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THE UBIQUITOUS DISH-RING

By Eric de Jonge

The pewter dish-ring described in Bulletin 25 not only surprised the Franklin family, it also surprised me as I had completely forgotten that they existed. And they existed much longer than it is generally known and their domination of the dinner table was much greater than it appears.

It is stated in Mrs. Franklin's article that they were used in Ireland for the same purpose as was the dishcross in England, namely to preserve the surface of the table from injury by heat. They had to fulfill that function all over the continent and much later, they had another function in addition to the original one, namely to be potato-rings, in fact and not in fiction.

It would be impossible to ascertain where they originated, how they were introduced into England and then into Ireland. All we know is, that they were well known there and extensively used. This we can gather from household inventories.

The dish-ring existed as early as 1460 and a much earlier date is probable. There was nothing primitive about them, and toward the end of the fifteenth century they not only had outgrown their infantile primness, but tended a little to the elaborate side. It must have been a domestic utensil of some importance and was widely used. This is substantiated by the fact that they were subjects for painters and engravers, that they were mentioned in a poem, and they were listed in a few inventories of pewter objects. One of these inventories is that of an Imperial Russian court of the seventeenth century and another that of an eighteenth century London household.

My memory was jogged by Mrs. Franklin's article, which gave me the idea to jot down what a little research brought forth. Only lack of time to go to various libraries to delve into art and reference books prevents me from giving more information than that I have now.

My first source of information is a painting by Friedrich Herlin, "Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee," about 1460, which hangs in the Municipal Museum at Noerdlingen, Germany. Here is depicted an apparently early form of the dish-ring, which seems to be similar in shape, although larger than the Franklin ring. My second source is the painting, "The Birth of the Virgin," by Hans Holbein the Elder, in the Cathedral at Augsburg, Germany. In this painting, dated 1493, we see resting on a table a four-footed dish-ring upon which the lady of the house is about to rest a magnificent broadrimmed platter. Still another painting, part of an altar wing, by the same artist of the Middle Ages, "From the Legend of St. Ulric," in the (formerly) Royal Picture Gallery at Augsburg, Germany, is dated 1512. Here again we see a dish-ring on which rests a broadrimmed deep bowl with contents. It also is of the four-footed type and shows ball-feet instead of the stubby ones of the second picture. I am certain that further studies of old paintings and reference works would reveal additional shapes and forms of these rings.

An early and most interesting source is a poem, which mentions the dish-ring amongst other pewter objects. I was fortunate in acquiring a woodcut by Jost Amann, Nuremberg, which dates back to 1568. This woodcut has already been described in Massé's *Pewter Plate,* London, 1904, and also by

H. H. Cotterell at great length in the August, 1929, issue of the *International Studio.* It was taken from Amann's book, *Die Beschreybung der eygentlichen Staende* or *The Description of all Trades and Professions* in which he gives an account of every profession known to him. [For this picture, see insert in this number, supplied through the generosity of Mr. de Jonge.] It is a pity, that Cotterell showed only the actual picture of a medieval German pewterer or "Kandelgiesser" and omitted the descriptive poem by Hans Sachs, the shoemaker and poet of Meistersinger fame. In his article, Cotterell translated the poem literally, disregarding rhyme and thereby missing the charm it has in the original. The translation could not have been an easy task, as he not only was confronted with the medieval German (Mittelhochdeutsch) but also with certain idiomatic Bavarian expressions. Reading the last word in the next to the last row, we find the word "Schüsselring," which is the subject of this article, the dish-ring.

My rhymed and improved (fervent hope) translation of the poem is:

The Tin I melt by Fire's Glow
And into Molds I let it flow
For Flagons and Flasks, large, small and fine
Wherefrom we drink our Beer and Wine.
For Bowls, Chargers and Plates, of various sizes
For Decanters, Wallfountains and Boxes for Spices
For Cruets and Candlesticks, and also Dish-rings
For Whatever a Household may need of Things.

Even though a dish-ring is not shown, the picture is of great interest to the pewter collector. Cotterell described in detail the various pewter objects, their shapes and forms, and seems to have taken great delight in pointing out that the so-called Swiss bell-flagon (with screw-top) in the left foreground, was already known in Germany in 1568. He thus tries to lead *ad absurdum* the contention of Swiss pewter experts, that this flagon was an indigenous Swiss type of the 18th century. (It is also known that this flagon type was known in Russia in the seventeenth century.) It is regrettable that he failed to elaborate on the dish-ring, the more so, as he usually was very thorough in his research and could have found more information about them than we possess now.

The Russian dish-ring of the seventeenth century went a little further than all others, as it had an addition of two handles, so that the, at times, piping hot dishes could be brought from the kitchen without great inconvenience.

From the year 1718 we have another picture, this in a Dutch book similar in contents to the one by Jost Amann, presenting us with quite an impressive footed dish-ring on the pewterer's counter in the right foreground. Still in the 18th century, in an inventory of household pewter, made on April 6th, 1740, in London, we find amongst the various objects: 2 rings. This inventory, strictly of utilitarian domestic articles, allows us to assume, that these rings were dish-rings, and having two of these rings specified, whereas, other articles were mentioned only as "various objects," proves that they were of some importance.

This short resumé shows us to what extent the dish-rings covered the tables of the European continent, Germany, Russia, England, Holland, Ireland. Due

to their proximity, there was probably no European country where they were not known and there may be the day when we shall find their American counterpart.

Their great reign makes it seem peculiar that their association in our minds should be so thoroughly with the Irish, unless the silver dish-ring is meant. Could we, perhaps, connect their Irish denomination with their *alter ego*, the later potato-ring? This assumption is not quite without logic, if we take into consideration that the potato sailed also under the Irish banner. The potato-ring could have acquired its name only long after the potato began its slow progress onto the household tables of Europe. At any rate, the potato-ring could not have been named before the potato became the staple food of the Continental population, and that would be some time during the eighteenth century, which explains the references we find about them in this period.

It is not quite true that the dish-ring's association with the potato was perhaps only the occasional use as a support for a bowl of spuds. Theirs was more than a nodding acquaintanceship. The later date dish-ring was just as intimately related to the potato as its earlier counterpart was to the dish it had to support.

Whereas the middle and upper classes had already acquired a certain refinement in their table manners through the use of forks and individual dishes, amongst the lower classes, food was still served on great platters and in large bowls. As everyone went for his or her desirable morsel, potatoes, particularly when baked or boiled in their jackets, were forever rolling away from the serving dishes when from all sides knives or eager fingers disturbed their equilibrium. Someone with an ingenious mind must have finally reversed the procedure and put the dish-ring upon the platter instead of vice versa, and created in this way a most effective guard-rail around the dish. The reaction of a sphere on an incline was forestalled. The table was secure against the fugitive potatoes, as everybody was forced to take his choice from the top of the heap. Involuntary education toward better table manners!

Dish-rings were made in various sizes as they had to accommodate the different wells of bowls and plates and, by necessity, only the larger sized rings could by right deserve the name potato-ring, as only they could encompass the needs of a large household. This function of the potato-ring was confirmed by Dr. Kurt M. Semon, who at one time or other has had to draw similar explanations from the wealth of his experiences and studies.

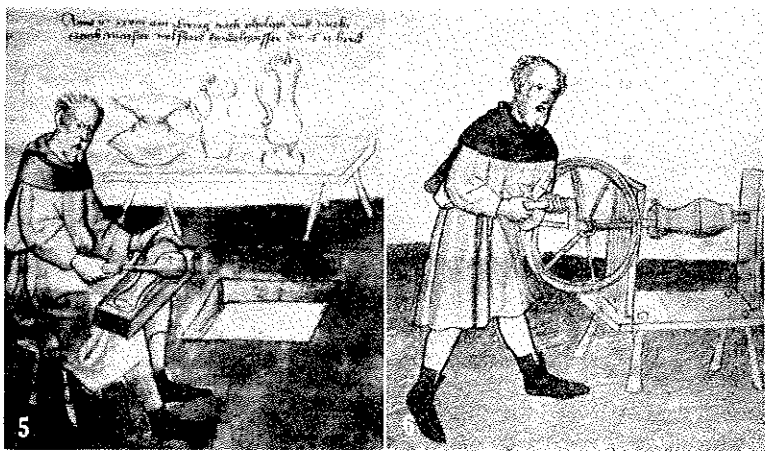
SIXTEENTH CENTURY VENETIAN PEWTER-MAKING

Adapted from *De la Pirotechina*, by Vannoccio Biringuccio, Venice, 1540. Translation by Cyril Stanley Smith and Martha Teach Gnudi, New York. The American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, 1942.

By LEROY L. THWING AND PERCY E. RAYMOND

Biringuccio was a practical metallurgist, and, for his day, widely traveled. At one time or another he was in northern Italy, Germany, Rome, Naples, and Sicily. For long he was a founder of cannon in Siena, but was also employed in making munitions for the Florentine and Venetian States. At the time of

his death (1539) he was the head of the papal foundry and director of papal munitions in Rome. His book, published the year after his death, was the earliest printed work to cover the whole field of metallurgy. It continued to be a "best seller" for 138 years in Italy and France, and even, in partial translation, in England. Georg Bauer (Agricola) used a good part of it in his *De Re Metallica,* published in 1556.



The author apparently knew little about ores or mining, being more interested in smelting and refining metals and in their practical uses. The following paragraphs present a summary, from the English translation, of such parts as relate to pewter. He uses the same word, *stagno,* (pronounced *stannio*) for both tin and pewter, which is still the Italian practice. This is from the Vulgar Latin *stagnum.* Some derivitives are *stagnajo,* pewterer, *stagni,* pewter plates and dishes, and *stagnarini,* traveling pewterers or tinkers.

Comments by the present writers are placed in square brackets.

Tin

The whiteness of the metal would lead one to believe that it was silver, and this inference is supported by the fact that it is harder than lead. However, there is no other metal like it, for it "acts like a powerful poison," to corrupt others. Just a trace of it will "embrittle" gold, silver, iron, or copper. This is thought by many to be due to a "wateriness" like that of quicksilver, which deprives metals of their toughness. However, it does not corrupt lead which seems to have a similar nature. [The Romans, indeed, supposed that tin and lead were two forms of the same metal, calling the former *plumbum candidum* or *plumbum album,* and the latter *plumbum niger.* At the time of Pliny (died 79 A. D.) the word *stannum,* now the scientific name for tin, seems not to have been used for that metal, but for an alloy of tin and lead, or what we now call pewter. It was not until the 4th century that stannum was used in the present sense.]

[Biringuccio knew that the ore of tin was found in large quantities, although he had never seen it. However, he said, it occurred in but few places, chiefly in England, but also in Bohemia and Bavaria. He included Flanders, where it is not found. He said he would not try to list the localities, because of their barbarous names.] The ore is easily smelted with any kind of fire and

with little effort. The whiter the tin, the purer it is, and the more granular, the better. A thin strip emits a crackling sound [the *cri de l'étain* of the French] when bent or bitten.

Tin changes the color of other metals, contributing to them, by some subtle means, some of its whiteness. Thus it overpowers the redness of copper. It is not sonorous, but by hardening other metals [copper] it makes them so. It is as though it put spirit into, and vitalized them. By mixing two flexible metals [tin and copper], it produces a third [bronze] entirely unlike both of them.

Either pure or mixed with lead it bears hammering well, and can be beaten out thinner than paper. The alloy is well known, for various household utensils are made from it, by casting. The pewterers add from four to six pounds of lead to the hundred of tin in making their alloy, claiming that the lead makes it more easily worked by the hammer, and more fluid in casting.

[Biringuccio, however, thought that this was a "racket," for the benefit of the master-pewterer only. Lead was cheap, tin expensive. He found that the tin which came from England made better and more beautiful articles than those produced in Venice. In his opinion, lead should be added only in making solder. In discussing antimony, he notes that the makers of pewter vessels add it to their alloy.]

Concerning The Art Of The Pewterer

Since pewter ware is commonly made of this easily melted alloy. the method of making it is well known, not only to skilled men, but almost to children. Besides its use for plates, bowls, and dishes, it is used in two other ways, namely, for the production of the type used in printing, and for making the sheets from which organ pipes are formed.

The utensils for eating are cast, one by one, in molds made from white tuff. Several are fastened together and then put on the iron axle of a wheel turned by hand. By the use of a slightly bent tool with a cutting edge they are thinned and brought to a good shape. Then they are finished by polishing with powdered tripoli on a linen cloth.

Flasks, containers for preserves, and salts are cast in molds in halves, which are fitted to one another and then soldered together. Then they are smoothed and polished with rasps, scrapers, and other cutting tools. Although the pewter vessels have considerable metallic odor, this cannot be detected in the food or drink.

[The paragraphs about type founding and organ pipe making are omitted here.]

Comments By The Present Writers

Two things of interest stand out in Biringuccio's account. The more important is that before 1539, the Venetian pewterers were using antimony in their alloy. So far as has been learned to the present time, the early English pewterers employed only tin-glass (bismuth) until the latter half of the 17th century, when the use of antimony was introduced from France. Both served to harden the alloy.

The second is that these early Italians did not employ permanent metallic molds, but made up a new set for each operation. It is difficult to guess the

nature of the "white tuff" which was used for making molds. Tuff, in the geological sense, is a rather broad term for all the non-molten products of explosive volcanic action. A tuff may be coarse material, or it may be fine-grained, it may be basic, or it may be acid. If he really meant volcanic material, it must have been brought to Venice from the Sicilian or Neapolitan regions. It is possible that he meant a white, fine-grained alteration product of volcanic debris. In another place in the book he mentions yellow tuff, probably referring to *puzzuolana*, a decomposed tuff of basic nature originally found near Naples. Named in fact, from Pozzuoli; where St. Paul spent seven days on his journey to Rome.

In his discussion of the making of molds, he insists that the materials must be fine-grained and "dry" by nature; that is, noncalcareous and not easily fusible. It was to be prepared by beating a mixture of the tuff with wool cloth cuttings, spent wash ashes, and horse-dung. This was made into cakes, dried, and baked in a furnace. Then pounded, sifted with a fine sieve, or ground in a potter's color mill, or on porphyry with water, as fine as possible. Then to be dried, magistery of salt added, dried, pounded, and sieved again. Then to be moistened, made into a mold, and dried again. By this time the material would certainly have become a fine powder, well adapted to the production of a smooth casting.

The "magistery of salt" was made by melting salt in clay. This seems to have produced sodium silicate, which would have acted as a binder. It is probable that molds prepared in this way could have been used more than once.

The Illustrations

The pictures at the head of this article are not Italian, but German. They show a pewterer at work before 1535, and perhaps, in Biringuccio's lifetime.

Figure 5 shows a flagon still in its mold, which, it will be noticed, is of the temporary, "sand" type. The pewterer holds his ladle, and the vat in the floor presumably contains molten metal. On the bench are two finished flagons, and another unidentified vessel. It looks like a cuspidor, but so refined an object could hardly have been in demand in days when Queens spat in the corners of the room. Perhaps it is a glorified dish-ring!

Figure 6 shows the "wheel" or lathe on which the body of the flagon is to be "skimmed" down and burnished.

These pictures, which are the oldest known showing pewter-making, are from the records of the Konrad Mendel Foundation, a home for aged, but not incapacitated, craftsmen at Nuremberg, Germany. It was founded in 1380 and the manuscript contains entries down to 1535. The sketches were first published by F. M. Feldhaus in his *Die Tecknik der Vorzeit*, copyrighted by the Akadamische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenion, and more recently by the senior writer in *The Technology Review*, May, 1941.

EXPERIENCES IN CASTING PEWTER

By Paul J. Franklin

This article was written by an amateur experimenter, who had a lot of fun trying.

Soon after taking up the study of pewter I became deeply interested in

how it was made. I learned that most early pewter articles were cast in moulds, also, that by diligent search moulds might still be acquired. Eventually we found a plain bronze mould for making rat-tail spoons, the price of which was three dollars. I could hardly wait to get home to try my hand at making spoons. I never had seen an old mould before, did not know the elementary principles of its use, but I guessed it should be well cleaned and polished, and that something should be used to prevent the poured pewter from sticking to it . I used powered graphite. After heating the mould over the gas flame to a fairly high temperature, but not red hot, I clamped the halves together in a vise, handling them with tongs. Hopefully I poured in the molten pewter already melted in an iron pot, that could be handled with forge tongs. Alas! The mould leaked around the edge, molten pewter ran out as fast as I poured it in. Like all moulds I have seen, it had become slightly warped from many heatings. To remedy this I prepared a paste of white lead, oil, and powered plaster of Paris. With a small brush I coated the edge of both halves of the mould, then clamped them together. Heating mould and clamps, I put them in the vise, and poured again. *No leak, and the mould was full.* It cooled, I opened it, had a fine spoon. The small lug of pewter on the tip of the bowl of the spoon, left where the molten pewter is poured in, is called a *sprue.* This must be cut off and the bowl tip filed to an even edge. The orifice or tiny funnel where the melted pewter is poured into the mould is the *gate.*

I later learned that instead of using powered graphite to prevent the molten pewter from sticking to the mould, the old pewterers coated the interior of all moulds with the smoke of a tallow candle.

The above description of method applies in a general way, to the casting of all pewter items in a mould.

An open casting, where the object is to be moulded and duplicated is the most simple form. Objects such as rosettes, flower forms, etc., must be flat on one side, which is a base. These objects are usually used as ornaments at intersections of geometric designs such as fan-lights over entrance doors of the fine houses erected about 1750 to 1825. Many of these can still be seen in transoms and side lights of old houses in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

To make these open castings I have had the best success using ceramic clay. Press the wet clay into a box of convenient size, of sufficient depth to take the object to be cast. Scrape the full box of clay to a smooth level surface. Coat the model with thin oil, then carefully press it into the damp clay. It must be so designed and made that there are no back drafts, that is, projections that will prevent the clean pulling of the object from the clay after sinking it to its proper depth. If unable to pry up the object you are moulding with a knife point, from the damp clay, remove it and fasten a handle on the bottom by solder or cement. After smoothing off the clay press the object down again using the handle. The object must be carefully pressed in and removed in order to avoid distorting the design. The consistency of the clay should be such that it is firm and stiff.

After moulding the object the mould must be dried by placing it in a warm oven of about 150 degrees F., for about two hours or until the clay has hardened and shrunk slightly, so it can be pulled from the box. The clay

then must be put back into a hot oven of about 450 degrees F. and baked until it is very hard and thoroughly dry. This will take about 2 hours. After removing the mould from the oven and while it is still hot, dust it lightly with powdered graphite, then pour in the molten pewter. When the casting hardens it will drop out by turning the mould upside down. Pour in molten pewter again while mould is hot. The mould will last for years if not dropped and broken.

For making large pewter castings wooden flasks and moulding sand are used. A wooden flask is like a shallow square box with the top and bottom removed. Two opposite corners are hinged, the other two fastened with metal clasps. Two flasks are used, one above the other. The object to be moulded is placed on a flat surface, the flask placed over it. Special fine-grained sand mixed with stale beer is then sifted in, and well tamped. Then a bottom is clamped onto the flask. It is then turned over to expose the under parts of the object. Another flask is placed over this side, filled with tamped sand, and a top is put on. The two flasks are then carefully separated, and the object to be duplicated is removed. From one side a groove is made to the hollow left by the removal of the model to a hole in the side of the flask so that when the halves are clamped together the metal can be poured in from a ladle when the flasks are set with the hole uppermost. After it is cool the casting is removed. This may sound complicated, but it really is a simple operation if care is used.

Complicated castings like that of a statue require flasks made up of many parts with cores so they can be removed separately to take care of any angle of projection or detail of the object to be cast.

I have had one very unfortunate and heart-breaking experience. I acquired a brass mould for wavy-end spoons with a beaded rat-tail. Both bowl and handle had fine scroll designs, while at the top of the stalk was an excellent intaglio of His Majesty, William the Third. I fancied myself making numerous spoons for ourselves, and for collector friends! This mould was brass, light in weight, not heavy bronze like our other spoon moulds, or like any we have ever seen.

I went through the procedure described in the beginning of this writing. The cast spoon, when cold, stuck badly in the mould. When I finally pried it apart, the mould was badly pitted and beyond further use. I took it to my good friend, William Ball, Jr., of West Chester, Pennsylvania, maker of Ball Brasses for furniture, who is an expert on brass and its alloys.

Mr. Ball said the mould was of brass of a low grade, containing a large percentage of alloy, much of it zinc. Further, that in early days metal workers did not understand making brass for special purposes, but they did know how to make bronze. In fact there was such difficulty in the making of brass moulds, that for a number of years brass was given up entirely and moulds for spoons, buttons, bullets, etc. were made of pure gold. These still turn up in England occasionally. Of course the lucky purchaser, and the unknowing dealer believe them to be brass until somebody discovers the truth. The next time you buy a metal spoon mould, look it over well; if it seems very heavy, have it tested; you may have a golden treasure. Mr. Ball said my mould could be repaired by an expert. As he deeply admired it I gave it to him. I believe

it now has been restored by a silversmith who filled all the scores of pits and cracks with pure silver, but it was a costly repair job.

A "slush" or "bled" casting, such as the hollow handle of a flagon, is made in a two-part mold. An experienced man knows to a second how long it takes the shell of the casting to harden. He then punctures the end of the casting with a sharp tool, and, holding the hot object in a pair of tongs, pours out the molten pewter from the interior. "Dumping a casting," as it is called, is a real art and takes a great deal of experience and a keen sense of timing. The soldering of the hollow handle to the body is also a very tricky job. Both handle and body are heated quite hot and the solder is flowed around the edge with an iron, but great care must be used not to put too much on, or to puncture the handle or body with the hot iron.

I do not think collectors of any antique articles pay enough attention to, or take into consideration the skill that was required by old-time workmen in putting things together. We take too much for granted and do not examine our specimens, to marvel at the real artistry of the work. The craftsmen do not get the credit which they so richly deserve. We have to remember also that these workmen possessed only crude tools and accessories. Their fluxes, their cleaning and polishing compounds, etcetera, were all a matter of experiment, for they had no knowledge of chemistry and little of metallurgy. Today it is almost impossible to find men who can repair the metal work made centuries ago, or who can get the finishes on metal articles. Certainly there is a wide field of research in these matters that can be undertaken by skilled persons. There are scores of collectors who would appreciate knowing how the items in their collections were made, and just how the beauty and style of workmanship were accomplished.

WORSE SLIPS OF THE PEN

As was remarked by the Duc de Saint-Simon, on some page of his almost interminable *Memoirs*, "nothing is more rare than writers who are well informed; nothing is more rare than writers who . . . of their own knowledge and experience are capable of writing . . ." If Percy E. Raymond had read the *History of Old Sheffield Plate* by Frederick Bradbury, London, 1912, before he wrote the *Alloys Called Pewter*, published in Bulletin 24, he would have refrained from passing along some serious misinformation in regard to the early days of britannia metal. He said; "the first commercial production of vessels made of britannia was by the firm of Hancock and Jessop in Sheffield, England, in 1770." Mr. Bradbury says: "And White's *Sheffield Directory* for 1833 (p. 44 note) makes the erroneous assertion that the first Britannia metal manufacturers were Messrs. Ebenezer Hancock and Richard Jessop." Mr. Bradbury found no trace of this firm in the contemporaneous Sheffield records, although there was a William Jessop who registered his mark for Sheffield silver plate in 1796. Ebenezer Hancock eluded his investigation entirely.

P. E. R. appears to have gotten Ashbury confused with Ashberry, and to have made other statements for which he had no evidence from original sources. Mr. Bradbury devotes his last chapter to the "Britannia Metal Industry," and it may be well to summarize his statements.

He ascribes the story of the purchase of the formula for "White Metal" to Mr. Charles Dixon, a candlestick maker who was born in Sheffield in 1776 and who died in 1852. But the ingredients of this alloy have not been disclosed. There is good reason to believe that they were not the same as were in what came to be called Britannia in 1797. James Vickers, who purchased the receipt from a very ill person in 1769, began at once to use White Metal for spoons and vegetable forks, and by 1787 was making teapots, measures, castor frames, salts, and spoons. Even his son John, who became his successor in 1817, and designated his works "Britannia Place," was listed as a White Metal Manufacturer.

Froggatt, Couldwell, and Lean are listed in the Sheffield Directory of 1797 as "Manufacturers of Britannia Metal Goods and Silver Platers," the first public appearance of the term. Curiously, Bradbury does not include them in his official list of Britannia makers, which is as follows:

1787 James Vickers
1797 Kirkby, Smith and Company
1800 William Holdsworth
1804 Dixon and Smith
1830 J. Dixon and Son
1833 J. Dixon and Sons
1817 John Vickers
1821 William Parkin
1828 J. Wolstenholme
1830 P. Ashberry
1837 E. Stacy

Mr. Charles Dixon, in his recollections, notes that Mr. Nathaniel Gower was an early manufacturer of White Metal, but he did not agree that he was "The Father of the White Metal Trade," an epithet applied to him in the *Sheffield Mercury* when he died Sept. 30, 1813, aged 83. Mr. Bradbury included only the more prominent of the "Britannia" makers in his list. Until further investigation, it may be well to make a distinction between White Metal and Britannia.

P. E. R.

THE SOCIETY OF PEWTER COLLECTORS

The Honorary Secretary, Mr. Cyril C. Minchin, writes us as follows:

"Our Summer Meeting is being held at Ripon, Yorkshire, with our Headquarters at the Spa Hotel, and our President, Mr. Fenton, would like all members of your Society to know that accommodation is being reserved for any members of your Society who may be in England on June 10th. We should be most honoured to welcome them to our week-end gathering, and therefore we should be most pleased if you could have all members of your Society advised that a royal welcome awaits them at Ripon in June."

Ripon Cathedral and Fountains Abbey! Do not miss them or the pewter.

A LETTER FROM MR. DE JONGE

Dear Professor Raymond:

This letter is in the form of a report and should have the title:

PEWTER BECOMES OF AGE

Your correspondent had the great pleasure and honor, to put Pewter and the Collectors Club on the air. He was invited to talk about and show Pewter over the Television network of the American Broadcasting Corporation last Thursday. The fun lasted for about 30 minutes and from a few reports which I had, the program came over beautifully. Not only did the individual pieces which I purloined from Mrs. de Jonge's (in this case *her* pewter, if it comes to the cleaning, *mine*;) collection, show up in the close-ups extremely well, but the remarks I had to make, made, according to a very good friend, sense for the first time. It was a rather incoherent talk, in the form of an interview, and the announcer was completely innocent in pewter matters, therefore I had to be on my toes not to be caught by rather intriguing questions.

I selected pewter from all over the world, knowing that unusual shapes would be seen better than a few plates. Amongst the selected pieces I showed

1. 16th century English sealtop spoons
2. The Dutch Brandy bowl which you may remember from "Antiques."
3. An Irish Haystack measure
4. A Bohemian Chalice with cover
5. A large Church Flagon by Calder
6. A pint mug by Joseph Danforth, Middletown
7. An English porringer with handles in the shape of Prince of Wales feathers. (Sweatman, London, 1730)

There were a few more items, but they could not all be produced as time was running short. I did of course give publicity to the Pewter Collectors Club and its activities.

If you think that this report may be a filler for the next Bulletin, you are welcome to use it.

Sincerely yours,

ERIC DE JONGE.

New York City, Feb. 4, 1950

CHATS ON OLD PEWTER

By H. J. L. J. Massé. Second edition, revised by Ronald F. Michaelis. Published by Ernest Benn, Ltd, London, and A. A. Wyn, Inc., New York. Sept. 1949. $3.75 in the United States.

Mr. Massé was the first to make the collecting of pewter popular in England. He organized the first large public exhibition of pewter in 1904, and, in the same year, published his *Pewter Plate*. This was followed by *The Pewter Collector*, in a cheaper format for wider circulation, and, in 1911, by *Chats on Old Pewter*. This, he explained in his introduction, was intended to be a useful guide to collectors and a supplement to *Pewter Plate*. That it was successful is shown by the fact that it was reprinted in 1919 and 1923. There

is necessarily a good deal of similarity in the contents of the Massé books, but some important differences. The second edition (1910) of *Pewter Plate* contains reproductions of the London touch plates, and *The Pewter Collector* has drawings made from them, with useful descriptions. Any collector who has all of them is fortunate, and we are fortunate indeed that so well-informed and enthusiastic a student of pewter as Mr. Michaelis has revised and edited the *Chats*.

Compression is the order of the day, especially in England, where shortage of paper is still an important feature of publication. The original 422 pages have been cut to 240, and the illustrations from 91 to 47. The reduction is not so great as it might at first seem, for the removal of blank pages and line drawings from the body of the work has left more space for text. The new edition contains the same number of chapters, 13, as the original, and they have the same headings. Except for the last two, there has been an obvious effort to cut them to about half the original length. Chapter one, "Advice to Collectors," is improved by cutting exactly in half. Chapter three, on "Pewter Prices," has been reduced from 24 to 4 pages, occasioning no regrets. Plenty of our friends tell us of the bargains they got or lost "years ago." Chapter eight, reduced from 66 to 26 pages, has suffered most, for we are all interested in "What was Made in Pewter." But here again the reduction in text is less than it would seem, for the illustrations were numbered as pages in the previous edition, and since each was printed on only one side of the paper, the deletion of each accounts for the loss of two pages.

Chapter twelve has been improved by the inclusion of information acquired since the time of Massé, and even of Cotterell. The first list enumerates the owners of the touches impressed on the five London touch plates, arranged in the order in which they were struck. Mr. Michaelis has cleverly explained the order which governs the disorder which caused so much anguish to earlier writers on the subject. He has also been able, in many cases, to give real names where formerly we had to be content with initials. For example, I have an octagonal dish with the touch W L and the date 1668. Mr. Michaelis' list shows that No. 105 is William Lewis, who obtained his freedom in 1667.

The second list contains the names of the Scotch pewterers who struck on the Edinburgh plates, in their numerical order, and the third, all the above makers arranged alphabetically, with their beginning dates and their numbers on the plates. Somehow my Lewis, William, failed to make this list, as did Lewis, John, No. 1002, *in propria persona*, although he did get mention with his partners John and Joseph Brown.

The last chapter, an analytical index to the devices contained in the touches, stands about as in the original edition. If one has a smattering of heraldric lingo, this is a most helpful key for the use of those who do not have Cotterell's *Old Pewter*.

Mr. Michaelis has shown good judgement in what he has eliminated. He has been most helpful and up-to-date in what he has added. Every collector of pewter should own and read the book, particularly if he be one of the monomaniacs who collect American pewter only.

The present high cost of book-making has seriously affected the illustrations, for the present edition has only 47, as compared with 91 in the original.

We can bear the loss of some with equanimity, but the writer regrets that only one of the drawings has been retained. All but 6 of the photographs are different from those in the original edition, although much the same subjects are illustrated. Some of the pictures will be familiar to those who follow the literature on pewter, but others are new to us. There is the common tendency, probably inevitable, to figure extraordinarily rare, even unique pieces, such as none of us can ever hope to possess. An instance of this is the Pirlie (or Pirley) Pig, represented here by an excellent new photograph, showing the side opposite to that in the previous edition. Including that of Ingleby Wood, we now have views of this Scottish "piggy-bank" in three positions. Other inaccessible things are the Stuart "rose-water" dishes, so-called, though probably used for holding fruits or sweetmeats. Americans occasionally have the opportunity to buy a faked one, with an enameled coat of arms soldered on the central boss. Other rare pieces, but not impossible, are early prickit and socket candlesticks, and particularly, a 16th century measure with a ball-and-wedge thumb-piece. In view of Mr. C. A. Peal's statement in Apollo in January, 1950, that this type was probably not made before 1600, it is interesting to see that it bears the hR excise stamp, which the reviewer believes to have been used during the reign of Henry VIII.

The most important of the new illustrations are those of specimens in the collections of Capt. A. V. Sutherland-Graeme, Mr. Cyril C. Minchin, Mr. Roland J. A. Shelley, and of Mr. Michaelis himself. The group of spoons with bas-reliefs of royal personages is particularly intriguing, for many of us have good starts for such a series. Tobacco stoppers are new to most of us, and pewter ones are rare, even to Mr. Michaelis, who has been collecting these exotic items in all their manifestations for many years. The two plates (one regrets that the plates are not numbered) showing snuff boxes are interesting. Despite the pessimistic remarks in the text, it is possible that someone may discover who made the boxes.

All of the illustrations are from good photographs of authentic specimens, all are well reproduced. One regrets that there are not more of them.

PERCY E. RAYMOND

HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN SILVER AND PEWTER MARKS

C. Jordan Thorn, Tudor Publishing Company, New York, 1949. pp. i to xi + 289. 110 halftones, 200 line drawings in addition to sketches of marks. $3.50.

The pewter collector views this book with mixed feelings. The sketches of the marks are hasty, crude, but sufficiently like the real touches in most cases to be useful in identifying specimens. They would, however, be useless in determining whether the touch was genuine or false. It would probably be useful to one who could not afford *Pewter in America.* The list of makers is obviously copied from Mr. Laughlin's second volume. It would have been graceful if some acknowledgment had been made.

The photographs, mostly from specimens in the Brooklyn, Metropolitan, and Philadelphia Museums, are excellent.

P. E. R.

SAMUEL PIERCE, AND A NOTE

While doing some research on an artist who worked during Samuel Pierce's time and whom I suspect worked in conjunction with him on certain items I came across the following advertisements:

The Copartnership heretofore existing between the Subscribers under the form of Samuel Pierce & Son is by mutual consent, dissolved. All persons owing money to said firm are requested to make immediate payment.

SAMUEL PIERCE
JOHN J. PIERCE

April 23, 1821.

DISSOLUTION

The connexion in business between Samuel Pierce, Jr. and G. W. Johnson, under the firm of Pierce & Johnson, was by mutual consent dissolved on the 23rd inst.

SAMUEL PIERCE, JR.
G. W. JOHNSON

Greenfield, June 27, 1834.

Business will hereafter be carried on by John J. Pierce & Samuel Pierce, Jr. under the firm name of J. & S. Pierce, who manufacture and will keep constantly for sale a general assortment of Tin, Sheet Iron, Pewter and Copper Wares, also Lead Aqueduct Pipes, Lead Aqueduct, soddered & straightened; Copper & Cast Iron Pumps; Cook, Parlour, Franklin, Box Stoves; Fire Frames and Brass Kettles, etc.
Cash paid for old Copper and Brass.

WANTED

A Smart Active boy, 15 or 16 yrs. of age as an apprentice to the above business.

SAMUEL PIERCE, JR.
JOHN J. PIERCE

ANOTHER NOTE

On pl. XL of *Pewter and the Amateur Collector*, by Edwards S. Gale, New York, 1909, there are depicted spoons with three-clawed drop. They have the initials P R on the upper side of the terminal of the handle. Mr. Gale said that they were obviously modern. We have found two with the initials W B, which we bought as examples of what not to buy.

MARION DEMING.

NECROLOGY

DR. RUSHFORD

Dr. Edward A. Rushford, who served the Pewter Club as its President in 1938 was a student and collector of pewter, as well as an authority on many types of Antiques. His home in Salem, Mass., was filled with treasures representing many years of careful acquisition. He was a charter member of the

Club and came to the first gathering in the Old State House when Mr. Dooley's invitation in the Boston Transcript brought a score of pewter lovers together. From that small nucleus the Pewter Collectors' Club of America was formed in 1934.

Dr. Rushford was also a founder of the Rushlight Club. He was the first editor of its publication, The Rushlight, and a contributor to many magazines and papers carrying articles on antiques. His lighting devices, including many pewter lamps and candlesticks, always impressed the visitor who enjoyed the hospitality of the Doctor and Madame.

Mr. Ingraham

Mr. Edward Ingraham, one of the original members of Pewter Collectors' Club of America, will long be remembered as a gentle and friendly person. His service to the club was given in response to any request. His term as President in 1942 and 1943 was marked by pleasant meetings and a spirit of genuine interest in pewter. His own collection was small, but choice. He cherished old and beautiful things. With Mrs. Ingraham he created a home of quiet charm in which members of the Pewter Club were frequently received with gracious hospitality.

After retiring from business, Mr. Ingraham devoted himself to helpful services. He was Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Mount Auburn Hospital, and Chairman of that of Lesley College, and an officer of the First Parish Church and of other organizations in Cambridge.

Eleanor Hudson Welch

Eleanor Hudson Welch was an ardent collector of dolls, pewter and many other things. She was a member of many antique-collecting groups.

Mrs. Welch started the flourishing Antiques Division of the Massachusetts State Federation of Woman's Clubs, and of the General Federation of Woman's Clubs, of which organization she was a national director. An article in a British magazine cited her as an example worthy to be followed in starting such groups in England.

Mrs. Welch gave unsparingly of her time to the study, collection, and preservation, of all types of antiques.

Elisabeth M. Perkins

PEWTER COLLECTING NOT A FAD

A friend who has been south recently tells of visiting Lighteners Hobby Museum at St. Augustine. In one of the rooms is a case filled with nondescript Continental pewter. It bears the following sign:

"40 years ago you had to be a pewter collector to be in fashion. Today only unusual pieces are in demand.

Fads in collecting come and go."

Whoever wrote this notice was not particularly well informed. There may have been a dozen pewter collectors in this country in 1910. The Club now has a membership of over 200. They take pewter seriously. No wonder the demand is for good pieces.

P. E. R.

PLEASE

This number of the Bulletin cost us over $200.00 to produce and distribute. No member of the club was paid anything for authorship, editorship, or the manual labor of sorting, addressing, and mailing. We spend over 80 per cent of our money on the Bulletin.

Our annual dues are so small that some members overlook them. The dues are still $2.00 a year. The bill for $3.00 last year covered a year and a half.

Bulletins will no longer be sent to those who are in arrears.

PERCY E. RAYMOND

MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST REPORT

1947

Sept. 17, 1947. Old Sturbridge Village. Since our previous meeting at Southbridge, Mr. Albert Wells, his colleagues and their staff, have made Sturbridge Village a reality, rather than a dream. In this realization, Malcolm Watkins was an important factor. It was a great privilege to have him as our guide to the various buildings and the vast collections which they contain. Pending the construction of further buildings, Curator Watkins used the Village Inn as a central museum. Most of the pewter is to be seen in it, but other buildings contain a good deal as accessories in the furnishings.

The Wells collection of lighting fixtures is famous. Some of those made of pewter are segregated in a special cabinet, containing both Continental and American pieces. There are numerous German time and spout-lamps, and American whale-oil, lard, and burning-fluid types. A most unusual specimen is a double-wicked betty, with a pewter trammel. A double-gimbel American lamp drew from Charles Ayers the unusual suggestion that these were not necessarily ship lamps, as commonly supposed, but that they might have been used in inns for lighting candles. Unsteady guests could push them about a bit, without upsetting them. An unusual specimen was made by Sellew and Co., Cincinnati, on the Davis patent. It has an Argand type burner, tin of course, and a perforated pewter ring which allowed the adjustment of the air intake.

In another building were two small, eighteenth century teapots, one with the unidentified H. I. touch, thought by Mr. Laughlin possibly to be American. The other had a duckbill spout, a common feature in ceramics, but unusual in pewter. Unfortunately the touch was obscure; opinion was divided as to whether it was English or Continental.

Oct. 25, 1947. Northampton, Hadley, Amherst. Autumn foliage and friendly welcomes made this a memorable day. The members gathered at Wiggins Old Tavern for luncheon, then adjourned to the sun-room of the Hotel Northampton for the meeting, Mrs. Birther H. Holmes and Mrs. Mary Moore acting as hostesses. Mr. Oliver W. Deming took for his subject "One Man's Luck." Somehow one got the impression from his talk that it was not all pure luck, and also that Mrs. Deming had a part in it.

He told some of his experiences over a period of five or six years. News

of the splendid things he had found was most heartening to those of us who had begun to think that the field had been thoroughly searched. Among his prizes were plates and platters by Frederick Bassett and Edward Danforth, a tiny cream pitcher by H. I., and a pair of plates marked "E. W. Virginia." Incidentally it might be remarked that Professor French brought to the meeting an H. I. teapot like that which we saw at Sturbridge, and that Mrs. Borntraeger showed us another at the meeting on Dec. 5. Furthermore, Mrs. S. W. Stammers has a vase-shaped salt caster bearing the same touch. All are good pewter, well made.

Mr. Deming's greatest discovery is the brimless fluted fruit dish which he described and illustrated in Antiques in January, 1949. The well is decorated with flowers, fruit, initials of the owner, and, most important, the date, 1732. It bears a touch, lion passant above F. B. which has long been known to have been that of one of the Francis Bassetts, but which is now proven, by the engraved date, to have belonged to Francis I (1718-1758).

Leaving Northampton, the Club proceeded to the home of Dr. James L. Huntington, a former Boston specialist who has retired to his ancestral Forty Acres, at Hadley. This is only a remnant of what was once a thousand acre plantation, carried on in true Southern style. The columned rear of the main house, overlooking the Connecticut River, and dominating various dependent quarters for the farm-workers, reminds one greatly of Mount Vernon. Dr. Huntington has a small collection of pewter, notable in that it contains nothing purchased within the last century, all being heirlooms. Many of them were in the exhibition of antiques at the Harvard Tercentenary celebration in 1936, and some are illustrated in your reporter's article in the American Collector, May, 1948.

The last stop was at the home of Professor Reginald F. French at Amherst. He has many exceptionally interesting pieces, among them seventeenth century English plates and platters which aroused our envy.

Dec. 5, 1947. Wellesley Hills, Mass., as the guests of Miss Esther Oldham and Mrs. Henry W. Borntraeger. After the meeting, Mrs. John Oldham invited us to view her collection. One seldom has the opportunity to see two such tastefully furnished houses in one afternoon. Well chosen antiques and objects of art are employed both for actual use and for decoration. Miss Esther Oldham's fans, described by her in the February number of Antiques, 1948, make a wonderful display, and Mrs. John Oldham's trays are known everywhere. Not to be outdone, Dr. Arthur Oldham makes accurately scaled miniatures of furniture and other objects. Instead of looking outside for models, he sometimes copies pieces in his own home. It is amazing to see a cabinet of old pewter, and alongside it, a miniature, with every pewter vessel faithfully reproduced.

As some of the older members of the Club will remember, your reporter has always had a repressed interest in teapots, even britannia ones. He was glad to find that Mrs. Borntraeger feels in the same way about them. Many of those made between 1830 and 1860 are hideous, but it is possible, by doing as our present President and her Mother did, to make a selection of interesting pots. And those in the collection we saw were carefully chosen. George Richardson of Boston and Cranston was represented in Queen Anne, Lighthouse, and

other styles. A surprise to the writer was a Queen Anne marked by R. Bush of Bristol, England. Queen Anne was far out of date in England by 1800, but whatever the Yankees wanted and could pay for, Bristol could supply. I have since seen a similar teapot by another Bristol maker. The Bush teapot, several tiny lamps, and other pieces, belonged to Miss Anne Borntraeger, one of the rising generation of pewter collectors.

1948

Jan. 30, 1948. Hotel Puritan, Commonwealth Ave., Boston. The Annual dinner was held on the coldest night of a bad winter, but with a surprisingly good attendance. The report of the Secretary showed that the Club had about 200 members, and that of the Treasurer indicated that we were in a sound financial position. Dr. Madelaine R. Brown, who retired after two lengthy periods of service as Treasurer was given a vote of thanks.

The election of new officers resulted as follows: President, Henry B. Reardon, Jr., of Farmington, Conn.; Vice-presidents, Mrs. Henry W. Borntraeger, Frank C. Doble, Merton H. Wheelock, John M. Graham II and the Chairman of the New York Regional Group, ex-officio. Governing Board, Charles F. Montgomery, Bertram K. Little, Percy E. Raymond; Clerk and Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Eaton H. Perkins; Treasurer, Mrs. William V. Wallburg.

The retiring President spoke on the topic "Why Collect Pewter," illustrating his remarks by pieces from his own and other collections. The address was published in full in Bulletin 22, July, 1948.

May 1, 1948. Springfield, Mass. William Pynchon Memorial Building. The occasion was an exhibition of pewter made in the Connecticut Valley. It was sponsored jointly by the Connecticut Valley Historical Museum and the Pewter Collectors' Club, a large part of the pewter being loaned for the occasion by members of the latter. Mr. Charles F. Montgomery was largely responsible for the selection of the material, and Miss Juliette Tomlinson, Director of the Museum, and her assistant, Miss Stephens, for the arrangement of the display. And it was a splendid arrangement. The official duration of the exhibition was one month, but some of the material is still on exhibition in 1950.

Modern cases, an attractive background, and good but unobtrusive labels combined to show pewter at its best. Pieces by twenty pewterers, loaned by twenty-one individuals and two Museums, afford an opportunity such as has never before been possible, to see the best products of the Connecticut Valley workers. The collections of many private individuals, most of them members of the Pewter Collectors' Club, were raided for their choicest pieces. "Uniques" were too numerous to mention.

The pre-view day, May 1, was devoted to a regular meeting of the Club. President Henry B. Reardon presided. Miss Tomlinson made a brief address of welcome, modestly omitting to call attention to the excellent pamphlet which she had prepared for distribution. It contains brief notes on the lives of the pewterers whose work is exhibited, and is most useful.

Miss Julia D. S. Snow was the first speaker. She told of her search for the home-town of Samuel Pierce, its final identification as Greenfield, Mass., and the dramatic climax in the discovery of the tools of his trade. They were

loaned for this exhibition by their owner, Mr. Ledlie I. Laughlin. The most important among them is the steel die by means of which the smaller Samuel Pierce touch was struck. So far as is known, this is the only surviving die of an early American pewterer.

Miss Snow was followed by Mr. Charles F. Montgomery, who spoke on "Pewter from the Connecticut Valley Workshops." After his formal talk, the members adjourned to the exhibition room, where Mr. Montgomery continued his remarks as a gallery talk, pointing out the more noteworthy specimens. Since all were in this category, the refreshment table was for some time notably neglected.

Connecticut Valley pewter, said our speaker, is in reality Connecticut pewter, and broadly speaking, Danforth pewter. The making of the metal came into the Valley when Thomas Danforth 2d started work at Middletown in 1755. Before 1800, four Danforths, their ally Jacob Whitemore, and two other master pewterers had shops in Middletown. By 1777 Thomas Danforth 3d, had gone to Rocky Hill, near Hartford, and, before the end of the century, Samuel was in the capital city. Frederick Bassett of New York is included as a sort of honorary Hartford pewterer, for he was there from 1780 to 1785. No touch of his has, however, been definitely assigned to these years. All of these 18th century men were represented in the exhibition. Younger Danforths appeared on the male line, till there were twelve in all, while on the female side there appeared, among others, the Boardmans, who were to dominate the scene during the first half of the succeeding century. But Danforth influence went far beyond their own families, for they trained numerous young men. One of them, Samuel Pierce, settled in the Valley, but others drifted off to Providence and Meriden. Up at the north, in Springfield, Vermont, struggled the surprisingly versatile and indigent Lees, orphans of the storm, without known pewtering antecedants or connections.

Thanks largely to the Boardmans, more than half of the now known marked American pieces were made by the Connecticut group. As compared with those in New York, they seem to have catered to the masses, rather than to the classes. This is shown most obviously by the paucity of tankards, a speciality in New York, but rare in Connecticut. In fact, only about a half dozen by Valley workers have yet been found. Three of these, by Edward Danforth, Samuel Danforth, and Thomas Danforth and Sherman Boardman, were shown. New Englanders were satisfied with open-topped mugs, made in great numbers. Mrs. Stephen FitzGerald showed four sizes made by Samuel Danforth alone. Yankees could drink the contents before the flies got in. The phlegmatic Anglo-Dutch of New York needed a lid.

In the early days, Connecticut pewter was strictly utilitarian, not showy. Plates, platters, and deep dishes made up a large part of their product. They did not, however, make large platters. Porringer-making flourished, particularly in the later days. From New York they adopted the Old English style of handle, from Rhode Island the flowered. But other ideas were not lacking. Three with dolphin handles, made by Joseph and Samuel Danforth, were exhibited. Where they chanced upon this English design is not known.

The later Danforths, and the Boardmans, went in heavily for ecclesiastical pewter, and fortunately some splendid services, such as the one shown by

Mrs. Irving Berg, have survived. Although the Boardmans lived and throve in the britannia era, they remained largely true to pewter traditions. And although they developed the factory system, and even became chain-store operators, they maintained high standards, both for workmanship and design.

The collection is arranged "down the river" fashion, hence starts with the Lees. Mr. Mark La Fountain contributed largely to this case, showing the full range of their porringers, from the 2¼-inch to the 5⅞-inch, and an almost complete series of their numerous handles and touches. Two Lee and Cressy teapots, and a tiny pear-shaped one, excite wonder and urge further research on this singular father and son. Samuel Pierce was fully represented and Frederick Bassett got in by courtesy, perhaps because of his commodious commode. But one cannot go through the list. Christening basins, tiny sugar bowls, sets of baluster and mug-like measures extort one's delight and envy. Nor can one enumerate all the contributors.

The above is mostly from the writer's report in the New York Sun, with two important corrections.

June 12, 1948. Meriden, Conn. Sales Service Institute, International Silver Company. A large number of members from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York took advantage of this central location and the attractive program. The paper given by George Holmes Edwards, who has recently retired as Secretary of the Company, was on Ashbil Griswold, pewterer, britannia maker, and financier. It was based on information collected by the late William G. Snow, a member of the Club, and for long the Director of Historical Research for the International Silver Company. The address was published in full in Bulletin 24, May, 1949.

The history of Rogers Brothers silver from 1847 to 1947 was depicted on colored film with sound, and an excellent collection of marked pieces by Ashbil Griswold was on exhibition.

Saturday, Oct. 15, 1948. Weston, Mass. Guests of Mrs. Stephen Fitz-Gerald.

Dr. Raymond was advertised to speak on "Some Odds and Ends in Pewter," and that is just what he talked about. He first traversed the ground covered by his article on "Some Pewter of Little Importance" which appeared in Antiques the next month (November, 1948), showing some of the articles illustrated in it. He stressed his well known views on the advantages of britannia metal over those of other pewter alloys, advocating the collection of late pieces if well designed and executed. He then drifted off onto his favorite topic, porringers, and showed a flowered-handled specimen made by Edgar, Curtis and Co. of Bristol, England. This type of handle almost certainly originated in Rhode Island or Connecticut, and seems to have been used in England but rarely, and probably only for the export trade.

Of much greater importance was a small heart-pierced porringer discovered by Mrs. Lawrence W. Polson of Concord, Mass. Many collectors have examples of this type. Since a few have been found with the touch of Richard Lee on the upper surface of the handle, and many with a raised R on the lower surface, it has become the custom to ascribe all of them to the workshop of the Lees. Several years ago Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Franklin saw one of these porringers in the possession of a descendant of Roswell Gleason, and

were told that it was made in Gleason's shop. Mrs. Franklin published this in the New York Sun, May 7, 1938, but not much attention was paid to it, since it was oral testimony, long *post facto*. Now Mrs. Polson has found a specimen which was not properly trimmed before being sold. A fleck of metal partially fills one of the openings and on the under side of it is a letter in relief. It is incomplete, but it is certainly not an L as in Lee, but so curved as strongly to suggest a G, cut in the mold. Adding the two bits of evidence, it seems almost certain that the initials are those of Roswell Gleason.

For a long time we have wondered about the origin of this heart-pierced design. It now appears, from the article by Mr. R. F. Michaelis in Apollo for September, 1949, that this sort of ear was made as early as 1650 in London. There is, however, little chance that any of our unmarked specimens are English.

Mrs. FitzGerald showed a recent acquisition, a large basin by George Richardson. It is probable that it was made during his early, or Boston period, and that it is unique. A large part of her collection is still on exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and another moiety is still at Springfield. Nevertheless she has in her Pewter room a large collection of choice pieces. Dr. Raymond called attention to some of them, and Mr. Joseph France, whom we were glad to have with us, commented on others.

The speaker closed with a tribute to our recently departed Vice-President, Mr. Merton Wheelock. This has been printed in Bulletin 23, November, 1948.

November 13, 1948. Worcester Historical Society, Worcester, Mass. The Society and Mr. Charles E. Ayers were hosts at a joint meeting of the Rushlight and Pewter Collectors Clubs. Professor Raymond spoke on the general topic of pewter lamps, with especial reference to those made in this country during the britannia period, 1820 to 1870. A summary of his remarks will appear in a later issue of the Bulletin. President Reardon, Mrs. Lura Woodside Watkins, Mrs. Henry W. and Miss Anne Borntraeger, Mr. Bertram K. Little, Mr. Mark La Fountain, Mr. Amory S. Skerry and others brought in numerous specimens, providing an unusally large display.

Mr. Leroy Thwing commented on many of the pieces, pointing out the rarity of marked examples of betty, spout, and time lamps in pewter. The low melting point made them unsuccessful lighting devices until the problem was solved by equipping them with tin or brass burners. The time lamps, he said, were highly impractical. They were supposed to indicate the flight of time by the height of the oil in the glass font. The rate of oil consumption depends upon the type of oil used, the kind of wick, the height of the end of the wick above the wick tube, and the temperature of the room. These variables make such a lamp the poorest timekeeper ever invented. By comparison, King Alfred's time candles would have been chronometers. Mr. Thwing is inclined to think that the seventeenth and eighteenth century people were as much inclined as moderns to run after novelties, whether or not they were of any use. So far as is known, they were made chiefly in Germany, although commonly called "Dutch." The older ones have cylindrical fonts, which are not too unreasonable, but others have inverted pear-shaped ones, which it is almost impossible to calibrate.

Mrs. Watkins brought the famous Woodside collection of pewter lamps,

mostly made in the Boston district, and well described in articles in Antiques. She spoke briefly about them, as did Malcolm Watkins. Mr. Charles E. Ayers spoke on primitive lighting in pre-historic times, and Mr. Skerry told the history of some of the specimens he brought with him.

1949

April 23, 1949. Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Bertram K. Little, Brookline, Mass. Dr. Madelaine R. Brown spoke on "Rhode Island Pewter," illustrating her talk by specimens from her unrivaled collection. Dr. Brown specializes in pewter from her native State, but also gathers pieces made by pewterers who influenced or were influenced by the Rhode Island makers. On this occasion she confined her remarks to the five pre-Revolutionary men at Newport.

The first of these, Thomas Byles, is commonly associated in our minds with Philadelphia, rather than Newport. But it was at the latter city that he set up shop about 1711, after serving an apprenticeship with William Mann, pewterer and brasier, of Boston. Dr. Brown thinks that he moved to Philadelphia about 1735. But, curiously enough, only a piece or two made by him at either place has been identified. This, despite the fact that his inventory of 1771 fills almost two and a half of Mr. Laughlin's large pages. It is possible that it was he who introduced to the trade the tulip-shaped pots for which William Will afterward became famous, for in his stock were "31 Common Qt. Bellied Mugs" and "5 Bellied Qt. Tankards."

Lawrence Langworthy, who was a pewterer in Exeter, England by 1719, was at Newport in 1731. It is not known whether he made pewter there, but several three legged, bell metal pots, bearing his name on the long handle, have been found. Dr. Brown is the proud possessor of one of them.

John Freyers, who worked in Newport from 1749 to 1768 probably made the mug, marked J. F., now in the Garvan collection at Yale.

Benjamin Day (1744-54) is thought to have made the quart pot, quart tankard, and solid handled porringer, which bear the initials B. D. in an octagon. The tankard has a slender finial on the lid, suggesting that it is a copy of a silver piece. It is well made, possibly for ecclesiastical purposes.

The last of the five, Joseph Belcher, (1769-1776) is better represented than the others, even though rare. He made a variety of porringers, plates, and dishes, some of which have survived.

Dr. Raymond showed an English porringer, one of a pair found in a grave near Charlestown, Rhode Island, in 1859. It is presumed to have been owned by Weunquech, Sachem Queen of the Narragansetts, and commonly called the Princess Ninigret. These porringers are of particular interest because of their dolphin handles, much like those made by Joseph (not John as usually said) Danforth of Middletown. It has on the bottom a much defaced touch which Dr. Raymond reads as that of Thomas Bell, London, c. 1660. Mr. Michaelis has recently figured (Apollo, September, 1949) an almost identical specimen, now in the Guildhall Museum, made by John Kenton shortly after 1675. The Rhode Island specimen is in the Park Museum in Providence, and its mate in the Museum of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

May 26, 1949. The annual meeting, the first since the shift from January to May, was held at the Hotel Commander in Cambridge, Mass. Presi-

dent Reardon presided for the last time, he having signified that he found himself unable to continue in the office. A hearty vote of thanks was given him for his successful administration of the affairs of the Club for the past year and a half.

The new officers elected were Mrs. Henry W. Borntraeger, President; Mr. Frank C. Doble, Mr. John M. Graham II, Mrs. Charles A Holbrook, and the Chairman of the New York Group, *ex-officio*, Vice-Presidents; Mrs. Eaton H. Perkins, Clerk and Secretary; Mrs. William V. Wallburg, Treasurer; and Mr. Charles F. Montgomery, Mr. Bertram K. Little, and Mrs. Charles I. Boynton, members of the Governing Board.

After the dinner and business meeting, the evening was spent in showing specimens and relating bits of "Collectors Luck." Mrs. F. G. Ripley showed a graceful pewter urn in which her grandmother kept nutmegs, and Miss Anne Borntraeger, a small pitcher which was a choice possession of her grandmother as a child. Mrs. Doble brought an unusually well made doll's tea set. Some eighteenth and early nineteenth century English pewterers specialized in these articles, but good sets are hard to find.

Mr. and Mrs. Jaques showed a problem porringer. The name P. Wilcox is stamped on the "old-English" handle with individual capital letters. One wonders if this was the Mr. Wilcox, maker of block-tin, for whom Roswell Gleason went to work when he came to Dorchester in 1818. The new President brought a pear-shaped teapot by the enigmatical H. I. The former owner was an old lady who thought it was silver, and was sure that some one of her ancestors "brought it over" during the seventeenth century.

As an example of luck, Mrs. Perkins showed a rare plate which rolled out from a pile of old papers and burlap bags just in time for her to acquire it. Mrs. Reardon learned the value of touch-marks when an auctioneer tried to substitute an unmarked specimen for the one originally offered. And Mr. Sherwood Rollins bought a communion set with a string attached. The Church reserved the right to use it whenever they saw fit.

Your reporter, who unfortunately was obliged to attend two dinners at the Commander that evening, had intended to offset these tales of good luck by one of frustration. In 1928 he had occasion to spend a week in Minsterly, a little village in Shropshire near the Welch border, and the site of lead mines worked by the Romans. The innkeeper had a seventeenth century pewter platter, well decorated with a lion and other ornaments in wriggle-work. A part of the brim was distorted by being bent upward. The story was that the platter had been a favorite of a distant ancestor, and had been buried with him, the disfigurement being due to the fact that it had been pushed into a narrow coffin. The tale, probably inaccurately remembered, was that a descendant knew about the platter, had a yen for it, so had the old gentleman dug up and relieved of his burden. Negotiations for its purchase were promptly rebuffed. Happening to be in the neighborhood three years later, another attempt was made, but the owner refused to part with the platter even though the "wealthy American" offered more than it was worth.

July 27, 1949. Concord Antiquarian Society.

The members gathered at the Concord Inn for luncheon, then moved on to the handsome building maintained by the Antiquarian Society. Generous

friends have restored and added to what was originally an important building, and the ladies of the Society devote much time keeping it in splendid condition and graciously explaining the contents to visitors. The furnishings are not only old, but many are historic pieces, connected not only with the life of Concord, but of the nation.

After a brief business meeting, Mrs. Kent, the Custodian, conducted us through the various rooms, where she pointed out the significance of the exhibits in each. In several places we encountered pewter, and were given time to examine and discuss it. Concord has every reason to be proud of its Antiquarian Museum, which sets an example which might well be followed in other localities.

October 15, 1949. Stone House Farm, Durham, New Hampshire. Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood Rollins.

Durham, New Hampshire, seat of a growing State University, is somewhat more modern than Durham, England, so Squire Rollins was perhaps wise in calling his place a farm rather than a manor. But on arriving there, one finds that he has stepped right out of New into Old England. There was even a Bishop to greet us! We thought for a moment that we were back in the home of one of our ancestors.

But Mr. Rollins does not confine himself to English pieces, although he has some important ones. Among these is a two-handled loving-cup of the wassail-bowl type, the gift from his friend Antonio de Navarro of Broadway.

It is doubtful if the members of the Club really saw and appreciated all the interesting pieces in the collection. Your reporter realizes that he did not, for after identifying a ramshorn-shaped stirrup-cup as the finial for a bed-post, he felt somewhat subdued. Getting the last drop from its spiral depths must have been an art. Mr. Rollins has a flair for the artistic and unusual. Form and workmanship mean more to him than touch-marks. Extensive travel and long residence abroad are reflected in his catholic taste. One sees Italian, French, Swiss, German, Dutch, English and American pieces, not indiscriminately mixed, but selectively arranged.

A rococo Hanukkah lamp, Germanic cruets, a T. D. and S. B. flagon, a modest communion service which a New Hampshire church had purchased from Calder, and a chalice improvised by soldering a beaker to the top of a candlestick are samples of the ecclesiastical pieces. The fact that refreshments for twenty-five members and guests were served on pewter without disturbing the arrangement on the shelves and cabinets gives some idea of the extent of the collection.

At the business session, Mr. Ronald F. Michaelis of London was elected to honorary membership. Mr. Michaelis is the energetic honorary librarian of the Society of Pewter Collectors. He has recently brought out a revised edition of H. L. J. Massé's "Chats on Old Pewter," published in both London and New York. His scholarly "English Pewter Porringers" in four parts, published in Apollo in July, August, September and October, 1949, gives us our first real information about English porringers. He is also an important member of the group now working on a revision of Cotterell's big book.

NEW YORK REGIONAL GROUP

April 14, 1948. Midston House, 22 East 38th Street, New York City. This was an adjourned Annual Meeting, at which an election was held, resulting as follows: Chairman, Eric de Jonge; Vice-Chairmen, Robert H. Ellenberger, Mrs. Paul J. Franklin, John M. Graham, II, Mrs. Philip Huntington; Clerk and Corresponding Secretary, Dr. Kurt M. Semon; Treasurer, Charles F. Edgecomb; Governing Board, Mrs. John H. Ballantine, Ledlie I. Laughlin, Mrs. Katherine P. Murphy, John P. Remensnyder; Program Committee, Arthur W. Clement, Douglas Curry, Miss Eleanor Mitchell.

Henry J. Kauffman of Lancaster, Penna. was the speaker. He told of the discovery of pewter made by Simon Pennock, and of the half of one of his porringer molds. Also a spoon-mold, and other interesting items. His researches had uncovered a considerable amount of biographical data in relation to this previously unknown Pennsylvanian pewterer. An abstract of his remarks was published in the March (1948) issue of Antiques.

December 1, 1949. The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave. at 92d Street New York City.

The former Warburg Mansion is now a splendid, well arranged and well kept Museum. Through the courtesy of its authorities, the Pewter Club was enabled to hold there a symposium on "Pewter in Jewish Art."

Under the direction of Mrs. Louise Kayser a remarkable collection of pewter was arranged so that everything showed to the best advantage, and was easily accessible for examination. Few of us knew anything about these objects with their outstanding decorations in Hebraic characters. German, French, Dutch, and English pewterers of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries had made splendid platters and chargers, many of them broad brimmed and multiple-reeded. Jewish artists had decorated them to make them suitable for domestic use in the ritual of the Passover. German pewterers had made Hanukkah lamps for the Feast of the Lights.

There were four speakers, who followed a cordial welcome from Dr. Stephen Kayser, Curator of the Museum. Dr. Kurt M. Semon discussed "The Role of Pewter in the Cultures of the World," Dr. Guido Schoenberger, of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, spoke on "The Use of Pewter in Jewish Ceremonial Art." Dr. Stephen Kayser followed with a talk illustrated by unusually good lantern slides, explaining the "Inscriptions and Decorations of Jewish Ceremonial Objects." And the Chairman of the New York Regional Group, Mr. Eric de Jonge told us what could be learned about "The Pewterers of Jewish Ceremonial Objects."

The occasion was unusual, highly interesting, and important. It is hoped that a special Bulletin to be issued this year will be devoted entirely to the addresses given. Your reporter is indebted to the N. Y. Group for enabling him to attend the meeting. Madame President Borntraeger and Madame Secretary Perkins were also present to officially represent the parent organization.

PERCY E. RAYMOND