

A COMPARISON
of
5 DOLLAND TELESCOPES c1820
makers unknown
to a genuine P&J Dollond c1800
& other Dollond instruments

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Intentionally misspelt "Dollond" signatures to deceive a customer into thinking he was purchasing a genuine "Dollond" telescope

In my collection of antique refractors are 5 Dolland telescopes, all 3-draw with mahogany barrels, and brass splash shields, achromatic objectives with green crowns, and 4-lens Schryle-Huygens eyepieces, the erector being removable so the telescope can be used as a night glass. They are similar in design and style of manufacture.

To the best of my knowledge the House of Dollond never made this style of telescope. The telescopes they made for use aboard ship were either single or 2-draw, with a longer wooden barrel, usually mahogany, or brass, covered with thick leather. A multiple draw telescope with thin machine drawn drawtubes would not last long on a man-o-war or a merchant ship. They simply could not withstand rough handling.

THE 5 DOLLANDS IN QUESTION





5 Dolland 3-draw mahogany barrel
Day or Night
with splash shield &
4 lens Schyrle-Huygens eyepiece

Note the similarity in appearance. The method of construction is identical. The eyecups are strikingly similar and are typical of the period c1820. They all have cover slides, to the object glass and the eye lens. The OG cover & slide is missing off one of them. It is easily lost because they simply push into the splash shield and are not an especially secure fit.

The OG's are each 1".6 clear aperture, but the cover slide stops the OG to 1".4. They obviously differ in focal length, because as you can see from the photographs, their overall lengths differ slightly.

This style of telescope was made at the time by various instrument makers, firms such as T. Harris & Son, J. Cetti, Hughes, Parnell, Pizzalla &c. But not George(I) Dollond who ran the business in the 1820's. The signature being counterfeited was that used by Peter & John(II) Dollond.

Why would any bona fide instrument making firm peddle "DOLLAND" 3-draw telescopes? I don't believe any well established instrument making firm would do so, they would have too much to lose in terms of their reputation and integrity. But brass jobbers seeing an eye to cashing in on the reputation of the House of Dollond might. Which implies "DOLLANDS" were not made by a single firm, but by a multiplicity of brass jobbers.

During the latter quarter of the C18th and the first quarter of the C19th a hand held achromatic telescope was referred to colloquially as a "DOLLOND". The House of Dollond only made a limited range of achromatics for naval use, and for the Gentleman of the day. They were expensive, beyond the means of all but the upper middle classes and the aristocracy. Hence there was a ready market for less expensive achromatics signed "DOLLAND" the engraving being executed so on first glance it looks like "DOLLOND".

DOLLAND signatures c1820





*Dolland,
London,
Day or Night.*

#107



*Dolland London
Day or Night*

#134



*Dolland
London
Day or Night*

#207



#241

Dollond signatures engraved in the supposed style of the House of Dollond. Note the similarities, and variations.



#114

A genuine Dollond signature on a single draw marine c1800



signature on a Dollond 2-draw Gentleman's telescope #24 c1825



signature on a Dollond 4-draw Gentleman's telescope #21 c1825

DETAILS of the "DOLLAND" signatures c1820

I shall consider the engraving details of the DOLLAND signatures in my collection in catalogue order, namely #87, #107, #134, #207, #241, compared to the engraved signature on a genuine single draw marine c1800 made by Peter & John(II) Dollond #114. All the signatures are engraved in the italic cursive script penned in the C18th & early C19th.

- #87 differs in the flourish of the "L" in London, which looks more like a "£" sign. "Day & Night" is too plain.
- #107 shares the same flourishes of the "D" in Dollond and Day & "N" in Night, but has a serif style "L", and "London" lies below "Dollond" instead of alongside.
- #134 overdoes the flourishes of the "D" in Dollond and "L" in London, and also uses serifs for the "D" & "N" in Day & Night
- #207 is the closest match, the flourishes on "Dollond" & "Day or Night" are so similar they could almost have been cut by the same engraver. But "London" has a serif "L" and lies below "Dollond" instead of alongside.
- #241 The flourish on the "D" of "Dolland" is a close match as is the "D" & "N" in "Day or Night", but the "L" in "London" has serifs, and lies below "Dollond" instead of alongside. Notice also that the "a" is actually "oi", the "i" so close to the "o" as to make it look like an "a".

The inconsistencies in these "DOLLAND" signatures imply each was engraved by a different engraver at different times. Don't take the c1820 date of manufacture as gospel, circa means an estimated date. These telescopes could have been made at any time from the early 1810's thru' late 1820's. It also implies, despite their similarity in appearance, they were assembled by different lens jobbers.

CONSISTENCY of the DOLLOND signature 1780 thru' 1820

The brass jobbers making Dolland counterfeits would have had access to or would have seen at close hand genuine Dollond telescopes and so one would imagine the Dolland signature would be as close to the genuine signature as feasible. Judging from this admittedly small sample, evidently not so. Presumably they were relying on their customers never having had the opportunity to examine a real Dollond for any length of time. Either that or the customer was complicit in the deceit so they could show off their "DOLLAND" as though it were a real "DOLLOND".

Which of course begs the question, how consistent was the "DOLLOND" signature over the period in question, 1780 - 1820. Genuine single draw marine achromatics signed "Dollond" are scarce. They were made from the mid 1790's to the mid 1820's. The only example in my collection to date is #114. I do however have the large Huygenian eyepiece from a "Night" telescope. The cursive italic script is identical to my c1800 single draw marine. The only difference is the flourish over the last 'd' in "Dollond". A flourish missing from the counterfeit "Dolland" signatures. I have dated this c1780 owing to the bulbous eyecup style typical of that period. The signature is also sinister, i.e. runs from left to right indicating the engraver was left handed, and "London" is also below "Dollond" not alongside.

Prior to this c1770 the 'd' in "Dollond" and "L" in "London" had more exaggerated flourishes.



Signature on a Dollond Huygenian eyepiece off a Night telescope c1780



Signature on a Dollond single draw telescope #128 c1770

I also have two other Dollond Gentlemen's telescopes made with red Honduran flame mahogany barrels to a very high standard. The both have OG's with green crowns, and both c1825. Their signatures also share the same flourishes to the "D"s & "L"s.

The House of Dollond made all manner of scientific instruments, and I have examined on-line images of the signatures on just a handful.

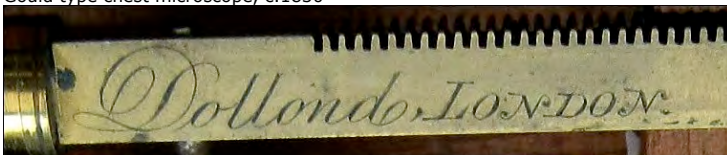
Dollond, London

Cuff's New Constructed Double Microscope, c1770

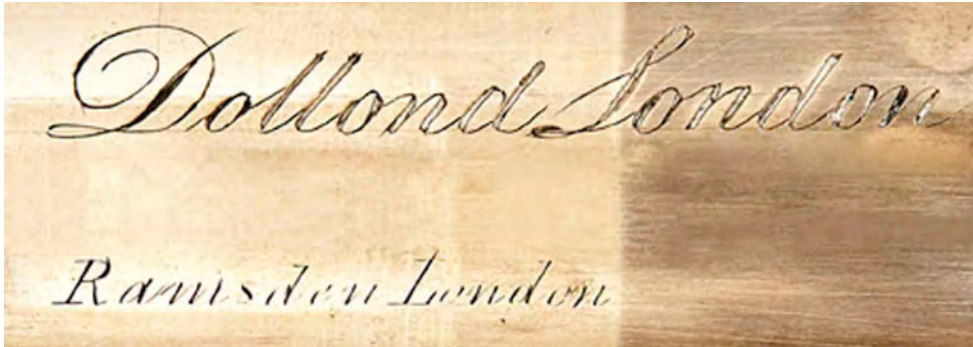


Dollond, London

Gould type chest microscope, c.1830



18TH-CENTURY 2IN. NAVAL SINGLE-DRAW TELESCOPE BEARING DUAL SIGNATURES FOR DOLLOND AND RAMSDEN
the tapering mahogany tube with brass draw signed Dollond London and Ramsden London, bulbous eye-piece with dust slide.



Dollond Achromatic Night Telescope single draw

This telescope has a parallel brass barrel, covered in brown leather. The objective lens is an achromatic doublet, contained in a German silver plated cell. The objective has a splash shield. All metal parts are nickel-silver plated. It has a single draw, a four-lens Schyrel-Huygens eyepiece, and a bulbous eyecup. It is signed "Dollond London Achromatic Night" on the eye tube draw, with the eyecup to the right (sinister). There is a long-necked bird design below the signature. The creature is resting on a crown. This designation as a "night" telescope is quite rare; the eye tube is oversized allowing larger diameter optics to be used for better night vision.



The flourishes on the initial letters of each word match those on the Dollond telescopes in my collection, with the notable exception of the Gould microscope c1830, in which "LONDON" is engraved all upper case & "L" has serifs.

Notice the long flourish on the Cuff style microscope c1770 matches that of telescope #118 c1770 in my collection.

CONCLUSION

Whilst the style of engravings on the 5 Dolland telescopes show similarities to the signatures on genuine Dollond telescopes and other scientific instruments, an expert would be able to tell the difference at a glance. The House of Dollond signatures show remarkable consistency over a 50 year period, whereas the Dolland signatures, engraved on telescopes all made c1820, as judged by the style of eyecup, show a variation indicative of an attempt to copy the House of Dollond signature, and clearly executed by different engravers, and none by the engravers who put the signatures on Dollond instruments.

There is no evidence the House of Dollond attempted to suppress or stamp out this counterfeit trade, indicating John(II) & George(I) Dollond did not share the litigious nature of Peter Dollond. The House of Dollond was a very well established firm by the 1820's, the year of Peter Dollond's demise. Perhaps this trade was regarded as inconsequential, or maybe even a form of flattery. The trade in Dolland counterfeits seems to have died out by the later 1820's early 1830's, as styles of hand telescope changed.

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION of 5 DOLLANDS

| | | | |
|---------|------|------|--|
| Dolland | #87 | 1820 | Mahogany barrel 3-draw Day or Night |
| Dolland | #107 | 1820 | Dolland, Dollond signature intentionally mis-spelt. Mahogany barrel 3-draw Day or Night. |
| Dolland | #134 | 1820 | Dolland Day or Night mahogany barrel 3-draw, with leather case; Dollond signature intentionally mis-spelt |
| Dolland | #207 | 1820 | Dolland, mahogany red leather clad barrel 3-draw, 4 lens Schyrel-Huygens eyepiece, sans crown to OG and OG cover slide |
| Dolland | #241 | 1820 | Dolland Mahogany barrel 3-draw Day or Night, signed "DOLLOIND" |

CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION of 3 DOLLONDS

| | | | |
|---------|------|------|--|
| Dollond | #21 | 1825 | Mahogany barrel 4-draw + sleeve - sinister signature |
| Dollond | #24 | 1825 | Mahogany barrel 2-draw |
| Dollond | #128 | 1770 | Dollond, early pocket achromatic with shagreen clad barrel & 5 lens Schyrel eyepiece |

