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Notes on Rim-Types of Old Pewter Plates By Howard H. Cotterell, F.R.Hist.S., etc., of Walsall

SOME considerable time has elapsed since it occurred to the writer, after much observation, that the various types of rims found on old pewter plates were not the result of whims or individual taste on the part of the old pewterers themselves, or of their desire to make their pieces *fasson d'argent*, but that each main type was governed by a certain limitation of time which makes it possible for us in the present day to date such pieces in a more or less accurate way.

With the hope of fixing, as far as might be, the periods during which each type was in use, I carefully noted all the plates in my own and other collections, dating them in the first place by the makers' touches or dates on the various pieces, by which means a rough basis was formed from which to proceed further.

After a time the result of these observations was submitted to the following well-known authorities:—Messrs. Antonio de Navarro, Walter G. Churcher, T. Charbonnier, Charles G. J. Port, F.S.A.; Herbert M. Cooke, Lewis Clapperton, M.A.; and Rev. A. G. Kealy, R.N. (retired), who kindly undertook to put their own pieces to the same test, the result being that, with one slight modification, their investigations bore out and supported the original conclusions and the provisional dates assigned to each type.

With such an array of support, one feels one may put down such dates as more or less settled, and it is with the object of placing these conclusions on record that these few notes have been compiled.

For the present purpose, the definition of the word *plate* may be as follows:—The trencher of from 8 in. to 10 in. diameter from which the food was actually eaten, as distinguished from the larger circular or oval dishes on which the viands were brought to table, and which often are erroneously referred to as plates.

No note has been taken of dish rims, the various

mouldings and reedings on which may have remained in use for a longer time for strengthening purposes, or of gadroon, rococo, cabled, or wavy-edged types of plates, which experience shows were governed by no particular limitations of time.

My grateful thanks are tendered in particular to Mr. Walter G. Churcher, of Bedford Park, for the excellent full-size photographs of the various plate-rims which he has taken specially for these notes, also to my fellow-collector friends who permit their names to appear in support of the conclusions set out, and whose collective opinion *must* make authoritative any pronouncement on the subject of old pewter.

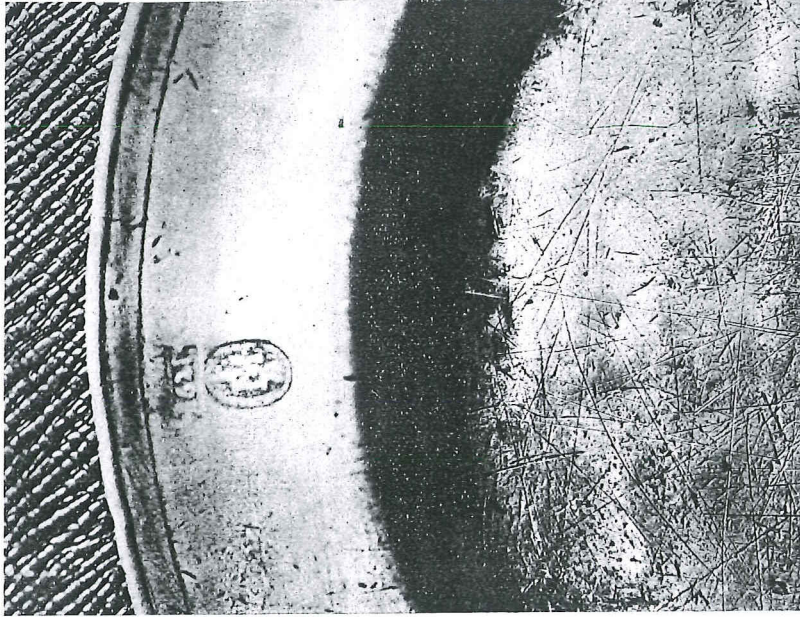
For ease of reference and standardising purposes, each main type has been given a number, and each "occasional" type a letter.

The only exceptions to the foregoing remarks of which I have knowledge are two plates with rim of No. 6 type, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide, and which must have been made during the reign of and for Queen Anne (1702-14), as they bear her royal cypher, a rubbing of which is here given. These plates were made by



Thomas Templeman, who was Steward to the London Company in 1677, and whose touch, struck c. 1670, is No. 122 on the first of the five existing touch-plates.

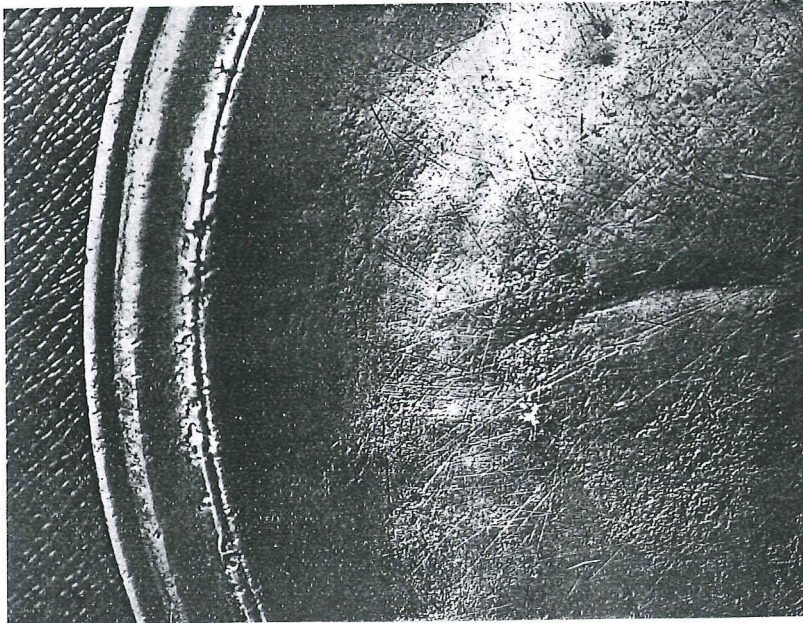
The only reason one can give for the appearance of the plain rim on these two pieces at such an early



Type No 1

C 1600 — C 1650.

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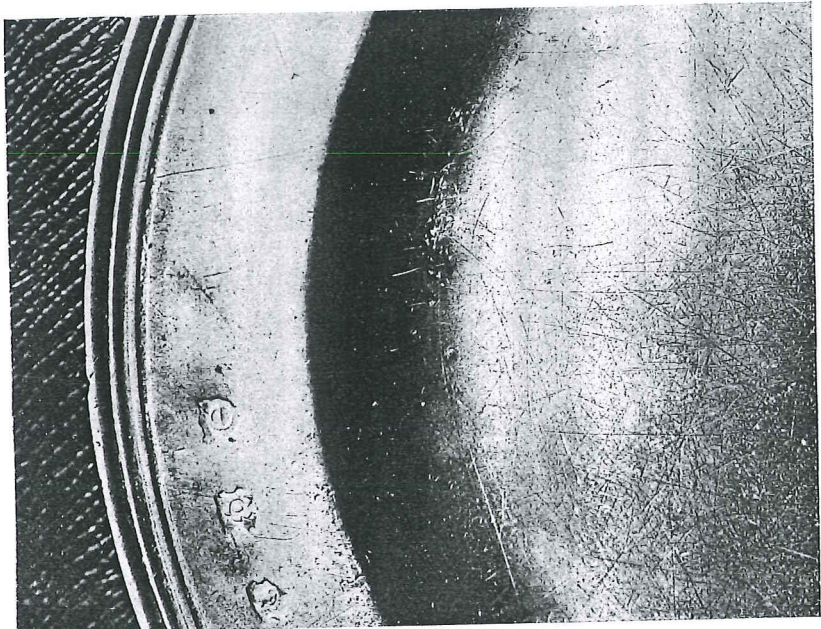


Type No 2

C. 1650 — C 1695.

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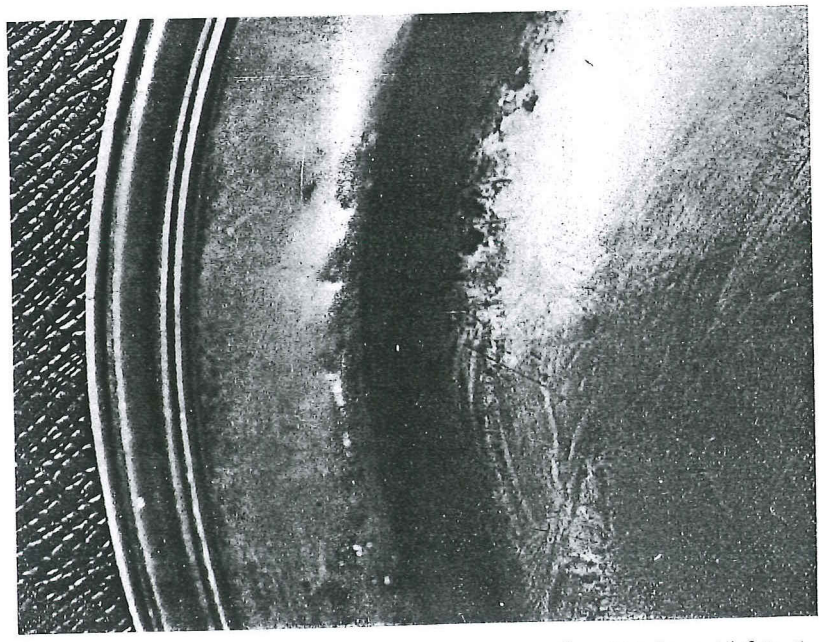
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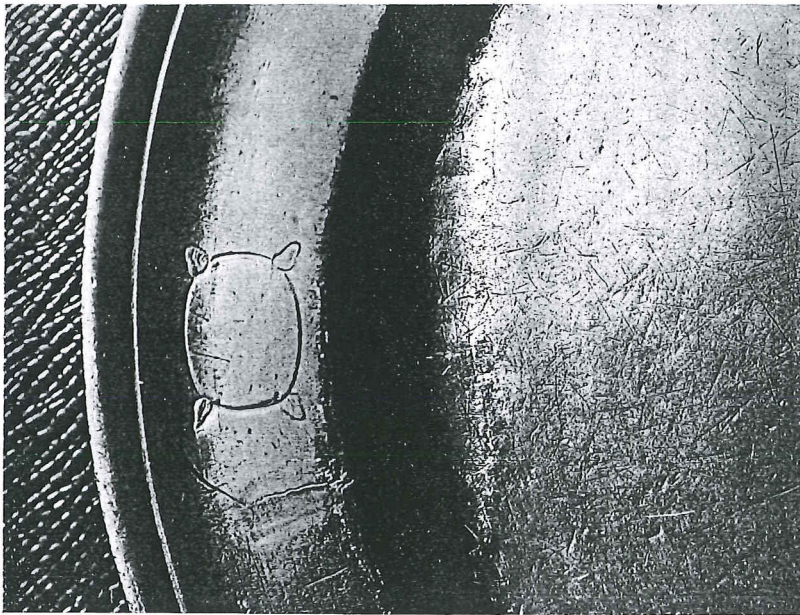
Type No 3.
C. 1670 — C 1705.

Contemporaneous.



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Type No 4
C 1670 — 1705.



Type No. 5.
 C. 1700 — c. 1750.

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Type No. 6.
 C. 1735 — { The decline of the
 } peculiar industry.

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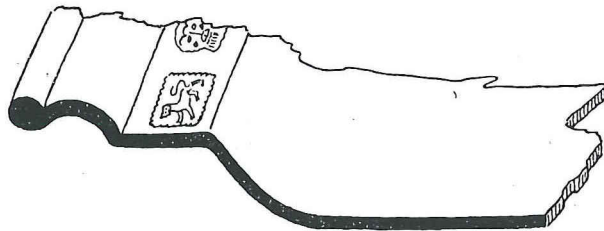
date is that they were left plain to receive the impress of the royal cypher, which it would have been quite impossible, owing to its size, to impress on a rim of No. 5 or any of the earlier types. One of these plates is in Mr. Cooke's and the other in the writer's collection, both having been purchased together.

Of course, there are other types occasionally met with, some of which, such as type A, one can but describe as whims of individual pewterers, and others which, though of well-known pattern, are so infrequently met with on account of their rarity as to warrant one in including them only as *occasional* types. It is doubtful if type C was ever used for

domestic purposes; it is more likely it was reserved for ecclesiastical use.

A few sectional drawings of these "occasional" types are given below, all of which are of the latter half of the seventeenth century. Type A is from a plate in Mr. Port's collection, the remainder from specimens in the writer's possession.

A similarity will be noted between type No. 1 and types B and C, but the latter are bolder, and the concave mouldings much more pronounced, itself an indication of a later date. I have drawn all these section sketches full size and to scale, so that entire dependence may be placed upon them.



Type "A".



Type "B".



Type "C".



Type "D".



Type "E".