SOME LIGHT ON PROVINCIAL PEWTERERS

Part I

BY RONALD F. MICHAELIS

THE late Mr. H. H. Cotterell, in his Old Pewter, Its Makers and Marks, published in 1939, quoted particulars of all pewterers' guilds of which information had come to light up to that time. Details were given of guilds, or associations, of pewterers in Bristol, Kingston-upon-Hull, Ludlow, Lynn, Manchester and Wigan, no organized societies would seem to have guided their destinies. Of later years, however, much interesting information has come to light, as will be explained in this part. The case for Scotland was fully covered by the late Mr. Ingleby Wood in his Scottish Pewterers and Pewterware. Ireland has so far yielded information only of pewterers' associations in Cork, Dublin and Wexford. This, and the succeeding articles, will deal specifically with the position in England.

As well known, the Pewterers Company of London exercised control over the whole industry in England from a time at least as early as the XVIIth century. The Company was granted a Royal Charter in 1472 and, inter alia, was given the right to make a provincial search and to take corrective action where necessary in order to stamp out the manufacture of poor quality ware. The first record of country searches in the existing documents of the London Company occurs in 1473-74 and shows that searches then went as far afield as Chelmsford. Later entries in these records mention visits to Yorkshire, Derbyshire, the West Country and many other places far removed from London. The only town, other than London, actually mentioned in the London records as having a separate Company of Pewterers is York.

In 1503-04 the London and York Companies together procured the passing of an important Act (19 Henry VII, Cap 6). In the petition for this statute it was requested that the Master and Wardens of the said craft of Pewterers within every city and borough where such are appointed and, where there are no such officials, then two wardens, having the requisite experience, appointed by the governor of the town, be given the power to make searches; and a Royal Charter in 1473 and, inter alia, was given the right to make a provincial search and to take corrective action where necessary in order to stamp out the manufacture of poor quality ware.

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The passing of the above-mentioned Act must have been the raison d'être for the formation of many of the local guilds, for in very few cases does it appear that a provincial guild was established earlier than 1503. Generally speaking, the pewterers formed only a very small proportion of the craftsmen practising in country towns which accounts for the fact that they usually kept themselves with other trades. There are many good reasons for this, the chiefest being that it would have been uneconomical for a small community to bear the cost of maintaining a Hall or other suitable offices.

Where guilds of associated trades actually existed they appear to have appointed a Master and two Wardens. These officers were chosen from members of the trade, and it is likely that the choice was not unanimously approved with a result that one of the trades broke away from the association and re-formed itself into a separate company.

In Scotland, according to the late Mr. Ingleby Wood, it was usual to appoint a Master of each craft represented in the association. There would naturally be certain merits in the Scottish system, lacking in our own, in so far as control could be more effectively maintained when the officers themselves were drawn from the particular trade they were required to shepherd.

Fortunately, in the cases of both London and Edinburgh, touchplates, or "counterpayses," containing pewterers' marks have been preserved. In York records it is enjoined that every master shall strike his touch mark (to wit) and that an impression of such touches was to be left at the Hall. This implies that a touchplate was in use, but it must be presumed to be lost for no trace of it has so far been found.

No mention can be found of touchplates elsewhere, and although it is reasonable to assume that in all the larger guilds some record of local marks was kept, this must necessarily remain a matter for conjecture.

One can only live in hopes that one day some fresh light will be thrown on the origin of many of the provincial touches known to exist, and in this respect the author will be particularly interested in record touches which have not hitherto been illustrated and will be only too pleased if readers will pass on to him careful rubbings of such marks with, if possible, some information of the piece (or pieces) upon which the mark has been found. All correspondence can be addressed to the author, c/o the Editor of this journal.

COVER PLATE

Mieris: "Lady with a Parrot."

Mr. Wilenski writes as follows on this picture in the new edition of his Dutch Painting (Faber):--

Frans van Mieris (called the Elder) was born, lived and died at Utrecht (1633-1683). He was the son of a goldsmith and diamond cutter and one of a family of twenty-three children. He was famous in his lifetime not only in Holland but also abroad --his patrons included the Archduke Cosimo of Tuscany and the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm who vainly invited him to become his court painter in Vienna. Mieris was a pupil of Gerard Dou and a close friend of Jan Steen, whose work he is said to have influenced though Steen was his senior by ten years. He is well represented in the galleries of Munich, Vienna, Florence, and The Hague.

The picture is typical of Dutch tableaux de modes which show us the clothes of the well-to-do Dutch bourgeois and his wife and to some extent the furniture and equipment of their houses. It is painted on copper and was at one time in the Beckford Collection at Fonthill Abbey. In the National Gallery, which acquired it in 1873, it is called "Lady in a Crimson Jacket"; a signed version on canvas is in the Munich Old Pinakothek; and there are other versions in Buckingham Palace and in the Cook Collection, Richmond.

BACK NUMBERS

A Belgian National Library requires the following copies of Apollo: May, October, December, 1940; February, 1941; April, May, June, July, 1942; October and December, 1943; all copies for 1944 and 1945; and Indices for Vols. 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35. The Editor will be glad to hear of any available.

61


SOME LIGHT ON PROVINCIAL PEWTERERS—PART II
A NEWLY DISCOVERED COMPANY OF METALMEN OF GLOUCESTER

BY RONALD F. MICHAELIS

TO preface the story of pewterers' guilds which have been discovered in the last few years the following notes will be found of interest.

It was reported to the Society of Pewter Collectors by a member, Mr. Ernest Hunter, that he had discovered a reference to a guild of pewterers in Kendal, Westmorland. Mr. Roland J. A. Shelley, F.R.Hist.S., the well-known collector and President of the Society, who lives in Lancashire, was asked to endeavour to find out whether any further information could be obtained in the locality. His efforts met with success and he was able to disclose his findings to the January, 1935, meeting of the Society members. In brief, he ascertained that in 1661 the pewterers of Kendal, who had previously been associated with other trades, broke away from the Hardwaremen, Armourers, etc., and formed a Company on their own.

A copy of the Constitution was produced by Mr. Shelley.

It appeared that the Kendal pewterers were also workers in brass, and the names of some 29 possible pewterers submitted by Mr. Shelley probably included some craftsmen who were partly or solely braziers. It is believed that the Pewters Company of Kendal came to an end some time prior to 1744.

The success achieved by Mr. Shelley in the above investigation seems to have spurred him on to further triumphs, for in January, 1936, he read a paper before the Society concerning his discoveries relating to the Pewterers of Wigan.

It had hitherto been believed that, although pewterware was made sporadically at Wigan, there had been no guild established there. Mr. Shelley, although unable to trace any guild documents, found sufficient evidence that a guild had existed, and was able to hand on to fellow collectors details of some 194 pewters, only a few of which had been previously recorded. Since the writing of this article, Mr. Shelley has published his booklet Wigan and Liverpool Pewterers, which gives particulars of some 361 pewters and much other interesting information. This booklet was reviewed in the January issue of Apollo.

He was also able to produce evidence that the so-called "York" flagons which were believed by Mr. H. H. Cotterell to have been made exclusively in Yorkshire, were also made by a Wigan pewterer and the score, presumably, in Wigan.

So much for the position up to date. The present writer has had the good fortune to find traces of yet more provincial guilds and the information is published here for the first time. Gloucester has yielded some valuable information relating to a Company of Metalmen, consisting of the goldsmiths, pewterers, braziers, copper smiths, wire-drawers, cardmakers, pinmakers, and plumbers. This guild was incorporated in the year 1607. Even Mr. Cotterell appears to have been unaware of such a Company since no mention of Gloucester (other than the names of a few pewterers whose provenance was Gloucester) appears in his book. The first reference to a company here, which included pewters, was found in a volume on the English Craft Guilds, printed and published in America in 1927, and corroboration of the information was made by the writer from the Public Record Office, London, where, in the "Commission Reports," was found an extract from the "Ordinances for the Government of the Company of Metalmen of Gloucester, newly incorporated by the Mayor, Aldermen and Council on 25th May, 1607." It was stated that these ordinances showed the names of the 21 persons who petitioned for its formation, but unfortunately these (the names) did not appear in the Commission reports.

The historical document to which reference is made is one of the valued possessions of the Corporation of the City of Gloucester, and contact was made, through the Town Clerk, with Mr. Roland Austin, the Records Officer of Gloucester, who kindly assisted in supplying further extracts from the text of the "Ordinances" and the names of the 21 founder members. The names are quoted below, together with part of the text in which they appear.

The whole extract and the names are reproduced in their original spelling.

"WHEREAS also, it hath alwaies beene founde necessarye and expediente for the common commodity and for good ordre to be observed and kepte within the saide Cittie that all anye uniforme order or governmente shoulde be reduced into some companye and that the persons usinge and exercisinge anye uniforme order or governmente shoulde be reduced into some companye and that the persons exercisinge anye uniforme order or governmente shoulde be reduced into some companye and that the persons exercisinge anye uniforme order or governmente shoulde be reduced into some companye..."

Men of the Cittye of Gloucester are of late much chevisance and mutull dealinge amonge themselves and some of them have not heretofore been of anye companye and so throughe defaulte and wante of composition betweene the persons exercisinge those occupations or mysteries as well the same occupations and trades as the persons usinge the same within the said Cittie of Gloucester are of late much decayed and therefore desire to be incorporated and to be ordened and made one companye or fraternitie and to be called by the name of the Companye and Fraternitie of Mettall Men of the Cittye of Gloucester KNOWE YEE nowe and these..."
SOME LIGHT ON PROVINCIAL PEWTERERS

lande, the fyorth, and of Scotland the fortyethe by us the
saide Maior and Aldermen and Common Councell of the saide
Cittye it was then and there with one assente and consente,
concluded consented unto and agreed and for us and our
successors allibed and granted to and for the weal of the saide
Cittye that our well beloved neighbours herein named:—

Thomas Hill, George Custance, Richarde Henche, Johane
Hill Widowe, Nicholas Foxe, William Collins, Henry Pryor,
John Pantts, Edward Owen, Francis Tewe, Phillippe Greens,
Robert Cugleye, Humphrye Taylor, Richarde Browne, John
Brownelinge, Robert Hillyarde, Thomas Edge, Thomas
Cugleye, Robert Brothers, Walter Prycharde, and John
Hawkeswell and such others as shalle have served seven
years as apprentices with any of the saide 21 persons, shalle
be taken and reputed as the onely Company of metal-men
in the saide Cittye"; and that they may elect on the Monday
sennight next after Epiphany yearly a Master of the saide
company and two Wardens of the same, to hold office for one
year; which Master and Wardens shall have power to enquire
into all defaults, deceits and trespass made by the members
of the said company, and to correct and punish the same.

The said Master and Wardens are invested with full
powers for the government of the said company and the said
company may assemble themselves as often as necessary in
some fit place in the City to be called the Guild Hall of the
Fraternity of the Metal-men of the City of Gloucester; and
the said Company shall be a body corporate and be called
and known by the name of "The Company and Fraternity of
the Mystery and Occupation of Metal-men of the City of
Gloucester."

Here follows a list of rules and regulations containing clauses
relating to good behaviour, rights of search, etc., but nothing
specifically for any one trade, nor are any particular trades or
professions mentioned.

It is to be regretted that the respective trades of the petitioners
for the formation of the company are not shown, but it seems
evident that Willyam Collins, at least, was a pewterer.

Cotterell includes a William Collins who was mentioned in
Gloucester records of 1610, and this was most probably the
Wm. Collins whose name appears in the "ordinances."

We are thus able to add to the already recorded information
the fact that this pewterer was operating, at least, between the
dates 1607 and 1636.

The only other name amongst those included above, of whom
a possible connection can be traced to a recorded pewterer is that
of Edwarde Owen. Cotterell records Edwarde ap Owen who was a
master of Ludlow in 1578, i.e. 29 years before the date of the
incorporation of Gloucester metalmen.

It is not a far throw from Gloucester to Ludlow, and it is
possible that Edwarde Owen, although a Gloucester pewterer,
joined the Ludlow Guild as being the nearest at that time, and
it is not beyond the bounds of reason that he, with his knowledge
of the inner workings of guilds by virtue of having already attained
the rank of master, was instrumental in instigating the benefits
to his fellow workers in metalcraft in Gloucester in 1607.

Although, so far, no trace has been found of any earlier
association of pewterers in Gloucester, it is established that
pewterware was made there prior to 1607. Beggars Badges' were
in use in the city in 1596, although the writer has been unable to
trace any such badge still in existence.

A record in the Chamberlains' accounts for the City of
Gloucester in 1555-56 reads as follows:—

... also in money paid to John Paynter for making of a
molde for the begger's bages, and pewter and workmanship
of the same to a pewterer, by the commandement of the Maister
Maire. xiii. 1/2d."

The above-mentioned John Paynter (or Peynter as his name
is variously spelt) is unlikely to have been a pewterer or mould
maker himself and was probably some sort of a Beadle of the
Corporation, for his name appears on various occasions in the
City records about this time as receiving sums of money for
doing odd jobs quite unconnected with metalcraft; for example
in 1556-57:

... also paid to John Paynter for the makyng of two
papurs sett abowte the sowthe seier (soothsayer?) standyng
uppon the leades at the High Cross, by the commandment of
the Maister Mayor vii. 6d.

Meagre as this new information may be, it adds just another
small chapter to the history of pewterers and their associations.
(The writer has also traced references to guilds which included
pewterers in Hereford, Shrewsbury, Chester and Chester,
and it is hoped to write further on these guilds at a later date.)

The English Craft Guilds: Studies in their Progress and Decline.

BOOKS RECEIVED

CHINESE ALBUM. By Cecil Beaton.

AN INDIAN ALBUM. By Cecil Beaton. (Batsford.) 12s. 6d. each.

MEDIEVAL CATALOGUE. No. 7. (London Museum.) 10s. paper cover, 10s. 6d. bound.

WELSH FOLK CRAFTS AND INDUSTRIES. By Iorwerth C. Prate. (National Museum of Wales.) 3s.

CIVIC AND MEMORIAL LETTERING. By Percy J. Daf Smith. (A. & C. Black.) 10s. 6d. net.

MEDIEVAL CATALOGUE, London Museum Catalogues No. 7. Paper covers, 10s. Board, 10s. 6d. (Lancaster House, St. James's, S.W.1.)

PIER DI COSIMO. By R. Langton Douglas. (University of Chicago Press.)

WESTERN ASPECTS OF GANDHARA SCULPTURE. By H. Buchthal. From the proceedings of the British Academy. (Oxford University Press.) 9s. 6d. net.

PAINTING AND PAINTERS. Lionello Venturi. (Scribners.) 21s. net.

LONG ROAD HOME. The Romance of Romney. Horace Ship. (Sampson Low.) 8s. 6d. net.

TWO EARLY PorringerS. Left: 5 ins. dia.—touch of Henry Hammerton, circa 1720. Right: 4½ ins. dia.—by "I. B.," unknown maker, circa 1700. Author's Collection

105