

THE PEWTERER

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Welcome to the second edition of *The Pewterer*, an e-magazine devoted to pewter and published by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers. We have articles on a number of subjects (see below for the links) and the first of a two-part article looking at the meaning of terms used in connection with pewter (see Glossary).

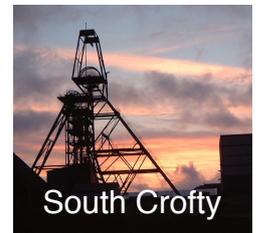
Please click-through, using the pictures, to the several articles; then let us have not just your comments but also ideas for future articles. If the picture links do not work, please use the links at the top of the page.

[Alan Williams](#)

Roma Vincent



Pewter Live
2011

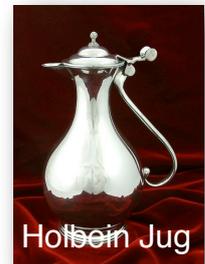


South Crofty



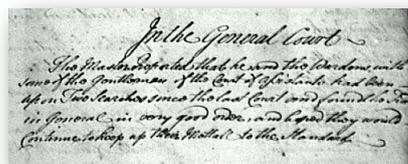
Keith Tyssen

GLOSSARY OF
ABBREVIATIONS and TERMS



Holsein Jug

China Tin Seminar



Powers of Search ...



Reproductions
fakes and
forgeries

South Crofty Mine



South Crofty was Europe's last working tin mine, closing in 1998. One of the reasons for closure was a disastrous fall in the world price of tin. The recent extraordinary rises in the price of the metal mean the mine once again could become viable. In fact, the mine became operational again in 2004 when preparatory tunnelling works started. The mine holds resources of a number of metals, including tin, copper, zinc, indium, wolfram and silver.

The former South Crofty mine is an amalgamation of twelve earlier mines worked in the past for tin and copper ore. From the 1860s onwards tin became increasingly important as its price improved; and the higher it rose, the more the mine deepened.

The sinking of two new vertical shafts in the 1900s and a period of extensive crosscutting (a tunnel driven across the long axis of the ore) led to the discovery and development of 12 new lodes within the granite, essentially a new mine on hitherto unknown mineralisation beneath the old workings.

Later extension of the South Crofty Mine west led to the discovery of yet more lodes. However, the prevailing economic climate restricted further expenditure. In 1985, there was a disastrous fall in the price of tin, seriously curtailing the tin mining industry in Cornwall. Following the award of government finance in response to the mining crisis in Cornwall, a massive reorganisation of the mine took place and much of the older section of the mine was abandoned. In the 1990s, the greater part of the original South Crofty mine was also abandoned, and eventually, on 7th March 1998, mining ceased for viability and regulatory reasons (rather than through exhaustion of mineralization and resources).

The assets of the mine were purchased by Baseresult Holdings Limited in 2001 with the aim of resuming mining operations in the Camborne Redruth mining district. The mine is now owned by Western United Mines Limited. [Click here](#) for their South Crofty website and more information on the mine.

Geology

Essentially the surface of the South Crofty and surrounding area is situated on "killas", a series of metasediments, hornfels and skarns, close to the granite contact (which crops out at surface a little to the north of the railway and is aligned ENE). In depth, the granite underlies the entire area but is encountered at increasingly greater depths northwards.

The granite surface slopes NNW at angles of 40 to 50 degrees but has rolls and ridges, rather than being planar. It is thought that these local undulations may have some controlling influence or association with the localisation of mineralization. The Granite is that of the Carn Brea stock, which forms the prominent hills of Carn Brea, Carn Arthen and Carn Entral south of the mine site. A series of "greenstone", typically metadolerite, dykes and metabasite sills crop out to the north. Evidence of skarns, pegmatites, quartz floors and greisenized areas have been disclosed but, to date, none have attained economic significance.

[Click here](#) to download a PDF document detailing the geology of South Crofty Mine.

Extracted with kind permission of Western United Mines from their South Crofty website

Note: The Worshipful Company of Pewterers organised a Company visit to Cornwall in 2010 . The Master was joined by around two dozen Liverymen and Freemen. Staying in Mousehole, their itinerary included visits to pewter manufacturers, St Justin's and the old tin workings at Geevor Mine, where (amongst other things of great interest) there is a wonderfully evocative museum (Ed.). They were entertained and informed by two talks by local historians, the first by Stephen Hall, who concentrated on the West Penwith area , particularly the agriculture, fisheries and mining; and secondly, by Alan Collins, on the local history and local pewterers.

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The Worshipful Company of Pewterers' Powers of Search

In the first number of this Journal, we published an article on the Company's powers of search (see Volume 1 Number 1). We have had the following responses from William Grant and David Hall.

Commenting on the powers of search, William Grant, Past Master of the Worshipful Company and its Historian, said: "My research in Welch highlights the intriguing possibility that when the Court searchers were out in the country, word got around that they were coming and people would hide things that might be a bit 'dodgy'.



"The Company's 17th century Orders & Entries [effectively, the Minutes of proceedings of the Court of the Company. Ed] indicate that it was the pewter manufacturers in Bristol who were particularly against the searchers as they had a very good trade in poor quality pewter which they shipped to Africa to trade for slaves who were then taken on to America.

"On a more substantive point, the Company was concerned about the quality of workmanship. I have come across quite a few instances of this although the occasions are far outweighed by the instances of sub-standard metal."



David Hall, Liveryman and the Company's Archivist, quoted the late Christopher Peal writing about these issues in 1983 (*Pewter of Great Britain for Pleasure and Investment* by C.A.Peal (and others) published by Gifford, London 1983, pp 16 and 17) who wrote:

"The Company, for its part, enforced on the craft very specific standards of quality. All sadware - plates and other flatware that generally did not require cored moulding - had to be made in 'fine metal'. This,

according to the records, comprised 'pure tin with as much copper as its own nature will take', which would amount to no more than approximately two per cent.

'Lay metal' was used in the manufacture of hollow-ware comprising tin mixed with lead of no less a ratio than four to one. 'Trifle', a third grade of pewter, was specified for tavern pots, candle moulds, toys and buttons.

In later years some changes were made to these specifications as new hardening with as much copper as its own nature will take', which would amount to no more than approximately two per cent.

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In later years some changes were made to these specifications as new hardening agents, such as bismuth and antimony, were introduced. It is interesting to note that at the end of the seventeenth century a variation of 'fine metal', denoted as 'hard metal', came into use for the highest quality flatware. This had very similar constituents to the Britannia metal of a hundred years later."

David Hall goes on to say that even that was a simplification. "Peal was only talking about *London* standards and trying to summarize regulations that had been in operation for hundreds of years; these obviously varied from time to time and place to place. For example, the regulations in Amsterdam in 1685 allowed 6% lead in their best quality pewter; and in Rotterdam in 1635 the same percentage. At this time, best London pewter contained virtually no lead.

"Modern pewter," he said, "is a derivative of *Britannia metal* which itself derives from London '*Hard Metal*'. This new alloy, in which initially about 1% to 2% antimony was added to a mixture of tin with a little copper, was introduced to London by Huguenot refugees in the 1650s/1660s. It was only well into the 18th century that it was introduced to Sheffield in the form of rolled sheet. The percentage of antimony tended to be increased in these Sheffield products until, in the 19th century, it reached around 6-8%. Virtually no lead was supposed to be used."

"I would expect modern pewter to be very similar in composition. The use of lead has been banned for many decades."

William Grant added:

"I think we still have much to learn about searches. There seem to have been Metal searches as well as General Searches; and three particular areas where they were looking for defaults. First the quality of the alloy for the piece being made of that alloy; secondly, whether the Pewterer's scales and weights were in order; and thirdly, whether the piece(s) were properly made.

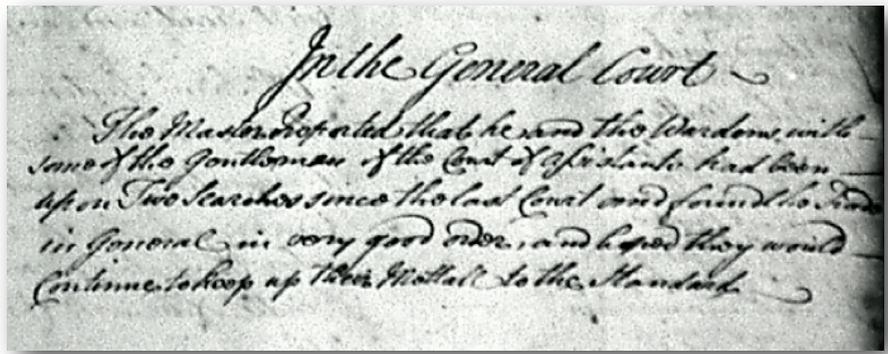
“The most common reason for a Pewterer to be summoned before the Court seems to have been the mix of his alloy; whether it was so many grains worse than (say) lay [‘Lay metal’, a term used in London for a specific alloy: see the

Glossary. Ed]. It makes me wonder why this was the case. Did each Pewterer have his own assaying tool? If not, how was he to know whether what he was using was the correct alloy, particularly when old pieces were simply put back into the melting pot? And if he did have an assaying tool, did each Pewterer have a sufficiently delicate set of scales to be able to work out whether his alloy was the right mix?

“My suspicion is that they had neither an assaying tool, nor a delicate set of scales, and perhaps that explains the reason for so many summonses on this count. Weights and scales (usually referred to as beams) were the second most common reason for a summons. I have always wondered why it might be that a weight, which presumably started out correct, managed to change its weight. I would not have thought that brass weights were easily damaged.

“The third category of shoddy manufacture is pretty rare for getting a summons and, of course, confiscation of the goods, if the searchers determined that the goods were not up to an acceptable standard of manufacture.

“I do not know quite what was meant when, at the beginning of the quarterly General Court, the Master pronounced that the search had proved that ‘the Trade was in General (or pretty) Good Order’. The expression was frequently coupled with an expression by the Master that he would hope the Company members would ‘look to their metal’, or something like that. Perhaps the answer is in the word **General** good order i.e. on the whole things were OK but nevertheless there was room for improvement.”



WCoP O&Es. **In the General Court** (18th October 1759)

The Master reported that he and the Wardens with some of the Gentlemen of the Court of Assistants had been upon Two Searches since the last Court and found the Trade in General in very good order and hoped they would continue to keep up their Metall to the Standard.

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After 5 years at Art College in Sheffield studying design and metalworking, Keith graduated from the Royal College of Art in the 1960s, and is a Liveryman both of the Goldsmiths' Company and the Pewterers' Company. He sits on the Council of the Association of British Pewter Craftsmen.

On design, he considers: "A design should be apt, well-conceived and realised through a well managed combination of invention, good technique, material, construction and thoughtful finish.



Keith Tyssen and the model for his

"These things together are essential ingredients for arriving at a fine quality product, and a good design is all of that. I prefer design that makes a bold visual statement, but calmly (mostly) and well-tempered enough to equip an object with a reassuring presence, enabling it to stand alone or to harmonise within its setting. For me, this forms a major part of the appeal of any good design, no matter its market value or social status."

Two of Keith's designs demonstrate this concept, and we shall look at both here.

The Table-piece

In recent years, Keith has favoured the darker oxidized tones of silver to give a dramatic and beautiful effect, as with his 9-light Table-piece in Sterling silver and glass (see illustration opposite).

"This is a useful and 'fun' piece in Hall-marked Sterling silver," he says; "and most importantly, an oxidized finish for silver that obviates the need for cleaning!" The nine Candlesticks can also be used independently simply by lifting them off the Stand.

Individual parts were Hall-marked during the year 2007 but this piece was only finally completed in January 2011. It is unique, the only one in existence and I have no plans at the moment to make another!"





One row of Keith Tyssen's candlesticks

The Candlesticks

There are 26 Candlesticks in total. They are made of pewter over a brass core (brass for physical strength and fixing to the oak furniture) plus glass chimneys, and fitted to the Choir Stalls in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Sheffield Cathedral. They were commissioned by the Lee family of Sheffield in memory of their mother, and were designed and made during 1999 and installed that August. During their making Keith was ably assisted by his son, Joe, who is now teaching at Freeman College, Sheffield.

“The outer casings are made from sheet Pewter (the alloy is 92.5% tin, as is usually used by the Trade). I personally made the forming tools (lathe-turned in solid nylon) over which the spun parts were formed to fit onto seamless tube; soldered together and buffed by Mike Schofield (a very good all-rounder pewtersmith who worked alone and has since left the trade).

“The internal 'guts' of the candlesticks are made of brass (for structural strength) with parts (bases and wax-pans) sand-cast from my turned wooden patterns by Sheffield Brass Founders Ltd.

“The brass castings and other brass parts (of solid bar) were lathe-turned, drilled, threaded and fitted to the pewter parts by myself and Joe. We also fabricated the bronze patinated 'cages' housings for the glass (Borosilicate) chimneys using straight, round section brass.

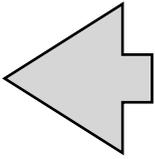
“The underside of each foot required to be individually angled, enabling us to make the candlesticks stand vertically on the undulating and slightly sloping (no two alike) timber (oak) surfaces, therefore each piece is numbered and its position marked.

“When all 26 Candlesticks were finished, Joe and I worked together to line them up on the Oak Choir Stalls and I can tell you, it was with considerable relief that we finally screwed those 26 candlesticks firmly into position in the Chapel. Twelve years on, it pleases me to see them all still standing true and straight in line!”

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We look forward to seeing you there.

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Reproductions, Fakes and Forgeries

by David Hall

Thinking of collecting old British pewter, or perhaps buying one or two pieces out of general interest? Are you confused by the items on offer and wondering what is genuine and what is not? Well, watch out for reproductions, fakes and forgeries! David Hall, Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, provides a guide to what may be genuine and what may not. Read on!

I am going to take, for example, the E-bay section for antique pewter. You may begin to have doubts when you look through the long list of pieces on offer. Isn't that so-called antique pint pot very similar to the one you were given on your 21st birthday; how can that be *antique*? Isn't the accepted definition of 'antique' something that is at least one hundred years old?



Figure 1. A pint Irish haystack measure made circa 1850, mark of Joseph Austen of Cork under base. This design has always been popular with collectors and others, as it is aesthetically pleasing. Although these were in production for about eighty years, there have never been enough around to meet the modern demand.

When I started collecting old British pewter, nearly forty years ago, I faced the same problem. Before long I had bought one or two things that in time began to cause me to have nagging doubts. Traditionally there were two ways you could address this problem: one was to buy from only one or two specialist dealers in whom you had built up trust; the other was to study your subject and learn how to identify reproductions, fakes and forgeries. It was to the latter solution that I committed myself! But what are reproductions, fakes and forgeries?

A *reproduction* is an item made as a copy of an old piece or in the general style of old pieces. Reproductions are not made with the intention of deceiving, and are not sold as anything but copies. Some pewterers in the British Isles and elsewhere never stopped producing and moved almost seamlessly from making items of practical everyday use to making reproductions. The design and the manufacturing process did not change. What *is* a problem is what can happen to a reproduction down line (see Figures 2 and 3).

A reproduction pewter measure or plate made in the 1920s or 1930s will now be around eighty years old; it will have suffered dents and scratches from use and some degree of surface discolouration. People can get taken in by such pieces, particularly if they also bear reproduction marks. Seldom, however, are such pieces such good copies or the marks so realistic, that with experience they do not become easy to recognise. The form of the piece, the nature of the alloy used, the nature of the wear, the level of corrosion on the surface and the reproduction marks are all indications of the real date of manufacture of



Figure 2. A modern reproduction gill Irish haystack

A *fake*, in my book, is a piece that has been altered or treated in some way so as to give the impression that it is older or more valuable than it is (see Figure 4). Reproductions can be used as the basis for making fakes. Buying reproductions and dressing them up is one of the three ways items are faked. A faker who takes a good quality reproduction, artificially ages the surface and adds false marks, inscriptions and dates, may well have created an item he can pass off as an antique, to considerable financial advantage.

The other two main ways of faking are by dressing up genuine pieces to make them more desirable or look older than they really are; or by disguising the fact that major repairs have taken place or that two or three damaged pieces have been cannibalised to make what appears to be one genuine old piece.

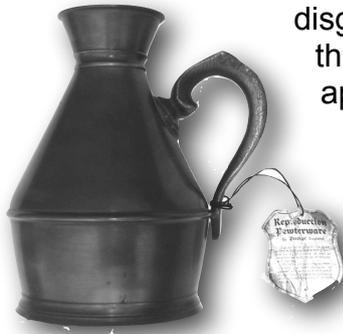


Figure 3. A pint reproduction haystack made in Birmingham circa 1960. This has a copy of the Joseph Austen mark under the base and was darkened after production probably by dipping in acid. Despite this, it still has the label attached saying it is a reproduction after approximately 50 years.

Looking at the first of these two options, one of the simplest forms of faking that has been recorded, is the adding of George IV, William IV and Victorian verification marks to Victorian pub pots. Verification marks were put on pub pots and measures to show the capacity had been checked officially and that they conformed to the official standard. Such marks are useful in dating pots and measures. In the 20th century, many such faked pots were shipped to the USA, where the fake verification marks were not only useful in deceiving potential customers but also in deceiving the US Customs into believing that the pieces were over a hundred years old (and therefore not liable to import duty) (see Figure 7c).

A common form of faking by over-repair is replacing lost lids. Tankards and baluster measures, which were essentially lidded pieces, are worth very little if they have lost their lids. By making and fitting a new lid and carefully disguising what he has done, a faker can substantially enhance an item's value, well beyond what it will have cost. Cannibalising takes this process a stage further. I saw a 17th century tankard once with the body from one piece, the handle off another and a replaced lid and thumb piece. If this tankard could be passed off successfully by an unscrupulous dealer as genuine, the sale price today could run to thousands of pounds.

Finally there are what I call *forgeries*. These are in my definition items manufactured from the start with the intention of deceiving (see Figure 5). Many collectors and general antique dealers spend more time looking out for forgeries than they do for fakes. In this way they sometimes get caught. This is not to say that there are not some forgeries around because there are. But all this business has an economic basis and making grand forgeries is expensive and risky; faking is far less expensive and can carry less risk of discovery. After all, it will come down in the end to some 'expert's' personal judgment and knowledge.

The Worshipful Company stores in the basement of the Hall what is known as 'the Black Museum'. This is a collection of fakes, forgeries and reproduction pieces belonging to the Pewter



Figure 4. A half-gill Birmingham made reproduction haystack which has subsequently been treated so it could be sold as an original. Like the example in Figure 3, it has a copy of Joseph Austen's mark under the base. After manufacture it has been treated, probably chemically, so it is now covered in what appears to be hard dark oxide accumulated over many years. This was done so it could be passed off as 150 years old - and it was.

Society. It has been assembled over many years from pieces gifted by members of the Society. The usual reason for donation was to make sure the item concerned was permanently removed from the market. Periodically the Society uses some of the pieces for discussion and instruction purposes. Although many of the items would not deceive an experienced collector or dealer, a few do present a real challenge.

If, in addition to looking on the Internet, you look in antique shops and antique centres, at auctions, views and antique fairs, you will find quantities of pewter. It will vary from the obviously modern, through vintage pieces, reproductions, fakes and just occasionally forgeries as well as genuine and interesting items of old British pewter. Rare things still some times turn up unrecognised and unloved. The slang term for such pieces when they turn up in an auction is a "sleeper".



Figure 5. Moving on to items made from scratch to defraud, this piece from the Pewter Society Black Museum purports to be a Queen Anne lidless two band flagon. It was made sometime in the 1920-1950 period and is a forgery.



Figure 6. There is nothing new under the sun: a Victorian-made piece meant to be medieval. These are called Billies and Charlies after their makers.

Most areas of collecting antiques are bedevilled to some greater or lesser extent by reproductions, fakes and forgeries, and old pewter is no different. If you want to buy just a couple of pieces, then either talk to an experienced collector or find a dealer with a good reputation.

If you want to go further than this, the best thing is to join the Pewter Society [www.pewtersociety.org/] and make use of their publications, database and collective knowledge.

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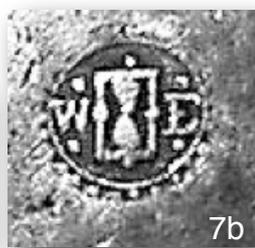
Footnote

The division between reproductions, fakes and forgeries is an old *Sotheby's* division, not all accept it. Personally I think it is a rational and helpful division.

7a. A set of reproduction Bristol hallmarks frequently used in the 1920s and 1930s on plates and dishes.

7b. A fake mark meant to represent the mark of a prominent London pewterer William Eddon, Master WCOP in 1732 and 1738.

7c. A fake verification mark; verification marks were applied by local inspectors after checking the capacity of a measure or beer mug.



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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS and TERMS

1. Terms Commonly Used by Pewter Collectors and Dealers

Antimony

A grey-white/silvery, brittle metal introduced to London pewterers in the second half of the 17th century. Used instead of lead to improve casting characteristics and the look of the pieces. Items made of this alloy (up to 4% antimony and up to 2% copper) were described as being made of 'hard metal', 'superfine hard metal' or 'Spanish metal'. The alloy was used for the best quality of flatware. Later, around 8% of antimony was used to make Britannia ware. Historically, antimony was sometimes known as *regulus*. Chemical symbol Sb.

Baluster

A tall slightly bellied vessel made to measure liquids, in England usually lidded in Ireland usually lidless.



Beaker

A mug without a handle.



Bellied

A 19th Century type of measure. Squat and fat round the middle, usually without a lid.



Beer pot

A term used in this work to describe lidless pots used to drink beer or porter. See truncated cone and tulip below

Bismuth

A silvery white metal traditionally used by pewterers in very small quantities to help with casting. Chemical symbol Bi.

Brass

An alloy of golden colour, comparatively easily worked and slow to tarnish. Brass consists mostly of copper with varying quantities of zinc. Copper and zinc can be found in number of places in the British Isles. Until the early 18th century the technique for refining zinc was unknown in the west and most brass was made by what was known as the cementation process. This involved placing copper and unrefined zinc ore in a furnace. The brass thus produced is sometimes known as 'latten' and is usually less golden in colour than modern brass due to the presence of impurities. As modern brass became increasingly available in 18th and 19th centuries the price fell and the metal was put to more and more uses. It has been called the plastic of the Victorians because so many bits and pieces were made of brass.

Britannia Metal

This was a trade name developed in Sheffield in the later 18th century

(and later used in Birmingham) for a form of pewter which resembled 'hard metal'. The main constituents were tin (90-92%), copper (2%) and antimony (6-8%). The main difference from traditional pewter was that items were in part fabricated (spun or pressed) from sheet metal made by rolling, although some casting was undertaken.

Bouge

The wall round the well of a plate.

Broken handle

A handle, which appears to be made in two parts, called by silver collectors a 'C' handle.



Bronze

An alloy of yellowish/green colour which oxides in time to a dark red brown or green, as a metal hard and brittle. Copper is the principle component of bronze, the other usually being tin. Bronze is the oldest metallic alloy known to man and it was widely used before the discovery of iron. It casts well and was historically used for many purposes including casting monumental statues and at a later date cannon. In earlier literature references to say "brassen gates" actually means bronze gates. Bronze was used from the later medieval period to make moulds for manufacturing pewter. It is less used today than in the past.

Chalice

Strictly a Roman Catholic mass cup commonly used to describe any stemmed and footed cup which might be used for communion in either a Catholic or Protestant setting or elsewhere.



Used to describe any plate over say 13" in diameter, although strictly should be at least 18".

Casting

Much traditional pewter was made by casting that is pouring molten metal into a mould. Until around 1400 moulds were often made of stone subsequently bronze moulds were introduced. Such metal moulds permitted the casting of complex shapes and pieces, pieces which were later soldered together to make sophisticated vessels. A simple two part bronze spoon mould is illustrated.



Concave

A beer pot with a narrower waist than foot or rim.



Copper

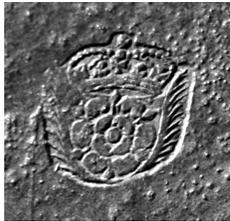
Pure copper is a malleable metal, in a refined condition it is reddish-brown in colour but oxidises to green. It is quite widely found in the British Isles but was not extensively mined until the 18th century. Until the late 17th century best London pewter contained one or two per cent of copper. Chemical symbol Cu.

Corrosion

Decay through oxidation on the surface of a piece of pewter.

Crowned Rose

Sometime in the 16th century Crowned Rose marks were placed on some pewter made for export. It was mark only allowed to the most senior Company members. In the late 17th century many pewterers used it.



Electroplating

A process developed circa 1840 whereby one metal could, by the passing of an electric current, be plated on another. Previously if you wanted to, say, plate a copper ingot with silver you had to dip it in molten silver. Electroplating had many advantages including making it possible to plate something uniformly, without heating either metal and controlling how thick the plating of metal was.

Since the development of the process, largely in Birmingham, it has been used for many purposes one of the most important being

silver plating. In this context two acronyms may be of particular interest, “EPBM” and “EPNS”. EPBM stands for Electro Plated Britannia Metal and EPNS for Electro Plated Nickel Silver. During the second half of the 19th century much Britannia metal was sold silver plated, the plating was often, however, very thin and began to wear off with polishing.

EPBM

Electro-plated Britannia Metal.

Fake

A piece of old pewter or reproduction pewter altered, heavily repaired or changed in some other way to deceive.

Fine Metal

All forms of pewter are alloys in which the major constituent is tin. ‘Fine metal’ was a term used to describe the alloy used in London to make flatware. The written descriptions of what ‘fine metal’ are difficult to interpret. Technically, however, modern analysis of 17th century London-made pieces of this description suggests tin content was between 95 and 98 per cent.

To the tin small amounts of copper and even smaller amounts of bismuth were added, to help with casting. The Worshipful Company of Pewterers, in its definition of ‘fine metal’ specified: “Tin with as much copper as it can absorb” which in practice was up to 2%.

Forgery

A modern copy of an old piece or old style made with the deliberate intention of deceiving.

Flagon

Tall vessels made to hold wine or beer and lidded, often used in church.



Flat Ware

Plates, dishes and chargers.

Hall marks

Marks applied by a pewterer which resemble Silver hallmarks but do not indicate anything except sometimes who or where the piece was made.



Hard Metal

An alloy similar to 'fine metal' introduced by Huguenot refugees in the second half of the 17th century. In addition to up to 2% copper, antimony (3%, later 6%) was added to the tin. When finished, items cast from 'hard metal' look even more like silver.

Haystack

A distinct type of Irish measure of churn like shape, sometimes called a harvester measure.



Hollow ware

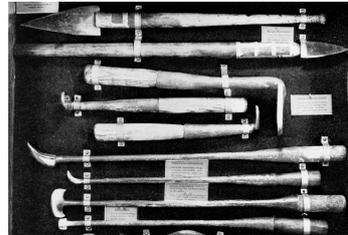
Vessels made to hold liquids.

Lay metal

In London a term used for a tin/lead alloy in which the quantity of lead did not exceed 20 per cent. Used to make hollow ware such as measures etc.

Lathe

Most pewter was finished by turning on a lathe. The lathes used did not in many ways resemble modern engineering lathes. They were usually called wheels as the motive power was provided by a large wooden wheel. The tools used by the lathe operator were also different as the examples below in the Company's collection show.



Lead

A heavy soft and malleable silver coloured metal. Lead oxidises quickly and is usually when found dark grey in colour. Lead was almost always cheaper than tin and there was a constant temptation for pewterers to include more in their pewter than was permitted. Chemical symbol Pb.

O.E.W.S.

Old English Wine Standard was a pre-1826 measure of capacity under which one pint was the equivalent of xx fluid ozs.

Pewter

An alloy the greater part of which is tin. Other possible constituents include bismuth, lead, antimony and copper.

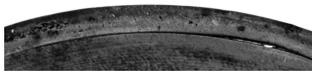
Porringer

A small in diameter piece of flatware with greater depth and one or more handles, used for porridge and other liquid foods



Reed

A cast or turned moulding on the upper rim of a plate.



Reproduction

A modern copy of an old piece or item made for decorative purposes and not intended to deceive.

Sadware

A term historically used to describe pewter pieces today we would call flatware, that is saucers, plates, dishes, chargers and soup bowls, etc. An array of historic sadware in the attached photograph:



Secondary marks

See hallmarks above.

Sheffield Plate

Sheffield plate production developed in Sheffield in the 1740s. A copper ingot was heated and then dipped in molten silver. The result was a layer of silver fused to the copper. The ingot was then rolled to make what was in effect silver plated copper sheet. From such sheet many domestic artefacts were made in the same styles as silver pieces. They looked like silver items but were much cheaper to produce. The one technical problem was that the copper showed where the sheet was cut and various methods were adopted to overcome this disadvantage. Sheffield plate remained popular until the introduction of electroplate silver in the 1840s. Old Sheffield plate can often be recognised when the copper begins to show through due to many years of polishing.

Soldering and Welding

Highly skilled techniques whereby pewterers could join pieces together to form a complete product. A gas flame or blow torch is generally used, with a solder that has a lower melting point than the pieces to be joined.

A soldering iron with a copper tip is also used.

With welding, a heat source is used to melt together the two pieces to be joined.

A flux is used in both procedures to assist the joining process. A typical flux is 1 part hydrochloric acid to ten parts glycerine.

Spelter

Spelter is another name sometimes used for zinc or zinc alloys. In the latter part of the 19th century and

early 20th century spelter in the form usually of a zinc/lead alloy was quite widely used. It was used in particular was for small statues made as mantle shelf ornaments, similar to contemporary bronze examples, for decorating clocks, making elaborate candlesticks, etc. Its advantage was that it was significantly cheaper but it usually gives itself away by being far lighter. It is also fairly brittle and will break if dropped. It was sometimes treated to make it look like bronze or ormolu, that is gold plated bronze.

Spinning

Spinning was a new manufacturing process introduced by makers' of Britannia metal in the 1820s. Previously the sheet parts of Britannia pieces had been made by stamping in a press. Spinning involved making a wooden former in the shape of the proposed product. The former was then mounted in a lathe and a sheet of pewter attached. Once the lathe was turning then craftsman with a rod like metal tool could apply pressure to the sheet and within in a short time it could be made to conform to the shape of the wooden former. This process had a number of advantages. It used less metal than casting, avoided the use of presses with their expensive dies, left less seams to be soldered up and was quicker. If you look in a Britannia teapot and see only one vertical seam, usually hidden behind the handle, then you know the body was originally made by spinning. Eventually it was even possible to spin pieces with an oval shape.

Standish

An inkstand made to stand on a table.



Tankard

To superficial appearance merely a pot with a lid. In practise almost always copies of current silver styles and an expensive personal possession.



Tappit measure

A distinctly Scottish form of lidded measure.



Tin

A rare soft silvery metal found (in the UK) in Cornwall and Devon. For centuries the Crown exercised control over tin mining through the Stannerys structure. Tin is the major constituent of all forms of pewter. The Worshipful Company had for many years an arrangement with the Crown whereby they got a significant share of the annual tin production at an advantageous price. The adjacent picture shows a 19th century Cornish tin ingot bearing the Stannerys' lamb and flag badge



Touch

The mark struck by a pewterer on a piece to indicate he made it. Originally such marks were registered with the guild.



Touch Plate

When a Freeman was allowed to open his own shop he had to have a touch made. In London he had to strike it on a pewter plate as a permanent record. The Company still has several such touch plates.

Trifle

The middle quality of metal between 'lay' and 'fine'. Introduced in the 17th cent., it contained about 4% lead for higher quality holloware. Used also for making toys, buttons and candle moulds, etc.

Triple reed

A plate or charger having several cast or turned mouldings on the rim.



Truncated Cone

A term used to describe a straight sided beer pot in which the diameter at the top is less than that at the bottom.



Tulip

A type of drinking vessel whose body resembles the flower in shape.



Turning

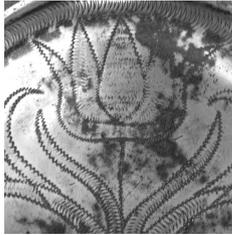
Verification

The procedure whereby the capacity of a vessel was officially checked and if correct within the permitted tolerances marked accordingly by an official stamp. Some people used to call such marks "Excise marks" but they have nothing to do with collecting excise duty.



Wriggle work

A form of decoration applied to plates, etc. made with a small chisel like tool which was rocked across the face of the piece. Appears in the second half of the 17th century, decoration applied often resembles that found on delft pottery.



X

A symbol used to indicate that the alloy is 'fine' or even 'hard metal' i.e. contains antimony rather than lead. In 19th century often added with little regard to the quality of the alloy.



From Abdy:
At first glance

1. Antimony - I thought that this was introduced as a substitute for lead rather than copper (which is retained in the alloy) - but I might be wrong?
2. Hard metal - as above
3. Tulip - referred to today as the Georgian shape - this is common throughout current manufacturers catalogues

From David Hall

"The Company, for its part, enforced on the craft very specific standards of quality.

All sadware - plates and other flatware that generally did not require cored moulding - had to be made in 'fine metal'. This, according to the records,

comprised 'pure tin with as much copper as its own nature will take', which would amount to no more than approximately two per cent.

'Lay metal' was used in the manufacture of hollow-ware comprising tin mixed with lead of no less a ratio than four to one.

'Trifle', a third grade of pewter, was specified for tavern pots, candle moulds, toys and buttons.

In later years some changes were made to these specifications as new hardening agents, such as bismuth and antimony, were introduced. It is interesting to note that at the end of the seventeenth century a variation of 'fine metal', denoted as 'hard metal', came into use for the highest quality flatware. This had very similar constituents to the Britannia metal of a hundred years later."

[Home](#)

The first part of this article appeared in the Spring 2011 number of the ABPC Newsletter. **Since then, Roma Vincent has started a series of workshops to teach others her RAV-Morph technique of producing pewter in marvellous colours.**

Roma Vincent and *RAV-Morph*



Coaxing the colour out of pewter

What is your first recollection of pewter?

My first recollection of pewter was the 1930s teapot set which my grandmother used to have on display. So, as with many people, my original perception of pewter was that it is very grey in appearance.

Where did you learn about how to use pewter?

In 1998, I worked with a blacksmith for several months and practised the technique of forging metal which I have since translated from mild steel to pewter.

I learnt how to work with pewter foil around 13 years ago at a two day workshop run by Bonnie Mackintosh and more recently I learnt how to cast pewter during a one day workshop with Fleur Grenier in 2009.

When did you start making pewter items, what and why?

In 2008, just in my spare time, I started to make pewter foil framed mirrors. Initially just another hobby outlet for my creativity, I soon came to appreciate the potential of pewter's malleability and attractive appearance. After working at various times with mild steel, brass, copper and silver, the flexibility of pewter offered me the freedom I needed to create the designs I had in my head.

What inspires your designs? Where did the idea of *RAV-Morph* come from?

The idea of *RAV-Morph* came from the desire to add colour to metal in an entirely different way, aided by the freedom of being able to experiment with a material which is relatively inexpensive. It is in my nature to experiment constantly and not use a material for its intended purpose, plus to some extent I am driven by the commercial need to have that illusive 'USP'. My design inspiration comes from the world around me – everything I see which is appealing - but ultimately it is my interest in learning more about metal and what you can do with it. My one-year foundation course at Art College meant that I was able to work with many media. I went in open-minded but came out realising that it was still metal that I wanted to work with.



A Roma Bracelet

crafts sector where design, British made and 'handmade' are applauded. Up to now I have not attempted to address the giftware market and play with the 'big boys'. Once I become more adept at casting pewter and can produce consistent work and more of it, I will explore possibilities beyond the network of craft galleries who currently buy my work.

What are you looking to ABPC to do for you?

Now that I am producing work in pewter in its recognisable guise, I thought it would be appropriate to belong to the 'pewter community'. I have not thought to look for anything from ABPC other than to appear on the website listing.



Roma in her workshop

Roma Vincent's unique way of working with pewter created a lot of interest amongst fellow exhibitors and the academics at *Pewter Live* in 2009. She has kept her *RAV-Morph* method 'secret' for ten years, but starting this year she will be passing on the knowledge to a select few.

RAV-Morph is the name Roma has given to her special recipe and process, basically pewter with an extra ingredient added during the heating stage. It is the unconventional heating process which coaxes the colour out of the pewter and gives her work its distinctive appearance with hues of pink, orange, brown, blues and purple.

Roma is running a one day workshop in her Cumbrian-based studio for one-to-one instruction. The maximum of number of people she will take through her workshop during 2011 is just six, with possibly more attending in 2012. Rather than holding onto the recipe and process, Roma is keen to observe what other makers will achieve with the material when they start to experiment and develop it for themselves. The results Roma achieves using *RAV-Morph* in her jewellery-making are invariably different each time, a quality beneficial to the wearer but a bugbear to any attempt to go into production. Her objective in keeping numbers down to just six people this year is that the knowledge of her technique and results will still be special and will, hopefully, impart to the recipients the same competitive edge that Roma has enjoyed.

Participants will be asked to agree to keep the knowledge to themselves for two years. Three participants are already signed up, and the first, Jo Dix of Silver Forge, started learning the technique in February.

Roma anticipates reactions of 'oh, so that's how it's done' when she demonstrates the alternative heating method which she has developed. She says that heating the pewter in a particular way appears to alter the arrangement of the crystalline structure of the constituents of tin, copper and antimony. The resulting colouration does not appear to be simply a process of oxidization but rather a situation where the antimony content is coaxed up to the surface of the mix. Interestingly, the same result is not achieved with just antimony on its own.

Another milestone for Roma this year is that she will exhibit *RAV-Morph* along with her silver jewellery at the International Jewellery Show Earls Court in September.

www.romavincents.co.uk.

The foregoing article appeared in the Spring 2011 number of the ABPC Newsletter. Having heard that Roma attended the British Craft Trade Fair (BCTF) in Harrogate at the beginning of April this year, we asked her why she had thought it worthwhile to go there, and then about her plans for the International Jewellery Show (ILJ) in September.

“The BCTF is the only trade event in England that only selects exhibitors who produce work in the UK and who do not import any products (other than the components/materials necessary to make their product). For example, imported tin is essential in order to produce pewter in the UK; that is allowed. But the product itself *has* to have been made here, it cannot have been imported.

“There are other UK trade shows with elements of handmade/UK-made but increasingly they are being diluted by the inclusion of imported crafts and giftware. Because of the reputation of BCTF for very high standards of workmanship and design in contemporary arts and crafts (and by implication the gifts market), it attracts key buyers from all over the UK.”

Mixed results were reported from this year’s show. Attendance was said to be down and whilst many exhibitors received no new business, many others were rumoured to have done very well indeed. How was the Show for you?

“I had a very successful show and certainly have more than enough jewellery work to keep me going for the next three months.

“In addition to my mainstream jewellery range, I showed a few of my wall-hanging *RAV-Morph* pieces, just to gauge interest. The wall hangings are more or less larger versions of my *RAV-Morph* jewellery pieces with landscape, botanical and conceptual motifs. I received a very good response to the wall pieces and can see a way to develop these further into functional items as opposed to just decorative.”

You are first and foremost a jeweller. What difference do you find in selling work made with Pewter/*RAV-Morph* as opposed to silver.

“It is ever more apparent to me why I switched from working in silver to a semi-precious metal. There are an overwhelming number of artisans and manufacturers producing silver jewellery. Silver was always the more affordable alternative to gold, but now that silver is so much higher in value, it is leading some buyers away to more affordable alternatives.

“In balance with the difficulties of selling ever higher-priced silver jewellery to the mass ‘affordable market’, there is a growing validity endowed by the contemporary jewellery sector towards the use of alternative materials such as paper, resins, textiles and semi-precious metals.

“Making my debut at IJL (International Jewellery London) Earls Court this coming September, I will produce a range of silver jewellery to exhibit alongside my *RAV-Morph* range just to be sure of having an opportunity to appeal to buyers from both ‘camps’.”



Wheatear



Tall slip pewter form

What pewter products are you planning to develop in addition to your hybrid *RAV-Morph*?

“I plan to pick up where I left off in 2006 when I was experimenting with slip casting pewter. It may or may not be possible to achieve what I want but that is the nature of experimentation.

“Back in 2006 I had some communication with Tim Parsons since we had both been working with the same concept without being previously aware of each other. Tim Parsons’ “lava bowl” is, of course, well known throughout the pewter industry. I have been busy developing my jewellery business in the meantime but I plan to re-visit the concept of running the pewter down a vertical form as shown in the photograph of a piece “I made earlier”.

Having spent time in 2010 learning about ceramics and, specifically, porcelain slip casting, I am also going to play around with porcelain and pewter together, as they appear to me to be attractive partners.”

Roma Vincent’s workshop is at Wilton House, Nateby, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria CA17 4JR

Visit her website at: www.romavincents.co.uk.

[Home](#)

The Holbein Jug

[Home](#)

Or

Putting Holbein's Wine Jug back.

A vision in Pewter.

Marc Meltonville; Experimental Archaeologist, Historic Royal Palaces.

My job is a little unusual.

I tend to be interested in things that other people, often people a long time ago, have thrown away! That's the archaeologist's job all over; the reverse of a dustman, and therefore, not necessarily as useful to society.

I am charged with putting objects from the past, back into place and then having a team of chaps test them, often to destruction, to see if we can learn from actually using historic items in their original setting. The setting that I spend most of my time in is the Kitchens of Henry VIII at Hampton Court.

So, I hear you say, what does all this have to do with pewter? Did Henry VIII eat it? No.

Did he eat from it? Probably not; but he did have an awful lot of the stuff about the Palace 500 years ago.

So when, in 2006, I was asked to help return the kitchens back to how they may have looked in Tudor times, I had to start looking for all the lovely things that would have been used there, and finding craftsmen who could still make them. My training is in ceramics. Technically, if you give me a dirty piece of pottery from out of your garden, then I should be able to tell you what it was and how long ago it was broken!



Pewter store at Hampton Court



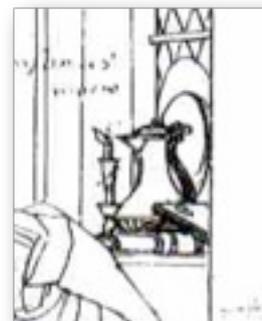
For reasons that I have never questioned I was also given pewter and glass things to work on. I thought I knew a little about historic pewter. I had attended a couple of courses on identifying pilgrim badges and worked on a Museum project to reproduce some of these badges in cuttlebone moulds. (This is dangerous as you hold the mould together with your fingers as someone pours molten metal into it. Just ask my colleague who received a dose of molten metal down his throat inside of his boot!)

I was wrong - I knew precious little about the sort of pewter that we needed for service wares in a Palace. After a little scrabbling around looking at items in

Museum collections and searching through as many paintings of dinner tables as I could, I suddenly remembered AE Williams. They were a company I had contacted some years earlier about buttons. This all led me on a journey that ended up with the wonderful wine jug you see above.

My first visit to AE Williams was a complete eye-opener. Finally I understood how you designed and manufactured historic pewter. For me, the biggest learning curve was nothing to do with the bronze moulds, nor the pouring of the metal; no, it was to do with how the pieces were put together. For some reason I had presumed that you had an idea for an object you wanted and a mould was made of it. In reality there are many many moulds, few of which were for any one object, just parts thereof.

For many hundreds of years, one saw a great wine jug or serving bowl at a noble dinner and thought, 'I fancy one of those'. So off you went to your pewter-smith, made a crude sketch on the back of some parchment and your craftsman goes; "Ah yes, that will be our small bowl mould with a #7 neck shape on top and one of our #5 handles". These items combined to make the object of your choice.



Detail; Family of Sir Thomas Moore; Royal Collection.

This new understanding, and the wonderful chance to 'dib' about in David Williams' world class mould store, led to the manufacture of around 600 items for our Pewter store at Hampton Court. Trenchers, dishes, goblets, serving bowls and lids. All of this pewter tableware is used when the kitchens cook Tudor meals and dine in the Tudor fashion. Most impressive last year was an event to allow our 'King' to dine out in the gardens.

Not content with the hundreds of items we now had, we wanted something a bit special and new. Images of the king or even the court dining are few and far between, and when they do appear all we see is a simple dish or goblet. Inspiration came in the form of the Family of Sir Thomas Moore. Not him personally, but the sketch of his family by Holbein which includes many interesting details around the room. Best of all for me was a wine jug on a shelf in the picture.

The thing I liked about this jug was its simple shape and unusual handle. The handle, to our modern eyes, is upside down. This made it an interesting project to have a go at and then test out; full of wine of course!

And so the full Tudor manufacturing process was put back into operation; maybe assisted by emails and digital photos. I drew a picture of the jug, AE Williams cast a model, I adjusted it, they made suggestions and so the piece unfolded, back to life after 500 years. Each stage followed the original process. The moulded pieces were soldered together. The body of the jug put on a lathe and turned to shape before the lid, spout and handle were added. (Please see the illustrations on page 3. Ed)

And so we have our wine jug, and can now test it, but I hope there is more to it than that. We have a beautiful wine jug that without the hard work and effort put in by the fine people at AE Williams would never have seen the light of day. It holds wine, it pours wine, but it also helps, along with all the items that we have researched and recreated, to bring to life so many facets of the past: solid objects that can help bring an old building back to life; objects that help us to understand the way in which we use to live; and craftsmanship that gives an idea of the beauty and refinement of a bygone age.

Once we have a bigger picture of the past, we might more understand how we came to the place we are now.

All from one little pewter jug; no, but it is helping, and its story is now part of our history.

Marc Meltonville

See all the Hampton Court Pewter daily at the Palace or see it used in cookery experiments held on the first weekend of each month and all holidays. www.hrp.org.uk follow links to Hampton Court.



Incorrect

Moving the thumb piece to the correct position



Correct



Cast pieces being offered up



Finished Wine jugs stored in the Clerk's office.

Enjoy the Holbein Wine jug for yourself from AE Williams!
www.pewtergiftware.com



Digital changes to the shape

Natasha Caughey @ Auricula



Natasha Caughey

Natasha Caughey started her own business, Auricula, five or so years ago. She designs and makes contemporary gemstone and freshwater pearl jewellery - earrings, bracelets, necklaces and pendants - at her workshop in Ditchling, Sussex.

She also sells pewter!
Her website says that:

“Inspired by the colour and texture of natural gemstones and freshwater pearls, Natasha creates contemporary jewellery with a timeless quality.”

The Pewterer, inspired by the collection of pewter for sale at her Ditchling shop, interviewed Natasha about her interest in jewellery and pewter.

You are a jeweller, designing and making your own pieces. How did you start in the jewellery business?

I graduated from St Andrews University with a degree in English Literature. My first job was as a trainee buyer for Fenwick in Brent Cross in their jewellery department. I have always loved jewellery and later worked for Pickett (a luxury goods emporium based in London's Burlington Arcade) to develop the gemstone jewellery side of their business.



Although I had always made jewellery as a hobby, I learnt how to string, and to work with precious metal wire, to give a professional finish.

Whilst in London I also obtained an FGA diploma in Gemmology from the Gemmological Association in Hatton Garden.

I set up my own business in Sussex in April 2006.

What caused you to devote nearly two shelves to the display of pewter items?

My uncle had contacts, through the University of Buckingham, with AR Wentworth of Sheffield, and gave me an introduction to them. We started with a small collection of their items which sold well so, over the years, we have expanded the range. I also feel that the pewter sits well with my jewellery.



The pewter display



One of Natasha's displays in the shop.
Note the pewter!

You have an interesting mix of Wentworth's picture frames and votive cups, Tim Parsons' splash bowl and more. Are there any particular items that sell better than others?



Picture frames and votives are the best sellers – also trinket boxes. Ian Pickersgill's 'comma' letter openers are always popular at Christmas (presents for men!)

Do you require a line to 'earn its keep', that is to return a particular percentage?

My main focus is on my jewellery. I am happy to stock certain other items but they would have to be profitable for me.

What is the market like at the moment?

Despite the 'doom and gloom' reported by the media I have found that, in general, business is holding up quite well.

Auricula

12-13 Turner Dumbrell Workshops, North End, Ditchling, East Sussex, BN6 8GT

Telephone: 01273 845 582

<http://auricula.co.uk/>

[Home](#)



The Auricula workshop

The Turner-Dumbrell Foundation

Dr Richard W D Turner, a cardiologist, was ahead of his time in realising that prevention is better than cure. The Charitable Trust he helped to set up was intended to provide access to the countryside so that people could get out and about on foot or on bicycles and find out how much better they felt if they did so. This little close of workshops and studios, on a part of the estate, is populated by artists, silversmiths, designers and other craftsmen, and is well worth visiting.

Editor: Alan Williams

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THE PEWTERER

The Pewterer. Volume 2, Number 2. October 2011

Welcome to the third *The Pewterer*, an e-magazine devoted to pewter, in support of pewter and the pewter trade, and published by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.

The Company fully supports the trade and the metal, not least through the Association of British Pewter Craftsmen and the European Union; but also through its highly-rated annual design competition, *Pewter Live*. You will find a brief article on *Pewter Live* 2011 elsewhere in this e-zine; but you might also wish to log into the Company's site (www.pewterers.or.uk) to look for more material on *Pewter Live* and on the Company's support for the trade.

We have articles on a number of subjects (see both above and below for the links) and the second part of the two-part article looking at the meaning of terms used in connection with pewter (see Glossary). We also introduce two new sections: the Product Innovation site and the Pewter Marketplace. Please do visit these sites (on one of them there is a competition for you to enter) and let us have your comments.

Please click-through, using the pictures below or the menu above, to the several articles and to the sites; then let us have not just your comments but also ideas for future articles. If the picture links do not work, please use the links at the top of the page.

Alan Williams

Royal Selangor – The Brand's the thing!

Robert Chambers, Court Assistant at the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, and his wife, Soonhee, visited Royal Selangor in Kuala Lumpur in April and were shown around by Yong Mun Kuen, a director of the company and grand-daughter of its founder, Yong Koon. Further material for the article was gleaned from the book “The Royal Selangor Story” written by her daughter, Chen May Yee.

Robert came away with two principal messages:

“The main market for [Royal Selangor’s] pewter will not in the future be the USA or Europe, but Asia”; and “The message for pewter manufacturers is: *Create your own Brand.*” He adds:

Setapak Jaya is an unprepossessing suburb of Kuala Lumpur, out of sight of the city’s gleaming skyscrapers. But taxis and buses arrive here daily, delivering visitors to the HQ of one of Malaysia’s international brands, Royal Selangor, the world’s largest pewter maker. Here the Visitor Centre (opened in 2003) celebrates the Selangor story and showcases the vast range of pewter produced in the modern onsite factory. The shop sells an impressive range of pewter items at impressively high prices.

The story begins in 1885 when the teenage Yong Koon emigrated from China to seek work in the booming Malayan tin-mining town of Kuala Lumpur, soon to become the world’s largest tin producer. For the next 60 years Yong Koon and his family strove to build a business making and selling pewter from their “shophouse”, a workshop which also served as their home. The first customers were tin miners who bought pewter incense burners and other Chinese ceremonial items for domestic altars.

By the 1930’s, during the worldwide depression, pewter was a dying craft, not for the last time in the 20th century! But the business picked up by finding new customers, namely expatriates, mainly British, who wanted pewter giftware such as cigarette boxes, ashtrays and tea pots. Then came the Second World War. The expatriates left, business crumbled and the Japanese occupiers oppressed the local Chinese community. The business (then known as Selangor Pewter) survived by making sake sets for the occupiers.

Yong Koon had four sons. They feuded. One son was murdered by gangsters. In 1952, Yong Koon died leaving only one son, Peng Kai, still in the pewter business. But all his four children joined the business and today they are active directors of Royal Selangor, with the youngest, PK Yong, at the helm. Several members of the 4th generation are also involved in running the business.



Robert and Soonhee Chambers in front of the world's largest tankard

The rags-to-riches story continued in the second half of the 20th century. Manufacturing innovations, such as the introduction of a production line and the purchase (in 1951) of a second-hand engraving machine for decorating tankards and trophies, helped the business grow. Tourists became the main market. In the Visitor Centre the company commemorates the large order for cigarette cases received in the early 1960's from the Hollywood actor William Holden. At the time, this was the largest order the business had ever taken. Later, American servicemen, on R & R from the Vietnam War, became major customers of pewter giftware, which Selangor packed for them and shipped to the USA.

The move to a modern 4000 sq ft factory at Setapak in 1962, and the opening of the company's first independent shop in 1968, were significant landmarks. A second factory was opened in Singapore in 1968, but eventually closed. In 1977, the company moved to a nearby 5 acre, 60,000 sq ft, site where it remains to this day. It seems unlikely that the company will ever quit Malaysia, despite the lure of lower cost production in China and elsewhere. The company has forged its achievements in the Malayan peninsula and the Yong family, which describes itself as "born and bred in pewter dust", is rooted in Malaya.

In the 1970s Australia became the company's first "Western" market. Following a complaint about the packaging of the pewter from the company's Australian agent, Selangor hired a Danish designer, Anders Quistgard, in 1976 to design modern packaging. He became Chief Designer, created an in-house design studio and married into the family. A visible example of his legacy is on display outside the Visitor Centre, where visitors can have their photograph taken in front of the world's largest pewter tankard (produced in 1985), a giant piece nearly two metres tall and with a capacity of 4,920 pints!

Other Western markets followed. Sales offices and shops were set up in Europe and North America. By the year 2000, 60% of the company's output was exported, compared with less than 2% in 1970.

This is the time when Selangor started to build an international brand and to go global. A programme of acquisitions included Englefields of London (in 1987), the 350 year old maker of Crown and Rose pewter, Comyns, the London silversmiths (in 1993) and Seagull Pewter of Canada (in 2002). Diversification also included the setting up of Selberan, a gold jewellery company.

In 1979, the Sultan of Selangor, having discovered on a visit to Perth that Selangor Pewter was more famous than he was, appointed the company "Royal Pewterer". In 1992, Selangor Pewter changed its name to Royal Selangor, reflecting the patronage it had received from the Sultan.

Today, Royal Selangor exports to over 20 countries and is found in top stores, including Harrods and John Lewis in the UK. But the largest export market? It will be China!

Back in the shop at the Visitor Centre the Chinese tourists, who are buying a brand they know and trust, are a significant source of income for the company. The pride in achievement and remembrance of debts, both past and present, are everywhere on display. A bust of the founder and the tools of his trade are on show, as is a likeness, modelled in pewter, of Kuala Lumpur's iconic Petronas twin towers. This imaginative work of art, which took six months to make, was created with more than 7,200 three-quarter pint tankards! Mentioned in dispatches are the designers, such as Eric Magnussen from

Denmark and Britain's Nick Munro. Not forgotten are all the long serving employees, whose palm prints are impressed on a lofty, specially-constructed, pewter wall.

For the visitor more interested in the narrative than the brand the "Selangor story" seems at times almost to be a morality tale: the overcoming of adversities through hard work and enterprise. Several times the company almost failed: during the Great Depression, during the Second World War and again during the race riots of 1969 (which for a while brought tourism to a halt in Kuala Lumpur). Yet a family from humble origins survived and built a world class company. Unlike so many family concerns that fail by the third generation this family business has so far gone from strength to strength as each generation takes over.

Moreover, it is difficult not to imagine that Royal Selangor will continue to be a success story. There is now little doubt about the eastward shift of global economic power to Asian markets, most notably China. [A recent example of this was when the Italian fashion house, Prada, this year decided to seek a stock market listing in Hong Kong rather than Milan, "because East Asia is where people can afford to buy Prada"]. In these new growth markets, companies with established reputations, like Prada and Royal Selangor, have a head start and are already racing ahead.

Perhaps the only surprise is that the business has been powered by a single family. Professor John Davis of Harvard Business School described Royal Selangor as "a model family business story". Few would argue with that and many could agree that the story provides hope and lessons to any business with an ambition to sprout wings.

Robert Chambers

Editor's note: The company's website will tell you that Royal Selangor has: over a thousand different tableware and gift items, from traditional tankards and tea sets, to photo frames, and desk and wine accessories, the company has more than 40 shops worldwide. It has, in addition to selling in major stores, its own retail outlets in several capital cities around the world.

The website, www.royalselangor.com, will handle nine different currencies.

Committed to innovative designs and excellent craftsmanship, the company every year, comes up with new ranges. In 1989 and 1991, Royal Selangor received the Design Plus award at the Frankfurt International Gift Fair; and in 1997, the Gift of the Year Award in the licensed gifts category, from the Giftware Association.

Next issue: The whole matter of 'branding'

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Editor: Alan Williams

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Pewter Collections

Alex Neish, the Smith Stirling Museum and the Neish Collection of Pewter

Alex Neish's collection of British pewter has found a new home - in the old District Court, now part of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum. In this article, Alex Neish describes how his Collection was put together and why it has found a new home in Stirling; and Rosalind Grant-Robertson describes the opening ceremony of the new Gallery in which that Collection is now displayed.

Alex Neish is a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of London; Rosalind Grant-Robertson is a Court Assistant of the Company, and an Edinburgh resident. She represented the Master of the Company at the opening ceremony



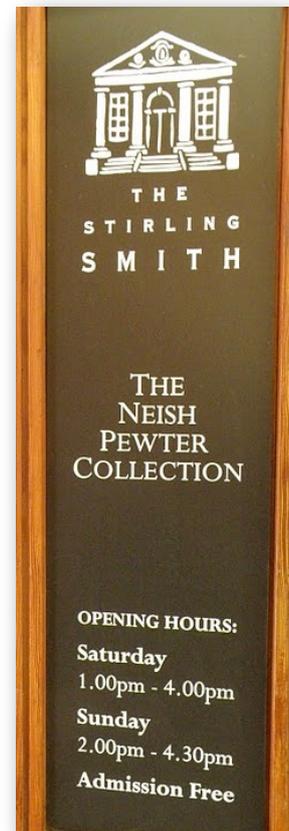
Alex Neish and Provost Fergus Wood

at the Museum on Tuesday 12th July, 2011. Her description of the day follows Alex Neish's summary of the importance of his Collection and how it came into being.

Alex Neish: "My pewter collection started when, in the early 1960s in Argentina, Patricia and I were looking for pewter place mats, in place of the more expensive silver ones.

Little was available in the antique shops of Buenos Aires except a few small plates with Hebrew engravings that had gone into exile from Germany with their owners – these formed the beginning of my pewter Judaica Collection now on exhibition in Barcelona's 12th century synagogue. Many experts consider the Judaica Collection to be the finest of its kind in the world.

However, the bug had truly bitten me, and I became a regular buyer at auction. In the



course of a visit to the UK, I was told that London's leading dealer was one Richard Munday; and so began a friendship that lasted until Richard's death in his 90s.

But it was when he retired from business that our relationship intensified; he introduced me to the collection of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers that he himself had helped form, saying: "Look well on this, Alex, as you will never own anything like it."

Later he told me that my Collection, with its origins in the Roman period and items that were masterpieces of the craft, had in his view surpassed the Company's.

Some time afterwards, knowing he was dying, and having by then pruned his own collection down to a hundred masterpieces, he spent his last week writing an inventory with values. He told his wife, Etta, to do nothing until she had spoken to me.

When I next visited London and saw her, the future of the Munday pewter collection - "that old tin with which Richard cluttered up our flat" - inevitably came up.

I was reluctant to buy anything, fearing that, later, other collectors would claim I had set wrong values. When Etta produced Richard's handwritten inventory, the problem was solved and I added his superb and unique pieces to my Collection.

By now, my Collection had become quite massive, with over 1200 items. Patricia and I retired to Barcelona, and I began to look for an appropriate home for it.

After a number of false starts (including the University of Edinburgh; and a leading American museum) the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, which had just completed the restoration of Harvard House, the finest Tudor building on the High Street of Stratford-upon-Avon, decided to endow it

with a special character, and the idea of a Museum of British Pewter was born.

For some 20 years Harvard House became a Mecca for collectors and historians and even attracted an enthusiastic royal visit by the Prince of Wales who was so interested that his entire schedule was delayed by three hours! By this time, the Collection had become accepted internationally as the world's dominant collection of British pewter.

Sadly, in my view, the Museum decided to concentrate on things Shakespeare. The effect was that the Collection reverted to me; the upside is that I have found an eager home for it at the Smith Museum and Art Gallery where it has joined their outstanding Scottish Pewter Collection".



Rosalind Grant Robertson:

"Alex and Patricia were accompanied at the opening ceremony by family, friends and officialdom. We gathered at the Stirling Smith, where Councillor Colin O'Brien, Chairman of the trustees, welcomed us and made us aware that this project was in many ways bucking the trend within the funding world.

He outlined the difficulties they had faced a year ago, when the collection had been offered to them just as a major



Alex Neish, Provost Fergus Wood, and Rosalind Grant-Robertson

refurbishment of the fabric of the Smith Museum was in prospect.

However, probably uniquely in the current economic climate, Stirling Council's funding for the Arts had been increased and, with additional annual funding support from Alex and a two-year lease for the old District Court, Councillor O'Brien described the atmosphere among trustees now as one of excitement.

The old District Court has been transformed and is strategically placed at the foot of the hill leading up to the Castle, an entry into the historic part of the city. It will be the first attraction to catch the tourist's eye in the old quarter.

We walked from the Smith to the District Court where, with Alex, Provost Fergus Wood untied the ribbon. In thanking Alex for honouring Stirling with such a "niche" collection, (*think about it!*) the Provost also wondered how many visitors to the new gallery might have known the building in its former guise and which gate they had used on that occasion.

We did see his point when we were shown the cells, which now hold the parts of the collection not on display in state-of-the-art storage. Other features of the old courtroom have also been retained: the

Bench is still *in situ*, and the room for witnesses still marked.

The main collection is housed in the courtroom in the original cases brought up from Harvard House and there is a shop in the entrance, which has, as yet, no pewter merchandise on sale – an opening for manufacturers there!

Michael McGinnes, the Museum Collections Manager, is keen to enlarge the education side of the exhibition, hopefully including the software with games for children, which was part of the collection donated to Harvard House but has not yet been received. Indeed, once the Smith has been refurbished, he is looking forward to even more space being available to show off the collection.

The Smith is also looking for books and literature on pewter, either for sale or to help the museum guides. Some guides were present at the opening and were most enthusiastic about the new displays. It will be a steep learning curve for them to absorb all the new information about the pieces, but catalogues of the displays in each cabinet are available".

Editor's notes:

1. The Neish Collection will be open to the public at weekends only and by arrangement for special groups.

2. Dr Elspeth King, the Director of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, the new home of the Neish Pewter Collection, has just published "*A History of Stirling in 100 Objects*," (The History Press, £12.99).

Inter alia it deals with the seven Incorporated Trades of the Burgh of Stirling, one of which was the Hammermen (which included pewterers).

Once upon a time each Trade kept its documents and valuables in a box, and the Conventry of Trades had a much bigger box with seven numbered locks, one for each of the seven Boxmasters' keys. This bigger box held the Conventry's rallying "blue blanket", 9ft x 7ft 9 ins of fine silk (dating from the times of Mary, Queen of Scots) and that term was used for their saltire. This is no longer in the Box, because it is so fragile.

Also featured in her book are: the Stirling Jug (or Scots Pint) holding three Imperial pints, which measure defined all Scottish liquid capacities from 1457 onwards; and the 1707 Grain Gallon measure, purchased with the help of Alex Neish, examples of which are amongst the rarest of all pewter items

3. *The Museum Shop and books: as a result of Rosalind's visit and her appeal to the Worshipful Company, the Company has arranged to donate a number of books on pewter to the shop.*
4. Cross-references: See Article by Alex Neish on 'Pewter Collecting' WCoP Newsletter, Vol 4 No 3 (Winter 2008)
5. Photo credits: Sylvia Anestikova; Bettina MacAbhuinn



Links

[The Smith Museum and Art Gallery](#)

[The Worshipful Company of Pewterers](#)

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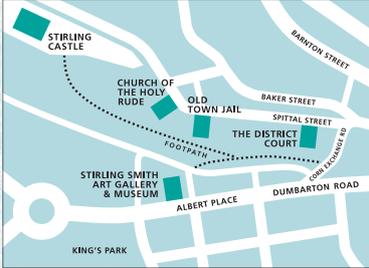
The District Court
A ten minute walk from the Smith, Stirling District Court dealt with petty crimes. It opened as the Stirling Police Station and Court on 24 March 1931, and closed in 2010.

Old Town Jail
A twenty minute walk from the Smith, the Old Town Jail is a gruesome reminder of the harsh treatment meted out to miscreants of the past.

Cowane's Hospital, Church of the Holy Rude and Valley Cemetery
These are a twenty minute walk from the Smith.

Stirling Castle
The Castle is a thirty minute walk from the Smith.

Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum
For all aspects of Stirling's history and culture, visit the Stirling Smith. See the world's oldest curling stone (1511) and football (1540), as well as portraits of William Wallace and Bonnie Prince Charlie.



The District Court is open
Saturday 1–4 pm and Sunday 2–4.30 pm.
Future additional opening times may apply.
For further information telephone the
Stirling Smith on 01786 471917.

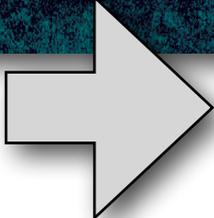


Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum
Dumbarton Road, Stirling FK8 2RQ
Tel. 01786 471917
www.smithartgallery.demon.co.uk
Open Tuesday to Saturday 10.30 am – 5.00 pm, Sunday 2 – 5 pm.
Café, Meeting rooms, Gardens. Admission and Parking free.
The Stirling Smith is a Registered Scottish Charity No. SC016162

**The Neish
Collection of
British Pewter**

The District Court,
23 Spittal Street, Stirling



Searches, part 3

William Grant, the Worshipful Company of Pewterers' Historian, has found more extracts from the Company's records on the subject of the Company's powers of search (see *The Pewterer*, vols 1.1 and 2.1 for the earlier articles on this subject).

Statement of the Court of the Pewterers Company to the Royal Commission

looking into Municipal Corporations

12 December 1833

The Company still continue to hold four Search Courts in the year when three or four of the members of the Court of Assistants take their walks and visit the Master Pewterers who are members of the Company and that they have thus been on the Search is reported as the following Quarter Court of Assistants but from the doubts and difficulties respecting the powers of the Company to make effective Searches which appear by the case submitted to Solicitor General Dunning in the year 1770 and his opinion thereon and the state of the trade which had been many years declining little has been done beyond going round and occasionally inspecting the work.

The Company still exercise the power of calling on the Masters in the trade to strike their touch on the touch plate of the Company kept at their Hall.

+++++

The last time someone was summoned for bad metal 18th June 1789

Mrs. Snape attended her summons to answer for her tablespoon being four grains worse than plate at the last Quarter Search & after hearing what she had to say,

Resolved that the said Mrs. Snape hath been guilty of a breach of the 26th byelaw and hath thereby incurred the penalty of £5 to be paid to the Renter Warden for the use of the Company.

+++++

The first time that the expression "so far as the search extended" was used. 16th December 1790.

The Master reported that he and the Wardens and Court of Assistants had been upon the Quarter Search and so far as the search extended had found things in good order.

Alex Neish

My pewter collection was formed over a period of 50 years. It started when I was living in South America, working for an international conglomerate. During my 20 years in Brazil I travelled extensively around the world and, having been bitten by the pewter bug, visited antique markets in search of good pieces.

In those days Sothebys, Christies, and Phillips all had regular quarterly pewter sales in London and I would bid off the catalogues. On a visit to London I met Richard Munday, the doyen of British specialists, at his shop in Chiltern Street. I had never seen such a cornucopia of outstanding antique pewter. We became great friends and soon he was bidding for me at auctions. We would agree what to buy and he, being the expert, would decide the price levels.

Over a period of years my collection swelled. Richard would occasionally sell me a special piece from his private collection when he wished to supplement his pension. When he died on the eve of his 90th birthday, I bought his residual private collection of over 100 unique pieces from his widow. Our combined collections became internationally recognised as the dominant one of British pewter in the world. I continued to add to it, buying notable pieces at auction or from major dealers like Michael and Hilary Kashden who supplied me with incredible Anglo-Roman pewter.

When I retired from business and settled in Barcelona, the collection had grown to over 1200 outstanding pieces. I began the search for a home for it in Britain. News of this situation percolated through to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon. It had just completed a major and expensive restoration of Harvard House, the most outstanding of Tudor houses on the town's High Street. Its Director, Roger Pringle, and Curator of Museums, Ann Donnolly, were determined to do something special to endow it with a unique character. They travelled to Edinburgh. I flew across from Brazil - and the Harvard House Museum of British Pewter was born. I gifted my collection with a proviso that it had to be on regular public display failing which the collection would revert to me.

After two decades, however, winds of change were blowing. Roger Pringle had retired and the new Director, Dinah Owen, initiated a major cost cutting campaign. When it was decided that the Trust's activities should focus exclusively on Shakespeare, it seemed to me that pewter had become irrelevant and that the Museum of British Pewter was clearly doomed.

I exercised my contractual rights and the Collection reverted to me. At one point it seemed it would leave the country for the States but then the Smith Museum in Stirling appeared. It is encouraging that this small, historic Scottish town can - unlike Stratford - see beyond Shakespeare and appreciate that there is a wider British heritage. It is also good that a collection that began in Scotland can return there in its maturity. However, until the Stirling Smith Museum's redevelopment plans have been completed, over the next 2 to 3 years, the pewter collection will be going into store.

Alex Neish, Liveryman

The Smith Museum

The Smith Museum in Stirling has a unique collection of Scottish pewter. It includes the historic Stirling jug that defined liquid capacities across the country and the run of 1707 grain measures that sought to harmonise standards with England.

It has Scotland's only known punch-decorated plate and the earliest surviving quaich. It also houses a remarkable collection of pewter from the local churches, saved when these disappeared. From the 19th century comes a unique tea service mounted in pewter and carved from coconuts (see illustration). By far its most unusual feature, however, is that unlike other British museums, the pewter is all on display.

Alex Neish, Liveryman

Note: As noted in the article by Alex Neish on his Collection, shortly the Smith Museum's display will increase when the Trustees of the Smith ratify a draft agreement to receive the Neish Collection of British Pewter from Roman times up to the 20th century. The Collection, which began in Scotland, will now be returning there in a vastly amplified form.

Initially a selection may appear in the present Museum facilities or other local historic buildings but the total display will probably await completion of a rebuilding programme. A public appeal has been launched and support is anticipated from Historic Scotland and the Heritage Lottery to allow all the Smith collections to be displayed.



A rare pewter mounted coconut creation from the Smith Museum Collection

[Smith Museum](#) *Dumbarton Road, Stirling FK8 2RQ, Scotland, United Kingdom* Tel: 01786 471917
Train: [Stirling Rail Station](#) [Get directions](#)

[Home](#)

Fleur Grenier



Fleur Grenier left school at 16 to go to Art College doing a BTEC and then her degree. She studied silversmithing at Sir John Cass, London Guild Hall University. While she was there she was introduced to pewter through one of the course projects. For her that was it; she loved working with the material, believing also that it complimented her designs. Her passion for working with it began.

Her degree show was all pewter and then she went on to develop her designs, techniques and ideas at the Royal College of Art where she did her MA. She graduated from the RCA in 1996 and for several years had a workshop in London; but in 2003 she moved back down to the Sussex Coast and set up her workshop where she now makes work to sell through galleries and exhibitions. She also takes on commissions and larger one-off sculptural pieces.

Home

3(Fighter) Squadron, RAF - and their new Loving Cups

We have got to know 3(F)Sqn, currently based at RAF Coningsby, rather well over the four/five years of our affiliation with them. They are one of two squadrons providing QRA - Quick Reaction Alert - over the UK's skies; currently they are deployed to both the Falklands and to Italy. ≈

It has long been a tradition for departing Officers to present a gift to the Squadron on the event of their final dinner. Their immediate past C.O., Wing Commander Jez Milne, DFC, RAF, decided on something rather different.

“Over the years, I have seen quite a spectrum of presentations ranging from the personal to the preposterous. As a Squadron Commander, one is expected to come up with something that befits the position; so much of my tour was spent musing the various options.

“As soon as I encountered the Loving Cups’ tradition at a Livery dinner, I realized that they were the perfect

choice. The principle of guarding a colleague's back while he drinks from a shared vessel epitomises so much of the spirit that bonds a modern (or indeed



Wg Cdr Jez Milne, RAF, DFC

an historic) fighting force.

“There aren't many professions in which one finds a team of motivated professionals, operating multi-million pound hardware, who work together, socialise together, and fight together. A team who not only depend upon each other for their safety on operations, but also for their shared identity - often defined by the role they play within the Squadron and the *esprit de corps* that flows from it.

“The office environment in which I now find myself presents a stark contrast.

“It was a great privilege to command No 3 (Fighter) Squadron, and an honour to have been associated with the





The Loving Cups on the wing of a Eurofighter

Worshipful Company of Pewterers. I do hope the Squadron continues its association with the Company and the Loving Cup tradition becomes a permanent feature of the Squadron's future dinners."

Note

The cups were commissioned from AR Wentworth. Richard Abdy said:

"They were made by putting together parts from various other designs. The body and lid are from our standard bullet trophy shape, the handles are from a 2 pint tankard (see illustrations above) and the stem/foot is unique, made to suit the overall piece

"The alloy used for casting was the usual 92-6-2 mix (tin, antimony, copper). The cups were then engraved on the machine."

Editor: Alan Williams

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Our approach to linking

How links are chosen for *The Pewterer*

You will find in this e-zine links to a number of websites. We select links that we believe are relevant to the subject of pewter or to the articles contained we are publishing, whether for further relevant, or practical, information or other key source material or for background information or otherwise.

We usually seek permission for each link. While links are selected and reviewed when the page is published, we are not responsible for the content of the websites, which may change and which are, in any event, beyond our control.

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Legal Deposit

The Pewter Society Medal Awards

On the 7th of July this year, past-master Charles Hull was presented the prestigious Pewter Society medal.

This presentation was performed by the current President of the Pewter Society, Mr Tony Chapman, at a special meeting held at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Charles is only the fourth person to have been awarded the medal.



Picture courtesy Mrs Trish Hayward

In the introduction to this presentation it was stated:

“As well as having an interest in modern pewter Charles has maintained for many decades an interest in old pewter and the Pewter Society. He was Curator of the Company’s collection and Chairman of the Curator’s committee for over thirty years, only retiring from the chair in 2006. In this period he strove to maintain, expand and protect the Company’s magnificent collection. It is acknowledged by all that this collection is one of the finest in the UK and many think it is the finest. He was also responsible for the Company’s archives and for the appointment of the late Ron Homer as Company Archivist, an appointment that was very fruitful for both the Company and the Society.”

The three previous recipients of this medal have been:

The late Dr R.F.Homer, for many years the Company Archivist
The late Mr B.Dubbe, the father of Dutch pewter collecting
Mr John Davis of Colonial Williamsburg in the USA.

We would like to put on record our congratulations to Charles Hull on receiving this award.

[The Hull family has an exceptionally long connection with the Company, being first mentioned in the records in 1451. The first Hull Master was in 1650 and subsequently there have been a further 12 Hull Masters. Charles himself was Master in 1992.

He has had a long interest in working with pewter and over the years has developed a vacuum casting machine which enable accurate and detailed copies of pewter and silver pieces to be made.

The medal has been developed from a small medal Ron Homer and Charles Hull cast for a visiting group of members of the American Pewter Collectors' Club in the 1970s. Ed]

A circular button with a blue border and a light blue gradient background. The word "Home" is written in blue text in the center of the circle.

[Home](#)

Maria Santos-Alcántara 'Pewter Art'

Maria Santos is a member of the Association of British Pewter Craftsmen. She joined because, following the launch of her website, she considered that her work in pewter would have a much larger exposure, and that it would be very useful to have the support of an organization of the standing of ABPC to guide her on her future path.

As is apparent from the interview set out below, Maria loves to work with pewter, feeling that not only does it have an enduring quality, but also that its flexibility enables her to recreate the beauty of nature in every small detail.

She is happy to take on commissions, some examples of which have been for: Christopher Peacock, Master of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers; and Reginald Denby, Master of the Worshipful Company of Plaisterers. Also for Aby Eniola, Actor; and Nick Munro, Designer as well as for St Michael and All Angels Church, Dalton, Lancashire.

Details/descriptions of her work have been published in Fleur Grenier's book: *Pewter: Designs and Techniques*.

The article which follows first appeared in, and is reproduced by kind permission of, *The ABPC Newsletter, August, 2011*

Maria Santos and *Repoussé*

Using a combination of enamels, veneers, semi-precious stones or glass, Maria creates mirrors, boxes, photo frames and decorative panels.

Some of her commissioned work is for large mirrors with decorative pewter surrounds. No two pieces are exactly alike as no casting or pressing is involved. Each piece has been worked individually from her own designs.

Pewter and silver foil are a relatively new innovation and foil's malleability enables quite intricate and *repoussé* chase techniques to be used.

Much of the inspiration for Maria's designs comes from the natural world and the flexibility of pewter enables her to recreate the beauty of nature in every small detail.



Pewter has an enduring quality and since it does not oxidise, it requires no other care than an occasional dust.

What is your first recollection of pewter?

From when I studied in Spain at the Instituto Gabriela Mistral, Madrid. The art teacher, Isabel Martinez, introduced us to the world of art and artisans. We experienced many forms of art, including painting, mosaics and working with metals, and I just fell in love with pewter.

Where did you learn about how to use pewter?

In 1996, I returned to Madrid and enrolled in a course taught by Carmen Mora, a professional artisan and teacher; and on my return to London, I attended a course taught in London by Bonnie Mackintosh.



Top from left: Cubist Abalone Shell; and Through the Fence. bottom: Oak Tree

When did you start making pewter items, what and why?

From 1996, I started to make photo frames and mirrors, later on experimenting with designs on plaques and boxes; eventually my hobby became a full-time job. I did work at various times with brass, copper and silver, but the malleability of pewter enables quite intricate *repoussé* techniques to be used.

What inspires your designs? Where did the idea of *repoussé* work come from?



Harrogate, 2011

Much of the inspiration for my designs comes from the natural world, and the flexibility of the pewter enables me to recreate the beauty of nature in every small detail. *Repoussé* requires a great deal of skill, control, sensitivity and understanding of the pewter. It is possible to make very simple designs and shapes or more technical and challenging designs including inlays inserts and cut outs, but a well-executed design can take a great deal of time, with each mark made by hand, working from the back and the front of the pewter.

How does the price of tin affect you?

Pewter has risen quite considerably over recent years. I implemented a price increase to my customers from the 1st April to reflect the higher cost of producing my work, not just the cost of pewter, which is my major outgoing, but also the cost of boxes, frames and other materials such as enamels and semi-precious stones; also the cost of carriage of heavy items, such as rolls of

pewter, is constantly changing. However, I did manage to hold my prices for approximately the three previous years.

What is your market?

Galleries and the craft sector, with an increasing number of commissions. My market has always been where my ability to produce an exclusive and bespoke design (and recognize a customer's wants) is appreciated.

What are your current work and exhibition plans?

At the current time I am concentrating on working my way through a lot of new orders received mostly through BCTF Harrogate, and also a more than healthy amount of commissions received either through galleries as usual or via enquiries to my new website, while also supplying my regular customers, Its a juggling act that keeps me on my toes, If only I had another pair of hands.

In the near future I am taking part in an exhibition at Thirsk in the Yorkshire Dale, Art Market at the Courthouse, and the Brewery Art Centre in Kendal.

What are you looking to ABPC to do for you?

Now that I am launching my website and my work in pewter will have a much larger exposure, it would be very useful to have the support of an organization of the standing of ABPC to guide me on my future path.

Maria Santos-Alcántara can be contacted at: 43 South Road, Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria CA17 4SY, Tel: 017683 72087.

Email: maria.santos@virgin.net

Website: maria.e.santos@btinternet.com



Top: Fallen Trees; and Waves and Abalone Shell.
Bottom: In the Frame; and Pines.