

# Introduction

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This Volume celebrates pewter and pewterers, old and new.

Old, in the form of John Paris who lived and worked in the 15<sup>th</sup> century; new in the form of David Clarke (Hang On ... !), silversmith-cum-pewterer who is hitting the headlines in the 21<sup>st</sup>. And new in the form of Sam Williams of AE Williams, Birmingham who, on behalf of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, created a stunningly beautiful pewter horse in seven days.

The Worshipful Company is about to go on a visit – not a search – to Bewdley, once a very important centre of pewter manufacturing.

Peter Spencer Davies has recently published an extensive book detailing his research into Scottish Pewter; and we note the collaboration between AR Wentworth of Sheffield and two, exciting young designers.

We are publishing just in time to celebrate Pewter Live 2014.

We hope you will enjoy this Volume and, as always, we like to hear back from our readers, so do please get in touch!

Alan Williams

<mailto:alan@thepewterer.org.uk>

## **Bewdley and the Worshipful Company of Pewterers**

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Bewdley and the Worshipful Company of Pewterers have a common benefactor - King Edward IV. King Edward granted the Company its first Charter in 1474; but two years earlier, in 1472, he had granted Bewdley borough status, as well as the right to hold a weekly market.

On the River Severn, Bewdley has been described as '*the most perfect small Georgian town in Worcestershire*'. The settlement of Wribbenhall, on the eastern side of the Severn, and now part of Bewdley, was recorded in the Domesday Book as being part of the manor of Kidderminster. By the 14th century, the town had come to be known as *Beau lieu*, French for "Beautiful place" - a compliment that fits well with John Leland's statement in his *Itinerary* two centuries later that "a man cannot wish to see a towne better".

The town and the Company have another thing in common - pewter. This article explores Bewdley's importance in the pewtering world, and how and why it prospered in this sense in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and then subsequently declined.

Research carried out in the 1980s demonstrated that Bewdley had been, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the base for the operations for one of the most important provincial pewter manufacturing enterprises of that century. Today Bewdley is a modest market town on the River Severn, for a long time overshadowed, economically, by many other more successful West Midland's towns.

It has a population of barely 10,000. The survival of many 18<sup>th</sup> century houses in the centre of the town, and the Severn Valley Railway with its many restored old Great Western steam engines, makes it an attractive place to visit as does.

A reconstruction at Bewdley Museum shows an 18th century dining room with pewter plates stored on a rack on the wall and pewter tankards, plates, serving dishes and a candlestick on the table which is set for a meal. Pewter was a substitute for silver in middle-class households.

Pewter-making in Bewdley lasted from the 16th until the 19th centuries, but the most dynamic period for the industry was in the hundred years or so following 1719, after John Duncumb had moved to the area. Duncumb and his successors used mass-production methods to meet different consumer demands and to compete with competition from other products such as brass, earthenware and porcelain.



The photo is of Pewterers House, a B&B in Bewdley, to be found in Pewterers Alley, just over the bridge from the town.

At a time when it was meant to be in national decline, Bewdley became, according to Malcolm Dick, the most important location for pewter-making in Britain.

A party of pewterers from the Company is making an expedition to Bewdley at the end of May.

See more at: <http://www.bewdley.org.uk/#sthash.axQX6EXR.dpuf>

Dr Malcolm Dick was born in Lichfield, lives in Sandwell and works in Birmingham. He is Director of the Centre for West Midlands History in the School of History and Cultures at the University of Birmingham,

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Richard Parsons, Chairman of Pewter Live, reports

Pewter Live 2014 will have a number of changes. If you come to visit us on the public day, Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May, between 1000-1200 hrs, or 1500 to 1700 hrs, you will find that the entrance is through a marquee, to the side of Pewterers' Hall, in Oat Lane. This will allow for more space in the recently refurbished Hall.

There will also be more to see, with an Open Competition entry in excess of 30 exhibits and a full student entry. There will also be more information stands and a full shop with 12

prominent pewtermakers selling their pewter directly to the public. This is a chance to talk to the people who make things; also, to arrange a special commission or make a purchase from their displays.

The Competition will be opened by the Lord Mayor at a Civic Reception and the prizes will be presented by the eminent designer, John Makepeace OBE, at the invitation-only prize-giving. He founded the Parnham House Trust and a school for Craftsmen in Wood; one of his students being Viscount Lindley who presented our prizes at Pewter Live three years ago.

A visit to [http://www.pewterers.org.uk/pewter\\_live/pewterlive2014.html](http://www.pewterers.org.uk/pewter_live/pewterlive2014.html) will give you full information about the Competition and we look forward to welcoming all our visitors to Pewter Live 2014.



## The ABPC Commercial Prize

The ABPC Council has raised from its members a prize fund for a new 'commercial prize' which, with the approval of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, it will award each year at the Worshipful Company's *Pewter Live* Competition, starting this year.

Richard Abdy, ABPC Chairman, said: "*The Worshipful Company of Pewterers' Pewter Live competition has done wonders in encouraging innovative design using pewter. But it has always been our aim to get a commercial angle to the competition and we are delighted to announce the creation of an "ABPC commercial prize" to be awarded to the Pewter Live entry with, in our judges' opinion, the greatest commercial potential.*"

The prize will, initially, be worth £250.

# Scottish Pewter



Peter Spencer Davies

Peter Spencer Davies has now published his new book, entitled 'Scottish Pewter 1600-1850'.

Peter, a Past-President of The Pewter Society, realised the need for such a book some 40 years ago, but it was only after his retirement from the University of Glasgow that he managed to find the time to complete what he says has "turned out to be a mammoth project".

The only previous work on the subject was Ingleby Wood's book '*Scottish Pewter-wares and Pewterers*' published in 1904, and surprisingly little had been published in the intervening years.

The research for the book involved the author visiting museums, heritage centres and churches to unearth and identify pewter that had often lain in storage, un-catalogued or unrecognised for generations. It also involved setting up his portable photographic studio in some of the most unlikely places, in order to take the images which illustrate the book.

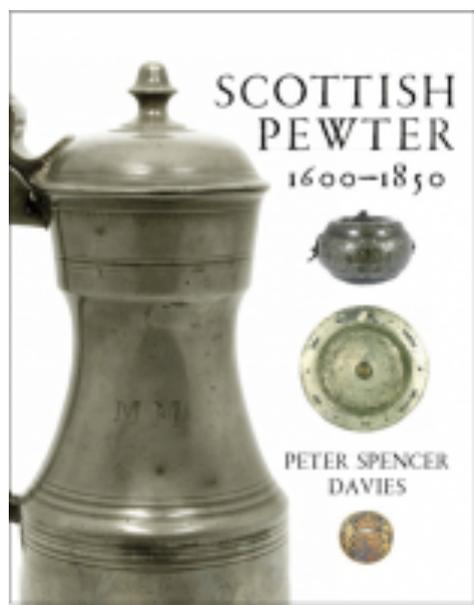
To his delight, he says, he discovered an incredibly rich resource of original manuscript records in the archives of the major towns and country houses. Information from these provides a backdrop to the history of the manufacture and use of pewter across the land.

The book has illustrations of all known types of Scottish pewter, including a large number of examples of hitherto unknown seventeenth century pieces, together with the names and dates of all traceable makers and their marks.

Rather ambitiously, it aims to be of interest to a broad spectrum of readers including collectors, historians, museum curators and anyone interested in Scotland's material heritage. It is being published by John Donald, the academic imprint of Edinburgh publishers Birlinn Ltd, and will hopefully be launched around Easter of 2014.

## Review by Alex Neish

"The new 350 page "*Scottish Pewter 1680-1850*" by Peter Spencer Davies, published by John Donald, is simply definitive. It covers the entire country from north to south, the principal makers, and resources the religious services of forgotten churches. It covers communion tokens and Scottish touch plates - and even comes up with new information on Edinburgh's



historic Magdalen chapel with its unique brods recording members of the Hammermen Incorporation and donors to the Chapel The book is not simply authoritative - it is the ultimate. There is no more to be said on the subject. At Stg 37.50 it is a bargain and indispensable.”

*Author of “Scottish Pewter”:* Peter Spencer Davies: <mailto:psd@dmgovan.com>  
*Scottish Pewterwares and Pewterers* by Ingleby Wood, published by Morton (Edinburgh) in 1904

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# Hang On, I'm Coming

by David Clarke



*The Pewterer* was delighted to learn that The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, Oslo, have purchased, for their permanent collection, 'Hang On I'm Coming!' from David Clarke.

David Clarke is often cited as one of Britain's most highly innovative silversmiths. He produces a wealth of covetable objects, pivotal in the renaissance of contemporary British silversmithing and metalwork. But he has over the past few years turned his hand to pewter. For an article about David Clarke in the context of pewter, see *The Pewterer*, volume 4.2 - <http://www.thepewterer.org.uk/home/the-pewterer-volume-4-2>).

The National Museum's main exhibitions are devoted to Design and Crafts from the last hundred years and the History of Styles from 1100 to 1900, as well as study collections of fashion and ceramic art. The vast collection ranges from antique Greek vases and East Asian art objects through to the history of European design. It covers costume, fashion and textiles, furniture, silverware, glass, ceramics and other crafts ... and now pewter.

<http://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/?module=articles;action=article.publicshow;id=606>

David Clarke: <https://misterclarke.wordpress.com/tag/pewter/>.

In a future issue, we intend to publish an article on pewter in Norway. <https://www.google.co.uk/#q=norway+pewter>

The National Museum in Oslo: [www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/](http://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/)

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# SUE PRYKE

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Congratulations are due to Sue Pryke. She has just won the *Homes & Gardens Designer Awards* for Ceramic & Glassware designer 2014! Not surprisingly, she's rather proud of that. But that success will not deter her from working with pewter. She is another designer engaged with AR Wentworth of Sheffield to produce high quality, attractive pewter-based designs. I asked her:

## What is your first recollection of pewter?

I knew about the *Pewter Live* project as a student, or at least through University, and teaching at De Montfort University and working with students on the Metalsmithing and Jewellery course. It's a great project, providing a wonderful opportunity to design for a competition and to liaise with a pewter factory, and always the possibility of work going into production.



## Where did you learn about how to use pewter?

It wasn't until last year that a meeting with Yorkshire Artspace and Made North Gallery that I came to meet Richard Abdy from Wentworth who was giving a talk about the factory and processes. Richard Abdy gave me a tour of the Wentworth factory and realized that the processes are not too dissimilar from many other manufacturing processes. Even with ceramics and glass, materials are still poured, pressed and turned in similar ways.

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

I've been working with factories in the UK over the last year to develop a tabletop collection. I looked for a material that had a harder, colder surface than ceramics and glass, one that would sit well next to my collection of wooden bowls, too.

The fact that pewter seemed to be a softer and warmer material than stainless steel, and was easily malleable, appealed to me. As a metal, it seems to be completely under-utilised across the tableware market. In terms of making, I'm guided by the expertise at Wentworth's, I discuss my ideas with the craftsmen and they suggest the best approach to making the pieces.



small and large spun & polished pewter bowls

## What methods do you use (spinning, casting etc)?

I only have a couple of pieces in production, and these are spun; but we're talking about casting for my new development for later in the year.

### **What inspires your designs? Where did the idea for your work come from?**

I'm interested in simple functional forms. I look for good, strong silhouettes in a shape but most importantly they should be functional. With the salad bowls, I liked the idea of a return in the curvature for gathering the salad when serving... rather than an open form which would offer no help when scooping the contents!

### **How does the price of tin affect you?**

The factory absorb the fluctuations in the material, I buy product at a set cost.

### **What is your market?**

I sell to high end high street retailers, such as Selfridges, The Conran Shop, Heals, and Fortnum & Mason. I also have a string of smaller independent gift shops that buy contemporary design. Most of the pieces in my collection are made in small scale, even one-offs from the wood turner, so products are made in limited editions. In terms of price, this can make the items fairly costly, but each piece has been more or less made by hand.



large spun & polished pewter bowl

The ceramic pieces are made by slipcasting in a mould but they are still handled individually. It is the same with the pewter pieces; they are made by a small team, each individual responsible for each step. It's not an automated process. It is quite exciting to find how many small decisions about how a piece is finished are made by one individual!

### **How do you reach that market?**

I've exhibited at key trade events over the last year, including Tent London (which is part of the London Design Festival) in September, as well as Decorex and also the Home show, (part of Top Drawer) in January. They are all major events for homeware buyers to place orders for their shops for the season.

### **Where did your association with Wentworths begin?**

A year ago, so it is recent. I've found Wentworth's to be a great company, and one of the easiest manufacturers to work with. They are helpful in terms of production, suggesting alternatives; the skilled craftsmen have years of experience to draw upon and are happy to discuss processes. And they always deliver swiftly.

### **What (if any) are your current work and exhibition plans?**

I co-curated an exhibition recently for the Contemporary Applied Arts Gallery in London, entitled *Crafts into Industry*, examining possible relationships between makers and industry. This opened in the same week as the Modern Crafts Market at Heals,

(a two-week Crafts Market, which I was also part of). it's a key topic currently with huge focus on the handmade and crafted product. From my perspective, industry also offers these handmade skills; it's just not seen in the same light as a singular craftsman who works from his studio. There is a wealth of traditional skills within industry to celebrate and draw upon; we still have a strong crafts heritage in the UK and customers like to hear about the provenance and background to products they buy.

## Contact Sue Pryke

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Photos: Yeshen Venema

A circular button with a dark grey background and a white border, containing the word "Home" in white text.

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# My kingdom for a horse!

Well, not quite; but it is the Year of the Horse and the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Shinzo Abe, was born in the Year of the Horse.

What better present, then, for the hosts to give him at the Civic Dinner held to recognise his visit to London, than a Horse? The hosts were the City of London Corporation; and the venue would be the Guildhall.

But where to get the Horse and out of what material? To cut a long story short, I was asked whether The Worshipful Company of Pewterers, could possibly arrange this - and in ten days!

There was only one person who, in to my mind, could realise this project in the time available; and that was Sam Williams (no relation), the brilliant young craftsmen at AE Williams in Birmingham.



“Crafted by A E Williams of Birmingham for the Worshipful Company of Pewterers and presented to His Excellency Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, by Sir Roger Gifford on behalf of the City of London Corporation. 1st May 2014”



Kevin Watkins

Issues such as other work, budgets and cost were put to one side. “Yes,” said Sam; “of course we can do it”.

Two days later the design had been sourced and the sculptor had been engaged to create the model (out of milliput, a multi-purpose sculpting material that sets very hard very quickly).



Sam Williams

By the seventh day, now with Sam on business in New York, and Sam's father, David, in charge, the mould had been made (by Kevin Watkins, who specialises in all the difficult moulds needed by AE Williams), the horse cast (centrifugally) and soldered, and polished.



Sir Roger Gifford presents the Horse to the Prime Minister of Japan

I had said that I did not want a shiny, silver-like, finish; I wanted the deeper, glorious luminosity of pewter. And that is what Sam and David achieved. From start to finish, the job took them ten days. Pretty impressive!

On the eighth day the Horse was delivered to Guildhall and on the tenth it was presented to Mr Abe, in the name of the Corporation linked to that of the Worshipful Company, by Sir Roger Gifford, the Lord Mayor's Representative, at the Civic Dinner.

What a wonderful example of how an ancient livery Company, the City and modern craftsmen, working together, can deliver beautiful product!

## Alan Williams

Court Assistant, the Worshipful Company of Pewterers

AE Williams: [www.pewtergiftware.com](http://www.pewtergiftware.com)

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# John Paris, pewterer of London: The Logge Register

The 1480s were exciting times for the Worshipful Company of Pewterers. They had obtained their first Charter from Edward IV in 1474 and were now well on their way to obtaining their own hall. Pewter was doing well and many members of the company were substantial men. The mid-80s were, however, challenging times, for Edward IV had died on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1483, his brother, Richard, had taken the throne and, on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1485, Henry VII had won the Battle of Bosworth.

Welsh's history of the Pewterers' Company (the Modernised Version by Major GS Johnson, second edition by William Grant) contains entries, on pages 45 to 47, (some of which are reproduced below) referring to one John Paris, "pewterer of London".

An entry (p 45) records his death on 26 April "*in the first year of the reign of King Richard III*", that is, 1483; also the fact that his obit was kept on 26<sup>th</sup> April yearly; and that 5p was paid for bread and ale, and 12p to a priest, at his burial.

John Paris was the senior member of the Company and Master at the time of his death. He had been Master several times, in 1467, 1476 and 1480. He is recorded as having left money to the Company to be spent on purchasing a pall or hearse cloth of Cloth of Gold; and also money for the Hall.

Interestingly, last year Michael Sutcliffe found copies of two relevant entries of Wills in the *Logge Register*, a register of 15<sup>th</sup> century wills.

The first was of the will of John Paris himself, "pewterer of London". He made his Will on 14 April 1485 and it was proved on 11 May that year. This provides evidence from the other end so to speak, of the bequest of the hearse cloth, the gift of money for the Hall, and much other interesting information.

However, John Paris could not have died in 1483, yet made his last will and testament on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1485. The entry in Welch must be wrong; and must have intended to refer to the last year of Richard's reign or, more likely, the first year of Henry VII's reign. We are talking of his death in 1485.

As was the custom of the time, John Paris left money for the saying of Requiem Masses for his soul.

He clearly trusted his wife, Agnes, for he appointed her his sole executrix.

He was also, not surprisingly, a man of some substance, since he left Agnes, amongst other things, all his "*londis and tenements with ther appurtenances around Algate aswele in Grenewich as elsewhere in the countie of Kent*", together with his "*brewhous in Holborne callid the Swane*". This gift was conditional upon her not remarrying, and if she did remarry, the property was to go to their daughter, also called Agnes.

After a gift of 20 shillings to each of the prisons at "*Ludgate, Newgate, the Flete, the Kinges Bench and the Marchalsy*" for the provision of "*brede among the poure prisoners ther*", comes the bequest to the Company of £10 "*for a cloth of gold to serve for the buryelles of the brethren of the craft of peautrers in London*", the money only to be paid once the Company had, within five years, acquired the cloth itself! As the entry in Welch records, the cloth was obtained that same year.

He also left £10 towards the "*purchessing of an hall for the seid craftte*" provided that the hall was bought within five years! There is an interesting story surrounding the acquisition of the Company's first Hall (in Lime Street) and that can be found related in Welch (pp 45 & 46). Welch also records the receipt of the money in 1486, paid over by Robert Lytton; so the Company must have acquired title to the Hall by then.

(There must have been a building on the land, but the Great Hall for feasts etc was not completed for nearly another decade.)

The purchase price of the land for the Hall was £120, so John Paris' contribution was substantial.

Not surprisingly, the connection with pewter continues. Amongst John Paris's many other bequests was one of £20 to William Marchall "*my servaunt so that he pay for iij blokkes of tyn which he hadde of me and for C weight of saltsalors and for certeyn tole which he hade of me as it apperith in my book and beside that make and gyf unto my seid wif a true accompt and rekenyng of all such money and goodes as I have putt in his handes of trust*".

William, it appears, was (one of) his apprentice(s). There is, however, no record of the apprenticeship being transferred (as was the custom, following an apprenticeship master's death) to another pewterer, so maybe William had qualified and been made free of the Company by this time; or maybe he was just as described, '*a servaunt*' who handled some of his master's business.

The second will is that of John Paris' wife, Agnes, herself. She did not live long to enjoy her inheritance. She made her will on 25 February 1485/6 "*the first yere of the reigne of King Henry the vijth*", and it was proved on 27 April 1486. In her will, she described herself as: the "*late the wiff of John Parys dede, citezin while he levid and peautre of London*".

She appointed, as her executors, her new husband and her daughter by her first husband, also by now called Agnes Lytton (it seems she had taken her

mother's second husband's name, unless she had in the meantime married a Lytton son! But if the latter, her mother did not mention him in her will).

She wished to be buried in the parish church of St Botolfe, Billingsgate and she desired her executors to dispose of her assets in the manner that her first husband had required of his estate.

Of William Marchal there is no further record; and there were no sons of the family.

#### Robert Lytton

He was Agnes' second husband and, with her daughter by John Paris, also executor of Agnes senior's will.

#### The Logge Register

The Richard III Society has been instrumental in the production of the Logge Register.

All 379 wills and testaments in the register of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury for the years 1479 to 1486 have been 'translated' and reproduced into two volumes. The name of the *Register* comes from the first will in the collection, that of John Logge, a woodmonger of London.

Some of the wills are in English, some are in Latin, with translations. Much can be learned from the wills of the famous, but those of ordinary people make fascinating reading.

Welch's History of the Pewterers' Company, Modernised Version, Second Edition: published by The Worshipful Company of Pewterers, 2003. ISBN 0 9500012 2 8

With thanks to Michael Sutcliffe, Past Master of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers for finding the Wills; and to William Grant, Past Master and also the Company Historian, for his helpful comments. I have to make it clear, however, that responsibility for the article remains firmly mine!

#### **Alan Williams**

The Logge Register: Lesley Boatwright, Moira Habberjam, Peter Hammond (eds.), The Logge Register of PCC Wills, 1479 to 1486, Richard III Society, Knaphill (UK), 2008. ISBN 978-0-904893-18-2

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# THE COMPANY'S HALLS

## Extracted from the Worshipful Company of Pewterers' 500th Anniversary Banquet Menu, 23 April 1974

The first recorded place of meeting of the Company was at the Austin Friars, where a Hall was hired as needed, until the Company in 1486 took possession of their own newly-built Hall which they had started in 1475 in Lime Street, on the site occupied by the Company until shortly before the last War.

The Hall was built by direct labour and the Beadle acted as Clerk of Works. The site itself cost £120 and was purchased by or through, one William Smallwood, a Past Master of the Company. This Hall continued in use throughout the sixteenth century, being used not only for Court and Livery Meetings, but also for Wardmotes, weddings of Pewterers and meetings of other Companies who hired it, very much as the present Hall is now.

This Hall was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666 and the new Hall was started on the same site in 1667 and virtually completed in 1670. This Hall was again used for many other functions besides those of the Company. The Great Fire, which destroyed most of the Company's property, had had a crippling effect on its finances. Accordingly the new Hall was noteworthy more for the decorative treatment of individual rooms than for its overall structure. A fire of 1840, which is often, incorrectly, said to have destroyed the Hall, did unfortunately destroy many of its finest features.

In the meanwhile the Company had in fact let the Hall on a permanent basis. The last occasion on which the Hall was used by the Company was for its November dinner in 1901. Thereafter its business activities were transferred to one of its houses facing Lime Street and its dinners took place elsewhere.

The second Hall was finally pulled down in 1932, after it had been found to be in too ruinous a condition to be worth repairing. The site was let on a building lease, the Company declining to take up an option to use part of the new building for its Hall.

The oak panelling and plaster ceiling were presented to the London County Council and were re-erected in the Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, Shoreditch. Some panelling and three chandeliers were put into store and are now in use in the present Hall, and the original entrance arch portals stand incongruously in a building leading to the Department of Zoology in University College, London.

The Company then became nomadic, being given hospitality by the Worshipful Companies of Grocers and Cutlers. The possibility of erecting a new Hall on a site in Queen Victoria Street was considered, but this site was required by the City Corporation for a fire station following the Second World War. This proved to be a blessing in disguise for the Company, since the Corporation was persuaded to exchange the Queen Victoria Street site for the site of the present Hall in Oat Lane, off Gresham Street. The foundation stone of this Hall was

laid on 10th March 1960 by the then Lord Mayor, Sir Edmund Stockdale, whose successor, Sir Bernard Waley-Cohen, declared the new Hall open on 15th May 1961.

The building of the present, or third, Hall has proved to be a turning point in the history of the Company. The Hall was built to the neo-Georgian designs of Mr. David Nye and built by Fairweather Builders Ltd. It incorporates the panelling and the chandeliers from the second Hall and includes many fine features. It is one of only two completely free-standing Livery Halls in the City, i.e. it is a Hall completely unattached to the offices of any other body.

Having a Hall has given the Company the opportunity to collect and house one of the finest collections of antique British Pewter in existence and to display many of its other treasures. The Hall is now the focal point for pewter, both ancient and modern, in Britain today. It is the registered office of the Association of British Pewter Craftsmen, the trade body for the pewter industry today, and each year the Pewter (collectors) Society holds its Annual General Meeting in the Hall.

The number of queries regarding both antique and modern pewter which come there are proof enough that Pewterers' Hall is once again taking its rightful place as the fountain head for all matters pertaining to Pewter in Britain.



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# Miranda Watkins

[https://  
sites.go](https://sites.go)

When I approached Miranda to interview her about her work with *Wentworths*, her enthusiasm for pewter was immediately apparent. She said: "I enjoy working with pewter; it is a wonderful, traditional material. I have been able to create accessible, contemporary designs, which I hope enhance its best qualities, and encourage an increased awareness and appreciation for this versatile metal."



Miranda's work with Wentworth has resulted in a highly successful collaboration between designer and manufacturer. To view their award winning pewter designs, and for more information please visit [http://www.mirandawatkins.com/col\\_tabletop.html](http://www.mirandawatkins.com/col_tabletop.html)

I asked Miranda to tell me more about her work.

*What is your first recollection of pewter?*

My first recollection of pewter is at my grandparents' house when I was young. They had a pewter coffee service and a pair of tankards with ornate engraved serpents that belonged to my grandfather.

*Where did you learn about how to use pewter?*

I learned how to use pewter through my collaboration with A.R. Wentworth in Sheffield and during my time as a prop maker, creating costume props for film and TV.

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

I worked with pewter in the film industry, initially as a prop maker creating costume props for film and TV. But really, I learned a more comprehensive understanding for working with pewter, when I joined forces with A.R. Wentworth in 2007 and embarked on a collaborative project. I felt there was great scope for a collection of contemporary pewter homeware products.

Wentworth and I created the Gleam Pewter Collection comprising: vases, bowls and candlesticks. It was launched in 2008, and won The Eureka Design Award in the same year.

We have since expanded the collection and introduced a barware range, complete with modern tankard! In 2010, Wallpaper\* magazine invited us to create a travel/picnic cocktail set for Wallpaper\* Handmade – a special exhibition and issue of the iconic magazine.

The Martini Cocktail Set has subsequently been acquired by the V&A in London for their permanent collection.

We have recently completed a commission for bathroom specialist Balineum – a contemporary bathroom set in polished pewter (see below), launched at Decorex International in September 2013, and have more collaborative projects and commissions in the pipeline for 2014.

*What methods do you use (spinning, casting etc)?*

The method I have focused on is spinning.

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



Materials and processes inspire my work and are an intrinsic part of the design process. I developed the first designs for pewter following a visit to A.R. Wentworth's factory in Sheffield. It was the spinning technique that grabbed my attention and inspired the creation of our Gleam Pewter Collection.

*How does the price of tin affect you?*

The price of tin does have an impact on the pricing of our products. Our pewter designs are often mistaken for stainless steel at first sight, yet pewter is more valuable and therefore more expensive than stainless steel - a metal more commonly used in the creation of tabletop products. The price of tin fluctuates,

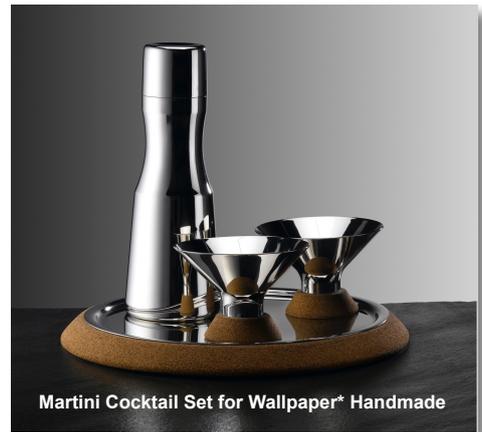
like any metal, impacting on the production costs and ultimately the retail price to our customers.

*What is your market?*

Our market is mid to high end / luxury. The Gleam Pewter Collection sells in specialist design stores around the world to design-conscious customers.

*How do you reach that market?*

We reach our market through selling our designs in specialist design stores. Buyers for these stores, learn about us when we exhibit at international trade fairs and via press coverage we've enjoyed in newspapers and design magazines worldwide.



*What (if any) are your current work and exhibition plans?*



In January 2014 we exhibited the entire Gleam Pewter Collection at *Maison et Objet* in Paris, and will certainly exhibit during the London Design Festival in September. Meanwhile, we are working on new collaborations and projects.

*Have you thought about joining the ABPC?*

Not until now, but I am interested to learn more about the ABPC!

Contact Miranda Watkins

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Product shots - Graham Pym  
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# The Sandy Law pewter collection

"It's old and grey but some people still love it"; thus John Windsor headed his article on pewter in *The Independent* on Saturday 6th September 1997. Writing on the eve of a major pewter sale at the then Phillips Auction House (now Bonham's) in Chester, Windsor went on to say: "Some collectors are afraid of old pewter. Not because the tin alloy contains a little lead and antimony, a close relation to arsenic, but because the unsorted heaps of grey metal tankards, tea pots and candlesticks on traders' stalls are so perplexing."

The sale was of "the biggest ever and probably the finest collection of British and European pewter comes under the hammer.

"What little old pewter is left has attracted only a small band of dedicated collectors. It has been a cheap collectible for the past century.

"But tin, pewter's main ingredient, is still the fourth most valuable metal (after platinum, gold and silver), and in the old days it was sufficiently valuable for the price of re-casting a battered pewter vessel to be fixed at just a third of its original price."

The collection Windsor was writing about was Dr Sandy Law's; Dr Law had been a stamp collector but, clearly, fell in love with pewter. Windsor went on to say: "Charles Hull, author of the Shire Album publication, *Pewter*, described to me how the country's stock of antique pewter got lost as China became fashionable at the end of the 18th century. ... Britain's 17th century population of six million owned 30,000 tons of pewter wares. Now there was a tenth of that quantity in a population ten times the size."

In the Sandy Law collection was a pewter plate, now owned by the Royal Palaces, known as the Arthur Plate, and displayed in the Great Kitchens complex at Hampton Court. Dr Law had bought the plate from a private collector.

We intend to publish an article on the Arthur Plate in a future issue of this e-zine.

Further reading material: *The Sandy Law Pewter Collection* (paperback), compiled by Phillips International Auctioneers and Valuers.

*Pewter*, by Charles Hull, published by Shire Album 280. ISBN: 0 7478 0152 5

John Windsor's article (Money: It's old and grey but some people still love it) in *The Independent*, of Saturday, 6th September, 1997

Albert Bartram became a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in 2009.

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# Villers of Birmingham

Alex Neish is well-known for his Collection of pewter. That Collection is now happily housed at the Smith Museum ([www.smithartgalleryandmuseum.co.uk](http://www.smithartgalleryandmuseum.co.uk)) in Stirling. The art gallery and museum was established in 1874 and holds the keys of Stirling's past.

Mr Neish continues to collect pewter and told me that he has recently added to the Collection a number of items, including two cake stands (illustrated here), one of which he believes was made by an 18th century pewterer, a Birmingham man, called Villers.

I looked up Villers on the internet and found reference to 'John Birch and William Villers' of Birmingham (1772-1786). The site claimed that they were the first recorded major firm of Birmingham pewterers.

But 18<sup>th</sup> century Birmingham is not an easy place to research. It did not have Borough status until municipal reform after the 1832 Parliamentary Reform Act. Even though it was already a significant metal-working town by the time of the Civil War, 1642-1646, it had no local government and therefore lacks many of the types of records that can be found elsewhere.



Notwithstanding the claim by the website that Birch and Villers were the first Birmingham pewterers, there were other pewterers in Birmingham who were working before Birch and Villers. One example is the Woods one of whom was Master of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers and, later, father-in-law to John Duncumb of Bewdley. (The current Master of the Company will be leading a visit by members of the Company to Bewdley later this year - see the companion article elsewhere in

this e-zine).

There were a number of pewterers in Birmingham in the 18th and 19th centuries:

John Wilkes 1765-72  
 Birch and Villers 1772-86  
 Villers and Wilkes 1805-33  
 Edward Villers Wilkes 1839-80

Information about Birch and Villers is limited. There are known pieces of pewter marked by 'Birch and Villers' and some, mostly from the late 1820s and 1830s, marked by 'Villers and Wilkes'.

There are items in circulation purporting to have been made by 'Birch and Villers' which are 20th century reproductions, sometimes made with poorly struck marks so one might see only 'Villers'. There are also 20th century items circulating marked with reproduction touches of William Wright. These types of 'repros' were being made in the 1920s and 1930s.

But congratulations to Alex Neish on his find!

### **Alan Williams**

The author, in thanking David Hall for his research into Birmingham pewterers, would like to make it clear that the conclusions are his, and his alone.

A circular button with a dark grey background and a white border, containing the word "Home" in white text.

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# Rochester Cathedral - and pewter



The Chapter Door, leading to the Library

Rochester is a Medway Town. It has a fascinating history, a medieval castle with an enormous keep (from the top battlements of which, on a fine day you can, as was intended, see for many miles).

It houses the French Hospital (as to which see the separate article in this issue) and has strong associations with Charles Dickens, who once lived in the town and based many of his stories on it. It also has the second oldest Cathedral in the country.

Early in 2013, the Very Reverend Dr Mark Beach, Dean of Rochester, and also a Court Assistant of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, arranged for the Livery of the Company to visit the Cathedral. I was in the party.

During the tour, conducted by Helen Colvin, we were shown a magnificent oak door, the door to the Cathedral Library. We were told that the carved 'wooden' bosses on it, painted the same colour as the doors, were in fact made of pewter. Much interest and excitement!

Was it true?

When I passed on this information to him, the Dean admitted that "I was a little surprised when it was suggested that these painted bosses might be pewter. So I went to look at the door and found that they are indeed made of metal, maybe pewter."

He immediately asked Graham Keevill, the Cathedral archaeologist,



A panel from the Chapter Door showing some of the many bosses



whether he could shed any light on the subject.

Mr Keevil thought that the bosses did look as though they could be made of pewter and that, pewter being a pretty resilient material, he was not surprised that, on a quick inspection, they looked to be in fair condition.

His initial feeling was that the door might be part of Charles Hodgson Fowler's early 20th-century work rather than anything much earlier. But he did some research in the Cathedral's extensive archives and found that while various entries in Holbrook suggested that the carved door frame received quite a lot of attention

during the late 19th and 20th centuries, the door itself was scarcely mentioned. He said: "The Holbrook volumes have references to the Chapter Room door. It looks as though it is a bit earlier than I thought."

[Please see below for a brief explanation about who Diane Holbrook was. Ed.]

Ian Stewart, Surveyor of the Fabric said: "I have come to the conclusion that the library door *is* Cottingham, and my source is the attached and, very annoyingly, unattributed article in the Friends' Annual Report of 1991/2 (See below. Ed.).

"More recently, I identified a problem concerning the splitting of the wood in the panels rather than anything to do with bosses. But I am sure that the door would always have been grained to simulate oak, and I would not be surprised if the present finish is the original from the 1820s."

If it is right that the door is Cottingham's work of the 1820s rather than Hodgson Fowler's of the 1900s, Graham Keevill thinks that makes it considerably more interesting and significant!

"I suspect that the bosses have always been painted to the same colour as the door – but I can't be absolutely certain of that. The references in Holbrook do specifically refer to 'colour for stoping' (?) and 'graining' the door', so I think it was treated to look pretty much as it is now from the start.

"The bosses imitate decorative stone carving, and presumably using pewter was both easier and cheaper than trying to do something similar in wood (which would have required a lot of laborious hand carving). I think I'd expect them



A similar boss, but showing wear; is that pewter showing through the graining?

to tone the pewter in to match the treatment of the timber.”

He thought it would be nice if any of Cottingham’s drawings survived – and that if they did they would most probably be in the Medway or National Archives. Sadly, it seems that rather a lot of his papers went down with him when the liner he was on sank on the Atlantic crossing.

It would not surprise me if the Dean were not now thinking that maybe he should seek funding to restore the doors. Perhaps with aid from the Pewterers!

One final word: pewter is an alloy of tin, copper and antimony! No pewter alloy approved by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers has contained lead for centuries.

## Alan Williams

**Diane Holbrook** Graham Keevill says that Diane Holbrook carried out an extensive (or rather exhaustive) review of the entire Chapter archive (now largely held by Medway Council), and produced a compendium/catalogue of all conservation and similar work to the Cathedral fabric documented therein, from the medieval period to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The compendium is arranged in two companion sets – one sets everything out in date order, while the other is thematic. She also wrote a very useful paper giving an overview of the record of past work in the book entitled *Faith and Fabric: a History of Rochester Cathedral* (Yates N ed 1996). This is out of print and copies are hard to come by.

**Charles Hodgson Fowler** (1840 – 1910) was a prolific English Ecclesiastical architect who specialised in building and, especially, restoring churches. He was born in Nottinghamshire. In the early 1860s, following an apprenticeship with Sir George Gilbert Scott, he became an Associate of RIBA in 1863. In 1864, he moved to Durham, where he lived for the rest of his life. Fowler's initial appointment in Durham was as Clerk of the Works at Durham Cathedral. In 1870 he became a Fellow of the RIBA. At various times, he held the position of Architect to Rochester and Lincoln Cathedrals. From 1885 to the time of his death, he was Architect to the Dean and Chapter of Durham, a post that had previously been held by Sir George Gilbert Scott.

**Lewis Nockalls Cottingham** (1787 – 1847) was a British architect who pioneered the study of Medieval Gothic architecture. He was a restorer and conservator of existing buildings. In 1825 he became architect to Rochester Cathedral.

**Rochester:** Medway Visitor Information Centre (01634)843666, call in or write to them at 95, Street, Rochester ME1 1LX. Their website is: [www.medway.gov.uk/tourism](http://www.medway.gov.uk/tourism)

High

**Rochester Cathedral:** [www.rochestercathedral.org](http://www.rochestercathedral.org)

**Restoration House:** [www.restorationhouse.co.uk](http://www.restorationhouse.co.uk)

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**Graham Keevill:**  
[www.keevillheritage.co.uk](http://www.keevillheritage.co.uk)

[Please see the next page for extracts from the enigmatic Friends’ Annual Report of 1991/2; and from Holbrook. Ed.]

## From the Friends' Annual Report of 1991/2

In 1827-28, the south wall of the south choir transept was encased in stone from the foundation to the roof. This acted as a solid buttress to the wall. Only the briefest mention of this is made in the Stevens' notebook and it was identified there as being the north-west transept! This repair by its very nature required that the windows and exterior mouldings be entirely reconstructed, and in the roof area, a new window was inserted. This was certainly a major undertaking but no reason for it appears in the archives of the Dean and Chapter. Mr Timme, publisher of a history of the cathedral, makes reference to a 'subsidence of brick' and 'a failure of buttressing', and this seems to be a reasonable explanation<sup>23</sup>. This work has proved to be as satisfactory as the tower was not. In connection with this work, the brickwork blocking the arches opposite the chapter room door was removed, and the richly carved door frame was 'restored'<sup>24</sup>. A new and appropriate door was designed by Cottingham and has remained in place up to the

present. The two windows adjacent to the door were opened up and glazed. Work was done to the ceilings of both main and east transepts.

After these works, there was a pause of nearly ten years before the final works carried out under Mr Cottingham's direction were started.

Brief extract from Diane Holbrook's *Compendium* (courtesy of Graham Keevil)

'The present door dates from Cottingham's time. He had found the archway partially blocked, so that an ordinary square headed door might be inserted, a most barbarous arrangement'  
p.108 Bell's Cathedral Series 1897

Report of work done Jan. 1825 to Feb. 1829 DRc/Emf/135  
Doorway leading to Chapter Room recarved and restored; a new wooden door.  
Recesses to the right of the Chapter Room as you enter re-opened and partially restored.

RESTORATION STONEMWORK & NEW DOOR 1828 DRc/FTb/159  
...Individuals and sums paid listed in Treasurer's Accounts  
(includes L.N. Cottingham for doorcase etc. Chapter Room) £56

Clerk of Works 12 January 1828 DRc/FTv/183  
G. Wilkins disbursements: 5 days Obeee at Library door; Firkin of plaster for casts from do... colour for stoping Library door;.. 4 grit rubbers for Library door.

Stonework restoration 25 February 1828 DRc/FTv/183  
Wm. Bagg, stone carver: workman's wages and 32 weeks lodgings for restoration of Library Doorway: £101.10s.7d.  
Rec'd: L.N.Cottingham: charges for Library Door with lock and graining £56.

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# Philip Wakeham

Philip Wakeham, artist, made his name in pewter, first working with the late Tom Neal, and then on his own account. Now, for various reasons but, principally it seems, the high cost of tin, he has turned to bronze. *The Pewterer* tracked him down to Cornwall, where he now lives, and interviewed him about his work.



## What is your first recollection of pewter?

I think I've always been aware of pewter in the clichéd tankard sense. But I first became aware of it as a material I could use when I met Charles Grant, who then introduced me to Tom Neal

## Where did you learn about how to use pewter?

It was with Tom Neal that I learnt first his innovative techniques of working with pewter. And then I taught myself the lost wax casting - in my kitchen oven!



The Poulterers' Swans

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

It was with Tom Neal, I think. The first thing I made, using a rubber mould, was a paper knife with a cast pewter handle.

## What work did you create when you were in

## partnership with Tom Neal?

I made a wide verity of commissions, from a salmon to funeral urns; and together we did a number of notable commissions, such as the Millennium bowl, along with Christopher Laurence, for the Worshipful Company of

Pewterers, and two commemorative plaques for the Museum of Rowing in Henley to mark its opening by the HM The Queen.

It was during this time that I designed and made the Seahorse Covered cup which was later bought by Alex Neish's Museum of British Pewter [Now at the Smith Museum in Stirling. See The Pewterer, issue x.x. Ed].

## **What did you do after you left Tom? Is your work materially different?**

After dissolving my partnership with Tom, I was trying to make a living working in pewter and bronze, but I was dealing with increasing mental health problems brought about by a mis-diagnosed learning disability from childhood.

Unfortunately, it took eight years finally to get the correct treatment, so it is only within the last three years that I have been working again, now solely in bronze.



## **What methods did you use (spinning, casting etc)?**

All my pewter work was made using the 'lost wax' process as, although it is a very lengthy and difficult process, this gave me the most creative freedom. I also used welding rather than soldering, which enabled me to produce work with no solder lines.

## **What inspires your designs?**

When working to commission, my designs are very much inspired by the client and the details of the commission, though my personal work is very much rooted in the figurative tradition and the natural and manmade environment, whilst drawing on the ideas of Carl Jung, and Iain McGilchrist

## **Tell me about the Pair of Swans; and the Ewelme Church Finials and the Seahorse Covered Cup**

I designed and made the Seahorse Covered cup as my 'master piece'. I chose a covered cup simply because I liked the potential of the form, and the seahorse because of the association with the Pewterer's Company. The Swans table centrepiece was commissioned by the then Master of the Worshipful Company of Poulterers'. I chose swans as they featured on that

Company's coat of arms - and for their obvious sculptural grace

## How did the price of tin affect you?

The price of tin stopped me using pewter for my own work. When it hit £50 a kilo, I simply couldn't afford to use it any more, as it was cheaper (because I cast my own work) for me to work in bronze; and bronze has a much higher perceived value. However, I must say that I always enjoyed working with pewter.

## What was your market?

When I worked in pewter, my main market was word-of-mouth commissions, but they were very diverse: essentially anybody who wanted something made specifically in pewter, for what ever reason. My secondary market was selling through craft galleries. Now, my main market is private collectors whom I reach through art galleries. I am currently in discussion for a public commission of a life-sized bronze figure; this came about via my Facebook artist page.



The Seahorse Covered Cup

## What (if any) are your current work and exhibition plans?

I am very busy at present making and promoting my work, though it is currently almost all cast in bronze.

## Philip Wakeham

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Website: <http://philipwakeham.com/>

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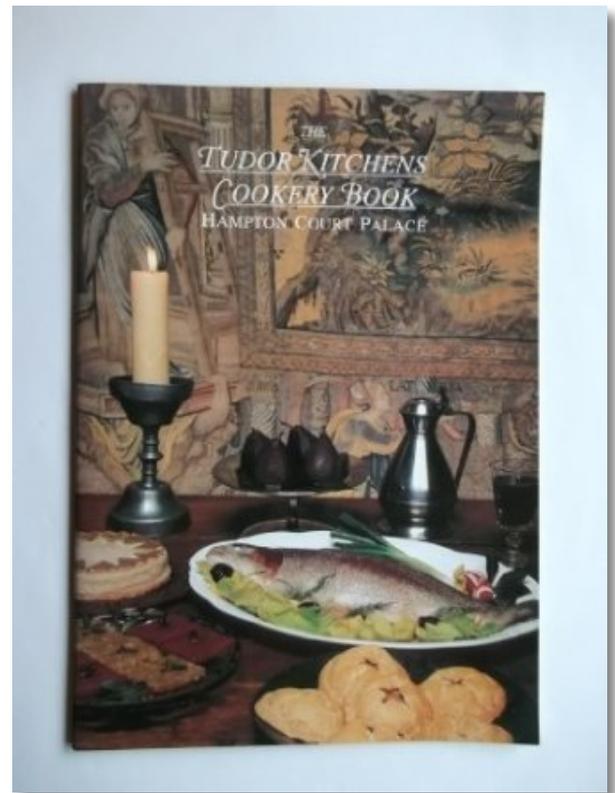
# The Tudor Kitchens Cookery Book

Hampton Court Palace

When you are next at [Hampton Court](#), you must call in on the [Great Kitchens](#) to see not only a marvellous display of mediaeval cooking utensils, but also the magnificent collection of pewter items, many of them made by [AE Williams of Birmingham](#).

In the shop, look for (and buy!) the *Tudor Kitchens Cookery Book*. Not only does it contain a series of popular Tudor recipes adapted for today's cook, but it is beautifully illustrated with photographs of the food; and most of the illustrations contain at least one item of pewter.

The shop also sells a wide variety of goods, from pewter to mead; and Hampton Court Palace (and the gardens) are worth a whole day. When you are there, see if you can spot Liveryman, Marc Meltonville!



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## The French Hospital, Rochester - and pewter

Last year, a small group of members of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers visited Rochester. One of the places they visited was the French Hospital. What is a *French* Hospital doing in Rochester, and why does it have a pewter collection? The Deputy Governor of the French Hospital, Peter Duval, told me about it; and Dr Tessa Murdoch, one of the Trustees of the Hospital, told me about the pewter.

Peter Duval: "The French Hospital was founded in 1718 with money left by a wealthy Huguenot - Jacques de Gastigny. De Gastigny had a successful career, with the title of *Master of the Buckhounds to King William III*, and was by all accounts a most generous and considerate man. Despite his position, he was concerned for those of his fellow refugees to this country who had fallen upon hard times.



"When he died in 1708, among other legacies he left £1000, to be split into £500 to purchase the Old Pest House in the parish of St Giles Without Cripplegate in north London, to house 'Poor, infirm or sick French Protestants, and £500 to establish a trust to fund the running of the establishment. The Hospital was established under a Royal Charter of King George I, with a Board of Directors drawn from the Huguenot community.

"The Hospital remained in St Giles's until 1865 when, following an offer by the City of London to purchase the site, it moved to a purpose-built French château-style building in Victoria Park, east London. It remained in Victoria Park until 1941, when it was forced to relocate by enemy action. The residents were dispersed, mainly to guest-houses on the south coast where their welfare could be monitored by directors who lived locally.



1/2 pint, footed drinking vessel with decorative scored bands around the base and high girth, and an ornate cast handle. 1/2PINT

"The Hospital re-formed after the war, but was threatened with a compulsory purchase order by the Inner London Education Authority which wanted the building for educational purposes. Accordingly, the Hospital moved again, this time to an Edwardian country house in Compton's Lea near Horsham. For many reasons this was not a success, so it closed down while the Trustees reconsidered the Hospital's future.

"One of the directors at the time was Bishop Chevasse of Rochester, who introduced the Board to a derelict square in the centre of the that city - Theobald Square. The Square was purchased in 1958, and the first residents moved into the 39 flats the next year.

"We have expanded since then, and now have 59 flats, gardens, a common room and other facilities. We are currently looking at adding a further 4 flats, as we have

an ever-expanding waiting list, today numbering over 100.

“It is still managed by a Board of Directors who meet every month, and applicants must ‘satisfy the Directors of their Huguenot ancestry’ to gain entry. <http://www.frenchhospital.org.uk/>

“The French Hospital, or La Providence as it has always been known by its residents, still retains the aims of our Founders, though the definition of ‘in need’ has changed.”

The French Hospital owns some couple of dozen pieces of pewter. So I asked Dr Tessa Murdoch who, in addition to being a Trustee is also deputy keeper of the Department of Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass at the Victoria and Albert Museum, about the Collection.

Tessa Murdoch: “The mid-18th century inventory was published in full in the book *The French Hospital in England*. Although there is no reference to pewter in the index, pewter is mentioned regularly in the text - there were plates, chamber pots, spoons, and original communion vessels used in the Chapel in the first institutional building, in fact everything needed to run an establishment at a time when pewter was ubiquitous.



“Many of the pieces have been damaged, and West Dean Conservation have been advising us on how to maintain them. In the past, a damaged piece could either be repaired or, more likely, returned to the maker for melting down. In fact we have one surviving bill from a pewterer, J (or maybe H) Perchard, for the supply of plates and pots which gives credit for returned pewter!

“We have 5 plates marked with the name of the Westminster Charity French School. The founder, David Hubert (whose portrait is at Rochester) was said to be a pewterer. It would be interesting to find out whether any of the Directors of the

Hospital were pewterers.” (That will be a future area of research. Ed).

Dr Murdoch added that the Collection had pieces made by Bonneau and Jonas Durand, both Huguenot names!

Peter Duval, the Deputy Governor of La Providence, told me that the Collection was currently housed in 41 La Providence, the French Hospital headquarters’ building and, although it is not on public display, he would be happy to show it to interested parties by prior arrangement (please contact The Clerk at 41 La Providence, Rochester, Kent ME1 1NB - 01634 843107. Ed).

The French Hospital is currently establishing a Huguenot Heritage Centre at 95 High Street, Rochester - about 50 yards from the French Hospital. It is planned to open this in 2015, and the pewter collection will then be put on display there. Mr Duval, who comes from a long line of Duvals associated with the French Hospital, is also the Chairman of the Huguenot Heritage Centre; he was pleased to announce in May this year that the Heritage Lottery Fund had awarded a grant of £1.2m to the French Hospital to establish what will be the UK’s first museum dedicated to the history of the Huguenots.

## Alan Williams

Since my interview, it has been announced that the Heritage Lottery Fund has approved a major grant of towards the work needed for the creation of the Centre.

Photos: courtesy of the French Hospital

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Notes:

The round dinner plate bears a central punchmark, and a scored line in the plate well; these are spinning marks. It has 'Westminster French Charity School' engraved on the back, and two makers' mark stamps.

*Huguenot* was the name applied to French Protestants in the 16th century and was probably a corruption of the German *eidgenossen*. 'confederats'.

They were severely persecuted in France under Francis I and Henry II, and following the massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day in 1572, many Huguenots came as refugees to settle in England, mainly to London but also to Canterbury, where they founded their church (now in the Black Prince's Chantry) in the Crypt of Canterbury Cathedral.

The Thirty Years' War which followed failed to crush them. Although in 1598 Henry IV had granted tolerance by the Edict of Nantes, in 1685 Louis XIV revoked the Edict and the forcible conversion and persecutions started again with renewed vigour with the result that about 250,000 people left France. Many migrated to England, others to Ireland, elsewhere in Europe and America.

The Huguenots were well received in England and they brought finance, industry, soldiering, intellectual life and the arts with them, contributing to the rise of British prosperity and power.



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This is a footed drinking vessel with decorative scored bands around the base and high girth, and an ornate cast handle. 1/2PINT, the number 7, and a maker's mark are stamped at the top, near the handle.

This is a footed drinking vessel with a broad decorative scored band

Huguenot was the name applied to French Protestants in the 16th century and was probably a corruption of the German eidgenossen. 'confederats'.

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# Bones, buttons and a Livery Company

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## How do they link up to the Worshipful Company of Pewterers?

The bones were discovered, in March 2011, by birdwatchers in the sand-dunes of Northern Holland.

They also found, with the bones, some metal buttons, buttons made of pewter.

Whose were the bones?

It turned out that the body found in the sand was that of a 200-year-old Coldstream Guards soldier. The buttons he had worn on his tunic provided the clue to his identity.

That he had been a member of the Coldstream Guards became apparent from the regiment's distinctive star and cross, which was just visible on one of them. At the same time, the faint words "Coven Garden", indicated that the buttons had been made in Covent Garden!



A preserved button

It was in 1799 that Russia and Britain invaded northern Holland. The operation was intended to topple the Batavian Republic and restore the House of Orange. The brevity of the campaign – the British Army had only been in the area for a day – helped the team date the soldier's remains. But it may never be clear what killed him. It seems that he had been buried in his uniform but it is not even clear whether this was a mass grave or one just for him.

The British armies had been under the command of Prince Frederick, Duke of York and Albany. Was it he who inspired the nursery rhyme? The campaign ended up where it began, so it is possible, though [Wikipedia](#) insists that there are several candidates and no evidence to 'fix' any of them.



One of the rescued buttons

*The Grand old Duke of York, he had 10,000 men,  
He marched them up to the top of the hill,  
And he marched them down again.  
And when they were up they were up,  
And when they were down they were down;  
But when they were only halfway up, they were neither  
up nor down.*

Anyway, originally there were, according to the Regimental Adjutant, Colonel Simon Vandeleur, two battalions of the Coldstream (or 2nd) Regiment of Foot Guards in 1799. Each battalion had about 1000 officers and soldiers.

The Coldstream Guards (then known as the 2nd Foot Guards) trace their ancestry back to 1650 and Cromwell's New Model Army, says Colonel Vandeleur. At the Restoration of Charles II, their commander, General Monck, was instrumental in re-establishing the Monarchy.

Unwilling to be known as the 2nd Foot Guards, they adopted the motto *Nulli Secundus* or 'Second-to-None'. They were later called the Coldstream Guards, because Coldstream was the town on the Scottish borders from which they had, in 1659, crossed to England on their long march to London, to restore order and set the conditions for the restoration of the Monarchy.

The Regiment is famous for having played a critical part in the defence of Hougoumont farm at the Battle of Waterloo, along with the 3rd Guards, now known as the Scots Guards.

Colonel Vandeleur explained to me that the buttons now used by the Guards are a light metal alloy, known as 'stay-bright'. Soldiers' capstars are, however, still made of brass, which achieves a much better shine. The advantage of pewter buttons then, said the Colonel, was that soldiers could easily melt them down, as and when supplies of musket balls were limited, and use them as ammunition for their Brown Bess muskets!

The bones of this unknown soldier, said Colonel Vandeleur, were handed over to the Guards at a ceremony in Holland, brought back to England, cremated and buried in the Memorial Garden at the Guards Chapel in London in a further small ceremony, in the presence of a bugler.

And, apart from the pewter of the buttons, what is the link to the Worshipful Company of Pewterers? Richard Boggis-Rolfe, a Past Master of the Company, was a Coldstreamer! "Is a Coldstreamer," insisted Colonel Vandeleur. "Once a Coldstreamer, *always* a Coldstreamer!"

The Scots Guards, by the way, should not be confused with the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.



This Coldstreamer is wearing the Garter Star on a cross belt and buttons in twos

## Alan Williams

The author would like to thank Past Master Richard Boggis-Rolfe, and Colonel Vandeleur, for their helpful comments on this article but takes complete responsibility for any errors remaining in the text!

- Note 1: The Worshipful Company's collection of pewter buttons comprises 5 odd buttons, purchased in 1988. They had been recovered from the wreck of HMS Invincible, lost in the Solent in February 1758.
- Note 2: With acknowledgment to the BBCNews website from which the images reproduced here were taken
- Note 3: The Guards Brigade (now Division) originally consisted of three Regiments of Foot Guards - Grenadier (1656), Coldstream (1650) and Scots Guards or 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards (1686). Today there are five Regiments, the Irish Guards being formed in 1900 and the Welsh Guards in 1915. The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards are affiliated to the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.

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# Pewter and Bewdley - a weekend

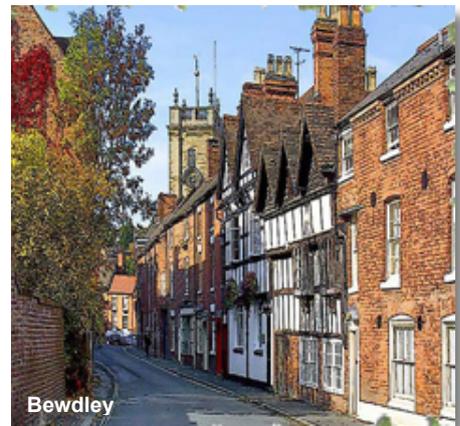
Bewdley has been described as the most perfect Georgian town in Worcestershire.

It was granted a charter in 1472 by Edward IV, in gratitude for the support of the town's men at the Battle of Tewkesbury. The manufacture of pewter in Britain reached a peak in the 17th century; in 1697, Christopher Ban(c)ks, perhaps the town's most famous pewterer, came from Wigan, the first of many to establish a pewter business in the town. Bancks was also a brass founder. William Stokes took the business over in 1828 and John Smith then bought it in 1884. Stevenson Bros owned it in 1894 and HJ Exley bought it in 1923. It closed in 1964. But by then, the manufacture of pewter there had long ceased.

Unlike their London counterparts, this and other Bewdley pewter companies were large, each employing up to 30 men.

Possibly as a consequence, in the early 18th century Bewdley found itself one of the most important centres for making pewter in Britain. But, as elsewhere, the pewter industry declined in the 19th century when it could no longer compete with cheaper pottery, brass and copper; and the last pewter manufacturer in Bewdley closed in the 1830s.

But already by then, Bewdley was under pressure. For various reasons, the new canal from Birmingham did not pass through Bewdley but instead went further south, to Stourport. Bewdley found it increasingly difficult to compete with transport costs.



Bewdley

The relationship between the pewter men of Bewdley and the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in London (with their Royal Charter and powers of search) appears to have been a difficult one. John Duncomb, one of the more famous of the Bewdley pewterers, was refused

admission to the Company after he applied in 1706/7 (but this was before he moved to Bewdley). David Hall, Liveryman of the Company, in his book *Provincial Pewterers*, notes that John Duncumb had both London, and family, connections. The latter was because he came from a cadet branch of the future Earls of Feversham, and, unexpectedly, ended up - in 1719 - inheriting the Estate, though not the title.



Bewdley's Pewterers' Hall, moved to Ombursley in 1881 and now two dwellings

The Company's records (Welch, Modernised version, Volume II, page 175; second edition by William Grant: page 300) for 1706/7 note simply that: "One 'John Duncumb of Birmingham' was refused admission (20th March) to the freedom of the Company by redemption".

Between 1718 and 1724, John Duncumb's business generated an annual turnover of about £2000, serving some 65 customers at any one time. It does not appear that the refusal by the Company to admit him to the Freedom did him any commercial harm whatsoever. He died in 1745 in his early 60s.

This year in May, a party of London Pewterers visited the town, led by their Master, Michael Johnson. Fuller details of their visit will no doubt be related elsewhere; this article concentrates on the pewter that they found in and around the town, as well as the remarkable 'discovery' of the existence of Bewdley's own *Pewterers' Hall*.

On the Saturday, the party visited the Bewdley Museum. In the information office, was prominently displayed an AE Williams' display case containing, amongst other things: bookmarks, hip flasks, journeyman watches, cufflinks, and heart pendants.

The party was welcomed by one of its own number, Freeman, Edmund Simons (also a former resident of Bewdley): he joked that this must be the first visit from "Head Office" since 1750, a reference to the right of search exercised by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers until the 18th century. David Hall, at page 72 of his book *Provincial Pewterers*, refers to the WCoP searchers' first and only visit to Bewdley.

The Museum's Collection & Interpretation Officer, Liz Cowley, took the party briefly round the delightful, award-winning, Museum, and then to the pewter



Five 9" and 9 ¼" pewter plain rimmed plates, made by John Duncumb in Wribbenhall, near Bewdley during the early 18th century. Plates such as these formed the largest single type of product which Duncumb manufactured.

collection, some items of which were crisply displayed in a number of glass cases. In addition to John Duncumb, the pewterers mentioned were: Ingram & Hunt; Crane & Stinton; and Joseph Morgan.



Pewter Tankards, A dome-lidded quart (left) and dome-lidded bellied quart (right), made by Ingram and Hunt, Bewdley pewterers in the late 18th century.

Afterwards, a tour of the town, led by Edmund, took the party to the original site of Bewdley's *Pewterers' Hall*, down a lane nostalgically entitled *Pewterers Alley*.

Pewterers' Hall, which had been the Bewdley Pewterers' Guildhall, is a 16th or 17th century timber-framed building. According to David Hall, it was moved from Bewdley in 1881. It now stands in Ombersley, a nearby village, in the High Street, almost opposite the Crown. According to Edmund, Lady Sandys (the Sandys lived, and still do, in the village) so liked the building that she arranged for its removal from Bewdley to Ombersley for use as an estate house on the Sandys' estate.

It is now divided into two, two-storey, houses, but it is quite possible to see where the Hall itself must have been, accommodated in a single high-beamed storey, but adjacent to a two-storey section containing, perhaps, the Master's room and a room for the Beadle. Lady Sandys



The past and the present ...



Above: said to be the site of the old Hall - at the top end of *Pewterers' Alley*

seems to have liked the building so much that she did not try to 'Victorianise' it; instead, she had a similar building erected next door!

On Sunday the party visited an historic Inn, *The Fleece, in Bretforton*, where there is a magnificent collection of pewter. You can find the article describing that visit in this issue of [The Pewterer](#).

## Alan Williams

Further reading:

<http://www.search.revolutionaryplayers.org.uk/engine/resource/default.asp?theme=365&originator=%2Fengine%2Ftheme%2Fdefault%2Easp&page=108&records=1400&direction=2&pointer=4744&text=1&resource=255>

See also *The Pewterer*, volume 5.1

According to Malcolm Dick (*An Innovative Metal Industry: Pewter and Mass Production in Bewdley*), pewter making in Bewdley lasted from the 16th until the 19th centuries, but the most dynamic period for the industry was in the hundred years or so after 1719 after John Duncumb moved to the area. Duncumb and his successors used mass-production methods to meet different consumer demands and compete with competition from other products such as brass, earthenware and porcelain. At a time when it was meant to be in national decline, Bewdley, together with Wribbenhall on the opposite bank of the Severn, became the most important location for pewter making in Britain. Malcolm Dick's exploration of the history of the industry is linked to images of locally manufactured ware held at Bewdley Museum.

In 1985, R F Homer and D W Hall in *Provincial Pewterers (Phillimore, 1985)* provided a detailed narrative of the industry outside the capital using a range of local archives. An important work, it questioned some of the assumptions about the decline of the trade in the 18th century and, *inter alia*, supplied evidence for the national significance of pewter-making in Bewdley during the period.

See, particularly, pages 60 - 87, chapter "Birmingham to c 1790, Bewdley and Kidderminster", for further information.

More sources and yet further reading

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David Hall looks at

## Some Bewdley Pewterers (particularly the Duncumbs)

*Research in the 1980s demonstrated that Bewdley in Worcestershire had been, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the base for the operations for one of the most important provincial pewter manufacturing enterprises of that century. This came as a considerable surprise as, today, Bewdley is a modest but attractive market town on the River Severn, with a population of barely 10,000.*

*The survival of many 18<sup>th</sup> century houses in the centre of the town makes it an attractive place to visit, as does the Severn Valley Railway with its many restored old Great Western steam engines. Economically, it has for a long time been overshadowed by many other, more successful, West Midlands' towns.*

*In this article your author will explore how Bewdley's importance in the pewtering world came about, and how and why it prospered in this sense in the 18<sup>th</sup> century - and then subsequently declined.*



9.25 inch plain rim shallow bowl by John Duncumb, typical product of the Duncumbs.

In 1929 Howard Cotterell, in his famous standard work on British Isles pewter, *Old Pewter, Its Makers and Marks*, wrote as follows about two 18<sup>th</sup> century Midlands' pewterers, J. Duncomb and S. Duncomb, thought at the time to be John Duncomb and Samuel Duncomb.

*"One feels one cannot let these two makers pass without special reference, for specimens bearing their marks turn up quite as often as, if not more so than those of all other makers put together. From this one can but deduce one of two things; either they had the most enormous pewtering business the world has ever known or there are a very great number of spurious pieces in existence."*

And further in the same text:

*"Out of a pile of ninety-seven plates which the writer saw at a dealer's some years ago, no less than eighty three were Duncombs and every one of the eighty-three was of fine metal, well-wrought."*



*The marks themselves fall under two distinct designs made up from the Armorial bearings of the Duncombes, Earls of Feversham.*

*The first embodies the Crest of the family, out of a ducal coronet or, a horse's hind leg sa, shoe arg. The second displays the Arms of Duncomb Per chevron gu and arg., three talbots' heads erased, counterchanged."*



(For further information on the the first creation of the Barons Feverhams, please see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baron\\_Feversham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baron_Feversham) ).



A Quart tulip tankard made by Ingram and Hunt and with their distinctive palmette thumb piece, probably made in the late 1770s.

Cotterell went on to admit that he had not sorted out the issues raised and in fact for over fifty years the matter rested there. All that was known was that a John Duncomb of Birmingham had applied in 1706 for admission to WCOP by redemption and had been refused; this may not have been one of the Company's best decisions. (The Court records simply say: "*John Duncombe of Birmingham was refused admission on 20th March to the freedom of the Company by redemption*". As far as this author knows, Duncomb's application was unusual, perhaps for the time very unusual. Does it indicate that he was a man of ambition and imagination?)

It was only in the early 1980s all this was unravelled. The late Dr Ron Homer (Archivist of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers for many years) and your current contributor set about investigating pewterers in the West Midlands and Wales. We soon found that Worcester had been an important centre for making pewter in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; and so I paid a number of visits to the Worcester County Record Office, looking for information.

On one visit, while waiting for some documents, I idly starting going through a catalogue of wills and probate proceedings, that had been proved at the Worcester Diocesan Court. Soon I spotted there was an *S. Duncomb of Wribbenhall, Bewdley* whose probate arrangements had been approved in 1767.

I asked for his will and will never forget reading the first line "*In the Name of God Amen - I Stynt Duncomb of Wribbenhall in the Parish of Kidderminster in the County of Worcester Pewterer*" and then looking at the seal on the will - and seeing the crest described above; it was a 'eureka' moment!

From that point we were able to sort out much of the history of the Duncombs and their family and to establish the significance of the business they had run. John Duncomb was the younger son of the younger son of a Surrey estate owner, who was the head of a cadet branch of the Faversham family.

John had been apprenticed to one William Wood, pewterer of Birmingham, one of a dynasty of pewterers. The link to the Duncombs may have been through another member of the Wood family who was a seedman - that is, a seed merchant. John married William's daughter Elizabeth and started to build up a business in Birmingham. Then by one of those family freaks, circa 1720, he inherited the family estate.

He used his newly gained wealth to expand

Any visit to Bewdley for those interested in pewter is likely to focus significantly on Pewterers Alley, today definitely part of the town. It would have been, in geographic terms, in 1720 although it was legally outside the ancient borough boundary. The Duncombs probably lived in a small mansion called Wribbenhall House (now demolished) at the head of Pewterers Alley.

There were apparently wharfs serving Bewdley in Wribbenhall facing the town. John Duncumb's choice of Wribbenhall rather than the ancient town may not have been accidental. Bewdley had a closed corporation, that is it was in 18<sup>th</sup> century terms a 'rotten borough'. In Birmingham he had worked in a town without a charter, so no 'baggage' of the type he would have found at Bewdley. In Pewterers Alley he was only about a 100 yards beyond the then historic borough boundary.

and develop his activities. He moved his base of operations to Wribbenhall, directly across the River Severn from Bewdley. Wribbenhall had always, geographically, been part of Bewdley, and today it is legally part of the town.

John Duncomb's choice of a location close to the river wharfs, but outside the actual Borough, was deliberate. Before the days of the canals and railways, Bewdley had been an important River Severn port, the limit to which large sailing barges could go upstream. This made it easier to import tin and export finished products while coal could be obtained from a few miles upstream, and lead from Mid Wales. He also probably wanted to keep outside the reach of the Bewdley Corporation (see box).

Amazingly, one of John Duncomb's ledgers for the years 1718 to 1724 still survived in the Worcester Record Office, catalogued as an ironmonger's ledger, as did other, later, records of the business he established.

John's business thrived and developed. In 1745 on his death he was succeeded by his son Stynt (not Samuel) who died in 1767. Stynt seems to have had no children; but the Wribbenhall business was taken over by his sister's son John Ingram. Early in the 1770s John went into partnership with his own brother-in-law, Charles Hunt, and from then on the enterprise operated under the name *Ingram and Hunt*. Both had died by 1807 when the business was leased to *Crane and Stinton*.

Crane was John Caruthers Crane, a prominent local business man, while Stinton was an ex-employee, an out rider of the firm, that is, a travelling salesman. By 1821 the firm was wholly in the control of John Caruthers Crane who eventually sold out to the Birmingham partnership Yates, Birch and Spooner in 1838, which is why some of John Duncomb's moulds can be found in Birmingham today.

In the early years of John and Stynt Duncomb, and of John Ingram, the business focused on the production of flatware - that is, plates, dishes and chargers. John Duncomb's business records show he had turnover in the early 1720s of about £2,000 a year. It has been calculated that this would be equivalent to around 50,000 plates of 8½ to 9½ inches in diameter. One can only speculate how many such plates were made in the fifty years between 1720 and 1770.

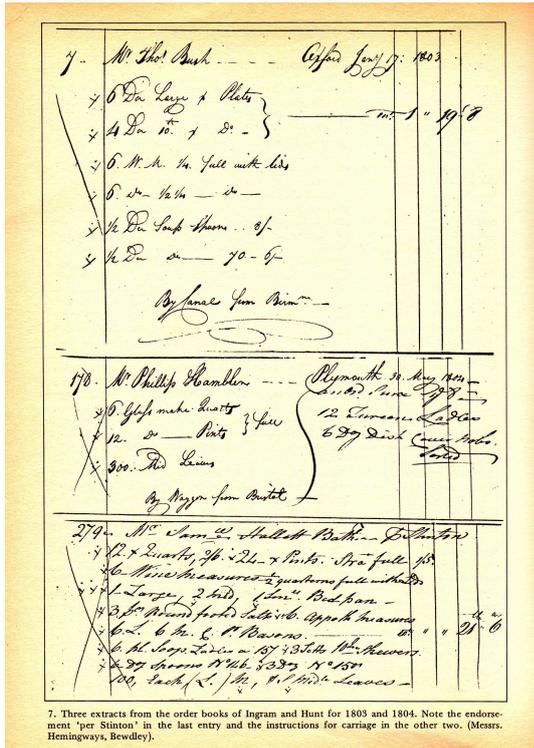


A porringer made about 1720 and half-pint beer mug made say in the 1740s or 50s, both bearing the 'CB' touch of

No wonder Howard Cotterell found so many.

With the formation of the *Ingram and Hunt* partnership, the emphasis of production shifted to hollow ware, mostly pub mugs, tankards and similar things. One aspect of the Duncombs' activities was, however, sustained and developed further, and that was the making of spoons, which seemed to have been turned out in very large numbers, although today very few survive. The succeeding proprietors continued the emphasis on the pub trade. No doubt a growing population and increasing industrialisation meant many more public houses!

It was postulated in the early 1980s that John Duncomb would have needed about twenty hands to produce the quantity of pewter in a year that he did; but little was found out about his work force at the time. Information from much later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century did exist, and that suggested that the men were not directly employed, but worked as out-workers or on a piece work basis.



7. Three extracts from the order books of Ingram and Hunt for 1803 and 1804. Note the endorsement "per Stinton" in the last entry and the instructions for carriage in the other two. (Messrs Hemingways, Bewdley).

Three extracts from the order books of Ingram and Hunt for 1803 and 1804. Note the endorsement "per stinton" in the last entry and the instructions the carriage in the other two. (Messrs Hemingways, Bewdley).

Nearly twenty years later, more information did appear, extracted from local parochial and church records. These suggested the Duncombs did not only recruit labour locally, from say Worcester, but from further afield, including London and Bristol. Later in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the time of *Ingram and Hunt*, there is evidence that they trained some of their own workforce through apprenticeship.

With such an exceptional enterprise, it would be surprising if there were not records of other pewterers in Bewdley; but only one family is worthy of mention: the Banks. In 1697 a young man, Christopher Banks, arrived in Bewdley with a letter of introduction from the Mayor of Wigan. He was to establish a business in Bewdley that would last well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, although in the later decades of its existence it would be known more for its iron and brass founding than for pewter making.

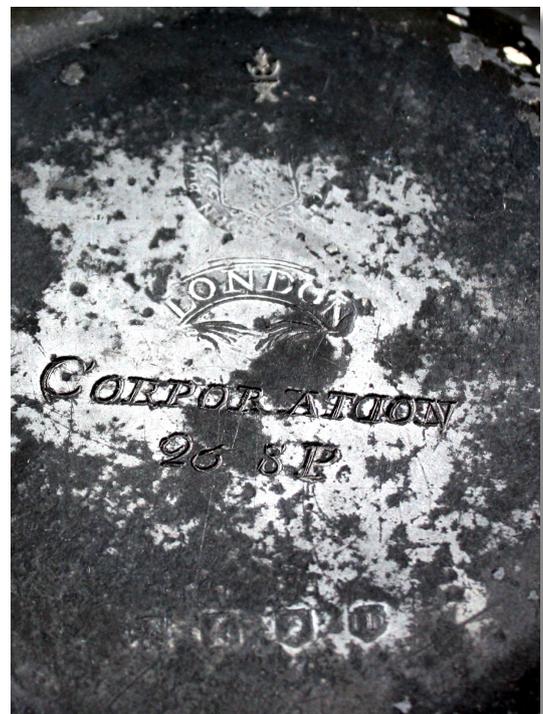
Christopher died in 1746 and it seems until 1790 the enterprise was run by two of his grandsons, Christopher II and William. After their partnership ended, the business continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the leadership of a great grandson, Christopher III. Eventually, in the early 1830s the

business became *Banks and Stokes*, by which time the pewtering part of the business was essentially long dead. Other Banks also worked as pewterers in Bewdley on their own account.

Christopher I does not seem to have been in direct competition with the Duncombs, since he specialised in hollow ware, that is baluster measures, flagons, porringers, pub mugs and tankards. While his enterprise never operated on the same scale as the Duncombs, it was by no means insignificant, and products of his, and his successors, still survive.

It is believed that John Duncomb and Christopher Banks both chose to come to the Bewdley area because of transport opportunities offered by the River Severn and the links the town had with Birmingham and the other growing towns of the Black Country. These links helped them prosper and so justified their choice of location. They depended, however, on transport by road, the goods either being carried on packhorses or in carts.

Nearly all will be aware that roads at this date were



The full array of marks off the back of the bowl including a Crowned 'X', a touch with the Faversham Arms, a London label and hallmarks the fourth being 'ID' and an enigmatic inscription reading "CORPORATION 25 SP".

poorly maintained and overused, making the transport of heavy goods along them time consuming and costly. In the later 18<sup>th</sup> century an alternative was developed: canals; and in the early 1770s Birmingham was linked by a canal to the Severn. This canal went to Stourport, a few miles south of Bewdley, and in the long run had a significant effect on Bewdley and our pewterers - and the attractions of Bewdley as a centre for the enterprising dwindled.

© **David Hall** 2014

#### Bibliography

Hall, D.W., 'Some New Information about Worcester Pewterers', *Journal of the Pewter Society*, Spring 2005.

Homer, R.F. and Hall D.W., *Provincial Pewterers*, Phillimore, London and Chichester 1985.

*Old Pewter, Its Makers and Marks* by Howard Cotterell. Published by B T Batsford, London (1929)

See also the accompanying articles on: the Worshipful Company's visit to Bewdley; and lunch at *The Fleece Inn* at Bretforton.

A circular button with a light gray background and a dark gray border. The word "Home" is written in a dark gray, sans-serif font in the center of the button.

[Home](#)

*The Pewterer*, Volume 5, number 2. September 2014.

Editor: Alan Williams

Published by Alan Williams, 14 Dandridge House, 31 Lamb Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6ED and endorsed by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, Pewterers' Hall, Oat Lane, London EC2V 7DE

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# The Fleece Inn - witches and pewter

In May this year, a party from the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of London, led by their Master, Mr Michael Johnson, visited *The Fleece Inn* in Bretforton, not just to have lunch, but to learn a lot about its wonderful collection of pewter - and a little about witches!

Morris men skipped as we ate our lunch on trestle tables under the sun in the orchard. We were at *The Fleece Inn* in Bretforton, a delicately pretty village near Evesham in Worcestershire. Also in this village lies the home of this year's Renter Warden, Mr Mark Chambers.



The Fleece Inn, Bretforton.  
Photo: Wikipedia

The Fleece is a timbered building which started life as a farm in the 14th century, at the time of Chaucer. It was originally built as a longhouse by a farmer named Byrd and remained in the ownership of that family until a few years ago. It has stayed largely undisturbed in its architecture since the mid-17th century, though a fire in the thatched roof in 2004 caused a lot of damage to the roof; but the structure and all the pewter and other antiques were kept safe.

It was already 71 years old when the Lancastrians marched by on their way to defeat in the Wars of the Roses at the Battle of Tewkesbury; and it was 200 years old when the Gunpowder Plotters rode past on their ill-fated attempt to blow up Parliament!

A descendant, one Henry Byrd, sold the farmland in 1848 and applied for a pub licence. The last member of the Byrd family, Henry's great-granddaughter, Lola Taplin, ran the pub for 30 years, until her death in 1977. She left the pub to the National Trust. It was the first pub in the country to be owned by the National Trust; and it has been kept largely as it was in Lola's time, except that they now serve food (and very good it was when we visited). There is still no television, and the pub is now run by a tenant, Nigel Smith.

Lola would not allow food, not even crisps. She ran the place single-handed for many years, and she lived in it for all her 77 years, until she died in 1977 in front of the fire in the snug.

David Moulson, a Liveryman of the Company (who lives in an adjacent county) gave a talk on the magnificent collection of pewter on display. First, though, he pointed out the white witch circles on the floor, still regularly



The Fleece's magnificent collection of pewter. Photo: David Moulson

refurbished today; they are intended to prevent witches coming in through the chimneys, though, it is said, Lola still watches over the building and the people in the incarnation of an owl sitting on the ridge of the thatched barn.

David also pointed

out to us the corner easy chair, the one in which Lola died. The member of the Company sitting in the chair squirmed slightly uncomfortably.

David said that no one quite knows how the pewter collection came into existence. One story could be discounted, he said: that it was presented to the Byrd family by Oliver Cromwell as a thank you for support. All of the pieces in the collection postdated the Civil War! He said that the pewter chargers all dated from the late 17th/early 18th century.

Most were made in Worcester by such makers as Sampson Bourne II (working life 1677 to 1689) ; John Greenbank I, who had died by 1700, John's son William, born in 1674 but dead by 1714; and Edward Bowen (working life 1686 to 1709). His charger has his hallmarks (see below) as well as the touch of Jonathan Ingles of Southampton, so Bowen probably bought it, maybe part-finished, from Ingles. Also John Trapp II (working life 1677 to 1713). Between the chargers were a narrow-rimmed bowl by John Shorey of London, early 18th century; and a hot water plate by John Ingram of Bewdley (working life 1767 to 1778).



Lunch in the Orchard at the Fleece Inn  
Photo: Alan Williams

David was able to tell us that most of the dinner plates had been made in Bewdley by John Duncumb (working life 1702 to 1745) or his son, Stynt (working life 1745 to 1767)

who took over the business on his father's death. Neither struck their touch on

the London touch plate - and thereby hangs another tale (to be continued in a future issue of *The Pewterer!*).

## Alan Williams

Note: I am indebted to HJLJ Massé's book, *The Pewter Collector*, for the following explanation: "Hallmarks" (four small marks, resembling silver hall marks) need to be distinguished from "touch marks". (For pewter) Hallmarks were not official marks, and at times they were expressly forbidden by regulations of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers. The earliest record of their use was in 1638 when the Goldsmiths' Company complained of their use by pewterers, but little notice appears to have been taken, nor was the Pewterers' Company able to prevent their use for very long. Ed.

The Fleece Inn  
The Cross, Bretforton  
Nr Evesham  
Worcestershire WR11 7JE

<http://www.thefleeceinn.co.uk/history-of-the-fleece-inn/>  
01386 831173

The Pewter Collector  
by HJLJ Massé revised with additions by Ronald F Michaelis.  
Published by Barrie & Jenkins in 1971.  
ISBN: 0 214 65255 6

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## **Editorial; and a Happy New Year to all our readers!**

This is the third and final *The Pewterer* of 2014. You should enjoy all the articles but particularly those on the Scattergoods (good pewterers of the 18th century); on Edwin Blyde; on Ed Glover and Glover & Smith; and on Pewter in Brazil - the first article in a new series on pewter around the world. There is also the start of what I hope will be an interesting discussion on cleaning pewter.

I do hope you have enjoyed reading the various articles across the three 2014 issues. If I had to choose my favourite, well that would be telling; but I think that Thomas Scattergood, Bewdley, and that Horse would be in close contention for the final list!

For next year, I will be updating the index of articles; publishing a series on miniature pewter, and continuing with the series on pewter across the world; both Sri Lanka and Australia are already lined up and ready to be published; the second of these articles looks at Lisa McGuigan, Australian wine and pewter wine labels. Also coming next year: a preview of Pewter Live 2015 and of the Association of British Pewter Craftsmen's new prize for the most commercial entry in the Competition.

If you have any comments, or ideas for articles, please let me know.

One of my New Year Resolutions will be to complete my work on recreating the early issues of this e-zine - lost when Apple withdrew MobileMe and I was not quick enough to secure the work stored on it.

Let me finish by expressing the hope (expressed, rather late, on New Year's Eve) that you all a very Merry Christmas and will have a very Happy and Prosperous New Year - and for the working pewterers amongst my readers, may the price of tin continue to fall and the public's taste for pewter continue to increase!!

**Alan Williams**  
December 2014

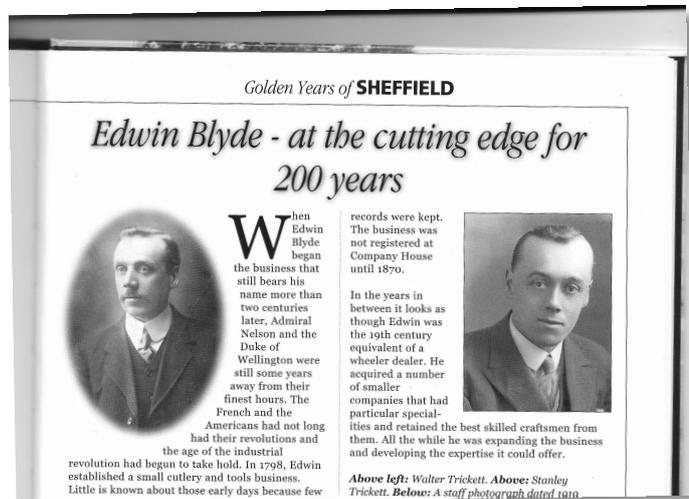


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# Edwin Blyde - at the cutting edge for more than 200 years

“When, in 1798, Edwin Blyde began the business that still bears his name more than two centuries later, Admiral Nelson and the Duke of Wellington were still some years away from their finest hours”. Thus commenced an article in a book, called *Golden Years of Sheffield*, about this Sheffield business.

So, it was just two years before the end of the 18th century that Edwin Blyde set up a small business, offering a variety of products, such as table and pocket knives, cutlery, scissors and razors (before the time of the safety razor), saws, files and edging tools.

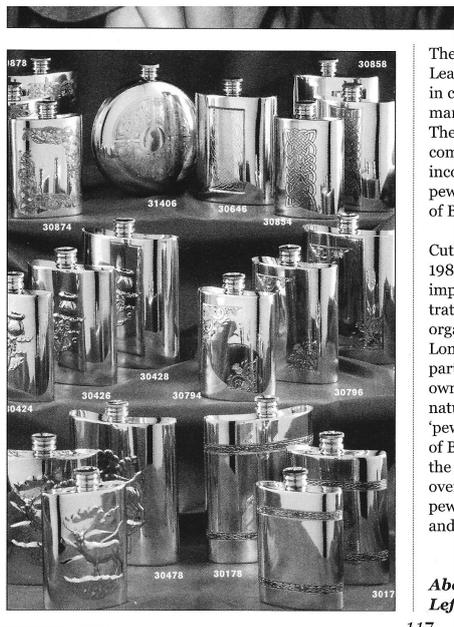


Walter Trickett (left) and Stanley Trickett

One hundred and fourteen years later, Walter Trickett purchased the company, and any remaining association with the Blyde family ceased. Walter concentrated on cutlery, selling complete sets in containers known as *canteens*.

Walter's grandson, Dennis Trickett, took over the running of things; but before his time, the Tricketts had acquired the nearby business of James Furniss, a company specialising in pewter products, and Blyde's then began to focus on pewter ware.

From cruets and tea sets, the company moved into tankards, the gift of choice of the 1960s and 70s. But cutlery and knife production continued into the late 1980s, when cheap imports reduced its importance and caused the company to increase its concentration on pewter.



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By 1989 Dennis Trickett had gone into partnership with Derek Stone and Jim and John Trower, themselves pewter manufacturers, and Blyde's went from strength to strength both at home and abroad, dealing exclusively in quality, handcrafted, pewter ware, tankards, frames, flasks and trophies.

In the early 1990's Edwin Blyde sold off their cutlery connections to a company which a decade earlier had purchased Walter Trickett & Co Ltd, the original company Walter had started. The result was that Edwin Blyde now manufactured only pewter ware but had a very experienced workforce, both in manufacture and design.

With the Millennium just round the corner, sales went through the roof, and more staff had to be taken on. The company had good years up to the slump of 2008 and, like all small businesses, it then had to cut back. Dennis comments that it was sad to see the decline in the standard of pewter sheet supplied to the company.

For many years this had been made in traditional ways and had been very good quality. But with the coming of more so-called 'modern' ways, he considers that the standard has gone downhill.

The company advertises itself on its website as: "a leading provider of pewter design and manufacture in Sheffield. Our team is passionate about delivering the highest level of service and professionalism on every project we undertake. We have built a reputation in Sheffield as a team who always go the extra mile, from actively engaging in the design process to our painstaking attention to detail on every pewter product we make.



Dennis Trickett

"All our products are hand made by our skilled craftsmen and women on site. We have long established British made products still being produced in the UK today."

They are strictly "TRADE ONLY" and they do not sell to the general public. One of the projects at the millennium was the making of many thousands of miniature (2oz) flasks for one of the better known High Street shops. "They certainly kept us busy," commented Dennis.

Dennis retired completely from the company in 2007.

Looking into the future is always difficult, but Dennis commented that today, "Edwin Blyde have moved to new premises, and now operate with a smaller workforce. Working as hard as they do, I am pleased to believe that they will keep the name of 'Edwin Blyde' at the forefront of pewter ware manufacturing for a long time to come."

## Alan Williams

*Golden Years of Sheffield*, published by True North Books Ltd, in 2000, ISBN: 1 903204 13 5

Website: [www.truenorthbooks.co.uk](http://www.truenorthbooks.co.uk)

Website: <http://www.edwinblyde.co.uk/>

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# Glover and Smith



If you are looking for a success story, look no further than the chocolate box perfection of the Wiltshire countryside. Among the picturesque villages, with their double-barrelled names, you will find a neat trading estate on the site of an old railway station, and there you will find Glover and Smith.

Twenty years ago, Ed Glover was putting the finishing touches to the kitchen he was building at his home, and was having difficulty finding suitable cupboard door handles, so thought he would make them himself. He made a mould from what looks like “minibrix” from the toy box, to create a cupboard door handle shaped like a snail.



With the shrewd eye of entrepreneurs, he and his wife, Judy, took soundings in the market place and correctly predicted the potential commercial interest in articles of this kind. The first retail outlet was *Liberty's*. From these small beginnings in the Glover garden shed the business developed from handles to tableware, particularly spoons, trinket boxes, jewellery and other pewter artifacts.

Ed and Judy are passionate about nature and natural forms and their designs are based principally on nature, shells, leaves, acorns, star fish and seahorses.



There is a small staff. Ed himself is responsible for making the very detailed moulds. He is a qualified photographer, so an obvious choice to take the photos for the brochures and the website. Judy, trained in art and design, is very much involved with design ideas and marketing. Steve is a graphic designer by profession, who has now taken charge of the website and the publicity. In the workshop downstairs are Andy and Matthew

who is a silversmith, which may point the way to future developments. Two part-time members of staff deal with packaging and everyone takes responsibility for quality control.

Ed Glover says that every piece they sell is handmade in their studio and that great care is taken to use the highest quality pewter. Modern pewter is lead-free, an eco-friendly, non-tarnishing, recyclable metal, safe to use with food and easy to care for.

We asked him a number of questions about his interest in pewter.



Designers, Ed and Judy Glover

### **What is your first recollection of pewter?**

In Bath, at the Roman baths, my Dad explaining to me that the stone moulds had been used by the Romans to make pewter bowls!

### **Where did you learn about how to use pewter?**

It started at school – with cuttle fish casting.

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

As you have mentioned above, I began making handles for our kitchen, where we needed something better than we had. It grew from there.

### **What methods do you use?**

All of our work is centrifugally cast; we hand finish after vibro-polishing.



Hare sculpture

### **What inspires your designs? Where do the ideas for your work come from?**

Nature, and British History; and the desire to have beautiful designs. It was that approach that led to my creation of the Spitfire Wing desk. (A further article will follow about the Spitfire Wing desk. Ed)



Small pewter keepsake box

### **How does the price of tin affect you?**

Greatly; higher prices have put us off many designs that we have prototyped, for instance tableware with large (and therefore heavy) handles.

## What is your market?

Our big growth area is with online sales, direct to the public. But we also supply around 200 shops, galleries and Heritage sites, as well as English Heritage, Highgrove and The National Trust in England and Scotland

## How do you reach that market?

Our website is a very important part of our sales effort; also we attend retail shows, and trade shows, too.

## What are your current work and exhibition plans?

Judy and I exhibited very successfully in Tokyo in June, followed by a busy summer of shows, such as: Hampton Court and Tatton Park. (This interview was conducted in July, this summer! Ed.)

## Mary Kearney and Alan Williams

**Contact:** <http://www.gloverandsmith.co.uk>

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## Alex Neish and his Pewter Collection at the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum

Alex Neish's Collection of pewter moved, from Harvard House some years ago, to the welcoming embrace of the Smith Museum in Stirling. We have written more than once about the Collection and the Smith Museum and are very happy to have the chance to be doing so again.

The Collection highlights include, in addition to the tankard (see right):

- a rare pewter pilgrimage badge depicting the murder of St Thomas Beckett;
- a Grain Gallon of 1707. After the Union, when Scotland became part of Great Britain, the old weights and measures were discarded in favour of new ones; this gallon was one of them;
- a beggar's badge for the Fife town of Dysart; this proved that the beggar was licensed

The Museum's pewter brochure, parts of which are reproduced here, says: "Pewter is immensely popular with collectors world-wide and today, the once-common domestic, civic and church artefacts made of pewter are hard to find. For nearly 50 years Alex Neish has sought to keep the best of British pewter in the United Kingdom by buying it in the sale rooms.

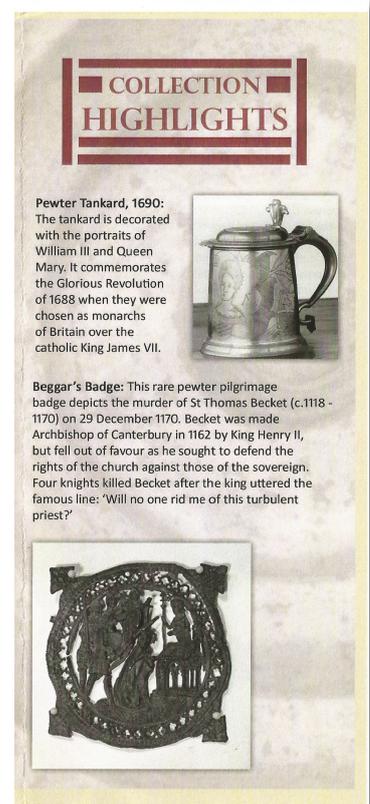
A graduate of the University of Edinburgh, he has identified the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and museum as the ideal home for his collection.



His collection has many exquisite, rare pieces, such as this rosewater dish (shown left), made by Richard Weir of Edinburgh, for King James VI's palace of Holyrood c1560."



This pewter tankard is described as: being decorated with the portraits of William III and Mary and to "commemorate the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when they were chosen as monarchs of Britain over the catholic King James VII.





**A Grain Gallon, 1707:** In civic life, pewter was often used in the production of weights and measures. After the Act of Union in 1707 when Scotland became part of Great Britain, the old weights and measures were discarded and new ones adopted. This grain gallon, which carries the couchant wolf, the symbol of the Royal Burgh of Stirling, was one of them.

**A Beggar's Badge for the Fife town of Dysart:** Beggars' badges were proof that the beggar was licenced to beg. They were issued by Scottish local authorities from 1650 to 1800. Stirling burgh also regularly issued badges, but there are none in any public collection.



**Wolf's Tooth Rattle, 1540s:** The infant to whom this rattle belonged teethered by pressing his or her sore gums on the wolf's tooth. The rattle features four copper alloy bells and its stem ends in a whistle.



## PEWTER PRODUCTS

Before the products of the mass production pottery factories in the eighteenth century, pewter (an alloy of tin, lead and copper) was the most common substance used for the making of household utensils. Plates, drinking vessels, pots, pans, lamps, candlesticks, snuffers, inkstands and toys were all made of pewter. Pilgrim badges in the Middle Ages were made of pewter, and pewter jewellery making still continues today. After the Scottish Reformation of 1560, churches ordered communion plate, flagons and tokens from pewterers, a practice which continued into the nineteenth century.



Pewterers in Scotland belonged to the Hammermen Craft, the trade guild which regulated all who wielded the hammer. These included gold, silver and blacksmiths, as well as clock makers, saddlers, forgers and pewterers. Their motto was 'By hammer in hand, all arts do stand' and their patron saint was St. Eloi, who in ancient times had made a golden throne for King Clovis. Most Scottish churches in the towns or burghs had an altar to St. Eloi.



## THE STIRLING HAMMERMEN

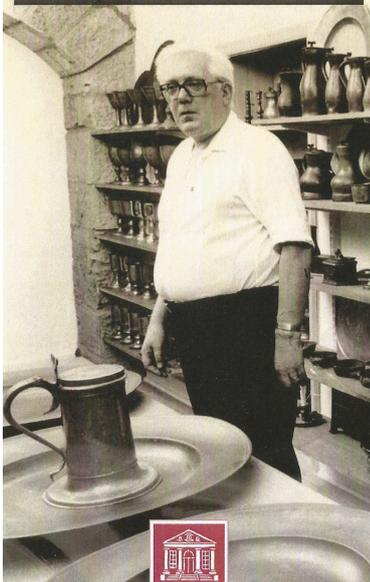
Between 1599 and 1620 when the town was small it registered four pewterers, a greater number than existed in any royal burgh except Edinburgh. The Incorporation's earliest minute book is dated 24 January 1596 when one Robert Robertson, Deacon of the Hammermen and pewterer, gave a statement of accounts.

It is, however, clear that the Stirling Incorporation dates from an earlier period. In 1604 it was recorded that Robert Bruce, a saddler, had delivered to the new Deacon 'in keeping for the welfare of the craft, thrie pieces of evidence, with an copies in peper, togidder with two bulks with two pensalls, with ane suchthe.' A latter minute stated the 'evidence' comprised parchment charters and these may well have been the original, earlier Seals of Cause granted to the Hammermen about which to-day nothing is known. The 'two bulks' presumably contained the earlier minutes while the 'pensalls' would have been the flags of the Hammermen - again long lost like the 'ane boxe with twa keys' that held the craft funds.

## THE NEISH COLLECTION

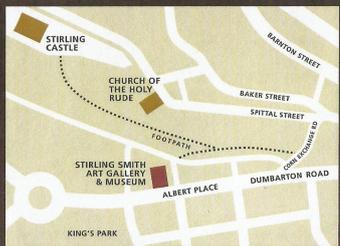
Pewter is immensely popular with collectors world-wide and today, the once-common domestic, civic and church artefacts made of pewter are hard to find. For nearly fifty years, Alex Neish has sought to keep the best of British pewter in the United Kingdom by buying it in the sale rooms. A graduate of the University of Edinburgh, he has identified the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and museum as the ideal home for his collection. His collection has many exquisite, rare pieces, such as this rose water dish (shown left), made by Richard Weir of Edinburgh, for King James VI's palace of Holyrood c1600.

## THE NEISH COLLECTION OF BRITISH PEWTER




**THE STIRLING SMITH ART GALLERY & MUSEUM**

The Smith Stirling Art Gallery and Museum can be found at Dumbarton Rd, Stirling FK8 2RQ, United Kingdom  
+44 1786 471917

**The Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum**  
Dumbarton Road, Stirling, FK8 2RQ



Open Tuesday to Saturday 10.30am - 5.00pm  
Sundays 2pm-5pm  
Cafe, meeting rooms & gardens.  
Admission and parking free.

Tel. 01786 471917  
museum@smithartgalleryandmuseum.co.uk  
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# Pewter Live, 2014

The Competition was opened, as is usual, by the Lord Mayor, this year Alderman Fiona Woolf. By common consent it was, again, better than ever.

The quality of the entries in the Student Competition complemented the quality of the entries in the Open Competition. Seven Colleges entered students for the Competition who, between them, put forward 25 items to be judged. There were more prizes than ever before: two new ones being that awarded by the Association of British Pewter Craftsmen for the entry with the "most commercial potential"; and that awarded by Adrian and Lesley Doble (*Partners in Pewter*) for the student "exhibiting a flair for design and technical ability to work with metal, as well as a genuine desire to make a career using these skills".



Caroline Sax's *Buttons*

The *Partners in Pewter* prize takes the form of a day at Adrian and Lesley's studio in Berkshire when, amongst other things, the winner will get an introduction to the practical aspects of earning a living as a craftsman. The winner was: Caroline Sax of South Coast College.



Claire O'Sullivan's *Carnival Coffee*

The winner of the ABPC prize, worth £250, was: Claire O'Sullivan of Truro College.

The prizes were awarded by designer, John Makepeace.

The Chairman of *Pewter Live*, Richard Parsons, was particularly keen to highlight the success of the *shop@pewterlive* where pewtersmiths can sell their pewter articles. This, he said, was one of the most successful years for the sellers, resulting partly from the increased footfall at the event.

Previewing *Pewter Live 2015*, Richard said that they were opening the event even further, to university students of all ages. "The prizes will recognise that some are more experienced than others. The Open Competition brief of 'light' will also be offered to students with a maximum prize of £1,000 for both the Student and Open Competitors. We aim to increase the footfall of visitors yet again."

The identity of next year's presenter of the prizes is a tightly kept secret, but Richard did let slip that he or she would come from the art world.

Photos: Jean-Raphael Dedieu

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# The Scattergoods

## - a family of pewterers in the 18th Century

In *The Gentle Author's London Album*, a book about Spitalfields past, (illustrated, right) there appears an advertisement by a pewterer, one Thomas Scattergood (illustrated, below). And there is a Scattergood recorded on the Boards in the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers as having been Master of the Company in 1774/5.



The Book

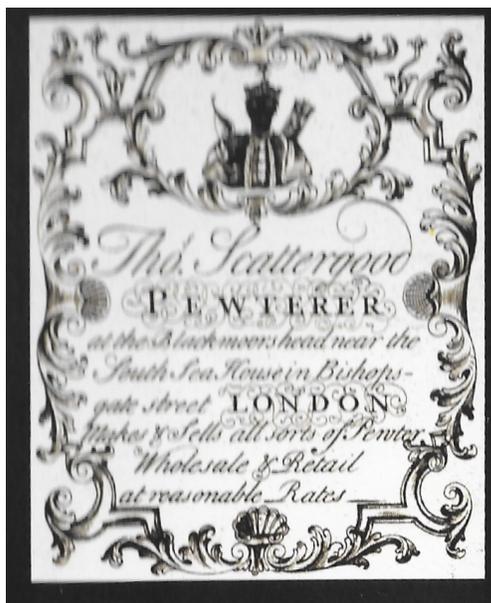
Who were the Scattergoods?

The Pewter Society runs a database of Pewterers. Access to it is open only to members of the Society, but it is a treasure-trove of information, worth the Society's annual membership subscription on its own! With Diana German's help, I researched the name Scattergood in the Database.

It seems that there were two branches of this Scattergood family, one branch of which may have originated in Derbyshire; and the other in Gloucestershire. There appear to have been at least seven in the 18th century.

John Scattergood senior, of Derbyshire, was a tanner. He had two sons: the first Thomas Scattergood (who seems to have been born in London) and John Scattergood, junior.

How it came about that he got into pewter, the Database does not relate, but the first Thomas Scattergood was made Free of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in 1700. He set up shop in 1703, at which date he struck his touch. He was working in London between 1700 and 1735.



The Advertisement

In 1708 he was affluent enough to be accepted as a sufficient security for £1500 to a 'letter of marque' (that is a licence to fit out an armed vessel and use it for the capture of enemy merchant shipping).

He married Anne at St Dunstan in the East. Anne died in 1717. In 1734 he was elected

Clerk of the Company on the death of the then incumbent, John Dyer; and he died in 1744.

His son, the second Thomas Scattergood, was born in 1715. His working years are recorded as being 1736 to 1788. He was made Free of the Company by Patrimony in 1736 and set up shop that year, at which point he struck his touch. He married Mary Gilbert at St Botolph, Aldgate; and was listed as a pewterer in Houndsditch.

1773 WILLIAM De JERSEY  
1774-75 THOMAS SCATTERGOOD  
1776 RICHARD NORFOLK  
1777 RICHARD ROOKE

On the Roll of Past Masters in Pewterers' Hall

He was Steward of the Company in 1754, and Renter Warden in 1760, In 1770/71, his wife, Mary, died.

He became Upper Warden in 1773. After then serving *two* years in succession as Master of the Company, in 1774 and 1775, he gifted

£600 in trust, the interest from which was to provide £2 per annum in perpetuity to help five poor men and five poor women.

He described himself in his Will as a Pewterer. He was recorded as a maker of: round-ended spoons with upturned ends; flat lid double volute measures; and pear-shaped tea pots for export to the Colonies.

The third Thomas Scattergood was the son of William Scattergood, shoemaker of Gloucestershire. He was apprenticed to one Richard Hammerton, a Founder, in 1766, and made Free of the Company in 1774 and is recorded as setting up his shop the next year, 1775.

Was William a brother of the second Thomas? The records do not indicate whether the third Thomas Scattergood was made free of the Company by Patrimony or by Redemption. He could only have joined by way of Redemption if his father had been free of the Company at his birth.

Nor do the records indicate when he retired or died. But he appears to have been the end of the line, certainly any Scattergood line working in pewter!

All this inspired by a small advertisement republished in a new book; and obtained from the Pewter Society Database.

### Alan Williams

*The Gentle Author's London Album*  
by *The Gentle Author* ([www. http://spitalfieldslife.com](http://spitalfieldslife.com)),



Mark of the second Thomas Scattergood.  
Image courtesy of Trish Hayward.

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		Birth	Death
John Scattergood I			
John Scattergood II	-8276		
John Scattergood III	-8275		
Thomas Scattergood I	-8277		1744
William Scattergood			
Thomas Scattergood II	8278	1715	
Thomas Scattergood III	8319		

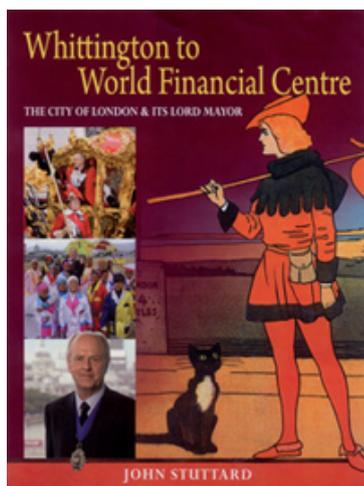
# PEWTER IN BRAZIL

(- a journey from,

Home

possibly, Englefields to São Joao del Rei)

In *The Pewterer*, volume 4.1, I reported on a meeting that I had had at a City Dinner with Past Lord Mayor, Sir John Stuttard, when he had told me of his book about his mayoralty, *Whittington to World Financial Centre: The City of London & its Lord Mayor*. This delightful book had only one reference to pewter, but it centred on a dinner, in a tourist-trap of a town called Tiradentes, during Sir John's trip to Brazil. At the dinner was Gregory Somers, a member of a family which owned a pewter business in São Joao del Rei, just five miles away.



I thought that that was worth pursuing; what was an Englishman doing making pewter in deepest Brazil? After a lot of trial and error, I managed to make contact with Gregory Somers. Here is: "A little bit about the Somers family and its adventures in Brazil and pewter making - my father built a superb company which produced the finest pewter. Nothing could touch us in the matter of quality".

The story he told was this: "My father, John Somers, who, sadly, passed away earlier this year, was from a steel making company in Halesowen where we produced drop forged steel shafts for the Royal Navy. My father went through Eton and then followed on to Sandhurst. My mother, Rosanne, was of Irish parentage, who was born in Brazil but never spoke Portuguese. She had done her schooling in Ireland, but they met in London in the mid-fifties and married there.

"During his army career, my father found himself in Suez during the crisis. Once that was over, he enjoyed the Middle East enormously. One bit of family folklore has him in a hammam when he heard giggles and turned round to find, behind him, a bunch of young ladies in burkhas watching this large piece of white humanity stepping out of the steam!

"He was repatriated after contracting a hernia, having been left holding a twenty-five pounder all on his own when the rest of the team dropped to the ground. He spent six months in hospital in Cheltenham; and while there, his ability with languages came to the attention of a certain organisation and he spent the rest of his time in the army clandestinely listening to radio messages. He left as a captain and, in 1956, the family came to Brazil to start a new life in this madhat country.

"I was born here, went to the British School in Rio de Janeiro, was sent back to England for Prep. School, then fluffed my exams to Eton because of a dismal Religious Knowledge exam. Malvern, however, was less concerned about my scriptural knowledge, and I went there instead.



John and Rosanne Somers



The State of Minas Gerais

"My father started in Brazil as an insurance broker but in 1960 he came to spend a weekend in the interior of Minas Gerais". (Minas Gerais, one of the 26 states of Brazil, is now, according to Wikipedia, the second most populous, the third by gross domestic product, and the fourth largest by area in the country. Ed).

"Here he stumbled across a shop from which he bought four truckloads of old furniture and various sundry antiques. This

purchase led him to become a full-blown antique dealer.

“The link with Minas Gerais became more serious as he continued to buy antiques. He set up a small workshop in São Joao del Rei where, with up to 20 employees working with iron, brass, copper, and wood, he could fix the antiques he had bought around the country and in Europe, prior to resale in Brazil.

“In the period 1962 to 1968 he had started travelling to Europe on shopping sprees. It was on these visits that he started buying old antiques in pewter, copper and other objects. During one of those visits to London, while having a pint, he met the factory manager of a pewter manufacturing company who showed him round the factory.

“I think it was, though I am not sure, Englefields; but I believe Ron Homer was involved.

“Anyway, he began negotiations with them to buy English pewter to take for resale in Brazil; but all of a sudden one of those hairbrained economic plans came into effect in Brazil and all imports were prohibited. Luckily, my father had been given a mould by Englefields (if it was Englefields) and, back at home, he tried it out. Our local workmen are extremely capable and the trials were a success. We still have the mould, one of a deep soup plate, in our Museum (see photos below).



John Somers

“Coincidentally, the centre of tin extraction in Brazil up until 1982 was in São Joao del Rei. So here he was, with tin, a mould (of a deep soup plate), very able workmen and a demanding market - a business planner’s dream. The right man, in the right place, at the right time.”

Thus began the John Somers Company. Greg Somers continued:



The first Somers’ mould, loaned by Englefields, is at the back of the main picture and the deep bowl soup plate made from it is at left foreground of the inset

“The economy boomed and, due to the import restrictions, all that rich Brazilians could buy was the product of a couple of steel manufacturers, a couple of porcelain factories, a couple of crystal factories - and the John Somers Company! It is amazing, but in the backwoods of Minas Gerais we were able to find people capable of making moulds and understanding the use of mechanical lathes!

“BUT not all is perfect; in 1980 we went broke. We then became associated with a Canadian multinational company and spent 10 years going through the steps of being businessmen. They could not take the nuisance of the small details.

In 1992 we bought them out and that was the beginning of the end. We associated ourselves with some very unsavoury people who, we ended up believing, were real brigands. In 1994 my father and I left the company and sued the others to try to get something back. It took us until 2010 to get some cash; and now, yes, I still do make some sort of pewter, but not the traditional line.

“It had become stale for me and, anyway, the market had totally disappeared. Brazil used to be one of the biggest *per capita* consumers of pewter in the world, but due to stagnation on the part of the producing companies, the market dropped. Cheap Chinese imports, huge internal taxes and very expensive money, contributed to the demise of the traditional pewter industry.”



On this page, I have reproduced three photos of Somers' traditional work. He said: "The jug with a lid was the bestseller; the mug with wrigglework engraving was one of the items we prided ourselves in - it is a repro. of the one in the V&A, as is the one in the 3rd picture, of a beer jug."

The fourth photo is of the mark used by Somers.



Look for the second part of this article - next year - which will look at Somers' new catalogue and their 2015 approach to pewter!



# Design by Somers

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# Pewter matters

## Cleaning that old pewter

### Cleaning instructions

One thing that everybody is agreed on is that pewter is not suitable for the dishwasher!

After that, it gets more difficult, as opinions vary. I do not think anyone would argue with the advice that pieces can be washed in warm, soapy water, then rinsed in clear warm water, and finally dried with a soft cloth.

Over the years the pewter will slowly develop a patina, which is a special feature of pewter. However, what do those who wish to keep the pewter bright, do? This is where opinions start to diverge dramatically. Some would say that you can use a proprietary polish from one of the three main manufacturers, but make sure you do not rub in circles, but rather in straight lines.

[www.goddards.com](http://www.goddards.com)

[www.towntalkpolish.com](http://www.towntalkpolish.com)

[www.haggertycare.com](http://www.haggertycare.com)

Others would say never touch the pewter with an abrasive polish! You take your pick. These latter people would say that cleaning pewter is a job for the expert; and that must be the case for dirtier items.

Can I ask those out there who know about these things to write in and tell me their views on cleaning?

**Alan Williams**

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# Methods of making pewter

## Casting and spinning

### Spun Pewter

Pewter sheets of varying sizes and thicknesses are spun against a metal or plastic form on a lathe giving the finished product a perfect round shape.

Tankard bodies are the most frequently spun items together with their bases. Goblets and circular flasks are also good examples of spun pewter.

### Gravity Cast Pewter

The metal mould has molten pewter poured into it and, if it is required for a hollow tankard handle, pewter is poured out of the mould again, after a few moments and before it has had enough time to set solid, thus giving a hollow handle as it is only at the edge of the mould where the pewter has set.

For heavy cast items, as in tankards and plates, the metal is allowed to set, completely filling the mould. Once the metal has set and cooled a little, the item is removed from the mould, and the pewter is then machined on a lathe to make its shape perfect.

### Centrifugal casting

Most often used to cast intricate items. Molten pewter is poured into a spinning, vulcanised rubber mould. The metal is forced into the furthest and finest extremities of the mould and is allowed to set hard before being removed from the mould for final finishing.

### Sheet Metal Worked Pewter

A sheet of pewter is bent round a metal form and the two edges are altered usually to make a flask body. Cut out parts are then soldered to form a top and bottom of the flask.

**David Hall**

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