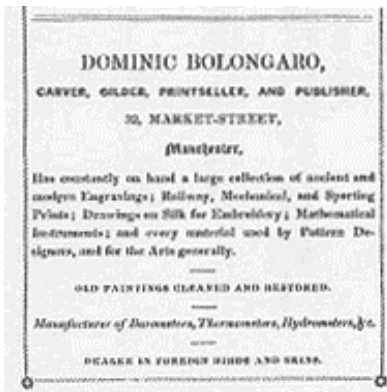


Dominic Bolongaro & Co.

Dominic Bolongaro was an important Manchester carver and gilder, who made looking glasses and picture frames. The Museum's collections contain a barometer made by his one-time employer, Vittore Zanetti.

He was born in 1783 into a very wealthy family in Stresa, near Lago Maggiore in northern Italy. He emigrated to England in about 1805, possibly with Charles Joshua Ronchetti, a barometer and thermometer maker. In Manchester, he and Ronchetti worked for Vittore Zanetti, a carver and gilder with large premises in Market Street. In 1816, Zanetti promised them both partnerships, but took one of his apprentices, Thomas Agnew, into partnership instead.



Bolongaro left Zanetti and set up a business on his own as a carver, gilder and print seller in Old Millgate on the left-hand side from the Market Place. His son Peter was born in the same year. He also made looking glasses, picture frames and barometers and sold mathematical instruments, such as ivory sectors. During the 1820s, Bolongaro took on an apprentice, Joseph Gale, who later started up his own business as a print seller and gilder in Market Street. Joseph moved to premises in King Street, but his business failed about seven years later and he became a hatter.

In 1831, Bolongaro moved to new premises at 14 Market Street, but moved again in 1835 to take over Joseph Gale's old shop at 32 Market Street. Dominic's eldest son, Peter, had joined the business by this time, possibly as an apprentice. The business was also involved with the sale of fine art and put on exhibitions at the Royal Manchester Institution. Peter Bolongaro became a partner in 1848 and married Mary Gale, probably Joseph Gale's daughter. His brother James went into another line of business.

From this time on, Bolongaro & Son seems to have prospered, being described in the mid-1850s as 'print-sellers and publishers to the Queen, carvers and gilders, barometer and thermometer makers, artists' colormen (sic) and picture restorers'. Dominic's death in 1856 does not seem to have affected this success. Peter retained the firm's name and soon acquired additional premises next door at 30 Market Street. He ran the business successfully for another 35 years until his death in 1892. Peter had no sons to carry on the business and his brother James had died 15 years earlier. His widow Lucy prevented his nephew Dominic from taking over the business, which was then sold.

For more information:

Read Rea, Anthony. *Manchester's Little Italy*. Manchester, UK: Neil Richardson, 1988.

Visit The Museum's Collections Centre.