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Date: 18 March 2019 at 22:02:15 AEDT

Hi Jane

Regarding the cost of a good handmade Scottish violin around 1800, according to a contemporary document a new Matthew Hardie sold for six pounds, Hardie was the leading maker in Scotland, output probably 6-10 instruments a year, this increased later when employing various assistants and his son Thomas.

The cost of materials would represent up to one third of sale price, on top of that income tax was introduced by Pitt the younger in 1899.

By 1840 the price of Thomas Hardie's violins has dropped to two pounds (this was partly due to the importation of cheap imported work) several purchases of TH violins are recorded in the Glen account book (currently held Edinburgh University). Purely an estimate a new James Sandy violin probably sold for 3-4 pounds, a servants annual wage at the time. Given these figures William Wilson was relatively high salaried for the time. The current value on a Sandy violin in good condition £3-4,000.

All best

David

VIOLIN MAKING IN SCOTLAND
1750-1950



David Rattray

BRITISH VIOLIN MAKING ASSOCIATION

James Sandy

VIOLIN, ALYTH C.1800

James Sandy was born at Alyth in 1766 and died there in 1819, three weeks after his marriage. Known locally as the 'Alyth Genius', he is the first recorded and arguably the best Perthshire maker.

The quality of his craftsmanship is confirmed by an extract from a 1920s Hill archive that mistakenly attributes his work to a London tradesman: 'A typically old English violin 1780-1800, un-purpled well modeled on Amati form, probably a trade worker with Simpson or Thompson, walnut stain and spirit varnish, brown-black appearance. Labeled, James Sandy / Maker / Alyth.'

It is unlikely however that Sandy travelled far from home – he lost the use of a leg at the age of twelve and lost the other in an accident five years later. Blessed with an inventive mind and a fine grasp of mechanics, he subsequently devoted his life not only to making violins and other musical instruments, but also to the production of clocks and optical equipment.

– The high standard of his instruments would suggest some training or at least that he had examined a good London-made violin. Henry Dryerre recorded in *Blairgowrie, Stormont & Strathmore Worthies* that Sandy built all his violins to one pattern with an inside mould and that his output included cellos.

This c.1800 violin is distinguished by the flowing curves over the blocks and the squarer middle portion. The widely spaced sound-holes, with their hooked outer wings and large notches, resemble London work, and the deep, beaded edge channelling reinforces this impression. The original, undisturbed neck is set into a shallow mortise through the rib on to the pine block.

The deep pegbox, slender throat and prominent eye bring to mind some early 19th-century Aberdeen work (page 156). Sandy's fine craftsmanship can be seen in the deep and regular turns of the volute, and the instrument is given further distinction by the fine gold-coloured varnish.

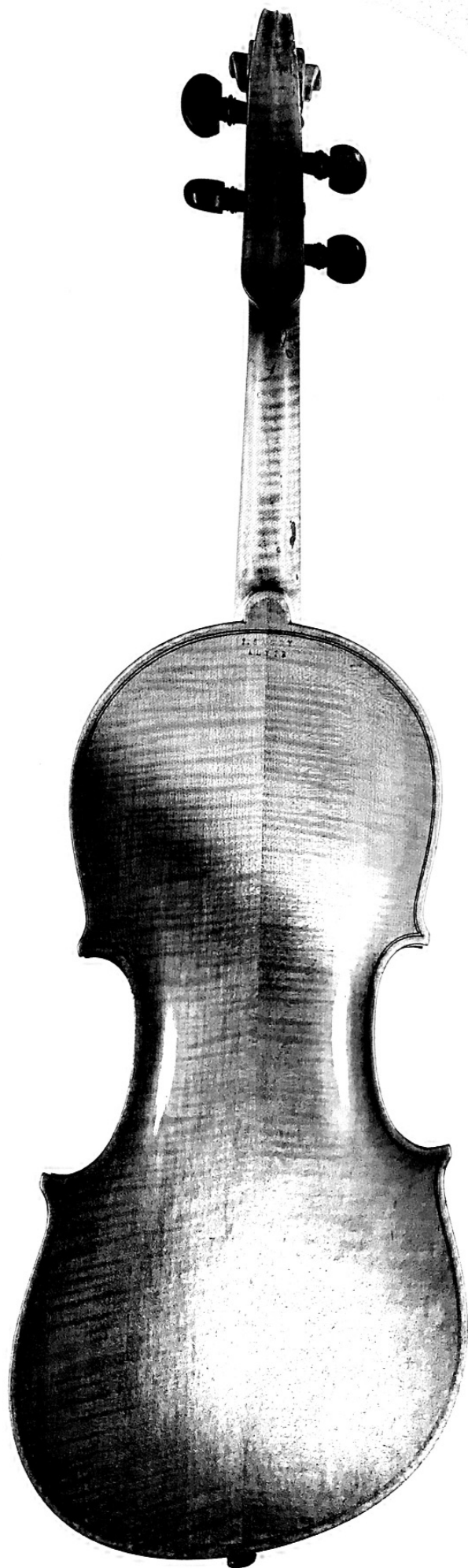


DIMENSIONS (MM)

BODY	
LENGTH OF BACK	357
UPPER BOUT WIDTH	165
MIDDLE BOUT WIDTH	108
LOWER BOUT WIDTH	203
STOP LENGTH	194
RIB HEIGHTS	
AT NECK	31.0
AT ENDPIN	31.0
ARCHING HEIGHTS	
BACK	15.5
FRONT	15.5
EDGE THICKNESSES	
MAXIMUM	4.3
MINIMUM	3.7
SOUND-HOLES	
OVERALL LENGTH	74.0
BETWEEN UPPER CIRCLES	40.7
SCROLL	
OVERALL LENGTH	108.5
MAXIMUM WIDTH	41.5
ORIGINAL FEATURES	
NECK LENGTH	124.0

PURFLING: *painted*
 LININGS: *pine*
 BLOCKS: *pine*

MARKINGS
 BRANDED BELOW THE BUTTON:
 J. SANDY
 ALYTH.



357
165
108
203
194

31.0
31.0

15.5
15.5

4.3
3.7

74.0
40.7

108.5
41.5

124.0