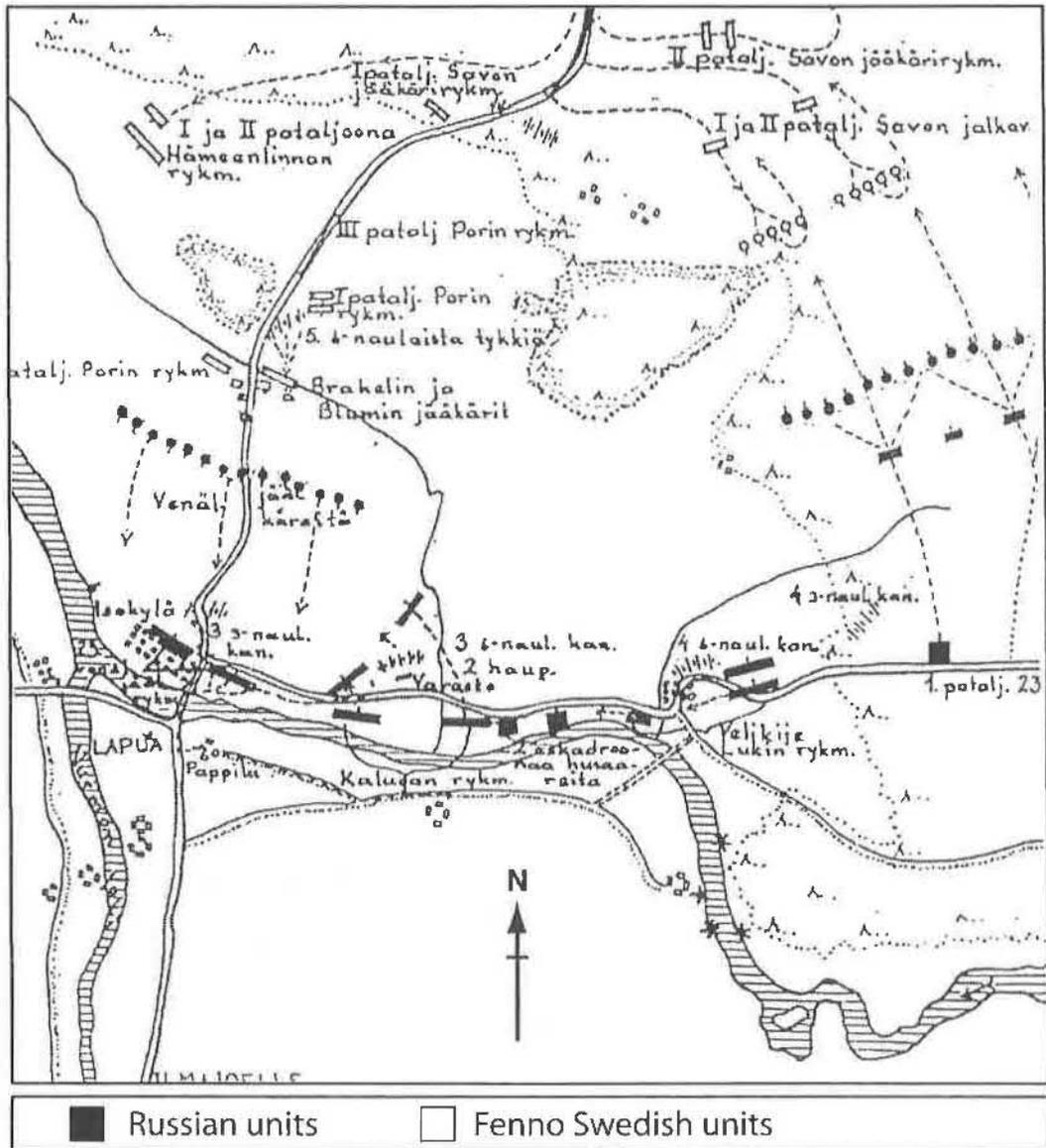


FIGURE 7 Plan of the Battle of Lappo (Lapua), 15 July, 1808 (an early sketch reproduced by J Koskimies op.cit.p.233).

from Vasa to Uleåborg had been under Russian control in April and May. Fiott arrived in the area at the time of the Swedish counter offensive. It was a situation reported in some detail in *The Times* through the Gothenburg press and the detailed troop movements of which have been reconstructed by Eino Jutikkala in his *Atlas of Finnish History* (1948).

Although the object of Fiott's journey appears to have been to visit Lapland, there are grounds for believing that there was a second motive. Did Fiott expect to see something of action in the war zone as he had done around Copenhagen? The first piece of evidence is that his obituarist H W Buxton wrote of Fiott "ever displaying much interest and curiosity in

military affairs, he availed himself of every opportunity". Secondly, Fiott must have written to his relative Mrs Arrowsmith before going to Finland, because she replied (31.8.08) "I hope that you will not get within gunshot of the enemy" and later, "I am glad to see that you have escaped the clutches of the Russians" (see footnote 3). Thirdly, he accepted an invitation from his brother Lt Fiott RN, to see something of what proved to be the ill-fated Walcheren expedition in March 1810. Support for his interest in military matters also comes from his concern for "the military history of Wellington's campaign in 1813" and, in 1814, the fact that he went to witness the arrival of Napoleon in Elba and what he called "the associated harlequinade". As Hugh Hanley has remarked "A curious interest for one who subsequently became a member of the peace party" during the Crimean War. And how to explain a little sketch of "Baron Düring with his company of dragoons" and the cryptic caption of Fiott's sketch of his departure for Lapland "quitting the Swedish army" when, in fact, he must have known that he was heading for an area of military activity? Probably the explanation is that he simply went to witness a military engagement as an interested spectator – a not unusual practice at the time (as with those who went to observe the major spectacle of Waterloo).

Be all that as it may, here he is in Ostrobothnia at the time of the Swedish counter-offensive. And it is his two sketches from Lappo (Figs. 8 and 9), clearly dated 22 July, that arouse curiosity. At the top of Fig. 9 is a note "The road from Nykarleby along which the Swedish army advanced. Baron Ramsey and several others were killed". On 9 July, the Russians had captured Lappo, apparently without inflicting serious damage. The Swedes and Finns began their efforts to recapture the village on 14 July. The site of the battle the next day (Fig. 7) was on the opposite side of the river from the church on open cultivated land beyond Isokyrö, the main village. In the ensuing encounter several hundred troops were reported killed.²⁶

There was a second encounter between the Swedish and Russian troops at nearby Alavo on 18 July after which the Russians withdrew to Kuortane and a Swedish headquarters was established in Lappo. Local sources record that the vicar and his family had taken shelter in the cellar of the vicarage during the operations. The remains of the battle must have been apparent to Fiott when he

arrived in Lappo. There can have been little local food available – the Russians with their long supply lines having lived off the land. Nevertheless, it was reported that the vicar and his family, emerging from their shelter when they heard Finnish being spoken, managed to provide "casks of beer" for the troops. Fiott must have stayed at the vicarage as was customary for travellers at the time. There was no existing source from which he could have copied the two well-executed sketches, which probably took him a couple of days.

Fiott left Lappo for Storkyrö, Jacobstad, Pedersöre and Nykarleby. It is more than likely that he would have been introduced to their parish priests by John Gummerus, the vicar of Lappo. The ecclesiasts of Ostrobothnia had an especially close network of personal relations and in terms of the living conditions of the day were in a position to offer hospitality.²⁷ They were, in fact, divided into a virtual aristocracy occupying the mother parishes, and a kind of proletariat working in the remote rural chapelries.²⁸ In Storkyrö, Fiott stayed with Pastor Aejmelaeus (cf. the notebook, where his name is spelt somewhat differently). In Nykarleby, the church and surroundings of which Fiott produced an attractive sketch (Fig. 10), he must have stayed with Georg Mattheseus whose family included a pastor of the Swedish church in London. If, as reported, Nykarleby had suffered damage during a military engagement on 24 June, there is no sign of it in Fiott's drawing. In Pedersöre, he stayed with Pastor Eric Brunnus (Bromaeus in Fiott's record and who quoted the Finnish proverbs which were written in the notebook). In Uleåborg, the apothecary John Julin, very much a natural philosopher in the language of the day, entertained him. Julin was one of the handful of apothecaries who served northern Finland – apothecaries virtually lost in an area a third the size of England. Beyond the Oulu river, the ferry of which Fiott sketched, lay lesser rivers and the wide estuary of the Kemi river, boundary between Sweden and the Grand Duchy of Finland at that time. An indifferent sketch of the site of Kemi market, as seen from the window of the vicarage (Pastor Henrik Vergelius in residence) is dated 22 August. It bears the caption "a little sandy island in the river on which the annual fair is held in winter". Kuivaniemi was to be remembered later by the inclusion in the notebook of the tune that Joseph Acerbi heard there and which he copied down from the blind Finnish beggar.



FIGURE 8 Lappo church and vicarage where John Fiott is likely to have stayed 18/19 July, 1808.



FIGURE 9 Lappo village and its wooden bridge, with the site of the battle to the right.

Shortly after, Fiott would have reached the Torne valley with its broad islanded river. He must have been accommodated in at least two vicarages – and they are likely to have been those which had offered accommodation to his predecessors Edward Clarke and Joseph Acerbi. There are several minor sketches of Torneå, of the view from the vicarage at Övertorneå (25 August), and also half a dozen not very satisfactory pencil sketches of Lapps and their settlements. It looks as though Fiott intended to produce a watercolour of a Lapp woman. Her costume is described in detail – “Strong black heavy shoes, coarse red woollen stockings, light blue striped gown, dark blue striped apron, long black hair, small cap, striped kerchief down to her elbows”. A local boatman took him upstream. Punting upstream regardless of the many rapids, was not easy work. Fiott was clearly anxious to reach the Arctic Circle. On 26 August, his boatman brought him to Kittilä (Fig. 11).

The return journey presented a problem. On 4 September, the Swedish forces were defeated at Oravais, near Vasa and retreated northwards, eventually reaching the Torne valley after which, with the descent of winter, campaigning ceased. On 25 March, 1809, the Finnish regiments in the army were disbanded and the Grand Duchy was subsequently ceded to Russia. All this must have been

familiar to Fiott during the remaining part of his stay in Sweden. Returning to Uppsala in September, he must have travelled by the coastal road on the Swedish side of the Bothnian Sea (cf. Fig. 12). At any rate he seems to have been in the company of Bishop Nordin on 16 September.

There is no record of how he spent the eight months before he returned to England. There were well-known professors at Uppsala of both mineralogy and astronomy with whom he may have had contact. While he probably had little time for social activity on his earlier visits to Stockholm and Uppsala, he now undoubtedly enjoyed convivial evenings at which poems were read (some of which he wrote down) and musical items were sung and played. He returned to Yarmouth on July 19, 1809.

EPILOGUE

There remain many unanswered questions. For an obviously responsible man, how is it that reports were not sent in accordance with the conditions of the fellowship? Only one of the score or so of reports which should have been written found its way into the university file containing material appertaining to the William Warts Fellowship.²⁹ It had been written to the Vice-Chancellor in February 1808 and must have been deposited for safe keeping



FIGURE 10 View of Nykarleby village on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. At the bottom of the sketch there are a number of notes. "The wooden bridge was built in two days by the Swedish army". ... "General Klercker's house has the chimneys". There are also colouring instructions – "yellow church, red steeples, white window frames ... all houses have white window frames ... yellow toll gate".

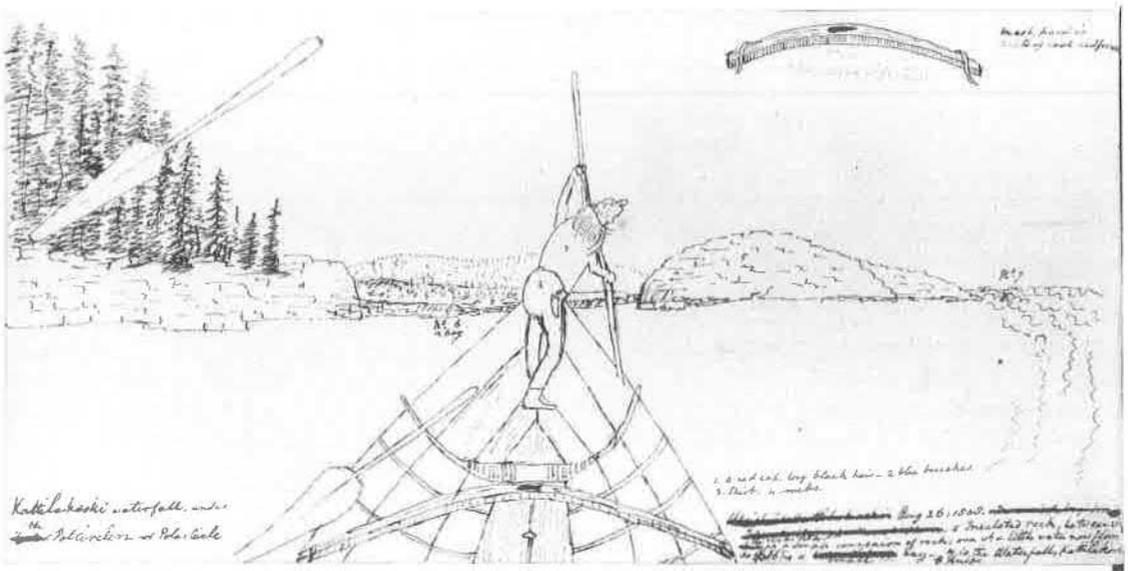


FIGURE 11 John Fiott's sketch of the boatman punting him upstream on the Torne River towards the Kittilä rapids on the Arctic Circle, 26 August, 1808. The boatman is described as having "a red cap, long black hair and blue breeches". There is also a fading pencil sketch of two oarsmen on the same river.

Presumably, Fiott soon forgot his Swedish experiences after his return to England when he was able to travel to the real territory of his heart's desire – the Middle East and Egypt. In H W Buxton's obituary for the Royal Society there are sentences which might explain the absence of written documents from the Swedish sojourn. Buxton's "science-loving friend somewhat eccentric in manner (though) considerate and bountiful to those around him and who excelled as a patron left few contributions to literature". And, Buxton continued "He was very much a man of action in his manifold activities, leaving few words on paper to others".³⁰

At the same time, as John Fiott became John Lee, he developed into a keen bibliophile. "Of books relating to geography and travels", Buxton wrote in his Oxford memoir, "he was a constant reader and few contemporary travels escaped his notice". Unfortunately, there is no catalogue of his once impressive library which was described as overflowing into "six airy attics". However, W H Smyth printed "an alphabetical roll" of the principal authors whose works were contained in "this scientific treasury".³¹

Among the half-a-dozen Scandinavian names on the roll, that of Tycho Brahe is likely to have claimed Fiott's attention more than the others. It would remind him of his pilgrimage to the deserted Uraniborg on the Danish (subsequently Swedish) island of Hven. And he would probably have mentally set beside it his copy of the report by Louis Maupertuis, the French astronomer, who with Swedish colleagues led an expedition to study the transit of Venus in 1735. There is no evidence to support it, but it would have been logical for Fiott, the prospective astronomer, to want to follow the Torne river route to the Arctic Circle in the wake of Maupertuis. The project may even have been encouraged by Swedish astronomical colleagues in 1808. Perhaps, therefore, there was a scientific motive to set beside the possible urge to witness something of the military engagement in Finland.

In October 1807, while John Fiott was in southern Sweden, a Swedish frigate arrived in Yarmouth with the future King of France and his entourage. Shortly afterwards, the British government rented Hartwell House from Sir George Lee to accommodate them. Gustaf IV Adolf of Sweden – he who had confronted Sir John Moore in 1807 –

also sought refuge in England. S W Smyth, author of *Aedes Harwellianae* and a friend of Dr John Lee, wrote that when the deposed Swedish king stayed at Hartwell in 1811, the two monarchs "ministered condolences to each other". Is it possible that the anecdote was passed on to Smyth by Lee, who would have appreciated that his Hartwell property had also had a Swedish experience?

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 29. Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, University Library, Cambridge. Ms 0o.6.90 Item 19. The contents of the report in Latin were limited almost entirely to the officers of state of the Swedish realm and some of their responsibilities. They focused on Field Marshall Mauritz Klingspor (who must have been in the Lappo area when Fiott was there), Chief Justice Silversparre, Carl von Otter, adjutant to Gustav IV Adolf, Abraham Edelerantz – a man of many parts, poet, playwright, administrator, a visitor to England in 1805. Finally, there was Samuel Ugglas, chairman of the war cabinet and the treasury. Ugglas was described elsewhere as a *homo novus* and something of a *bourgeois gentilhomme*. Just two weeks before this letter was despatched, there had been a *coup d'état*. Fiott

must have been in Stockholm or Uppsala at the time

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