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William Eddon flat lidded flagons

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Eddon's 'lavers' are, of course, flat lidded flagons typical in every detail of flagons of the last two decades of the 17th century. The banding too started to appear during this period, but the mid-barrel position of Eddon's turned fillets triggers the imagination of the present day collector and generates an association with Scotland and the later laver style common in churches there.

This preliminary study of Eddon's flagons seeks to demonstrate that Eddon made the simpler versions for sale primarily as household flagons. They contained some lead and both the alloy and the flagons themselves can be classified as 'lay' compared to the expensively made but somewhat later developed hardmetal spire flagons by his London contemporaries. The 'laver style' with flat lids, strap handles and twin cusp handles belong firmly in the 1680-1720 period rather than the 1720-40 period although Eddon probably made them throughout his career. They are invariably dated 'c. first half of the 18th century' by auctioneers and writers for reasons unknown. The question to ask in this context is how, exactly, Eddon and his apprentices occupied their working days from his shop opening in 1690 to this 'first half of the 18th century' before the new styles of tankards etc. arrived?

A peculiarity relating to Eddon's flagons is his distinct twin cusp thumbpiece cast in two sizes at least. Why have all later Scottish lavers by Scott, Hunter etc. exactly this thumbpiece? Close measurements of later Scottish lavers reveal exact measurements by *different* makers. Did they have moulds in common? Did they get hold of Eddons moulds after his death?

To the right is Eddons smallest and very simply made flagon (John Douglas collection in Jan. 2002).

Below is a comparison with Eddon's larger size II which is also simply made (Casimir collection Jan. 2002). The thumbpiece/hinge arrangement on the smaller flagon is a scaled-down rather

than a cut-down version of thumbpiece/hinge used for the larger flagon. Eddon therefore had separate thumbpiece/hinge and also strap handle moulds for these two sizes of flagon. A photographic comparison below using the same focusing angle illustrates that the flare of the barrels of the above two flagons are similar. Eddon evidently used a wider 'tankard style' base for the larger flagon in the Sotheby



example below (and also for the examples illustrated by Sutherland-Graeme in his Eddon article in the Connoisseur) compared to the one of the same size in the Casimir collection. He therefore produced a *pronounced flare* by pressing the barrel against a greased cone in the lathe low down on the barrel for a perfect fit into the wider purpose-made base rim. He sometimes used a similar technique and an even more impressive base for his 'size III' and largest (?) flagon.



Eddon, thus, made two distinct styles based on his three (?) sizes of barrel moulds; a simple, flat bottomed version with some turned fillets low down destined for households (or churches with limited funds!) and a more expensively made style. Although cast in the same moulds, this version received some extra work with a flared lower barrel section to fit a distinct foot ring although the bottom also with this version rested on the table. (Frank Holt coined the term 'internal volume base' for this style as opposed to 'external volume base' when the bottom is raised off the table.)



Eddon used the slush cast handles on his later tankards but no such 'modernities' have ever been recorded on his simpler tankards and flagons, nor have the Carpenter/Eddon thumbpieces been noted here!



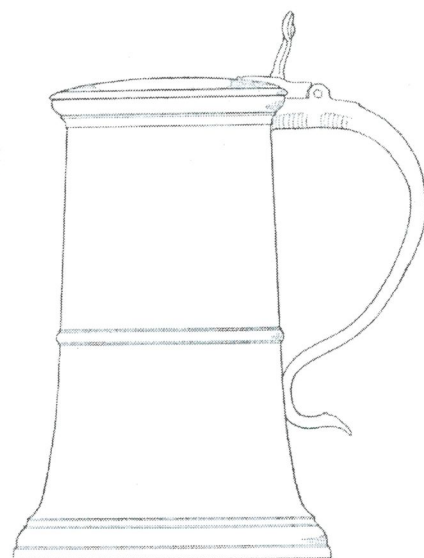
With the pronounced narrow fillet and tankard style base (rather than just an inserted flat bottom) the flagon on the right looks and is more expensive than his simpler lavers and the future (and close measurements) will tell if this indeed was Eddon's 'de Lux' version intended for churches?



A Church laver from Scotland by Thomas Inglis II, height 11 ¼" (286 mm), dated 1702 was sold by Sothebys, Billingshurst, Sept 15, 1998, lot 314. Engraved 'DALGETY COMMUNION FLAGONS, 1702'



A Church laver ill. by Cotterell in OP, height 13" (330 mm), ex Chas G.J. Port coll. engraved 'THIS FLAGON WAS BOUGHT BY THE KIRK SESSION OF KILMADOCK, FOR THE USE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, 1702'.



A pair by Eddon owned by Walter Churcher was exhibited at the Clifford Inn Pewter Exhibition in 1904 and illustrated with a line drawing.

Tankards for drinking using the Eddon thumbpiece

These smaller flat lidded tankards seem to be unmarked. The future will tell if they all use this Eddon thumbpiece which measures c. 38.5 – 39 mm measured from the back at the widest point across the 'cusps'. This thumbpiece was first identified and measured on the smallest of the Eddon flagons above (John Douglas coll.). There is an easily recognizable asymmetry in the mould of this smallest Eddon thumbpiece as the left hand vertical fluting reaches higher up on the left cusp than does the fluting on the right hand side (see various illustrations).

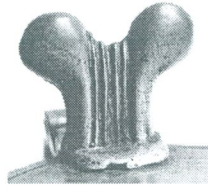
These thumbpieces appear to have been soldered rather than cast onto the lids and they all have a varying degree of rather poor finish. This could mean that Eddon sold this thumbpiece together with a strap handle/hinge assembly as separate units to other pewterers. If this was the case identification will be difficult, unless the various barrels show a corresponding similarity.



CWF 1958-555, cat. 251



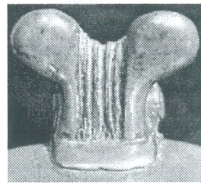
Fitzwilliams Museum, NAV 097-1933



CWF 1963-151, cat. 252



Photo to come

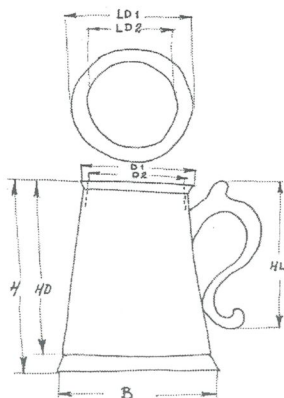


Tony Chapman thurdendale I

Tony Chapman thurdendale II

Size table

| Maker | H | HD | B | D1 | D2 | LD1 | LD2 | HL | WVH | Mus/coll No. | Comments |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|--|---|---|
| Unmarked | 123 | | 96 | 88 | 78 | 91 | 75 | 108 | | Fitzwilliams Museum, NAV 097-1933 Cambridge | Eddon's thumbpiece, double banding |
| Unmarked | | | 96 | | | | | | h o/a 157 | CWF 1958-555, cat. 251 | 'Eddon's' thumbpiece, double banding |
| Unmarked | | | 119 | | | | | | h o/a 206 | CWF 1963-151, cat. 252 | 'Eddon's' thumbpiece, double banding |
| Unmarked | 168 | | 118 | 98 | 87 | 104 | 116 | | | Tony Chapman | Thurndendale with two fillets applied, Eddon's thumbpiece 38.5 mm across |
| Unmarked | 168 | | 116 | 96 | 88 | 103 | 82/3 | 150 | | Tony Chapman | Thurndendale with two fillets applied, Eddon's thumbpiece 38.5 mm across |
| William Eddon, size I | 200 | 186 | 140 | 103 | 93 | 109 | 86 | 173 | 171 cl, 1208 g, h o/a 234 mm | John Douglas | Laver style flagon with circular flat lid, strap handle and old thumbpiece 39 mm across. |
| William Eddon, size II | 260 | 240 | 173 | 127 | 113 | 137 | 108 | | h o/a 308 mm | Casimir | Laver style flagon with circular flat lid, strap handle and old thumbpiece |
| William Eddon, size III | (c. 283) | | | | | | | | h o/a 331 mm (48 mm allowed for distance rim to top of thumb-piece). | Sothebys, July 9, 1970 (Mundey bought it) | Laver style flagon with circular flat lid, strap handle and old thumbpiece but with a pre-cast tankard style base rather than inserted base plate. |
| William Eddon, size III (pair) | 286 | | 200 | 143 | | | | | Prob. as Sothebys 1970 | Walter Churcher in 1904 | As Eddon III above. (Clifford's Inn 1904 cat gave height 11 1/4" = 286 mm. This is probably and more usefully 'height to rim' as otherwise the measurements given in the cat. would be out of proportion! |
| William Eddon, size III | 292 | | | | | | | | h o/a 356 mm | | Ex Scott Nicholson, ill by Cotterell in Apollo Feb 1934, |
| Thomas Inglis II, Edinburg h | | | | | | | | | h o/a c. 290 | Sotheby Sept 15, 1998, lot 314 | Twin cusp severely bent, probably h o/a 310 mm as William Eddon size II? Engraved 'Dalgety communion flagons 1702' |
| Laver ill by Cotterell | | | | | | | | | h o/a c. 330 | | Engraved 'Kilmadock Church 1702 etc.' Height as William Eddon size III. |
| Drew, Glasgow | 213 | 197 | 155 | 118 | 106 | 121 | 99 | 187 | | Fitzwilliams NAV 148 | |
| Wm Hunter, Glasgow | 214 | 198 | 156 | 118 | 103 | 123 | 100 | 178 | | Fitzwilliams NAV 222 | |

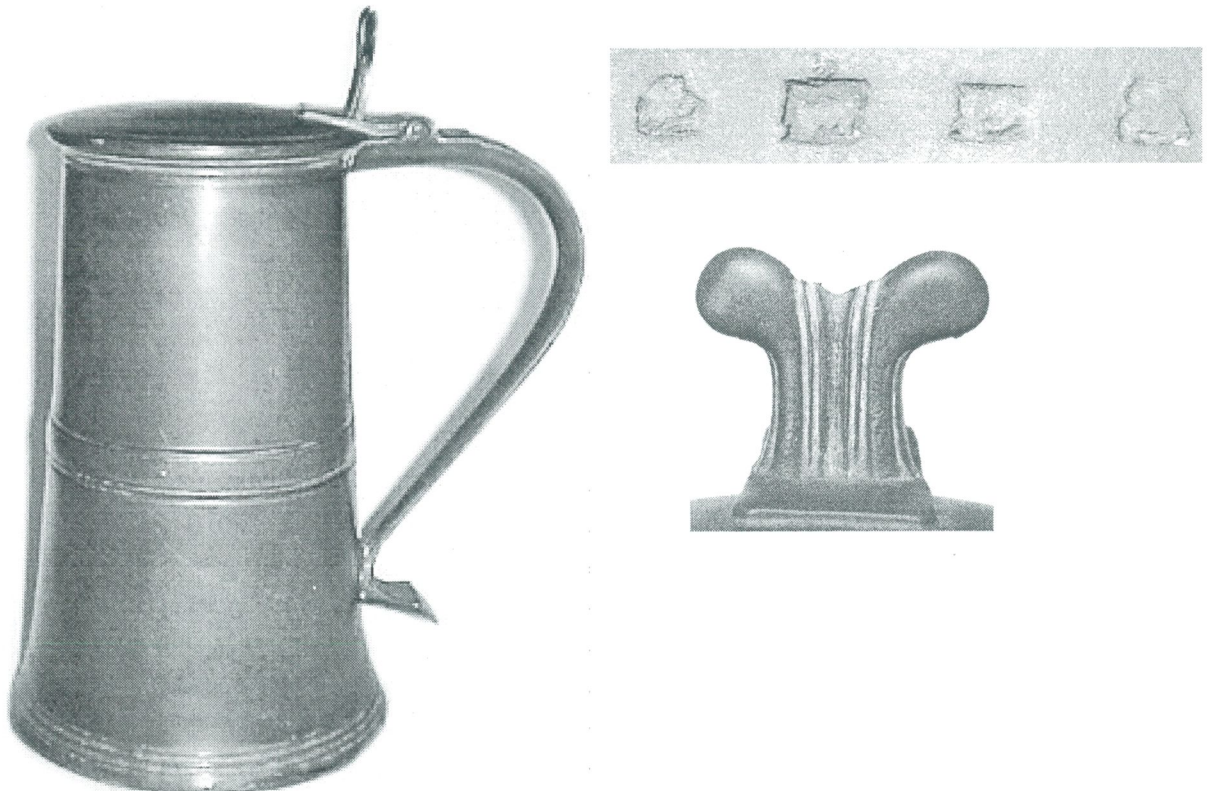


William Eddon lavers



Comparison with Eddon larger size (Casimir collection Jan. 2002).

The thumbpiece/hinge arrangement on the smaller flagon is a scaled-down rather than a cut-down version of thumbpiece/ hinge used for the the larger flagon. Eddon therefore had separate thumbpiece/hinge and also strap handle moulds for these two sizes of lavers.





A photographic comparison where the same focusing angle was used illustrates that the flare of the barrels of these two lavers were similar. Eddon evidently used a wider base for the larger lavers illustrated by Sutherland-Graeme compared to the one of the same size in the Casimir collection and produced a pronounced lower barrel flare in the lathe for a perfect fit. This church laver base is somewhat more elaborate than the one illustrated here.