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Fig. 1.—Rose-water bowl in pewter, the centre boss with the Royal Arms of James VI. (From the collection of Mr. Geoffrey J. Gollin.)



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PEWTER OF SCOTLAND

IN view of the decision to include Pewter in the present exhibition of Scottish Art at Burlington House, it is not inappropriate that some account should be given here of the Pewterer's Craft in the northern Kingdom and of the wares which were produced there. At the same time it is obvious that a short article can only touch upon the fringe of the subject, and those who desire to enter more deeply into it should consult the late Mr. Ingleby Wood's "Scottish Pewterware and Pewterers" and the late Mr. Howard Cotterell's "Old Pewter, its Makers and Marks," in each of which books it is fully dealt with.

The examples illustrated in these notes have been selected as representative of the various types which have come down to us.

The Craft of the Pewterer in Scotland appears to have been regularised not much earlier than the beginning of the 16th century, some 150 years after it had been established in London. It must be remembered that Scotland as a whole was comparatively poor, and before the 16th century, pewter was regarded as a luxury which could be afforded only by the wealthier classes, the re-

mainder having to be content with wooden platters and horn or leather mugs. Moreover, the amount of tin produced in Scotland was negligible, and it had to be imported. These facts account for the comparatively late date at which pewter came into general use.

As in England, so in Scotland, the Craft was controlled by Guilds, but with the difference that, in certain cases, instead of each trade having its own Guild, several trades, having perhaps similar methods of manufacture, or carrying on inter-related business, combined to form one Guild. This was so in the case of the pewterers who, together with cutlers, blacksmiths and armourers, formed the various Incorporations of Hammermen throughout the country. The pewterers of Edinburgh joined the Edinburgh Hammermen in 1493. The earliest record of pewterers being members of the Perth Incorporation is in 1546. In Glasgow few records remain of the early years of the Hammermen, but in the 17th century pewterers are found among them; this Guild must, by that time, however, have interpreted its title very broadly, as we find clock-makers, saddlers and potters included in its membership. The earliest references to a Guild

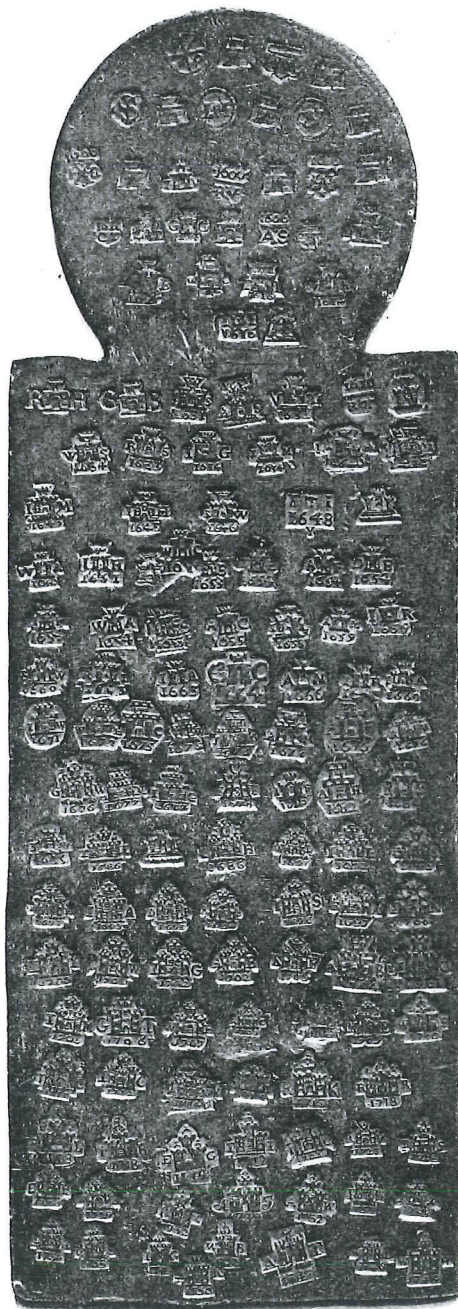


Fig. 2.—Touch plate with marks used by the Edinburgh pewterers between c. 1575 and 1764. (By courtesy of the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh.)

Fig. 4.—An early Scottish Church flagon, c. 1690. (From the collection of Mr. Lewis Clapperton.)



of Hammermen at Aberdeen is in 1556, at Dundee some twenty years later, and at Stirling in 1605, whilst a Guild also existed at Saint Andrews.

Again, as in England, the Craft gradually succumbed to the invasion of other more hygienic materials, and it is recorded that the last surviving pewterer in Edinburgh was James Moyes, whose trade in pewter ceased in about the year 1870.

There are preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh two "Touch Plates," of which the first is, by permission, shown in Figure 2. Upon them are struck the marks used by the Edinburgh pewterers between circa 1575 and 1764. In 1567, in the reign of James VI, the Scottish Parliament made the marking of pewter compulsory, and these

England and Scotland, those of Edinburgh and London being the sole survivors.

So much for History; but before we proceed to consider the pieces illustrated, two singular facts must be recorded.

The first is that comparatively few of the examples of Scottish pewter which have come down to us are of a date prior to the first

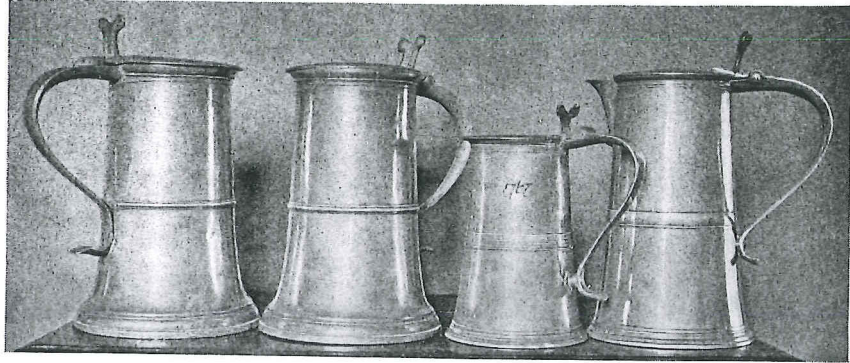


Fig. 3.—A group of Scottish Church flagons. (From the collection of the late Mr. Walter Churcher.)



Fig. 5.—Complete set of Scottish Church plate consisting of flagons, cups, baptismal bowl and alms plates. (By courtesy of Messrs. H. & A. Kimbell.)

Touch Plates are the evident outcome of that law. They formed the record of the marks used on their wares by the Master-pewterers of the City, and were used until the trade died out. Similar Touch Plates, of course, are preserved by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in London, and it is probable that these records were at one time kept by all the principal Guilds of pewterers, both in

quarter of the 18th century, due, no doubt, chiefly to the fact that before that period, for the reasons already given, much less pewter was made. One outstanding example is, however, shown in Figure 1.

The second is that a notable gap occurs between Ecclesiastical and Tavern pieces; Household wares such as tankards, candlesticks and salts are practically non-existent, and even dishes and plates are uncommon. That church vessels have been preserved is easily understandable, and, to a lesser degree, perhaps, the same may be said of spirit and wine measures and ale pots, in use in inns. But Scotland has nothing to show comparable with, for instance, the splendid Stuart, Anne, and Georgian lidded domestic tankards of England; and it must be supposed that between the upper and lower classes the gap of poverty which separated silver from horn is



Fig. 6.—Scottish Communion cup inscribed "The Associate Congregation in East of Fife 1743." (From the collection of Mr. Francis J. Weston, F.S.A.)

PEWTER OF SCOTLAND—*Continued*

responsible; there was no "middle class" in pewter. There are, however, two pear-shaped dome-lidded tankards in the possession, respectively, of the kirks of Drumelzier and Balfron.

Turning to the pieces themselves, Figure 1 is of a three-tiered rose-water bowl. Upon a boss of copper and enamel in the centre appear the Royal Arms of James VI (of Scotland, I of England). The maker was Robert Weir, whose Touch, dated 1600, appears in the very centre of the circular head of the Touch Plate (Figure 2). This magnificent piece—one of the finest examples of old Scottish pewter in existence—is in the collection of Mr. Geoffrey J. Gollin, M.A., of London. Its fellow, for there is a pair, is the property of the writer.

Perhaps the most typical of all the products of the Scottish pewterers are their Church flagons, and the familiar so-called "Tappit Hen" measures.

A group of the former, from the collection of the late Mr. Walter Churcher, is seen in Figure 3. It will be noted that, apart from minor deviations in detail, all are of the same type, sturdy and severely plain, with tapering drums relieved about the centre by a broad band or narrow fillet, with slightly domed flat covers and plain twin-eared thumbpieces. The principal deviation from strict conformity is the addition of a finial knob to the centre of the lid. Many of these flagons exist, both in churches and private collections, and the whole, with one or two exceptions, may be dated between 1730 and 1790.

These flagons and the Communion cups which accompanied them were frequently engraved with the name of the Kirk or Congregation to which they belonged, together with the date of purchase or presentation; in this instance the small flagon is engraved "Coldstream 1767." Figure 4 shows an early flagon, probably circa 1690, and progenitor of the type. It is in the collection of Mr. Lewis Clapperton, M.A., C.A., of Glasgow.

Incidentally some of these flagons have spouts, a feature which usually proclaims a late date. Earlier flagons were seldom spouted, and in many cases spouts were added later as the difficulty of pouring accurately from a wide mouth became apparent.

A complete set of plate comprising flagons, cups, baptismal bowl and alms plates is illustrated in Figure 5, from a photograph kindly lent by Messrs. H. & A. Kimbell of London. All the pieces except the plates bear the inscription "Associate Congregation of Falkirk 1787." Though adhering more or less rigidly to type as regards flagons, the pewterers allowed themselves somewhat more latitude in designing cups, as will be seen in Figure 6. This is perhaps the most pleasing of all the types of Scottish Communion cup. Its inscription reads "The Associate Congregation in East of Fife 1743," and it is in the collection of Mr. Francis J. Weston, F.S.A.

REVOLVING

A Query Turning on a Scarce Type of Old Furniture

THE query in the heading applies, of course, only to the first two illustrations, but this brief article is partly a discussion as to whether "revolving tables" of this kind are dumb-waiters or bookcases. Everyone knows the usual pattern of three-tiered (more or less) dumb-waiter, and it will be conceded that Figures 1 and 2 bear less resemblance to those dumb-waiters than to the squat type of revolving bookcase which had a place in so many of our parents' studies—or in those sitting-rooms which were by courtesy described as drawing-rooms. Again, there is in Mr. Arthur Hayden's interesting little book on "Cottage and Farmhouse Furniture" (p. 181 of the older editions) an oak revolving table with feet roughly similar to those of Figure 1, but with another tier or storey. Now that piece, dated circa 1720, is described unequivocally as a "revolving bookstand."



Fig. 1.—Oak revolving bookcase (?) with tripod support. (By courtesy of Mr. S. W. Wolsey.)



Fig. 1.—A group of "Tappit Hen" measures, formerly in the Charbonnier collection. The two on the right in each row are "Crested Hens."

PEWTER OF SCOTLAND

By Captain A. SUTHERLAND-GRAEME, F.S.A., A.R.I.B.A.

PART II

¶ Part I of this article appeared in our February, 1939, issue.

LEAVING ecclesiastical pewter we enter the homely tavern and here we find the familiar "Tappit Hen" (but only in theory, alas!).

It is not proposed to enlarge upon the discussion which has raged around the derivation of this name. In the writer's opinion the propounder of the theory that it is derived from "Topinette," the name given to a French wine measure of somewhat similar form is probably as near the truth as we shall ever get: the old association between Scotland and France which, incidentally, led to the assimilation of French words (e.g., Ashet—a Plate; Fr.: Assiette) is a strong argument in its favour. Figure 1 shows a group of these measures of varying capacities, both Scots and Imperial, which were formerly in the Charbonnier collection. The fact that, on the 16th century fountain at Linlithgow, a figure is shown holding in its hand one of these measures is evidence that the type was well known, at least in the south of Scotland, over 300 years ago, but, with one or

two exceptions, none of those which exist to-day are earlier than circa 1725, and they lasted till the early 19th century. Three varieties are known; those with plain domed lids, those whose lids are surmounted by finials ("Crested Hens"), and those which are lidless. Three examples of the latter are shown in Figure 2; they are known as the "Aberdeen" type, from the locality in which they were most frequently found.

Budding collectors should note carefully the outlines of these measures. As has been said, a superficially similar type was made in France at about the same period, and these (which are fairly common) are often, ignorantly, one hopes, exposed for sale as "Tappit Hens."

The latter are not infrequently faked also, and whilst it would be injudicious, to say the least, to broadcast the signs and tokens by which these fakes can, up to the present, be unhesitatingly exposed, an intending purchaser should, if possible, consult an "old hand."



Fig. 2 (left).—Three lidless "Tappit Hens," examples of the "Aberdeen" type. Fig. 3 (right).—A group of "thistle" measures, c. 1830.

The Antique Collector

Another type of measure peculiar to Scotland, though far rarer than the Tappit Hen, is seen in Figure 4. This is known as the "Pot-belly," and was chiefly found in the Aberdeenshire district. As in the case of the Tappit Hens, these measures are "crested" and plain, whilst there is also an unlidded type. One of each of the former is seen in the illustration; each of the three types has been found in four or five different capacities, and they form the one major exception to the statement made earlier in these notes, that comparatively little Scottish pewter now existing dates from before the first quarter of the 18th century, since they may be said to date from circa 1690, though doubtless they continued to be made to a much later date. One of each of three late types of Scottish lidded measures (generally early 19th century), is shown in Figure 5. All are of the well-known "baluster" type but differ from their English counterparts in the design of their lids and thumbpieces. The measure to the left is of Edinburgh make by reason of the convex sloping lid, whilst that on the right, with domed lid, hails from Glasgow; both have "shell" thumbpieces. The centre measure has no special place of origin, and its thumbpiece is an "embryo shell." Of each of these types also there are some five different capacities. Another type of baluster measure (not illustrated) has a plain flat lid and the thumbpiece is a small ball.

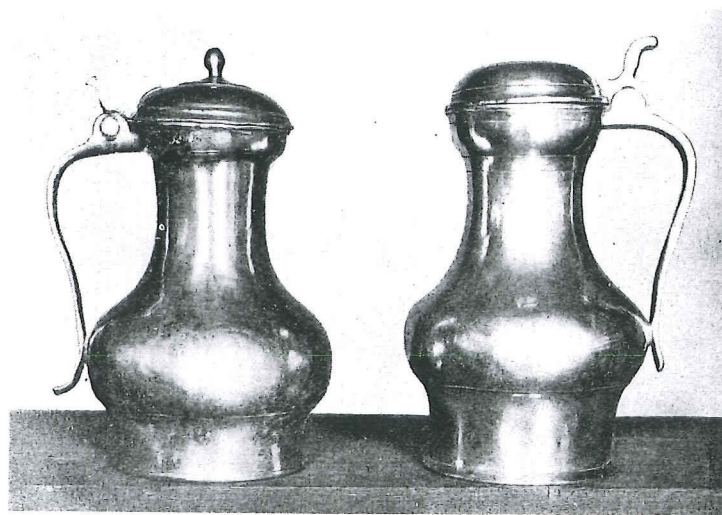


Fig. 4.—17th century "Crested" and plain Aberdeenshire pint measures of the "Pot-belly" type. (One Scots pint equals three English pints.)



Fig. 5.—Three "baluster" measures of the early 19th century. L. to r.: Edinburgh Imperial pint measure with domed lid, maker W. Scott; with flat lid, maker A. Ramage. Glasgow Imperial pint measure with domed lid (no maker's name).

Figure 3 shows five "thistle" measures dating from circa 1830. These lasted only for a very short time, being condemned by the authorities because, unless completely reversed, they retained a portion of liquor in the "bulge," a circumstance that doubtless led to the defrauding of unobservant customers, if one can image any such! This provides the anomaly that although these are among the latest in period of the whole series of Scottish measures, they are by far the rarest, and in consequence frequent attempts have been made to "fake" them.

The last illustration is of a well-known Scottish domestic piece known as a "Quaich" (Figure 6). These vessels, which were used both for drinking from and as porringers, have existed in Scotland for centuries. They have come down to us in wood, horn, and silver, and are still made, as souvenirs, in those materials, but genuine old pewter examples are extremely



Fig. 6.—A rare Scottish quaich in pewter.

Scottish Pewter

rare, less than half a dozen being known. They vary in diameter between about two and eight inches.

It will be noticed that, except in the case of the rose-water bowl in Part I of these notes, no maker's names are given. This is partly due to lack of space, and partly to the fact that, though church flagons usually bear their makers' touches,

very few of the measures are marked other than with excise marks and the initials of the Dean of Guild. A quaint exception is found in the mark struck upon an early "Pot-belly" measure, "MADE BE LACHLAN DALLAS." All the pieces illustrated in Figures 2 to 6 are in the well-known collection of Dr. A. J. Young, of Christchurch.

THE EDINBURGH TOUCHPLATES

By Lieut-Col. J. S. BISSET, F.S.A., Scot.



Small oaken coffer known as "Johnny Faa's Charter Chest," but probably a "common box" of the Edinburgh Pewterer Craft; circa 1650. By courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

WITH reference to Capt. Sutherland Graeme's letter in the March number of *THE ANTIQUE COLLECTOR* in which he kindly refers to my recent paper on the Edinburgh Touchplates, perhaps the following extract from the Edinburgh Burgh Council Act of 1562 may be of interest to those to whom the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland are not readily available.

The Council were concerned at the poor quality of the metal being used by the local pewterers and the Act, after giving instructions for the assaying of the work of each craftsman by his fellows, ordains that to prevent dispute as to the quality and authorship of the piece under assay: ". . . the said powdereris has instantlie at the making heir of (to) put in thair commoun box of the pudermaker craft ane assay (i.e. sample) of tyn markit with all thair markis and according thairto in tyme cuming the tyn weschell to be maid . . .".

It seems, however, that the Act was soon for-

gotten or ignored as it was re-enacted in 1600, and it is probably in this latter year that the first of the touchplates we have to-day was prepared, as that is the earliest date used in any of the touches recorded on the plate—even by craftsmen who had been made freemen before that date.

The small oaken coffer in which these plates, along with other articles of pewter, were found, was in the possession of a gypsy family named Faa, and is shown in the accompanying photograph. It is some 16 inches long by 7½ inches broad, of rough workmanship and decorated with ornamental iron strappings and escutcheons, all badly corroded. It is generally assigned to the 17th century. Legend attributes it to the famous early 16th century gypsy Johnny Faa, Lord and Earl of Little Egypt, the touchplates being said to be his charter to travel and trade throughout the country, but it is almost certainly an old "common box" of the Edinburgh pewterers, though probably not the identical box of 1562.