

EGS

A CAUSERIE ABOUT PEWTER

[In this article the writer, Mr. Watson Lyle, discusses various points about pewter with Mr. Roland J. A. Shelley, of Formby, Lancs. The illustrations are of some examples in the latter's collection, from photographs by Mr. W. Sayer.—EDS.]

THE Channel Islands measures, and English and Continental dishes, porringers, etc., in Mr. Roland Shelley's collection are in themselves an imposing and beautiful array, in addition to his well-known series of English and Scots lidded measures, and his English and Scots church pewter.

Two English beer jugs were the first pieces I noticed in the section of the collection to be written about in this article. I asked Mr. Shelley about them, and he said: "They are typical English jugs, and I place both about the year 1790, although one is in much better—indeed perfect—condition compared with the other, the lighter model with the thinner handle and flatter

"It is interesting to note the way in which the pouring lip of the jug has gradually evolved from the lidded measures," I said, glancing at the fine series of these near by. "Now, what are the outstanding distinctions between the lidded measures from the Channel Islands and the English measures of the mainland?"

"Well, firstly is the difference in the lids, which are heart-shaped in the case of the Channel Islands measure, while English pieces are invariably round. Whenever you meet a flagon, tankard or measure with a heart-shaped lid, you may rest assured it is either Channel Islands or Continental. As you will notice in those from Jersey here" (he indicated a series of seven) "and those from Guernsey, all the lidded



FOUR CHANNEL ISLANDS MEASURES: GUERNSEY.

The smallest on the left was made by Joseph Wingod, London, about 1740; the next two are by A. Carter, date about 1750; and the tallest on the right is of the same date by an unknown maker.

Channel Islands measures are smaller at the top than at the base, to the full bulge of which the sides taper gracefully. The larger measures are thus tall compared with the typical English measure of the period (1740-50), a characteristic that necessitates a long and rather narrow-looking handle."

"Yes," I agreed, "and with the decided lip at the rims, and correspondingly on the lids, and their elegant thumb levers, they are rather jug-like."

"Yes, those from Guernsey have a rather fuller bulge, and were commonly ornamented there, and around the neck, with encircling lines or moulding. All the Jersey series are unmarked with the exception of the two largest; which are by John de St. Croix, London, 1740. Of this set of four Guernsey measures (see illustration above) the largest is by an unknown maker, the next two are by A. Carter, London, 1750, and the smallest is by Joseph Wingod, 1740. Those further two Guernsey pieces, though unlike each other (see illustration on left) are also by Joseph Wingod; and the one of simple, more English style has the lower part of the characteristic bulge, flat, instead of being rounded. The English coffee pot between them was made by Samuel Duncumbe, of Birmingham, about 1750, notwithstanding that the piece shows London under his name; but this inaccuracy, to put it mildly, was often adopted by country



TWO GUERNSEY MEASURES AND A COFFEE POT.

Both measures are by Joseph Wingod, London, about 1740. The coffee pot is by Samuel Duncumbe, Birmingham, about 1750.

pewterers, for then, as perhaps now, anything from London took first place in general esteem. Harking back to the Channel Islands measures, I should explain that these were all made in London, and not in Jersey, or Guernsey, where they circulated."

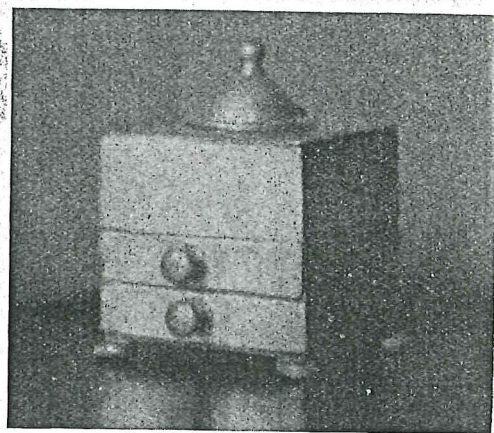
"What is the very unusual-looking, jug-like vessel with the long spout from the bulging bottom, attached to the neck by an ornamented support, and with a moulded head on the top of the arched lid as well as the big thumb lever? The design looks almost Moorish."

"Oh, no! It isn't that! It is a wine can of Swiss manufacture, and Bernese in style. There is no 'touch' or maker's mark, but the date 1750 is impressed on the hook (i.e. almost ring-form) handle. That fine bowl there is rather a favourite of mine, and is genuine Queen Anne. The inkstand is either English or Irish of 1790."

"Inkstand? Yes, I see. The helmet-like thing on



The bowl on the left is a genuine piece of Queen Anne pewter. On the right is an inkstand of about 1790, with drawers for wafer and sand, which were used before the invention of blotting-paper.



top of the box is the inkpot lid, but what are the two little drawers for?"

"Wafer and sand drawers; no blotting paper in those times, you know. Now, here is a very beautiful piece of English pewter of about 1750." He indicated a vessel, bowl-shaped, set upon a stout, circular foot. The outside was decorated with an elegant design, and the beaded lip was also decorated immediately under, all round the rim of the bowl.

"What is it?" I asked.

"An English cup salt."

"It would make a lovely sugar bowl! But what are those odd-looking, circular vessels, with carved, and fretted, rounded or triangular-shaped handles, which latter remind one of the quaint little tea-caddy spoons used by canny folk to measure out the tea—only they are far too big for the purpose."

"Those are English porringers. This one, of somewhat irregular shape with the triangular, elegantly-fretted handle, is dated 1679, but the maker is unknown. The two others are, however, by Joseph Pickard, London, 1705, and James Butcher, Bridgwater, about five years later. As you see, the bowl of the last one is quite smooth inside, whereas the two earlier pieces have embossed central discs. This plate by Richard Baldwin of Wigan is earlier than either of those porringers, being of the period 1700. This tall, unlicked measure is still earlier, 1675, and if you look at the gracefully curved handle you will see the 'touch' of the maker, Lawrence Warren, of London. Those unlicked measures are far rarer than the lidded ones of the same period, the Stuart. For instance, here is a Stuart tankard, and a 'bud' measure, both dated 1674, and both lidded. They are both by Charles Richardson, London. His 'touch' is on the inside of the bottom in the tankard, and on the lip, and outside of the lid of the small measure."

"Are any of those dishes Stuart?"

"This one here, with the wide, plain edge is, though the maker is unknown; the period may be placed as 1680. This other one, with the narrower rim and reeded edge, was made by Richard Webb, of London, five years later; while this other dish, by John Stile, of London, period 1710, is a fine example of the English triple-reeded dish in pewter."

"What are all those tiny, regular indentations over its surface?"

"Those are hammer marks on the face. They were to strengthen the dish, which is a very rare piece. Now here Mr. Lyle, is a dish that should be of particular interest to you, with your fondness for birds. It is an English plate of 1720 by James Hitchman, of London, and I wonder if you can tell me what bird is represented in the centre, of the wriggled-work pattern on the inside of the plate?"

"An adult cock golden pheasant," I replied, for there

was no mistaking the intention of the designer, "though the tail is not carried at quite the right angle. Actually, the tail is long and pointed, and is never elevated above the level of the back, even when the bird is 'showing off' (as all game birds do) to the hen." And then someone came in, and our interesting chat had to finish abruptly.

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