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J. P. Paul

THREE NORWICH PEWTERERS

BY
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Three Norwich Pewterers

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IN THE COURSE OF DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH on buildings for the Norwich Survey, inventories of three pewterers came to light. Further investigation of relevant wills, the Register of Freemen¹ and other sources has built up a picture of the trade in Norwich spanning a period of two hundred years.

The Norwich pewterers were originally attached to the Guild of St. Luke, but after the Reformation the crafts became secularized and in 1622 they were regrouped as 'Trades'. These were arranged as twelve Great Companies in a socially descending scale, the Pewterers being in the sixth group along with the Goldsmiths, Saddlers, Braziers, Glaziers, Cutlers, Plumbers, Clockmakers and Bellfounders.² Apart from the problem of non-enrolment, for there may well have been other manufacturers of pewter who did not become Freemen, some trades tended to overlap, for example Pewterers and Braziers.

The methods of making pewterware were (and are):

1. By melting the alloy and casting it in moulds;
2. By hammering the metal previously reduced to plate form;
3. A combination of both these methods;
4. By turning on a lathe;
5. By spinning—a modern method only possible on power lathes, usually used for Britannia metal.³

Compared with the tools of some crafts, those of the pewterer were (and are) simpler and comparatively few (PL. XI). Most important and valuable were the moulds and lathes, the former being made of bell metal or bronze. Then there were hammers of various patterns, files, graters, hooks of various shapes and sizes, and burnishers.

The following lists are extracts from the inventories and pertain only to the workshops and warehouses.

THOMAS HAYWARD 1590⁴

'In the working Chamber.

Item one olde trendle bedd and one olde fether

bedd uppon the same and a covering

xiiis iiiid

c[er]tene mouldes one payer of yron wheles

and other working tooles belonging to the

occupacion of a pewterer

xls

one oulde candlestick

xiid

one olde clothegowne and a cloake

iiiiis

¹ Percy Millican, *The Register of the Freemen of Norwich 1548-1713* (1934).

² H. H. Cotterell, *Old Pewter: Its Makers and Marks* (1929), 15.

³ H. J. L. J. Massé, ed. Michaelis, *Chats on Old Pewter* (1971), 56.

⁴ Norfolk Record Office, Norwich Consistory Court Probate Inventories. INV 7/58.

too olde stooles
In the shopp
 one chiste
 twentie pounce of leade
 one new chamber pott of pewter
 eighten m[ar]king l[ette]res for to
 m[ar]ke pewter with
 one olde stande and one olde stole and
 too leathers
 one yron wedge

iid
 vis viiid
 xxd
 xiid
 xs iiid
 iis
 ixd

GEORGE YOUNGS 1623^s

In the shopp and vault
 Item iiicwt iqr Olb of shruffe metell
 1-2-5lb of laten metell
 62lb of copper shruffe
 18lb of pott metell
 iii peces of brase plates 60lb.
 bell metell xxlb
 plate peces 260lb
 old brase basons 24lb
 spores buckells and nayles 53lb
 batrie ketells 1-3-26lb
 laye metell 2-3-11lb.
 fyne metell pewter 21-0-20lb.
 brase pottes 180lb.
 Iron pottes 2-0-16lb.
 Morters and chafers 76lb.
 Copper kettelles 186lb.
 Collered ketelles 270lb.
 Iron bond ketelles 230lb.
 Skilletes with trivettes and
 chafing dishes 85lb.
 Skilletes without trevettes 40lb.
 Brase chafing dishes 8lb.
 Brase candellstickes 16
 Brase candellstickes 24
 Brase candellstickes 14
 Wine pottes and other wares as the
 parcel came from London whole
 pewter pottes of severall sortes 40lb.
 pewter saltes of severall sortes 30
 pewter botells 9 at
 pewter goddardes 24 at
 pewter porringers 15 doss[eyn] at
 pewter sawcers 13 doss. at
 pewter spoones 10 doss. at
 pewter candellstickes of severall
 sortes
 pewter beakers and Cupps 31 at
 Chamber pottes and other newe laye solb

£9.15. 0
 £3.17. 0.
 £2.11. 8.
 6. 0.
 £1.10. 0.
 11. 0.
 £10.16. 8.
 16. 0.
 £2.13. 0.
 £13.17. 0.
 £7.19. 6.
 £90. 0. 0.
 £4.10. 0.
 £2.12. 8.
 £1.18. 0.
 £12. 8. 0.
 £14.12. 6.
 £9.11. 8.
 £4. 5. 0.
 £4. 0. 0.
 £1. 6. 8.
 £1. 4. 0.
 £3. 4. 0.
 £2.16. 0.
 £15.15. 0.
 £4. 0. 0.
 £1.15. 0.
 7. 6.
 12. 0.
 £4.13. 0.
 £1.12. 6.
 15. 0.
 £7.10. 0.
 £1. 6.10.
 £1.13. 4.

THREE NORWICH PEWTERERS

115

bedd panns bakeing panns and other thinges in shopp	£3.10. 0.
i old gret copper bought Cost	£12.14. 0.
14 paier of bease mouldes to cast pewter in the tooles ap[er]taining to his trade to work with	£25. 0. 0.
iii paier of skales with div[er]s gret and smal waites	£6.13. 4.
9lb. of bease hiltes for swordes	£2. 0. 0. 9. 0.

FRANCIS BEART 1662⁶*In the shope and warehouse*

Item for Newe pewtter dishes flagons Candlesticks porigers and orther small thinges for brase kettells and coopers skilletts and orther small things	£25. 0. 0. £15. 0. 0.
for Cooper platte and brase platt and ould brase for 13 pewtter dish moulds for 3 basson moulds for one pllatt mould	£5. 0. 0. £50. 0. 0.
one chamberpoot mould with A flatt necke to it one wine quart mould one winn pinnt mould	£3.10. 0. £3. 0. 0. £1. 0. 0.
1 sallte moule for 7 poringer moulldes and one saser moulld for 2 chamberpott handll moullds and 2 winepoot Eare moulds 6 poriger Eare moulds 2 Cifter moulds	£3. 0. 0. £2. 0. 0.
for one Raysing stake and 3 bootoming stakes and 26 hamers and orther small stakes and one per of greate shears and orther small towlles	£6. 0. 0.
for one wheall to turne pewtter platters and tower 3 anvills to work pewter one 11 hamers to work pewter with all 4 swaggis 2 flootes 9 sadwerhouckes and orther small toulles thearunto belongin	£1.15. 0. £1. 0. 0. £1.10. 0. £2.12. 0.
one greatt wheall to turn Hollough ware in tower and as it stands 2 floattes 19 Houckes and orther toulles thearunto belongin	£2. 6. 0. £2. 8. 0.
for Iorn poots and Kettells and Iorn fryin pans In Iorn bands and wyers and warming pan Handells and orther Iorn wares prased att for leading and orther waytes	£9. 0. 0. £6. 0. 0. £2. 3. 0.

⁶ N.R.O. INV 54/109.

for 4 beames and scoules belongin
unto them
for lumber in the shop

£1. 5. 0.
£1.15. 0.

Glossary

<i>Shruffe</i>	Dialect for Swarf—turnings from the lathe.
<i>Laten</i>	Brass alloy.
<i>Spores</i>	Spurs.
<i>Batrie</i>	Wrought by hammering.
<i>Laye</i>	An Ordinance of 1348 defined this as an alloy of 26 lb. lead to 112 lb. tin used for rounded pots. ⁷
<i>Fine Pewter</i>	Alloy of 26 lb. copper to 112 lb. tin for flat ware. ⁸
<i>Collerd</i>	Vessel bound at the neck with copper or brass.
<i>Goddard</i>	Goblet.
<i>Cifter</i>	Sifter, probably for sand.
<i>Stake</i>	Small shaped anvil.
<i>Tower</i>	Probably the tailstock on the lathe.
<i>Swaggis</i>	A swage is a shaped anvil or stake usually for dishes.
<i>Flootes or floattes</i>	Single cut files.
<i>Sadwerhouckes</i>	Hooks for shaping 'sad', i.e. flat ware on the lathe. Lathe tools had long handles held under the arm and were used under, and not from over, the lathe bar.
<i>Holloughware</i>	Cups, bowls etc.

Any analysis of these inventories is complicated by the fact that they are complementary rather than corroborative as regards raw materials, tools and new wares. For example, omissions make it impossible to comment on the ratio of new to scrap metal employed. Tin is mentioned in none of the inventories and only Hayward's has lead. It is not apparent whether the other two made their own pewter alloy or simply bought it in ready made.

No mention is made anywhere of a fire in these workshops (though every other hearth is recorded in the rest of the house) nor, more surprisingly of bellows or fire-irons of any kind. Due to the low melting point of pewter, an ordinary open fire would probably have sufficed, and in Young's case his 'old gret copper' could well have been the container. A bellfounder's workshop of 1634⁹ also omits a fire, but does include bellows, so it can only be assumed that the heat source was taken for granted.

Judging by their wares, Youngs and Beart were also coppersmiths and braziers (Beart describes himself in his will as a pewter and brazier) and probably dealers. Youngs has a parcel of wares from London and the will of Peter Youngs mentions 'goods bought'.

Some idea of the market for wares produced by Hayward, Youngs and Beart can be obtained from a spot check on contemporary Norwich inventories.¹⁰ While pewter appears in most inventories, the number of pieces or, alternatively, their total weight, is often not stated. However, a comparison between all inventories for 1590,

⁷ R. F. Michaelis, *British Pewter* (1969), 7-8.

⁸ Hall, Williams, Singer and Holmyard, *History of Technology*, vol. 3 (1967), 42.

⁹ N.R.O. INV 41/184.

¹⁰ N.R.O. INV 6 and 7; INV 31; INV 49, 54 and 55.

1621 and 1650/1666¹¹ does show an increase in the number of pieces throughout the period, from an average of 35 in 1590 to an average of 44 in 1650/1666. Another trend that emerges is that the value of the pewter as a percentage of the total value of household contents declines between 1590 and 1650/1666. For the 1590 inventories this value ranges from 1.4 to 13 per cent with an average value of 3.6 per cent, while by 1650/1666 these values have declined to 0.3 to 5.1 per cent with an average value of 2.5 per cent.

The enrolment of Freeman Pewterers¹² from 1548-1713 clearly demonstrates the continuity of families and apprenticeship:

'Peter Younges appr. John Sandringham Wed. 17 May 1 Eliz.
 Thomas Hayward non appr. 17 May 1 Eliz.
 Richard Foster non appr. 15 June 18 Eliz.
 John Forman non appr. 5 Aug. 11 Eliz.
 John Mannock non appr. 15 June 18 Eliz.
 Richard Stone appr. Peter Youngs 8 April 29 Eliz.
 John Allison appr. Peter Youngs 21 Sept. 29 Eliz.
 William Tompson non appr. 24 Feb. 37 Eliz.
 John Smyth non appr. 3 Aug. 41 Eliz.
 John Coller (f. Robert Coller) 21 Sept. 1613.
 Jos. Coller (f. Robert Coller grocer) 19 Feb. 1622.
 George Youngs (f.—Youngs nuper de Norwich defunct) 23 Oct. 1622.
 Francis Beart non appr. 10 March 1622.
 Richard Foster (f. Ric. Foster def. pewterer) 8 Oct 1624.
 Christopher Holme appr. John Allyson 6 Nov. 1629.
 William Smythe (f. John Smythe) 26 Feb. 1633.
 Robert Coller (f. John Coller) 21 Oct. 1640.
 Matthew Youngs* non appr. 22 Sept. 1645.
 Francis Seegood non appr. 26 Sept. 1645.
 John Engram appr. William Smythe 20 May 1653.
 Francis Beart (sonne of Francis Beart) 28 July 1655.
 John Beart (sonne of Francis Beart) 6 April 1661.
 Robert Twitney appr. Francis Seagood 25 Feb. 1663.
 Samuel Beart (son of Francis Beart pewterer) 13 June 1668.
 Richard Norgate 9 Dec. 1670.
 John Melchior jr. appr. Thomas Melchior [Freeman brazier] 29 Nov. 1689.
 Samuel Sparke app. Ric. Norgate 6 Aug. 1708.
 * Matthew Youngs son of George pewterer defunct appr.
 to Frances Youngs of Norwich widow pewterer Ind.
 12 Feb. 1624 for nine years.'

Perhaps the most interesting example is the Youngs family workshop. Peter Youngs became a Freeman in 1559. In 1645 Matthew Youngs, his grandson (or possibly great grandson) took up his Freedom. In the years between, Christopher Holme, John Allison, Richard Stone and Matthew's father, George, had all passed through the same workshop.

The overlapping of the trades of pewters and braziers, inferred for Youngs and Beart, is clearly demonstrated by another family, the Melchiors, who were working

¹¹ A number of inventories for different years amalgamated to form a large enough group for analysis.

¹² Millican, *op. cit.*, 109.

as braziers.¹³ John Melcher/Melchior became a Freeman Brazier in 1651 and Thomas, his brother (or son), in 1661, but it was as a pewterer that Thomas' son, John jr., took up his Freedom in 1689, apprenticed to his father the brazier. Cornelius Melchior, nephew of John senior, became a Freeman Brazier in 1702. Unfortunately, there are no inventories for the Melchior family, though there are several wills,¹⁴ and the survival of several pieces of pewter by the braziers Cornelius Melchior and Christopher Berry (Thomas Melchior's apprentice and son-in-law) confirms the documentary evidence.

The wills corroborate the fact that pewterers and braziers alike attached great importance to their moulds and tools, leaving precise, if longwinded instructions to their heirs.

In 1591¹⁵ Peter Youngs declared that '... my wife and son George shall occupy my stocke and wares belonging to my shoppe together to their joint use and comoditie to the best proffe and advantage during soo long time as George shall keep himself unmarried and that during soo long time from time to time George shall make and yield unto my said wife a true accompte and reckoning of all wares to be bought made wrought or sold by the said George ...' After George marries he shall have and enjoy to his own use '... my toles and moldes ass well of brasse as of other things ...'

In 1687¹⁶ Thomas Melchior left to his sons John and Daniel '... the joint and equal use of all my moulds tools and implements thereunto belonging ...' during their joint lives, and the survivor retains them. Neither is to dispose of them without consent of the other. Daniel also gets '... all the rest of the tools of my trade, wheels, beams, scales and weights and all other implements of my trade'. Francis Beart insisted in 1660¹⁷ 'Whereas I have severall mouldes of brasse and other tooles belonging to a pewterer and brazier mentioned and sett forth in a Schedule attached to this my Will which are usefull for and about my Trade ... Ann my wife and Francis John and Samuel Beart my sons shall have the use and occupacion ... in comon amongst them during their lives ... and I will that the same shall remain in the custody of Ann my wife during the terme of her naturall life. And after her decease in the custody of John if he survives her ... then Samuel for the use of him and the said Francis my son. And so long as anie two of them ... shall be living not anie of them shall have anie proprietie in ye said mouldes or tooles. But they shall all have the use of them in comon ... I give and bequeath the said mouldes and tooles unto which of the said three sons shall survive the other two ... if my wife or three sonnes so long as anie of them are living shall sell or make away with anie of my said mouldes or tooles then he or she so doing shall no longer have anie benefitt or priviledge by the said mouldes or tooles but from henceforth wholly be debarred and excluded from the use thereof ...'

Often, where the widow got control of the tools and business, the children were under age, but it was not always so. Frances Youngs, widow of George and

¹³ Millican, *op. cit.*, 19.

¹⁴ N.R.O. Norwich Consistory Court. 1687. OW 19; 76 Allexander; 1 Melchior.

¹⁵ N.R.O. 182 Andrews.

¹⁶ OW 19, as in note 14 above.

¹⁷ N.R.O. 182 Tennant.

mother of Matthew, was a pewterer in her own right. This is indicated by the note attached to Matthew's name on the Freeman's List. Whilst there are no women's names actually on the Norwich register between 1548-1713, the freeborn wife of a Freeman could carry on her late husband's business and become a sister of his craft.¹⁸ This Frances certainly did for twenty-six years, affirming in her will of 1640¹⁹ that her son, Matthew, have '... all my working tools and implements and other things whatsoever belonging to my trade of a pewterer also all my bedding and household stuff which is in the house where he now dwell and where I now live with him ...'

Ann Beart, widow of Francis, was not apparently a pewterer in her own right and her will²⁰ does not mention tools. All the same, as seen above, she was left in custody of her husband's tools, even after her sons attained their majority, and in 1666, although by then two of her sons had taken up their Freedoms, her own inventory²¹ includes the entire contents of the workshop. Although identical in content with that of her husband two years earlier, each item of household goods has dropped a few shillings in value, but that of the workshop goods is exactly the same (despite different appraisors).

Although the practice of pewter makers impressing their marks was in use many years before, it was first made compulsory in 1503.²² It is therefore of special interest that Thomas Hayward's otherwise sparse inventory yields eighteen marking letters. Unfortunately, nothing of his work is known to survive. There are, however, about twenty known pieces of Norwich pewter in existence in churches, private collections and Strangers' Hall Museum. One is by John Beart, five by John Melchior, four attributed to the Smythes and the rest by Cornelius Melchior and Christopher Berry, the braziers.²³

Matthew Young (Woodvining)

¹⁸ Millican, *op. cit.*, xv.

¹⁹ N.R.O. 28 Houchin.

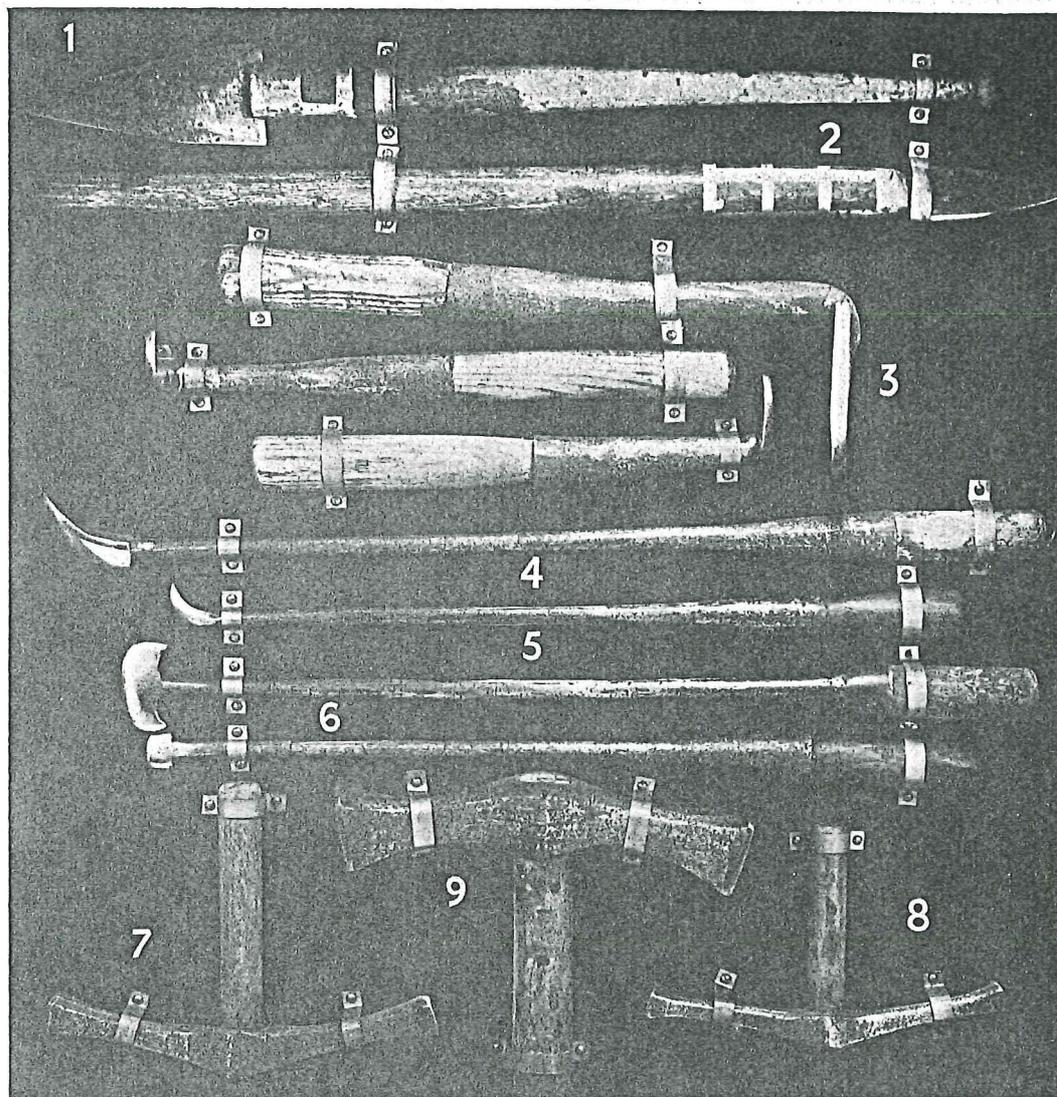
²⁰ N.R.O. 248 Stockdell.

²¹ N.R.O. INV 52/42.

²² H. H. Cotterell, *op. cit.*, 24.

²³ I would like to thank the following for their assistance during the preparation of this Note: Ian Dunn and the staff of the Norfolk Record Office; C. G. Grant, Clerk to the Worshipful Company of Pewterers; C. A. Peal, for information about existing Norwich pewter; and Alan Carter, for help with the statistical calculations and a great deal of advice.

PLATE XI



THE TOOLS OF THE PEWTERER'S TRADE, c. 1700

1. Grater, for burnishing inside hollow ware.
2. Spear burnisher, for burnishing inside tankards, etc.
3. Turning hooks (see sadwerhook in glossary).
4. Hawksbill burnishers, for burnishing bouge of plates and dishes (bouge = bulge or walls) and inside of bowls (like 5 and 6, while on the lathe).
5. Spade burnisher, for flat surfaces.
6. Burnisher for small plates.

7. and 8. Bouge hammers, for use on the bouge of sad ware.
9. Planishing hammer, for use on sad ware to disguise turning marks and harden the metal.

(Scale: c. $\frac{1}{2}$).

(*Photograph: John Pinkus, by courtesy of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers*)

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