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Pewter

PEWTER is an alloy consisting mainly of tin, with a small proportion of lead or copper, or both. From at least the middle of the fourteenth century two qualities of metal were recognised in England. "Fine" or "plate" metal comprising tin and copper in the proportions of about 85 parts of the former to 15 parts of the latter; and a cheaper "ley" or "lay" metal in which the tin was alloyed with about twenty percent of lead. Fine metal, being harder and stronger was used for plates, dishes and articles requiring a degree of rigidity, the so called "sad-ware". Ley metal was used for flagons, tankards, measures and like vessels where the shape of the object gave it a degree of strength. Some time about 1600 a third alloy, "trifle", was permitted by the Pewterers' Company and this contained equal parts of fine metal and ley metal, that is about nine percent copper and thirteen percent lead. Similar alloys were used by European pewterers, though more frequently lead appears to have been the only alloying metal. Because of inadequate assaying methods, and the custom of recovering and remelting old pewter ware, the composition of actual pieces of old pewter is variable and uncertain within the limits given above.

With the passage of time the control of the Pewterers' Company and the similar guilds in provincial centres, waned, and standards ceased to be observed. Cheapness encouraged the addition of lead giving a soft dull alloy. In the eighteenth century antimony was added to confer hardness and brilliance. Bismuth, or "tin-glass", was another additive used from quite early times to give the metal better working qualities.

The expressions of "tin" and "pewter" were used indiscriminately both in England and on the Continent to describe

pewter alloys. It is most unlikely that pure tin was ever used as a metal for fabrication purposes, though some early spoons contain as much as 96% tin. Britannia metal springs directly from the later eighteenth century pewter alloys containing antimony and does not differ essentially from them in composition. The distinction lies more in the method of fabrication than in the metal. Britannia alloys are spun, stamped or rolled, and articles are thin and light in construction. Pewter is cast and turned, and in addition it may be hammered to compact and strengthen it.

Pewter is a low-melting alloy and can be readily cast in complex shapes in moulds of plaster, stone or bronze. Multi-section bronze moulds for making pewter utensils survive in some quantity from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Indeed some eighteenth century bronze moulds are still in use producing reproduction pewter, and at least one early nineteenth century pewterer in England was casting broad rimmed plates in moulds some 150 years old. Such moulds represented a major investment for a pewterer and sometimes were owned communally for hiring out to individual craftsmen as required. In Europe, and also probably in England, stone moulds carved from "tuff" a soft volcanic stone, were in use in the early sixteenth century. Roman pewter dish moulds of limestone have been excavated.

The roughly cast article, assembled from its pieces by soldering, was finished by turning, scraping and burnishing. In England the Pewterers' Company required that the ware also be hammered to compact and harden it, and the seried rows of hammer marks still visible on the underside of the booge of many plates give evidence of the considerable dexterity of the "hammerman". On the continent hammering was less frequently practised.

Despite the edicts of the Company some of its members failed to comply with this requirement, and its records from time to time record the seizure of unhammered articles.

An interesting technique was used for turning pewter plates

and dishes. A plate was fixed by means of solder onto the face-plate of the lathe, and its outer surface turned. A second plate was then attached to the first with three blobs of solder at the circumference, this was then similarly turned, and the process was repeated to give a stack of plates each turned on one face. The stack was then reversed in the lathe and the undersides turned, removing the solder at the end of each operation to free each finished plate in turn. In Britain it is usual to find the seams of multi-section vessel bodies running round the body. On the continent seams customarily ran vertically. Handles may be attached by soldering, but commonly solid handles were cast directly on to the body, so becoming welded to it.

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Roman pewter made from Spanish and later from Cornish tin, with added lead, first appeared in the mid-third century and some two hundred examples of plates, bowls, ewers and jugs survive in museum collections. The most recent major find, uncovered during gravel excavation at Appleford (Berks) in 1968 comprised 22 pieces from the fourth century. Plates followed pottery styles and a characteristic feature is the presence of one or more cast foot rings which are not found on later pewter. Apart from a few isolated references to pewter for ecclesiastical purposes, such as the allowance by the Synod of Rouen in 1074 and the Council of Winchester in 1076 of pewter vessels in churches too poor to afford silver, and the survival of a few sepulchral chalices and patens from the graves of 13th century clerics, there is a complete gap in our knowledge of British and Continental pewter from Roman times to the fourteenth century.

In 1348 the first ordinances were promulgated for the fegulation of pewtering in London. The ordinances reflect a highly developed craft even at that date, and it is here that the first standards for metal are laid down. As early as 1350 John de Hiltone, "peautrer" was summoned before the mayor and alderman for making vessels "the greater part of the metal of which was lead", and the vessels were forfeit and sold.

The Worshipful Company of Pewterers received their first charter from Edward IV in 1473 and for two and a half centuries sought to control, and in some meamure succeeded in, controlling, the craft throughout much of England. They had power of search and seizure of inferior quality goods and required each member to have a distinctive mark, or touch, so that objects could be attributed to the maker in case of failure to meet standards of quality or manufacture.

Similar guilds were established in provincial towns. York in 1445, Norwich in 1449, Bristol in 1456 were among them. In Scotland, Edinburgh had its Guild of Hammermen in 1496, followed by St. Andrews in 1539 and Perth in 1546. Dublin had a Guild of Smiths in 1556. In European towns and cities such as Bruges, Paris and Augsberg, the craft was organised in the fourteenth century and by 1500 pewter was made in many centres in France, German and the Low Countries.

British settlers introduced the craft into the American colonies in the seventeenth century and one Richard Graves had a pewtering shop in Salem Mass. in 1635. However even by 1700 there were probably fewer than a dozen practising the craft in America. This was undoubtedly due to legislation introduced at the behest of the Pewterers' Company which made the export of raw tin difficult or uneconomic through tarrifs and bans. The only metal with which the colonial pewterers could work was that which they obtained by melting down old imported pewter ware. Enormous quantities of pewter were

shipped from England. A bill of lading of 1693 for a cargo of pewter from London to Boston, packed in hogsheads, includes tankards, porringers, candlesticks, chamberpots, spoons, basins, and wine measures. Before 1700 some £4,000 worth of pewter was shipped annually to America, by 1760 the figure reached £38,000, about 350 tons per annum.

The collection of discarded utensils for re-casting was well organised and some half to two-thirds of the new price was paid for old plates taken in part exchange for new. Some of those who established themselves in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York were emigrant members of the London Company, such as Simon Edgell and William Cox of London and Philadelphia, and William Digg(e)s of London and New York. Others were from the provinces, Samuel Carter of Bristol and Boston, and Lawrence Langworthy of Exeter and Newport.

A statute of 1503 required "that the makers of such (pewter) wares shall mark the same wares with several marks of their own to the intent that the makers of such wares shall avow the same", and further that, "all and every such wares ..... not marked in the form aforesaid ..... shall be forfeited". An inventory of the Pewterers' Company in 1550 refers to "a table of pewter with every man's mark thereon". Unfortunately this "table", or "touch plate", together with any others prior to 1666 perished in the great fire of London and we have no record of the marks of this early period. In 1667 the Company "paid for a plate to strike the touches on.....8s", and this plate together with four later ones survives. Together they provide a record of some 1071 touches covering the period ca. 1640 to ca. 1840, the earlier ones being restrikes by pewterers who survived the fire. Two touch-plates of the Edinburgh Guild of Hammermen also survive, covering the period from ca. 1600 to 1764, with 143 touches.

Many London pewterers seem however not to have struck their touches on the London touch-plates, and of large numbers of provincial pewterers there is no record. The standard work "Old Pewters, its Makers and Marks"by H.H. Cotterell lists several thousand marks known to him in 1929.

Marks prior to about 1660 are simple circular or oval punches frequently containing only initials, sometimes with a simple device. Later they become larger, incorporating the full name of the pewterer in labels above and below an oval or shield-shaped device which may be flanked by palm leaves. Some are dated, but the date is either that of the first striking of the touch, or the date of one of the edicts of the Company requiring touches to be re-registered. Thus a marked piece may have been made at any time in the working life of the owner of the mark.

As well as the maker's personal touch other secondary marks are found. Chief among these are the so-called "Hall-Mark", found in England from about 1630 to 1720 or later, and also found on American and European pewter. Originally struck on the face of plates and dishes they are later found on the back. Frank imitations of silver marks they were clearly intended to give to the casual observer of an array of pewter the impression that it was silver, rather than the humbler base metal. A source of embarrassment to the Company, who never sanctioned their use, they were the cause of continual complaint from the Goldsmiths' Company.

From the end of the seventeenth century, in England an 'X' surmounted by a crown was used as a mark of quality, approved by the Pewterers' Company for use on metal of a particular composition. Later it became debased in use and by the nineteenth century was meaningless. Additional marks such as the "rose-and-crown" and bearing legends such as 'LONDON' and 'SUPERFINE HARD METAL' are found. The 'LONDON' mark appears on much continental pewter, and on some American, a sure indication of the esteem in which English pewter was held aborad.

Despite the hold of the company over the craft much pewter remained unmarked. While there is perhaps less interest in a piece which cannot be attributed to a maker, the quality of much unmarked ware is in no way inferior to marked pewter.

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Pewter was essentially utilitarian and simple in concept, but nevertheless pleasing in proportion and style. For three centuries it was the common table and kitchen ware of the yeoman, the merchant and the middle class. Harrison in his "Description of England" written about 1577 says that tin and lead are common here,

"whereby my contriemen doo reape no small commoditie, but especiallie our pewterers, who in time past imploed the use of pewter onlie upon dishes, pots and a few other trifles for service, where-as now they are grown unto such exquisit cunning, that they can in manner imitate by infusion anie forme or fashion of cup, dish salt, bowle or goblet, which is made by goldsmiths' craft, though they be never so curious, exquisite and artificiallie forged. Such furniture of household of this mettall as we commonlie call by the name of vessell, is sold usuallie by the garnish, which dooth conteine twelve platters, twelve dishes, twelve saucers, and those are either of silver fashion, or else with brode or narrow brims, and bought by the pound, which is now valued at six or seven pence, or peradventure at eight pence. Of porringers, pots and other like I speake not, albeit that in the making of all these things there is such exquisit diligence used, I meane for the mixture of the mettall and true making of this commoditie (by reason of the sharpe laws provided in that behalf) as the like is not to be found in anie other trade".

"In some places beyond the sea a garnish of good flat English pewter, of an ordinarie making, is esteemed almost so pretious, as the like number of vessells that are made of fine silver, and in a manner no less desired among the great estates, whose workmen are nothing so skillful in that trade as ours, neither their metall so good, nor plentie so great, as we have here in England."

Of pewter of this period practically none survived due to the practice of re-melting old metal.

Consideration of British pewter before about 1600 rests mainly on the evidence of excavated pieces. Of these spoons form the bulk, having been lost under floors and in drains and cess pits. Styles of pewter spoons can be followed from about 1300, through the period which concerns us here, and on for another two hundred years, and closely follow the styles of contemporary silver. The very early leaf-shaped bowl gave place for a short period to a round one, and then to the characteristic fig shaped one which predominated for some two centuries, from about 1450 to 1650. Stems originally slender, and round or diamond in section became hexagonal, and by 1650, somewhat flattened. Knops abound in many forms, ball, acorn, diamond, hexagon, seal and baluster, and ones incorporating human or animal symbolism, the maidenhead, the apostle, the wild-man and the lion sejeant. Spoons apart, tudor domestic pewter is represented by a few plates and dishes, a handful of porringers, and an equally small number of measures. A few chalices, patens, cruets and one or two flagons complete the remaining evidence. Mention should however be made of pilgrims badges, and many of these made in pewter have been dredged from the Thames.

On such slender evidence dating can only be conjectural except where excavated material is found in a well defined context. From about 1600 onwards we are on much firmer ground: a few dated pieces exist, records of purchases of identifiable church pewter survive, and marks become attributable from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards.

curious that the earliest dateable coherent group of British pewter, made between about 1600 and 1620 should be heavily decorated with relief-cast motifs. A dozen or so extant pieces include several wine cups and beakers, a footed plate, a candlestick, a small plate and a wine taster. Several have the date '1616' incorporated in the design, for what reason is quite unknown, and one has a contemporary inscription including this date. Decoration is based on running vine and rose designs. Such relief cast decoration was not uncommon on Continental pewter of the mid-sixteenth century and a number of German plates, knownas Apostle-teller and Kaiser-teller, cast with religious or classical motifs are to be found. In France, jugs and plates cast with Briot inspired designs were made in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Reaching its peak of excellence in the mid-seventeenth century, pewter sought on the one hand to imitate silver, and on the other evolved its own characteristic forms and usages in areas where there was no silver prototype. The appeal of the pewter of this period lies in its dignified proportions, simple shape, and mellow lustre. Decoration was restrained or absent, and functional considerations were supreme in the designer's mind. Where similar objects were made in silver and in pewter, the style of the latter closely followed its precious counterpart. Spoons, plates, chargers, salts, tankards, flagons, porringers and candlesticks are found in essentially identical forms in both metals. The limitations imposed on pewter by its softness and low melting point precluded its use for a few applications such as cooking vessels, but on the other hand its cheapness and toughness made it ideally suited to a range of tavern vessels, measures pots and takards of a characteristic shape which have no counterpart in the precious metals.

It is perhaps convenient here to consider the main stream of British pewter from the early seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century, when it was rapidly being raplaced by cheap

pewter, and Tavern pewter, according to its use.

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Ecclesiastical Pewter

Among the earliest surviving pewter relics are the shallow-bowled pewter sepulchral chalices which have been found from time to time in the graves of 12th and 13th century clerics. It is not clear whether these base metal vessels were actually used for the celebration of the mass, or whether they were 'tokens' made solely for internment with the priest. It should be noted however that William de Blois, Bishop of Worcester in 1229, ruled that two chalices were to be provided for every church. One for the mass to be of silver, and one of tin for burial with the priest. Whether the poorer churches could afford the former seems doubtful and we have seen that the Synod of Rouen in 1074 permitted pewter for sacramental use. A few medieval patens, cruets, and pyxes have also been found. Not until about 1660 in England does a connected series of ecclesiastical pewter survive. Flagons of pewter appear to have been generally introduced following the Canons of 1603 which permitted pewter vessels to be used for sacramental wine. These earlier flagons were tall, tapering, straight vessels of heavy construction, with knopped bun lids and plain sweeping handles surmounted by massive upright thumbpieces or puchases. As the century wore on the 'beef-eater' style with its spreading base and characteristic cover was adopted, followed at the close of the century by the plain flat-lidded Stuart type with a range of ornamental thumbpieces. From about 1700 dome-lidded flagons with knopped covers and flared, skirted bases, later with double curved handles predominated. A few local styles are found, such as that originating in York with an acorn shaped body and elegant knope to its domed lid. Irish flagons of the latter half of the eighteenth century have a body reminiscent of the beef-eater with an even wider base and a large bodly curved handle. In Scotland the eighteenth century produced a plain slightly tapering flagon

slightly incuring contour to the Body which was encircled by a bold single fillet round the centre. By no means all pewter flagons were used in churches. Many were undoubtedly of domestic use and unless inscribed or of known provenance, original use can only be conjectural. Alms dishes of pewter, sometimes inscribed, and sometimes decorated with punched or repousse work, are found, and a few bear in the centre a brass boss enamelled with a coat of arms. Similarly tazzas, or footed plates of church use can be identified from inscriptions or designs on them. Font bowls and christening bowls were also made in pewter, the latter apparently particularly in Scotland. Early chalices in pewter are rare, there being reluctance to using base metal for holding consecrated wine, but follow the forms found in silver. However, communion cups, particularly of Scottish use, are plentiful. Church plate of pewter, in styles based on English and continental prototypes was made in the American colonial settlements during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Domestic Pewter

The domestic use of pewter vessels, the poor man's silver, dominated the English household scene for some two hundred and fifty years. Its use began with the rise of the moneyed middle class in the fifteenth century and continued until it was ousted by cheap pottery in the mid-eighteenth century. Inventories show that even the humble yeomen owned a few prized pieces of pewter, a spoon or two, a bowl and a few dishes, and perhaps a candlestick. The huge households of the noble families owned it by the ton. The Earl of Northumberland in 1512 'hired' a hudred dozen of pewter vessels to last his household one year. The reference to hiring is obscure, perhaps they were traded in for remelting at the end of the year. At the other end of the scale William Windle, a Warwickshire yeoman died in 1612 possessed of 'x pewter dishes or platters, x sawcers, ii salts, a counterfiet* dish and a

* counterfeit = wrought

Candlestick Valued at twelve shillings

In the New World in 1640 Bertha Cartwright of Salem (Mass.) bequeathed '3 platters, a salt cellar, six spoons and a porringer.' Five years earlier Sarah Dillingham of Ipswich (Mass.) had died leaving 40½ pounds of pewter valued at £2-4-0.

It is perhaps pewter plates which survive in the largest quantity. An exact record of the Pewterers' Company for 1438 sets out a classified table of pewter ware and lists 12 types of flat ware ranging from 'chargeours of the largest size' weighing 7 lbs each to 'small sawcers weighing 5¼ ozs, only'. This list was supplemented from time to time, but despite the detailed record we are on uncertain ground in attempting to date early plates and dishes and not until the early to mid-seventeenth century can we establish a certain chronology. Most desirable in workmanship and form are undoubtedly the beautifully proportioned broad rimmed chargers made from about 1650 to 1680 in sizes commonly from 15 to 20 inches diameter but exceptionally up to 24 or 27 inches. Indeed a unique set of six of 36 inches across is known. Frequently found with coats of arms engraved on the rim, the English broad rimmed charger represents one of the pewterer's finest achievements. Overlapping in period with the broad rimmed style is the reeded edge plate, originally with broadish rims but from ca 1670 onwards with normally proportioned rims, and also with very narrow ones in which the rim is scarcely wider than the reeding. Originally incised on the lathe, the reeding was later cast proud of the surface. By the early years of the eighteenth century the single reeded plate appeared, to be superseded by the mid-century by the plain rim, which was made well into the nineteenth century for use as platters in eating houses.

Fancy scalloped or wavy edged plates had a short vogue in the mid-eighteenth century, in imitation no doubt of the current silver fashion, and oval octagonal and decagonal plates were also

made in small numbers. The hollow hot water plate, the interior of which was filled with heated water to keep the food warm, is a typical pewter style which does not seem to be found in silver.

English plates from which food was eaten, as opposed to serving plates and voiders, were commonly 9 - 10 inches in diameter, as were the continental ones. In America a slightly smaller 8 inch plate was the fashion, most usually with a single reeded rim. This style was made in America well on into the nineteenth century, over a century after the style had become obsolete in Britain. Garnishes of plates, comprising a dozen each of several sizes were the common stock of the seventeenth and eighteenth century pewterers. Strictly the term 'plate' is applied to those of a size from which food was eaten, the larger sizes were dishes, up to some 18 inches in diameter, and above this the term 'charger' is properly used.

Our knowledge of early drinking vessels derives solely from records which as early as 1482 describe 'taggard potts' and in 1595, beakers. Of the vessels themselves few survive from before the restoration when the flat lidded tankard closely copying its silver counterpart was popular. Again, as with the broad rimmed dish, the flat lid tankard shows the pewterer's craft at its best. The plain drum, often with a slight entasis was sometimes decorated with 'wriggle-work' designs of symbolic or commemorative significance, as with portraits of William III and William and Mary. The ornate thumbpieces of these tankards with their profusion of design make a study on their own. By the 1690's the lid had become domed, and from about 1700 the drum was encircled with a reeding about a third of the way up. The elaborate thumbpieces of the earlier styles gradually gave way to the simple 'chair-back' pattern. The 'tulip' shape became popular about 1730 but by 1800 the design had become debased and tankards of this later

period was the least convincing as forum pewter rather than domestic

The single-eared shallow porringer with booged bowl is a characteristic pewter shape for containing semi-liquid food. As with the thumbpieces of tankards the ears of porringers are of many forms and include cast dolphin and coronet ears as well as the more usual perforated 'English' pattern ear. The porringer died out in Britain by soon after 1700, but remained in use on the continent, and particularly in America, much later. American porringers in traditional English style were made in quantity well on into the nineteenth century. In Scotland the porringer as such does not seem to have been made, and its place was taken by the quaich, a small bowl with two 'lug' ears, which however is very rarely encountered. Salts and spoons in styles closely following silver complete the range of table ware. The slip-top spoon commoner in pewter than in silver, gave way in the mid-seventeenth century to the puritan spoon with the 'modern' egg-shaped bowl, and by way of trifid ends and shield tops to the spoon shapes current today. Commemorative spoons with portraits of Queen Anne, William and Mary, William III, and George III and Charlotte cast on the stem form an interesting group of pewter 'souvenirs' of coronations and royal events long ago. Forks were not made in pewter as the metal was too soft for the purpose.

Elsewhere in the household, pewter candlesticks are recorded from the fifteenth century, though the earliest surviving does not date before about 1620. Much more vulnerable than those of brass or silver, on account of the low melting point of the alloy, comparatively few have survived from before about 1800. Those of the restoration period with octagonal bases and centrally placed drip pans are found with both plain and knopped columns, and are fine examples of pewter craft at its best. Curiously very few pewter candlesticks are found from about 1700 until the latter half of the century. No doubt

the seventeenth century, led to their substitution by the more servicable metal. Candle moulds of pewter enabled the housewife to make her own candles and tapers. To complete the range of domestic pewter mention should be made of beakers and wine cups, two-handled 'loving cups', ink stands, pepper, spice and pounce pots, snuff boxes, tobacco jars and chamber pots all following closely the design of the contemporary silver ware.

Decoration on domestic pewter is uncommon, but from about 1660 until 1720 there was a vogue for 'wriggled work' decoration on tankards and plates. As a soft metal pewter is not well suited to the fine lines of the engraver, and instead a bolder engraving technique was used in which the design is executed in a zig-zag pattern formed by rocking a narrow chisel-shaped tool from side to side as the design was traced out. Perhaps the finest examples of wriggled decoration are also the earliest a magnificent series of broad rimmed chargers wiggled all over with the royal arms and supporters with floral motifs on the rim, and commemorative of either the restoration of Charles II itself, or more probably (from the date 1662 which some of them bear) of the marriage of the restored monarch to Catherine of Braganza.

At a lesser level a wide range of designs is found. Some, with William and Mary, commemorate another royal occasion, others with flowers and conventional ornament are purely decorative, but an interesting series with symbolic beasts and birds clearly served for wedding and christening gifts. The peacock and peahen with the initials of the bride and groom are typical. A single peacock plate engraved on the back "William Brook's, born July ye 26th 1717" commemorates another family occasion. Bold in concept, but usually naive to the point of crudeness in execution, the wriggled designs on pewter are reminiscent of the motifs found on early English slipware pottery. From a comparison of a number of plates with identical

designs it is apparent that at least in the later part of the period, transfers were used to ensure uniformity, and some makers who specialised in wriggled domestic plates must have employed teams of engravers to work for them. From the first decades of the eighteenth century pewter began to feel keen competition from pottery. The Pewterers' Company complained in 1710 that trade is "now reduced to a very deplorable condicion in this Kingdom and in fforeign parts.". Burslem alone in 1715 had 42 potters, by 1786 the number was 80, and in 1802, 149. In the face of such competition the day to day use of pewter in the home waned and died.

Tavern Pewter

It is in the field of cheap durable tavern pots and measures that pewter becomes a unique material in its own right. Silver was too expensive, pottery too fragile for these hard worked vessels. From the sixteenth century almost to the present day pewter reigned supreme.

Characteristic of this form of pewter, and unique to Britain, is the baluster wine measure. Deriving its shape from the medieval baluster jug, and the leathern blackjack, the earliest surviving examples date from before 1600. From then until the latter years of the eighteenth century countless thousands of baluster measures were found in inns up and down the country in sizes from half a gill to a gallon. Originally rather tall and slender with simple wedge or ball and wedge thumbpieces on the lid, there later developed three mainstyles in a chronological sequence. The hammerhead current from before 1600 until about 1670, the 'bud' so called from the design of the thumbpiece was current until perhaps 1730, and the 'double volute' with its thumbpiece resembling the Prince of Wales' feathers, and fleur-de-lis attachment to the lid, which carried on until the end of the century. In Scotland the same baluster shape was made but with a rim under the lid to locate it in the

neck of the measure, a practical feature never found on the English types. These Scottish measures are comparatively late, and were made well on into the first half of the nineteenth century. Though customarily lidded, to prevent spillage between the cellar and the table, a number of lidless baluster measures were made in the earlier period and from about 1800 manufacture of lidded measures ceased. As the nineteenth century moved on the baluster shaped lidless measure became squatter and finally passed into the familiar Victorian pot-bellied measure of the type still made today. In the Victorian period the straight-sided dual purpose measure and tankard evolved as more convenient for drinking from than the pot-bellied variety. Straight sided measures are found in a limited range of sizes, half pint, pint and quart, while the pot-bellied shapes are found in a long range, from as small as a sixth of a gill to a gallon. Whereas baluster measures usually conform to the old pre-Imperial standard, the Queen Anne Wine Gallon, the later forms are Imperial, a standard introduced in 1824. 1826

Tavern pots, that is drinking vessels as opposed to measures, are rare but are extant from the late seventeenth century. At that time they were of tall elegant shape, straight sided and tapering, lidless, and usually with two bands or fillets round the drum. Often they are found inscribed with the name of the tavern, and may have an inscription such as 'If sold, stole'. Brief and to the point! It appears that it was the custom of the inn-keeper, when selling ale or wine to be taken away, to loan drinking pots with it, so that the cautionary inscription may have had a real purpose! About 1700 pots were made with an elegant gadrooned pattern cast on the lower third of the body, and a rare variant, cup-shaped, is also found with this decoration. In the first half of the eighteenth century pots were rather squatter and may have only one fillet round the drum, again they are rare.

the Channel Islands in sizes corresponding to the local standards. These have tall bulging bodies with flat heart-shaped lids, and the continental style twin acorn thumbpiece. Sometimes they are found without lids. In Scotland the "tappit Hen", a tall waisted measure, with tapering cylindrical lower section and deep cylindrical collar, surmounted by a domed lid, was the characteristic form from about 1700 until after 1800. Properly 'tappit hen' is the name of the capacity, a Scots pint or three English pints, and smaller measures should be referred to as the 'chopin' (one and a half English pints) and the 'mutchkin' (three quarters of an English pint), but a long range of sizes were made both in Scottish and English measures, and 'tappit hen' is a useful descriptive name for the type as a whole. An earlier Scottish measure, the pot-bellied measure was made as early as 1650 and both this and the tappit hen types are also found in lidless varieties. The lidless tappit hen is particularly associated with Aberdeen.

Irish forms include the 'haystack' measure of double conical form, and later, a group of lidless and handless baluster measures in a limited range of sizes. Local English Forms of nineteenth century measures abound. Worth particular notice is the West Country style of squat measure with short spouted neck, identical in shape with the more frequently seen copper measures, and the 'waisted' form of Victorian measure associated with Norfolk and Suffolk.

Mention should perhaps be made of the range of medical objects made in pewter during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Bleeding bowls in the form of graduated eared dishes, pap-boats, feeding bottles, syringes and clysters, inhalers, and 'Mr. Gibson's Physic Spoon'. This last ingenious device for the forcible administration of nauseous medicines to an unwilling recipient, invented about 1825.

Miscellaneous objects include dog-whistles, buckles and buttons, chimney ornaments, pipe-stoppers, communion tokens issued by Scottish churches as "admission tickets" for those wishing to take Holy Communion, medals and coins. Pewter farthings and halfpennies were minted by James II and numerous seventeenth and eighteenth century pewter tokens were issued by tradesmen. Pewter teapots, in contrast to Britannia metal ones, are scarce. Food bottles and wine cans of continental manufacture are found in a variety of forms and periods. Finally it should not be overlooked that 'tin' organ pipes are in fact made from a low grade, lead-rich pewter alloy known as pipe metal.

Museums Fine collections of pewter are to be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Guildhall Museum, London, the Kelvin Museum, Glasgow, and by prior arrangement at Pewterers Hall, London. Abroad the Boymans Museum, Rotterdam, the Rijks Museum, Amsterdam, the Metropolitan Museum, New York and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, have collections, the last strong in English pewter.

Bibliography

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Pewter Illustrations

Pewter. Fig. 1 A range of English spoons. Left to right; dog-nose ca. 1730, trifid ca. 1700, trifid ca. 1670, slip-top ca. 1650, acorn ca. 1550, horned head-dress ca. 1500, baluster ca. 1550.

Pewter. Fig 2 A beef-eater flagon of ca. 1650 with twin-cusp thumbpiece.

Pewter. Fig 3 A flagon of Ca. 1730 with chair-back thumbpiece and double curved handle.

Pewter. Fig 4 A broad rimmed charger of ca. 1660 the arms of Sir Thomas Walcot and his wife Mary Lytlleton, 24⅛" diameter.

Pewter. Fig 5 Two baluster measures with bud thumbpieces of half-pint and pint capacities, and a triple reeded plate, all ca. 1680.

Pewter Fig 6 A flat-lid tankard of ca. 1688 with wriggled portraits of William and Mary.

Pewter. Fig 7 A coronet ear porringer of ca. 1690.

Pewter. Fig 8 A small lidless Scottish pot-bellied measure.of lidless style ca. 1680, and a wriggle-worked plate with peacock design dated 1717.

Pewter. Fig 9 A set of Irish haystack measures from half-gill to gallon, early 19th century.