

WHERE DID THE FLAGONS COME FROM?

RIDDLE OF A CITY CHURCH By A. V. SUTHERLAND-GRAEME

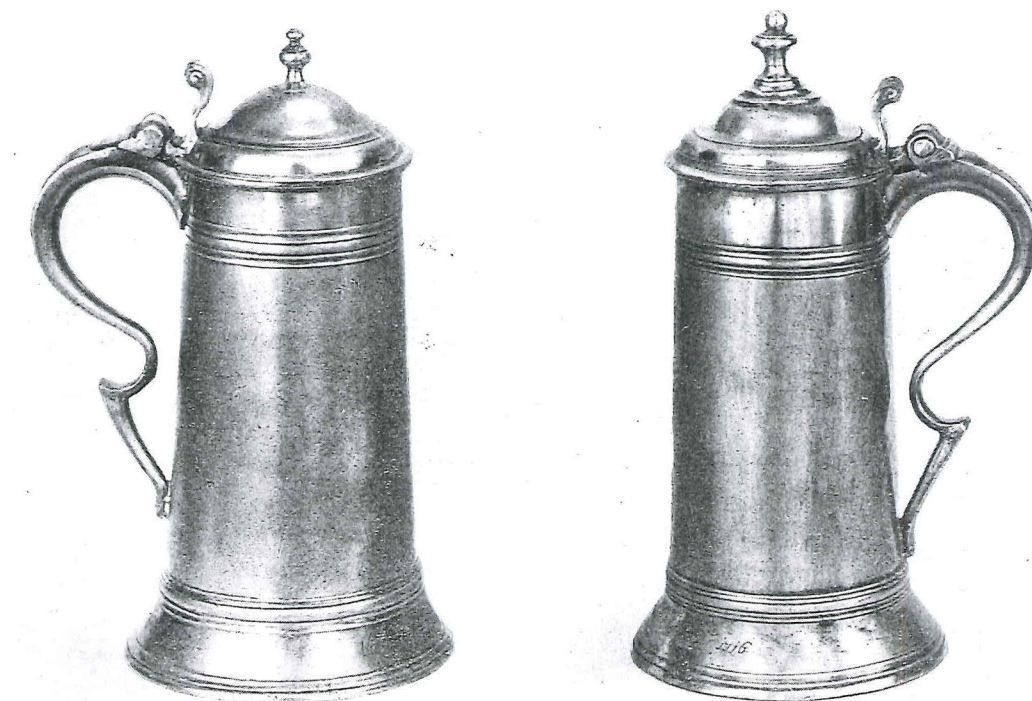
THE pewter flagons shown in the accompanying illustration formed part of the pewter plate belonging to the Church of St. Swithun, London Stone, Cannon Street, E.C. This church was partially destroyed during the war, but fortunately the flagons and a footed paten had been removed, and only six alms plates were lost.

These flagons present an interesting problem: for it is clear that they were never intended for sacramental use at all, a fact which is proved by the inscriptions on them. These inscriptions encircle the projecting bases, that to the left reading: "The gift of John Layland (and) Joseph Watts, *stewards*, for the use of the *Society* 1717," and to the right: "The gift of John Layland and John Taylor 1716," Layland being the connecting link.

The records of St. Swithun's do not refer anywhere to this Society and as there are no other sources of information of which I am aware, it is not possible to state what it was, how long it existed, or what connection it had with the church.

It is, however, possible to suggest an explanation by referring to contemporary history. A change of rule had occurred. James II had left England in December, 1688. William of Orange and his wife Mary, elder daughter and heiress of James, became joint sovereigns, and all persons holding public offices were required to take the oath of allegiance to them.

Many of the clergy, however, having taken the oath to James, found it against their consciences to swear allegiance to William and Mary, and, in consequence, they were deprived of their livings by an Act of Parliament. However, they strove to continue their ministrations wherever possible and were known as Non-jurors. They and their flocks regarded themselves as the sole representatives of the true Church of England, differing from the main body on this issue alone. It can hardly be doubted that many of the "Societies" of the period sprang from Non-juror congregations,



PEWTER FLAGONS FROM THE CHURCH OF ST. SWITHUN, LONDON STONE, CANNON STREET. Before the war they were part of the church's sacramental plate, though they were probably designed for secular and convivial use

and that, as their ordained members died, and could not be replaced, they tended to become purely secular Jacobite clubs. It is, therefore, quite likely that these flagons were acquired by one of these clubs, not for sacramental, but for convivial use, as were, for instance, the Guild flagons so often found on the Continent and represented in this country by the Guild flagons of Norwich and the Joiners' flagon at Salisbury.

The flagons shown are not a pair and only one bears a pewterer's touch—the initials I.P., which were used by many pewterers at this time. There is no explanation as to how these flagons came to be at St. Swithun's. The church, for its own sacramental usage, already possessed fine silver flagons; and, until further research gives the answer, the matter must perforce be left there.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

of the house was attributed to Archer