

EJS

ENGLISH PEWTER POTS part 1

by Christopher
A. Peal



Figure 1. Two Broad Band. Delightful, distinguished and rare. Engraved "Jno French att ye Rose & Crown, Greek Streete Sohofields". By James Donne, who struck his mark in 1685.

Pots – it is surprising that although they are the most popular item in pewter for display and collecting, they have had little attention on their own. It should be fun to deal with the whole range, which we must confine to English. Not only are they decorative and homely, but you, like I do, can use them for their intended purpose.

Perhaps we can define a pot as a vessel designed to be drunk from, lidless and with handle; and when the body is raised away from the base it is connected by a wide neck. Of course, many a verified pot has been used as a measure – verification marks do not imply use as a measure, but merely that you could be satisfied that you were getting full measure.

One assumes that the contents were of the beer family, and the great majority of English pots conform to William III's (and Anne's) Ale measure,



April 1978



Figure 2. Exceedingly rare, and possibly North Country. Quart. No maker's mark. Probably c.1700.

and later, to Imperial measure (1826). But there are a few, very few, which conform to the Old English Wine Standard, which at $16\frac{2}{3}$ fl.oz. is still the American measure. Imperial is 20 fl.oz., and William III (of 1688) is only 3% smaller, and this was acceptable to the authorities for continued use after 1826. Remember, we are not including Scottish pots. Occasionally one comes across odd-measure pots. Some, English made, and from nowhere near Scotland, are of 15 fl.oz. which fits the Scottish standard. "Bar Maid" half pints may be found with the base plate set very high, allowing much less than apparent contents. She takes the full money – and she avoids getting too chatted up.

In setting the early scene, consider four slightly different usages. Most of the early pots – the "tavern pots" – c.1680 bear clear engraved inn ownership, with address. Probably they were

Figure 3. Gadrooned pot. This shows the "neolithic beaker" type. These must have been very popular for a short time, by few makers. Very costly moulds.

used inside the inn, but certainly beer was taken out in them by servants, to be collected next morning. One surviving example warns succinctly "If sold, stole" (which would have delighted Winston Churchill with its force and economy of words). Perhaps many were not "sold", but just disappeared, for the ensuing type survivors bear the legend

less usually, and so probably the service of distribution faded, and they were only used under the inn roof. As late as the end of the 18th century pots were still being taken out by servants again, to be recovered later. In the latter 18th century and up to very approximately 1840 the engraving of the landlord and pub had returned, first in a frame on the body, then unframed, and finally under the base.

As well as the wandering pot, we have mentioned the "inn pot", to pun its use. By using the inn- or pub-keeper's name and address one can sometimes trace the span over which he was presiding, and a maker's mark, if his terminal date is known, might show a partially overlapping span, the overlap giving perhaps a very narrow period which could spotlight the date. But beware of being too dogmatic, for the pot may have been in use before the engraving was done; and sometimes – surprisingly often – dates applied were retrospective and/or commemorative. The other two uses need no elaboration; ownership, possibly by initial monogram, of a pub user; and home use.

Makers' marks must be left to reading elsewhere, and this too, must apply to verification marks, with only a passing note. Frequently pots of pre-Imperial date bear "W R" under a crown. This denotes conforming with the William III standard, and can be taken only as being pre-Imperial as the latest date. Most certainly it does not mean being of William III's period. But a pot bearing "A R", "G IV", or "W IV" does mean that it is datable from that reign. Note also that the "V R" and district number, and the dates, e.g. "96", "03", might have been applied to an older pot which conforms.

On degrees of rarity – it is safe to generalise that the earlier the scarcer



Left: Figure 4. Two Narrow Fillet. A superb example, showing fillets and handle details, and the badly struck verification. 8½ins. high.



Right: Figure 6. An early Tulip, pint size. Unfortunately the maker's mark is corroded. c.1750.

Below left: Figure 5. One Broad High Band. See the sensible broad raised base and handle detail. Pint. The ribs under the thumb are usually dated as c.1690-1700.

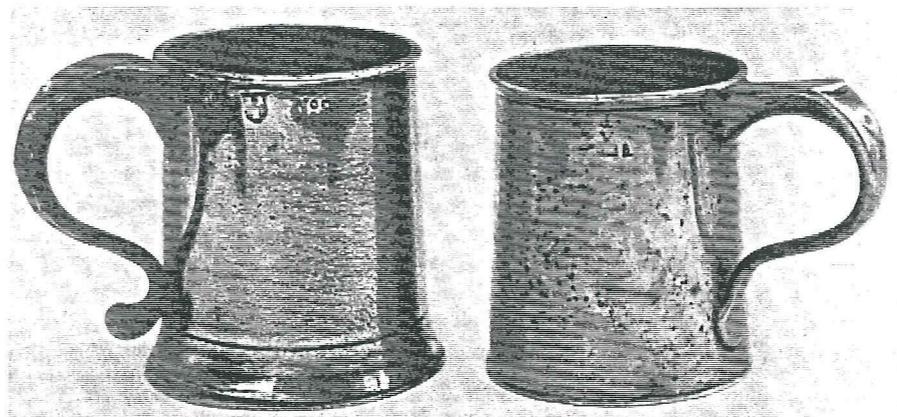


Figure 7. Earlier half pint Truncated Cones. See the ball terminal, and the general simplicity. Also a very rare type with base flush with the table. Note the sweep of the handle. Half pints. c.1770.

(mostly due to natural wastage, and also to greater beer drinking in the early 19th century). From c.1740-c.1810 dating is very indeterminate, with considerable experimenting of styles latterly. By c.1815 styles appear to have settled recognisably. Close observation of handles and their detail is of great importance as to dating and provenance, and much further and concentrated work needs to be done. Further reading, attention to illustrations, and handling pieces are rewarding — essential.

Nowadays even after 1826 pots are becoming much scarcer in the market, such is the recent attraction of pewter to possessors and collectors; and the styles become much more clear cut down to some seven styles in the 19th century.

Figure 1. TWO BROAD BAND. A well-known, dramatic style, and very scarce. Invariably they bear their inn ownership engraved on the drum, and very often the same initials appear on the handle, as the husband and wife

triad. It is interesting that there are NO examples of any previous type. In fact, I doubt if there was a previous lidless type, because all surviving tankards, flagons and measures, and the few illustrations prior to their date of c.1680, all bear lids. It seems that design had kept the amount of work up, for knock-about pots clattering home next morning strung on a long loop through the handles would have been certain death to lids and thumbpieces. Always, I think, these pots are in quart size.

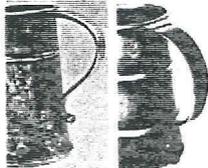
Figure 2. Perhaps the next in sequence is of a similar basic design and construction, tall and tapering, with solid handle and a "heel" terminal. And importantly, the base is flush with the table. Note also in the illustration the extreme simplicity of the base — an early feature. There is only one band, narrower than in the first type, and this is set very high on the drum. A little later this feature appears to be North or North-West country. I know of only one other example of this type. Possibly

c.1695±5. Significantly they are quarts. Shall we call it the EARLY HIGH BAND?

Figure 3. GADROONED pots were made in two styles; one in the soon to be familiar "truncated cone" (tapering straight sides), the other in a "neolithic beaker" shape with handle. These can stake a claim to be one of the most attractive, and most rare styles in pewter. Possibly to some eyes they have gone too far away from the simple charms of English pewter — its delicate design. These pots seem to be almost a speciality of one maker only — William Hux, although at least one example bears a different maker's mark. This would date them as c.1702-c.1714, and most likely 1702-1704. A glory to behold.

Figure 4. So to the very attractive TWO NARROW FILLET type, which would seem to be c.1700-c.1735. At first it appears with a solid handle; at the other end, at least one has been found with a double (or "broken") handle. (I have not inspected the latter

English Pewter Pot Handle Types and Detail Chart. Approximate Span

1680-1700	1700-1730	1730-1760	1760-1790	1790-1820	1820-1850	1850-1880+
 <p>Figure 1: Solid Strap.</p>			 <p>Figure 7 right: Standard.</p>	 <p>Figure 8a outside left and right: Standard.</p>		
 <p>Figures 2 and 4: Solid Strap.</p>			 <p>Figure 9 right: Broken.</p>	 <p>Figure 8a inside left, 8b outside left, 9 left: Broken, or Double.</p>		 <p>Figure 8b inside left: Standard.</p>
 <p>Figure 5: (Appears on some flat lids and early dome lids).</p>	 <p>Figure 6: (Usual 18th century handle).</p>		 <p>Figure 9 right: Broken.</p>	 <p>Figure 8b inside left: Standard.</p>	 <p>Figure 11: Standard (Liverpool).</p>	
 <p>Figure 3: All remainder, Hollow.</p>			 <p>Figure 12: Standard (Bristol and Bewdley).</p>	 <p>? Figure 10: (Yorkshire).</p>		
				 <p>Figure 13: Standard (General).</p>		
				 <p>Figures 15 and 19: Broken.</p>		
				 <p>Figures 16 and 18: Broken.</p>		
<p>Handle types and their detail Date spans should be regarded as very approxi- mate, and the chart gives no indication of rarity, either in general or in any period. (Figures 8 to 20 will be included in the second part of this article.)</p>					 <p>Figure 20: On Concave pots.</p>	

— it is possible that it is a replacement.) These are seldom marked — but a maker's mark rarely gives a narrow dating, since either the maker had a long working span, or his work-terminal date is not known. In the illustration the verification is badly struck, and the "W" or "A" of "W R" or "A R" is not visible. The earlier bases are flush with the table, and later they are raised above the table level. These are usually of pint size.

Figure 5. The last of these easily recognised early types is the ONE BROAD HIGH BAND. All examples in my experience indicate a provenance sweep from Lancashire to Newcastle, with the emphasis on the North. Most, I think, conform to Scottish measure, which I have a strong suspicion was used in the Cumberland area, if not also in

Northumberland. This still has to be explained. (The same applies to lidded baluster measures from this area c.1715-c.1740.) The bases are wide, and examples are usually marked inside by unidentified makers. Probably c.1700-1725.

All the foregoing are now very rare on the market — they are cherished in collections. We will now turn to very long runs of few styles, in which details are paramount to dating.

Figure 6. From about 1730 or even earlier some styles ran through almost unchanged to the late Victorian period. The TULIP is the longest, and is very distinctive, although its dating through its run is less easy. For those people with a practical turn of mind, take care if using one, for the bulk in its belly is

easily disgorged past the sides of the mouth! At first there was a fillet which was gradually discarded, finally c.1825, while plain examples appear from, very loosely, about 1760. Curiously, at about this time the fillet was adopted into some other styles, one of which is the TRUNCATED CONE (figure 7), which was taken direct from the dome-lidded tankards: but while the latter bore a fillet, it was not until the second half of the century that it was taken in for use on pots. It may have gleaned a little from the Narrow Two Fillet, but almost all the earlier examples are squat rather than tall. This style, with modifications, was probably the most popular 19th century type, and it had had a very good innings in the last quarter of the 18th century.

THE DESIGN HISTORY SOCIETY

Founded to promote interest in design history studies, this Society provides a means of communication between members and encourages the exchange of ideas, information and resources. Meetings are held to coincide with exhibitions of designs, a list of unpublished research projects in design history (from museums, educational sources and private individuals) is being compiled, an annual conference is held, at which a variety of papers are presented (of which the Society secures publication), and joint conferences and meetings are arranged with other organisations with similar or complementary interests. Since 1975 residential conferences have taken place at Newcastle, Middlesex and Brighton Polytechnics, under the auspices of the Design History Research Group.

All those interested in design history are invited to join the Society and receive its newsletter of D.H.S. activities. Membership costs £2 (student membership 50p) and applications and cheques should be sent to Alan Crawford, Treasurer, 85 Clarence Road, Birmingham 13.

Klaber and Klaber Antique Porcelain



2B HANS ROAD, KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON SW3 1RX
(Side of Harrods)

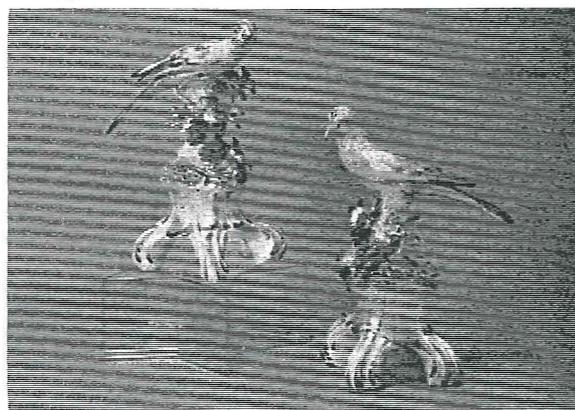
WILL BE HOLDING AN EXHIBITION OF
ORIENTAL INFLUENCES ON EUROPEAN PORCELAIN
FROM 10th — 22nd APRIL, MONDAY TO SATURDAY 10 am — 5.30 p.m.

(all exhibits for sale)



From left to right: CHINESE teabowl and saucer painted with a mandarin pattern, 18th century. Saucer 5½in. diam., teabowl 1½in. high.
LOWESTOFT teabowl and saucer painted identically to the Chinese circa 1780-85, saucer 4½in. diam., teabowl 1½in. high.

Telephone 01-589 7728



Fine pair of BOW Yellow Buntings, circa 1768.

We shall have our normal stock on display at
Camden Antiques Fair, 8th-16th April, Stand No. 19

Telegrams Klaberporc London S.W.3

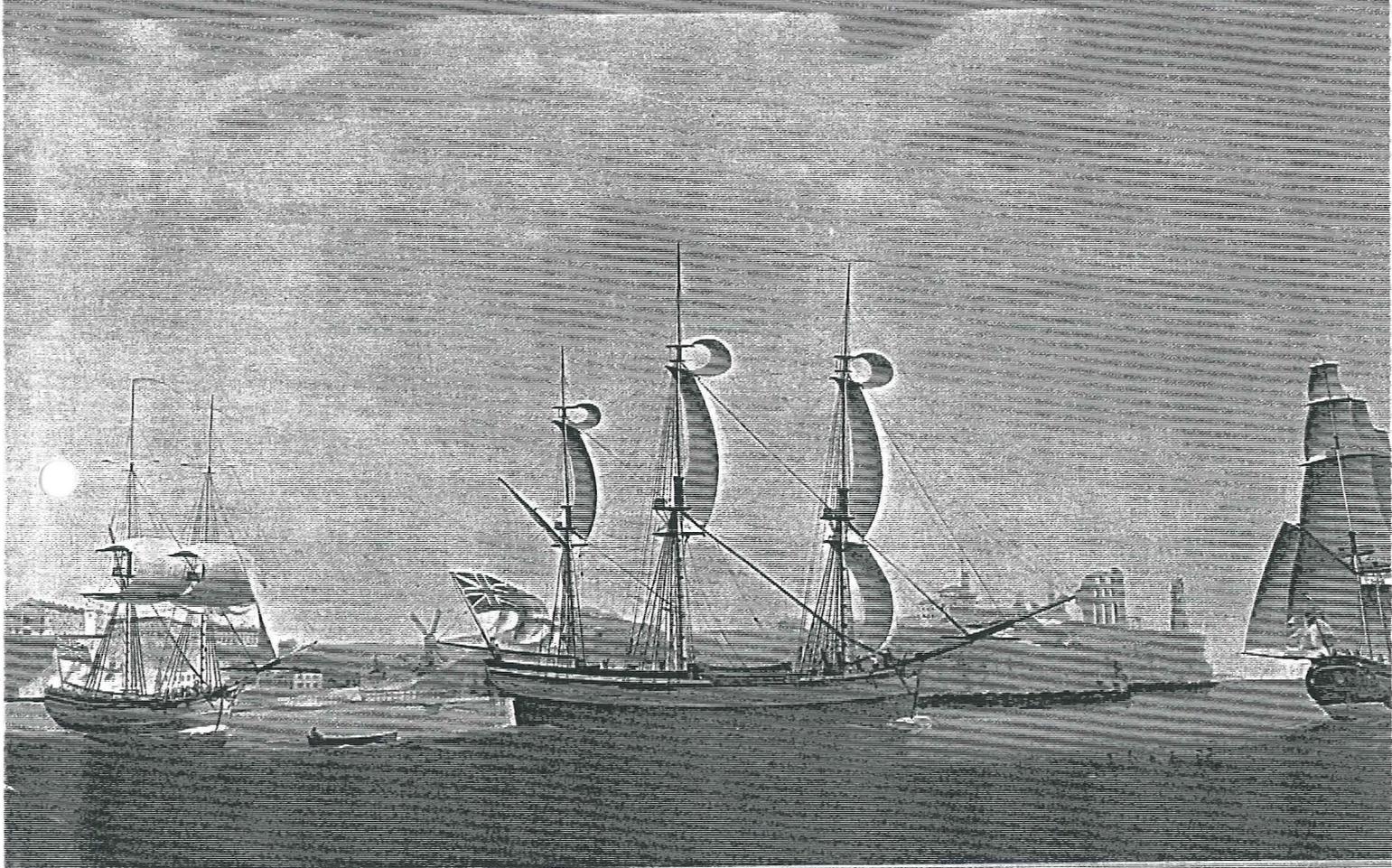
Antique Collecting

the Journal of

The Antique Collectors' Club

April 1978

Vol. 12 No. 12



for Collectors

by Collectors

about Collecting