

Dark Gold: A Drink for Doctors and Kings

Intro: Welcome to Hampshire HistBites. Join us as we delve into the past and go on a journey to discover some of the county's best and occasionally unknown history. We'll be speaking to experts as well as enthusiasts, asking them to reveal some of our hidden heritage, as well as share with you a few fascinating untold stories.

Johanna: Hello, and welcome to the second episode of our series on chocolate. I'm Johanna Strong. I'm doing my PhD at the University of Winchester, looking at Mary I. Today's episode features some fabulous research by Holly Marsden, who is a PhD student on a collaborative doctoral partnership scheme and she's looking at the life of Mary II of England. She's based at the University of Winchester and at Historic Royal Palaces. And she also works with the National Portrait Gallery and Royal Museums Greenwich. Today, we are going to talk about chocolate in early modern England, and we are joined by Holly. So nice to have you, Holly.

Holly: Thank you.

Johanna: So I guess we'll get right into it and give kind of a brief overview of last episode where Gabby and I talked about where chocolate comes from. So do you want to give kind of a brief introduction into the topic?

Holly: Yeah, absolutely. So, as Jo and Gabby covered, last episode, cocoa was grown as part of the plantation economy, dependent on the labour, skill and knowledge of enslaved people in West Africa. And so it was introduced to Europe only in the latter half of the 16th century by Spanish colonisers who had invaded Honduras. And then it was traded through religious networks in Europe, particularly through the Jesuits in Catholic regions before the Dutch established a base in Curaçao in the 1620s. And so to meet demands for consumption, South American natives were enslaved by Europeans, before people from Africa were forcibly transported in a triangular trade system. And it's thought that only 10% of the original population of Honduras survived and later, most Amazon natives and African enslaved people were also killed by disease.

And so relating this to Hampshire, trades occurred in the 17th and 18th centuries. And so in 1764, we have a record of 700 pounds of chocolate, which was exported from South Carolina in the US to Gosport and then trade in Portsmouth and Southampton also happened. There's no records of chocolate that I've found yet, but these included sugar, which was added to chocolate to sweeten it.

And so relating chocolate and enslavement to Hampshire as well, in 1808, the Royal Navy's West Africa Squadron was sent from Portsmouth to stop slavery in West Africa. So enslavement and cocoa production was explored much further by Gabby and Jo, but that was kind of just a recap of last episode.

Also in Hampshire, individual chefs and greengrocers used or sold chocolate and domestic trade and other uses of chocolate in early modern England will be further explored by Andy in the next episode of our podcast series and the legacies of chocolate in Hampshire and its function in Hampshire, are actually explored by modern day chocolate companies, such as Montezuma's in Winchester who have done quite a lot of interpretation on the history of chocolate as well.

Johanna: It's nice to see modern companies talking about those difficult parts, and some have put the spin on it as the bitter side of chocolate. So it's nice to see that acknowledgement happening.

Holly: Yeah.

Johanna: And so when you say 700 pounds of chocolate is coming into Gosport, that's got to be quite like the ship loads of chocolate that are coming in. Are there specific places where chocolate is handled and used in England or is that just something that comes into a regular kitchen?

Holly: Absolutely. So specific buildings were created for chocolates, such as the chocolate kitchen and the adjoining chocolate rooms in Hampton Court Palace, which is just outside of London. And these particular rooms were built by Christopher Wren and commissioned by William III and Mary II during their reign over England, and they moved to Hampton Court as the city of London was too smoggy and too congested for William, who suffered quite badly from asthma. And Mary was particularly interested in the redesign of the palace and the redesigning of the gardens as well.

So Polly Putnam, who's a wonderful curator at Historic Royal Palaces, who look after Hampton Court, was the first person to discover that this room, the chocolate room, was used for chocolate from looking at 18th century inventories of the Palace, which stated that Wren designed the kitchen in around 1690. So I would love to thank her for her invaluable help and research during this chocolate project, because she is really kind of the pioneer of looking into chocolate at Hampton Court, and has done amazing, amazing work on the interpretation. I would a hundred percent recommend going to see the chocolate kitchen and the chocolate rooms at Hampton Court themselves and it kind of explains that the chocolate kitchen was part of the bedchamber and not necessarily the kitchen. So drinking chocolate was part of the levee rituals, the rituals of getting ready and a symbol of friendship and trust. There was also a chocolate room that Mary commissioned at Whitehall Palace in central London and chocolate kitchens in Kensington Palace and Windsor. And William and Mary would drink their chocolates together in the morning, in their bedroom, every morning, which is really interesting. So it's the symbol of their monarchy as well as being kind of a connecting feature of their relationship and of the relationship between them and their courtiers as well.

And so the placement of the kitchen in the Fountain Court was absolutely intentional. Mary designed the garden with Christopher Wren and the palace, to show the modernity and the fashionable nature of their court. And so the Fountain Court would welcome visitors in from that side with loads of sensory pleasures, including the smells from chocolate, from the chocolate kitchen, and from the herb garden that she grew and from the spice kitchen as well. And so they were really trying to cultivate this sensory experience to bring in smells of the new world as such.

Johanna: I cannot recommend enough, as Holly already has, to go and see the chocolate kitchens, because I think when we think of using chocolate and drinking hot chocolate or hot cocoa, we think, oh, you know, we, we know how to use it. It can't have been that different, but you go in and you realize just how different drinking chocolate was for William and Mary.

Holly: Absolutely. Yeah.

Johanna: Yeah. And so were there other uses of chocolate beyond the drinking chocolate at William and Mary's court? Or was it particularly, you know, sit in bed and drink your chocolate?

Holly: Yeah, absolutely. So, Polly's research shows us that chocolate straddled what she calls "straddled their extravagant and the everyday". So it wasn't just drinking to consume chocolate. It was, as I've already said, a demonstration of monarchy, which gives us a view of history from under

when understanding the making and the serving of the food to be consumed by the Monarch and their high-profile guests.

But also, it was used by doctors. So, William was especially fond and was said to consume chocolate at least three times a day. And his Doctor, William Salmon was worried about the levels of consumption, and he noted this in his 1707 diaries. So, the chocolate rooms where William's chocolate chef also slept, were actually placed below his bed chambers, which kind of brings in the whole idea of access to the King as well. So, the chocolate chef was one of the closest people to the King. William's chocolate chef was called Aert Kemps¹ and he saw the entire process from roasting, peeling, and grinding the beans to making it into a cake where the ground cocoa beans were kind of patted down into a specific shape and the chef perfected and documented the King's recipe, which included many, many spices. And these cakes were left to mature and added to water, milk, or even wine, and sometimes thickened with egg yolk, which is really interesting 'cause completely different to how we would consume chocolate today. But chocolate wasn't, I guess like today seen as inherently unhealthy. So William Salmon, the doctor, had a chocolate pot as part of his medicinal kit. And Mary's doctor also, who was called Hans Sloane, it's been shown through Sarah Churchill's privy purse accounts that there were a few bills for chocolate on behalf of Mary made by Hans Sloane as well.

So chocolate wasn't just edible, but it was also, seemed to be a cure for ills. It would seem to be an aphrodisiac, which I will explore a little bit later. And if you think about the chocolate pots in the medicine kits, it shows us the materiality of chocolate as well, so that there are chocolate pots in museums, such as the British Museum, which often come in gold and William's silver chocolate pot is held in the Dutch silver archive and it's really interesting because the British Museum's inventory of Mary's ceramics and kitchenware collection, and Mary was a huge, huge collector of ceramics, especially, so this inventory includes 16 chocolate cups in a category entitled 'In the Backstairs for Constant Use'. So, they were constantly being used, they were a huge part of William and Mary's everyday life. And they may have also been made of porcelain aligning with Mary's love for ceramic collection and display as well, because as I've already noted, chocolate was a display of wealth as was collecting and displaying ceramics.

And the equipment like this may have been held in the King's chocolate room, but the usage wasn't specified in the 18th century inventories that Polly Putnam discovered. So we're not sure, but the equipment probably would have been stored on the metal shelves that is described in the inventory.

Johanna: So chocolate is obviously a massive part of William and Mary's monarchical life but it's also such an important part of the rest of court life. And as you've said, we have Dutch colonisation in the 1620s, which sees plantations for cacao and for the processing of chocolate. And then we get chocolate to England in the 1760s. So are there monarchs between the 1620s and William and Mary who are also using chocolate or is this very specific to William and Mary?

Holly: Yeah. So Mary's uncle, Charles II, acquired the painting, *A Landscape with Farm Buildings in Brazil*, circa 1656 to 1664, and this is attributed to Albert Eckhout. It depicts a farm building centrally, attached to which are cocoa drying trays. And in the foreground on the left is a cocoa tree with cocoa growing in such abundance that ripe pods have fallen to the ground. And so Charles II's

¹ The information about the chocolate chefs comes from an unpublished paper by Polly Putnam at Historic Royal Palaces. Charles II employed Solomon de la Faya in 1682 (recorded in a warrant at the TNA) and William III employed Aert sometime after Mary's death (1694). A warrant again from the TNA states he was given a room directly under the king and 'press sheets and bedding' in 1702, which could mean he was employed that year. TNA records also state William paid for Aert out of his own privy purse. It is likely that Faya continued working as a chef indeed under Mary and William but was not employed by them specifically for that purpose. Kemps is mentioned rather than Faya as his rooms etc show the closeness of the chef to the king, despite William dying later on in 1702. Thomas Tosier was hired by George I in 1714 (TNA).

interactions with ambassadors in Spain helped influence the introduction of cocoa to England. And Charles himself indulged in drinking chocolate, especially for aphrodisiac uses as well as to purely enjoy it as a drink. And this may be tainted by Charles' reputation as an overtly sexual Monarch, but the purpose of cocoa for an aphrodisiac was often prescribed by doctors. Henry Stubbs', book *Nectar, Or a Discourse Concerning Chocolata*² from 1662, mentions Charles II's favour of the drink and, and overt use of the drink. And there's also records of Charles himself purchasing chocolate in 1667 and employing his chocolate maker, Solomon de le Faya in 1682. And at this time as chocolate was first introduced into the court, especially, it was heavily, heavily taxed along with coffee and tea, because they were luxury items of excise. And so it was really a drink and a product only for the rich used in an especially luxurious manner, kind of tying into this ritualistic fashion that it was consumed in. And so, Samuel Pepys actually recorded his first taste of drinking chocolate in his diaries in the morning after partying to celebrate Charles II's coronation, which I love. So maybe it was a hangover cure as well.

Johanna: I love that. I'm going to take that as fact, even if it isn't.

Holly: Have a go everyone, try it. The Earl of Sandwich also researched the interest in chocolate and why people were going so mad for chocolate in England, in 1666 to 1668, and he presented this research to the Privy Council. And so people were becoming aware of the interest and of the fashionable nature of this new product from the New World.

After William and Mary, George I and II also used the chocolate kitchen and employed his chocolate maker, Thomas Tosier. So again, they're trying to show the wealth and the modernity of the monarchy and the access they have to these products from other countries. And so Thomas Tosier, who was employed in 1717, would make a drink for George every morning and take it up to his bed chamber himself, so again, we're looking at the access to the monarch. And Tosier also had a chocolate house in Greenwich, which was very, very popular among the aristocracy and the nobility. So as William and Mary used it as well, drinking chocolate was used as a gift of grace and favour, and was served it very intimate social functions and these rooms, especially in George I's and George II's courts, became a hotspot for wealthy aristocrats, because drinking chocolate was glamorous, and it was expensive, and it was a little bit naughty as well. And so they continued serving it with water or milk, spices and sugar, still cultivating this recipe as a drink of the New World. And chocolate houses also became very fashionable along with this kind of indulgent display of modernity and the New World, and they cost a lot of money to visit, unlike coffee houses, which were used a lot more by the emerging middling classes at this time. And the kitchen function continued on into George II's reign, who consumed chocolate, according to his physician's diaries, shortly before his death.

Johanna: It's really interesting to see how it's gone through from Charles II to the beginning of the Georges of the span, where chocolate is just the height of luxury, but it's also the height of medicine in a sense. And I mean, that, that makes you think twice now in a good way about having a nice cup of hot chocolate or hot cocoa is that it's something luxurious, but also may be good for you.

Holly: Definitely. Yeah.

Johanna: And it's incredibly fascinating how much one drink, I think we take for granted today, how much the chocolate served to show us what life in the 17th century court was like. And I know you've

² The Indian nectar, or, A discourse concerning chocolata the nature of cacao-nut and the other ingredients of that composition is examined and stated according to the judgment and experience of the Indian and Spanish writers ... its effects as to its alimantal and venereal quality as well as medicinal (especially in hypochondrial melancholy) are fully debated: together with a spagyric analysis of the cacao-nut, performed by that excellent chymist Monsieur le Febure, chymist to His Majesty

touched on this a little bit, but could you tell us a little bit more on what insight this gives us into the 1600's and court life?

Holly: Definitely. So chocolate's function in 17th century court life was to display power and to display the connection to the British empire. So the inclusion of the chocolate kitchen, especially in William and Mary's court, in their newly renovated palace, demonstrates an aim to convey the wealth and the power and the modernity of their monarchy. They wanted to show the products of colonial expansion and to house the extravagance of their newly acquired exotic tastes. And this idea of modernity shows really how monarchs at this time wanted to show an image of being forward thinking and of changing and of developing how the monarchies demonstrate their power from previous monarchs.

And as we said, chocolate only arrived in England in the mid-17th century, after Spanish colonisers invaded Honduras the century before. So this really is a new thing that they're bringing in. And so by including the kitchen in the redesign, Mary worked with Wren to place the palace at the epicentre of what was the new world and William and Mary was shown to be monarchs of modernization, international expansion and colonisation.

And the consumption of these goods by Mary and by other 17th century monarchs and members of the aristocracy in the court demonstrates an ambition for global expansion and imperial success. And this connects to Mary, especially through the establishment of the Royal African Company in 1660, which is led by Mary's father, James II. And although I haven't discovered any information yet, with Mary herself's connection to the Royal African Company, my future research aims to understand Mary's involvement in the company, if at all, which was continued after James II's ousting by Mary's husband, William III.

Johanna: Something that's so important to talk about when we talk about chocolate, is to talk about this global expansion and imperial success or the perception of quote unquote success. And so just wondering if, there's more about Mary and empire and about that connection to colonialism, that we could talk about to bring, kind of a true rounded perspective? You know, the glory of chocolate, but also the consequences.

Holly: Definitely. I think, as you said, it's really important to acknowledge where these products came from and who was harmed in the process. And talk about the beginning of colonialism in terms of the British monarchy, because I think it's quite often ignored in interpretation of the British monarchy.

So with Mary, we can see colonialism and its relationship to displays of majesty in two portraits, and one is held in the Rijksmuseum in the Netherlands and one in the British Museum in London. And they both show Mary, central to the image, with potentially enslaved persons as in a servile manner behind her. And although the figure might not be representative of an actual enslaved person working for William and Mary, this child in the two paintings of her represents the new global economy of human trade, which met the demands of a growing consumerist economy. And both these images depict a woman depicted or labelled as Queen Mary II accompanied by a black child. And in one of the images, this child is in what would be labelled exotic dress that was attractive to people of the court who would see paintings such as this. And the presence of the child is not acknowledged by either museum who hold the image. And although, you know, it might not be displaying an actual enslaved person, and maybe instead, the artist sat with a model and this figure was used repeatedly. Pictorially using the figure to bolster Mary's status is reliant on African enslavement, which commodified and dehumanized black bodies. And even just the commission of this painting, although we can't take, kind of, the provenance that the museum states - you have to take it with a pinch of salt I haven't found any documents to accompany either of these images - so it might not be Mary II at all,

but the pictorial depiction and what it suggests, shows that monarchs or people of high status used images of enslaved people and people servile position to booster their own status.

And so this is also demonstrated in Mary's, kind of empirical goals in building the College of William and Mary, which was in colonised Virginia, on stolen land from native people, which demonstrates her aim, her colonial aim of expansion, shared by her husband. And this isn't often discussed in relation to Mary at all, who is often talked about as being apolitical. So as monarchs used to their given lifestyle, William and Mary relied on and expected global expansion and empirical success to support their lifestyle and their personal tastes, which are tastes of the New World as we've explored through chocolate and of ceramics through importing artifacts from other countries. And so a active effort in this area of governance, overturns assumptions that she had little political ambition and the chocolate kitchen and the use of chocolate within her court is a prime example of this.

Johanna: And I think that kind of perfectly embodies talking about the chocolate coming from, what is now Central and Southern America, or South America, and then coming to England and then having that power and empire then transferred to Virginia. We have this example of the triangular trade, which I think is something that often we can think of in an abstract way, but that's just such a concrete example of it and how easily, for worse in this case, how easily ideas and people moved from different places in the world. And for anyone wondering about these images, they are included in the show notes for this episode. So please do go check those out on the Hampshire HistBites website.

And just one final question. I feel like I've grilled Holly so much about chocolate in Hampshire, what does chocolate mean for the monarchy?

Holly: Chocolate was a way to display majesty, like portraits, like buildings, like the college of William and Mary, which we've discussed. So consumption of chocolate was power.

Johanna: Absolutely. I think that's the bottom line and a really good way to end this episode. so thank you Holly, for joining me and thank you to everyone who has listened. And we look forward in our next episode to talking to, I believe Andy, who is going to be talking about the uses of chocolate and kind of the medicinal and recipe side of chocolate.

So thank you Holly, for joining us and thank you everyone for listening.

Holly: Thanks so much. Thanks for having me.

Outro: We hope you enjoyed listening to today's episode. If you would like to find out a little bit more about what we've been talking about, then please visit the website, www.winchesterheritageopendays.org, or click on Hampshire HistBites, and there you'll find today's show notes as well as some links to more information.

Thank you.