

EDE

THE GUILD OF HAMMERMEN OF LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE.

by H H Cotterell, FRHistS & W G Churcher

In 1917 Mr Cotterell contributed to that excellent magazine 'Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries' a short article entitled 'West-Country Pewterers'. The article in question was something in the nature of a 'bow at a venture' in that there was very little material to work upon and much of the 'information' was designedly put forward as a target for others to fire at. How well the venture succeeded was very soon evidenced by the volume of additional material which poured into him from many quarters, the direct result of which was the publication in 1918, as one of its Handbooks by the Bristol Museum, of his 'Bristol & West-Country Pewterers' which increased the list of 33 makers in the magazine article to upwards of 200, a number which has since been still further increased to upwards of 600!

Well the present notes are put forward in a somewhat similar manner, though it is not pretended that these are to be 'fired at' for here we deal with incontrovertible historical facts, whereas in the former case it was more or less conjecture, but we do hope that, through the publicity which the pages of the 'Connoisseur' alone can give, fuller details may accrue to us and, who knows, of such a volume as to warrant the compilation of a small handbook on this subject too.

The archives of the Ludlow Hammermens' Guild are deposited in the town museum at Ludlow and it is to the courtesy of Mr John Palmer, one of the joint curators of that institution, that we are indebted for much of the information here given.

Two interesting mementoes of the Guild have found a safe resting place in the Museum, in the form of two much frayed silken streamers or pennants with fringed edges, each about fifteen feet long and upon one of which appears the date 1734. Each side of these streamers is painted with the arms, helm, crest, supporters and motto of the various trades constituting the Guild and of which illustrations are given here from photographs taken by Mr W E Harper of Ludlow, these trades and mottoes being as follows, reading from top to bottom in each case:-

- Fig I
- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Ironmongers | 'In God is all our Strength' |
| 2. Goldsmiths | 'In God alone be all Glory' |
| 3. Pewterers | 'In God is all our Trust' |
| 4. Masons | 'In the Lord is our Trust' |

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|---------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Fig II | 5. Blacksmiths | 'By Hammer & Hand all Arts do stand' |
| | 6. Saddlers | 'Our Trust in in God' |
| | 7. Coopers | 'Love as Brethren' |
| | 8. Bricklayers | 'In God is all our Trust' |
| Fig III | 9. Plumbers | 'In God is all our Hope' |
| | 10. Glaziers | 'Non sine Lumine' |
| | 11. Tinplate workers | 'Unite in Love' |
| | 12. Carpenters | 'Honour God' |
| Fig IV | 13 Joiners | none |
| | 14 Cutlers | 'Pour parvenir au Bon' |
| | 15 Plasterers | 'Let Brotherly Love Continue' |
| | 16 Farriers | 'Honour God' |

Fig V gives an enlarged view of the Pewterers' Arms, also a better idea of the frail condition of the treasures.

The streamers were carried by the youngest Freeman on all state occasions, at the head of the Fraternity when it marched in procession; they were also paraded at the pleasure fair held annually on the 1st May.

Fig VI shows what was evidently the old membership badge of the Guild, recently acquired by Mr Thomas Warburton of Manchester and by whose courtesy it is here reproduced. The reverse side of this badge is left blank to receive the name or number of the member and the edge is milled diagonally.

Prior to the reign of Richard I, the smiths with some 16 other allied trades formed themselves into a trading fraternity under the name of 'Smiths ' others' for mutual protection, benefit and support and became in course of time a prescriptive corporation.

It is laid down in an ordinance made by Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward IV, whilst Lord of the Castle of Ludlow, and confirmed by the 'twelve and twenty-five', the then governing body of the town, that:-

'No manner craft make no foreign Brother but it be a man of this same town, dwelling and occupie the same craft that he is made brother of, under payne of X li, so as it playnly apperth under the said Duke's seale and the Comon Seale of

the town, to be forfeit as ought times as it may be proved.'

King Edward IV, by his Charter dated 7th December, 1461, granted to the Burgesses of Ludlow, their heirs and successors for ever:- 'that they have in their Town or Borough aforesaid, the Merchants Guild with a Company and all other customs and liberties to the Guild aforesaid appertaining, and that no one who is not of that Guild shall use any merchandise in the aforesaid town or suburbs of the same unless by the licence and leave of the same Burgesses, their heirs and successors.'

The Guild or Company of Smiths met in the South Aisle of the parish church for the transaction of their business, held pews there and contributed towards the maintenance of the church.

In the year 1511 a Charter was granted to the Guild wherein the following trades would appear to be Members of the Guild:- Smiths, Ironmongers, Saddlers, Braziers, Pewterers, Spurriers, Buckle makers, Brygand ironsmakers(sic), Armourers, Masons, Cardmakers and Coopers. Under the Charter the Guild was ordered to choose from amongst themselves, six of the 'most honest and saddest men' to be called by the name of 'the six men' and two Stewards, to be called by the name of 'Stewards' and the same six men and two Stewards to continue in office for two years from the date of their election and the two Stewards yearly to make a true account of all such goods and monies as shall come to their hands, before the said six men.

In the Charter it was provided that any Master summoned and not appearing upon his summons was to be fined by the Stewards in half a pound of wax and every Master who was apprenticed in the town of Ludlow to any of the occupations shall have his Freedom in the Guild on payment of 6s 8d and those not apprenticed there on payment of 13s 4d. Any journeyman of any of the said occupations rebuking any Master was to forfeit half a pound of wax as often as he offended.

The first record of priceedings is in 1539 when certain alterations were made in the election of Stewards and the fees payable by Masters on their admission.

Under the new rules the six men were to choose but one Steward and the body of the Fellowship the other. The fees for admission differed according to different trades, the list of which varied considerably from that of 1511 and included 16 trades

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instead of twelve, the pewterers paying 10s 8d for admission if apprenticed in the town and 40s 8d if otherwise.

In 1575 a new composition was drawn up under the seal of the Fraternity and that of the Borough, and approved on 3rd April, 1576 by the Law Officers of the Crown at Bridgenorth(sic).

This composition is a long document, the chief terms of which were much the same as those already in force:

the Stewards were each required to give a bond with sureties for £40 on election.

Members were forbidden to bring actions against fellow-Members without the consent of the six men under pain of forfeiting 3s 4d.

apprentices could not be bound for less than seven years, to end when they attained the age of 24 years, the apprentice to be made free of the occupation on payment of the customary fee.

a 'foreigner', or one not apprenticed in the town, had to produce testimonials showing where and with whom he served his apprenticeship and that he had been 'of good name and fame' during that time. Should he fail to comply and set up in business without being made free of the Fraternity, he was fined 3s 4d for every day he so offended.

the Bailiffs and Council of the town were given power to correct, reform, amend or alter any ambiguity that might arise in any clause.

the charge to Masters on being made free provided for their attendance at meetings when summoned, under pain of a fine of 3s 4d, to pay Hall-money of 1s 0d yearly and a fine of 3s 4d for using 'railing words' or commencing a suit against a brother member without leave, or procuring work out of another Master's hands.

It concludes:- 'No Master of this Fellowship shall suffer his servant or prentyce to come to the occupacons supper, only suche as shall paye their IIIId upon payne of forfeiture of 3s 4d, and lastly, you nor your wief(sic) or other in your behalf shall not use to knele in the Occupacons pewes before you have been Steward'.

About the year 1580 there are in the minutes and Stewards' accounts, many instances of money being spent on the furnishings of soldiers, the Stewards also having charge of the Fraternity's small armoury.

Like other similar fellowships, the Ludlow Guild seems to have had its annual feasts and the Stewards had an annual allowance of 'a pottle of sack and a pottle of claret' for their Stewards' suppers.

In the year 1600 the fraternity numbered about 65 free-masters. After the year 1694 the admission forms bear a 1/- Inland Revenue stamp.

Among the meetings of the fellowship were Election Day, Stewards' Hall, Quarterly meetings (reduced to two per annum in 1790), with special and private meetings. All these were held in the pews belonging to the fraternity, situated under the East window of the South Aisle in the Parish Church, on the spot formerly occupied by the Warwick Chapel, but 'an adjournment was frequently made to a neighbouring Inn'.

Members were summoned by notice and by the ringing of a bell.

Election Day was formerly held on the Sunday, afterwards altered to the Saturday, after Holy Rood Day, and finally to a Tuesday early in May.

The fine for refusing to serve as a Steward, finally fixed at £5, had previously been 13s 4d and 20s 0d.

The six men were chosen, as a rule, from amongst the latest past Stewards, the four key-keepers and box-keeper being chosen next.

Stewards' Hall was generally held on Whit Monday. In later years the audit was transferred from Election Day to this meeting.

Upto 1710 the Clerk was chosen from among their own members but in this year Richard Perks, Town Clerk of Ludlow, was appointed to the office, about which time also the silversmiths, clockmakers, cabinet makers and others were admitted to the fraternity.

In 1792 a motion was set on foot for getting rid of the six men on the ground that they should have no more power than other members, but this came to nothing.

Trouble commenced as in other similar Guilds early in the nineteenth century and from about 1815 to 1835 great trouble was experienced in getting refractory hammermen to take up their freedom and the death-blow came in 1835 in the shape of the Municipal Corporations Act, which enacted that any man might carry on any lawful trade in any Borough, whether free of any trade guild or not.

The Fraternity drifted on for many years after this until one-by-one its old members died off and its pews in the parish church were swept away.

This is a verbatim copy of the notes by Cotterell and Churcher and dated between 1926 and 1928. The notes formed the basis of the entry in Cotterell's 'Old Pewter - Its Makers And Its Marks', pp 11-14, on Ludlow. Figures I - V mentioned in the notes appear as the four photographs which make up Plate IV in that publication. Figures V and ~~VI~~ do not appear in the book. It seems to me that the notes were prepared for some other article, possibly for 'The Connoisseur', but no such article has yet been found.

Note:- Figure VI does appear in 'OP' in Plate XII, p74.

Homer and Hall in their 'Provincial Pewterers' have a section on Ludlow, pp 29-34. They deal with various aspects of the Craft Guild but their main objective is locating names of pewterers and braziers working in Ludlow.

NOTES ON AN OLD ENGLISH PROVINCIAL TRADE-GUILD

by

Howard Herschel Cotterell and Walter Graham Churcher.

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In the January, 1926, issue of ANTIQUES, the Editor, in his excellent "Casual Notes on American Pewter", gave to us a thrill of the first magnitude in his reproduction of the old painted silken Banner of the New York Society of Pewterers, for which, very wisely, he claims no more than that it gives evidence of the existence of such a body, though there is at present no evidence to say whether or not it was of a permanent nature or created for a special purpose, to wit, the great Federal Parade of 23 July 1788.

Well, one prefers to be with him on the safe side rather than allow one's self to be led off into all manner of "wild-cat" schemes of conjecture and speculation, but surely, our American cousins, there is someone among you who will be willing to seize the baton from the Editor and do another lap or two in the race for further knowledge, for it is surely to be found if the search be made in the right channels and with real keenness?

At the time the January number came into our hands, we had but recently completed some notes bearing on two English banners, pennants or streamers, also of silk, painted, with fringed edges and having reference to - inter alia - the Pewterers, and displaying the Pewterers' Arms.

These notes furnish a good example of the regulations which governed, and the bounds which limited, the work and the actions of the early pewterer and open up ground which has hitherto not been published. They cannot be without interest EH at the present juncture and one is now almost encouraged to hope that something analogous to these regulations may be discovered as governing the operations of American Pewterers.

That a more ready comparison may be made with the Arms on the American Banner, an enlarged illustration is given at Fig. V., of that part of our Banners which contains the Arms of the London Pewterers though the Banners we write about were not of London, but of the Hammermens' Guild of Ludlow in the county of Shropshire, England, and the use of the London Pewterers' Arms by provincial Guilds would seem to have been either permitted or "winked at"

Ludlow is one of the oldest and most interesting towns in England with its old and fine feudal castle and wonderful half-timbered houses, well worthy a visit by Americans when in this country

From the most cursory glance it will at once be seen that the American shield bears but one point of resemblance to that on our Banner - the chevron bearing the three slipped roses. In the English example this chevron appears between three EH strokes of tin, or ingots somewhat in the form of a portcullis, whereas the American version appears over the spiral "worm" of a still. Again, your crest is "A Teapot" in place of our "Pewter dish supported by two arms embowed" which rise from a torse resting upon a helmet, which latter feature is absent in your Banner and in place of the sea-horses for supporters, you have what are des-

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described by Sarah H.J. Simpson as "Two miners holding burning lamps", (Tin Miners presumably ?). We cannot, at this distance either prove or disprove this suggestion since the banner is not before us for examination, ~~but~~ but may we put forward as an MI alternative, that they may be pewterers with melting pots full of molten metal ? It is a small matter and the suggestion is put forward with the sole desire of establishing a point after viewing it from all angles.

The only remaining point for comparison is the mottoes, yours being "Solid and Pure" against our "In God is all our Trust".

From the above there would not seem much at first sight whereupon to base a connexion, but that chevron with its three slipped roses is sufficient, for it shows that whoever was responsible for the American conception was not without knowledge

of, and who shall say, affection for, the old tradition ! It is

well !, it proves the American interpretation is not chimerical,

but that it stands upon a foundation of granite, a conclusion ~~MM~~

which gives greater force to the hope, that something more than a

institution for the temporary participation in the Federal Parade

was in the mind of the designer, a hope that even yet it may be

discovered that the Pewterers of the New World were organised,

and had their ordinances formed on lines similar to those

obtaining in the Old Country.

Turning now to the story we have to tell, the Archives of the Ludlow Hammermens' Guild.

refer on to
next page
& remember 3, 4, 5 & so on.
A.H.C.