

Verification Marks

on

Old Pewter Measures

by

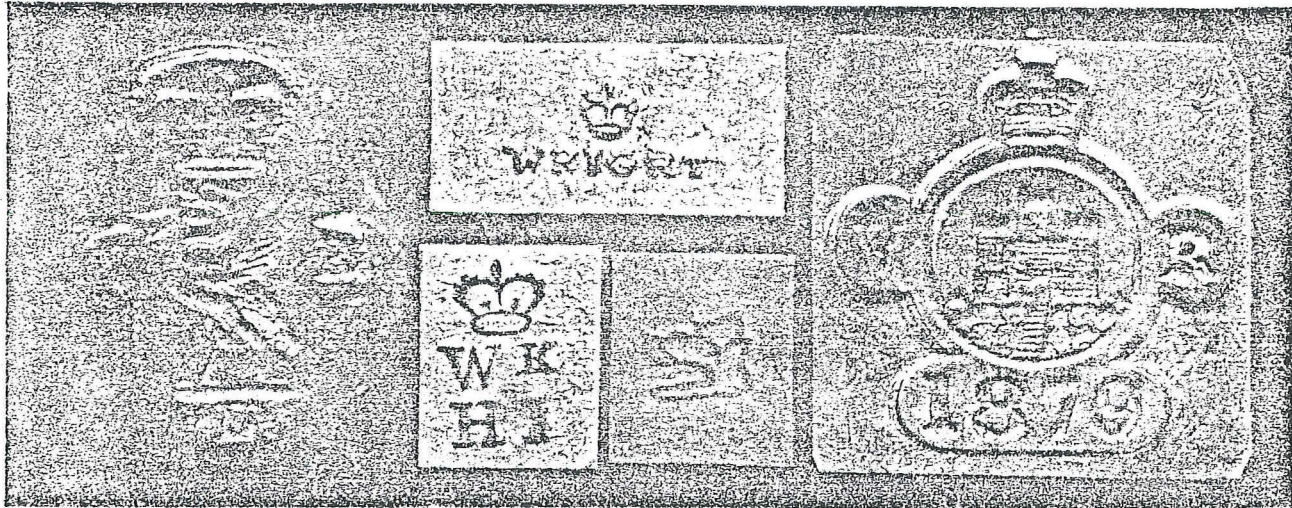
H. W. Speight

Verification Marks on OLD PEWTER MEASURES

By HAROLD W. SPEIGHT

Chief Inspector of Weights & Measures, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Photographs by JAMES PENN, Jnr., Chief Inspector of Weights & Measures, Dewsbury



LIVERPOOL

Old stamp of SALFORD: unique use of Inspector's name

WARWICKSHIRE:
Hundred of Hemlinsford

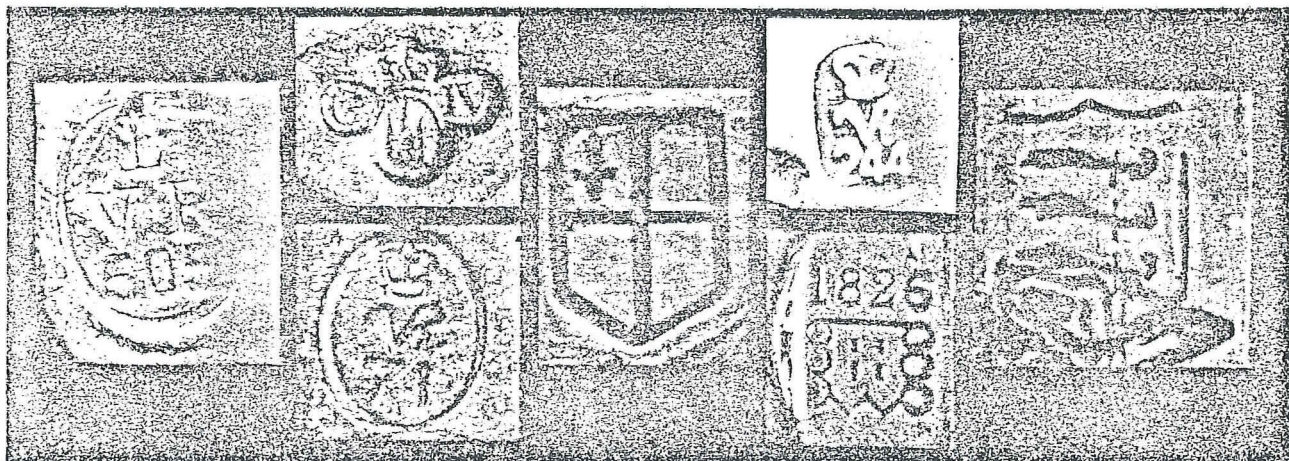
BRADFORD, with crest of
boar's head without tongue

EDINBURGH

FOR many years the world of pewter collectors has been crying out for information concerning the small markings which often are seen clustered round the lips and sides of pewter measures. These marks have nothing whatever to do with makers' marks or "touches," they are

the "verification stamps" impressed by weights and measures officials of the Local Authority to show that the measure has been compared with a standard and found to be correct.

In this country the practice of stamping measures as a guarantee of accuracy seems to



NORTHUMBERLAND

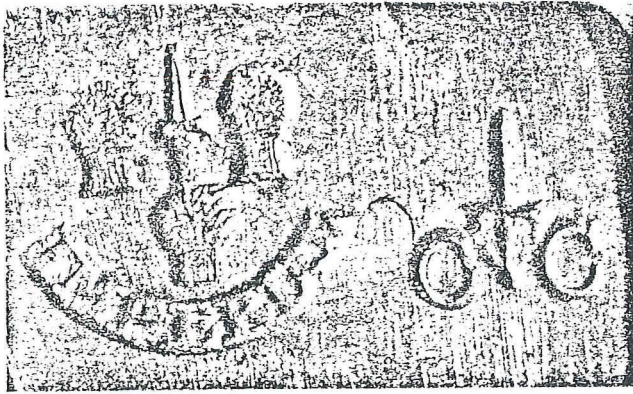
Old stamp of KIRKCALDY
(George IV)
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
Adopted c. 1880

CITY OF LONDON

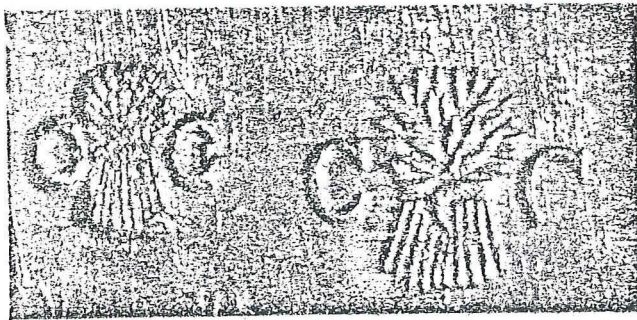
TYNEMOUTH
ARBROATH

Old stamp of MIDDLESEX
(partially defaced) showing
the "three seaxes"

Verification Marks on Old Pewter Measures



CHESTER



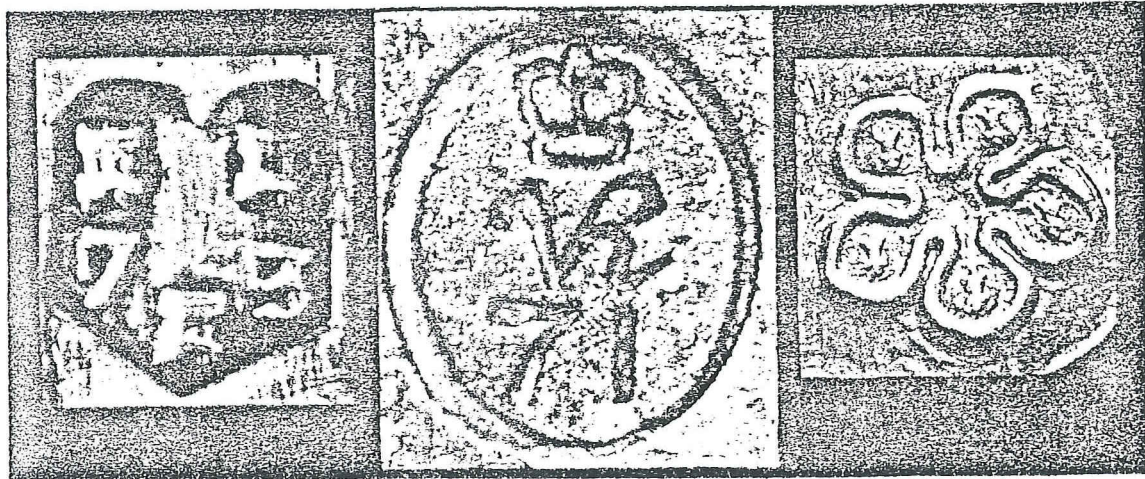
CHESTER

have been inaugurated in the reign of Edward I, who ordained that: "the standard of bushels, gallons, and ells shall be sealed with an iron seal of Our Lord the King and no measure shall be in any town unless it do agree with the King's measure." In the 16th century an official known

as the Dean of Guild was responsible, not only for the quality of the work turned out by the Guild, but also for the accuracy of pewter measures made by the members, and amongst the articles in the keeping of the Dean of Guild for Dundee was "ane Iron stamp to mark ye tinn stoupis."

There was no general obligation upon Local Authorities to provide for the inspection of weights and measures until early in the 19th century, when it was the practice to stamp correct measures with a mark derived, in most cases, from the arms of the town or county where they were used. Some of these designs incorporated almost all the details of the city arms, as in the fine examples of Edinburgh and Liverpool; others are based on a portion only of the arms, as in the case of the Leicester stamp which depicts only the "cinquefoil ermine" from the arms of the borough, or, in the case of Bradford, where the crest only is adopted, "a boar's head without a tongue." A curious and unique example is that of Salford where the old stamp portrays a crown surmounting the Inspector's surname "Wright" —fortunately his name was phonetically compatible with the purpose of the stamp!

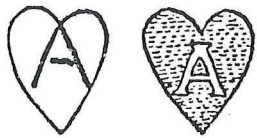
Other stamps, less interesting heraldically considered, consisted merely of a crown surmounting the initials of the town as in the case of the city of Bath, "Crown B.C." and Swansea, "Crown B.S." of which a large number existed. In 1879, after consolidation of weights and measures law, the Standards Department of the Board of Trade



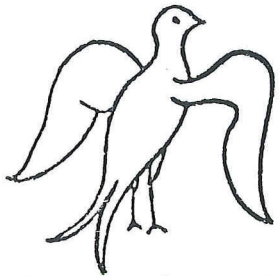
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE: Types of the uniform Board of Trade stamp
Old stamp, 1873 "Uniform" stamp (after 1880)

LEICESTER

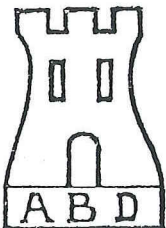
VERIFICATION MARKS FOUND ON OLD PEWTER MEASURES



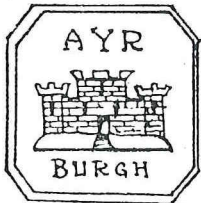
Aurdrce



Arundel (Sussex)



Aberdeen



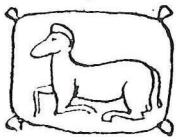
Ayr Burgh



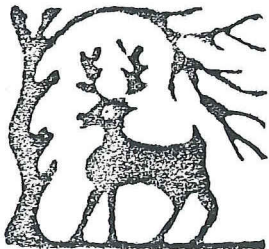
Abingdon



Buckinghamshire



Boston (Lincs)

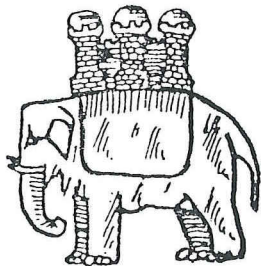


Berkshire



BB

Brighton



Coventry



D - C

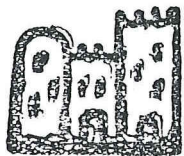
B

Denbigh

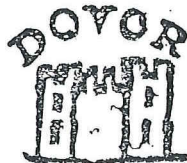


DON

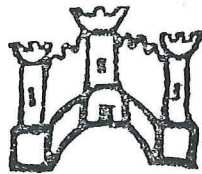
Doncaster



Dudley

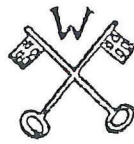


Dover



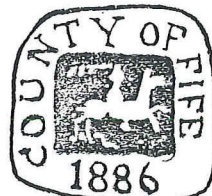
EXON

Exeter

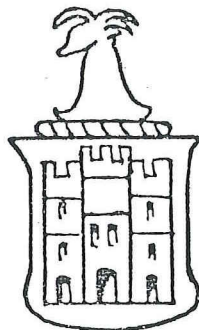


I of E ELY

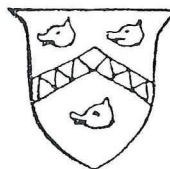
Isle of Ely



Co. of Fife



Gateshead



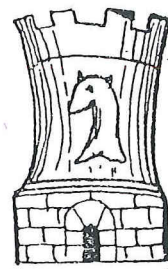
Grimsby



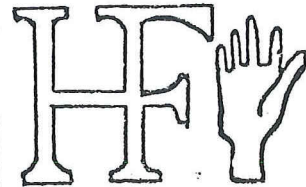
Glasgow



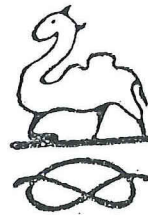
Grantham



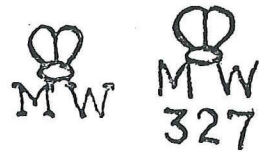
Gravesend



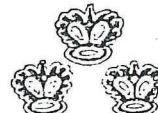
Higham Ferrers (Northants)



Hanley



Halifax (Manor of Wakefield)



HULL

Hull



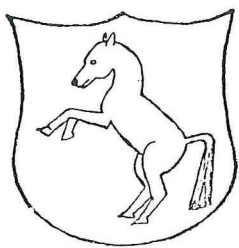
B H

Huddersfield

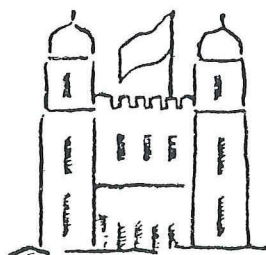


Inverness

VERIFICATION MARKS FOUND ON OLD PEWTER MEASURES



Co. of Kent



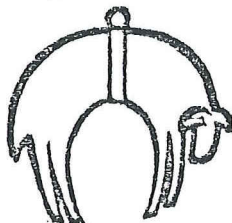
London (Tower of)



Lincolnshire (Kesteven Div.)



B L
Lancaster



Leeds



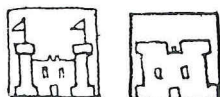
Launceston



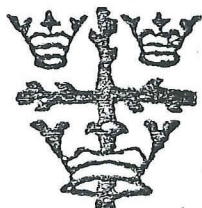
Macclesfield



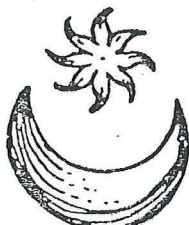
Middlesbrough



Old
Northumberland
Stamps



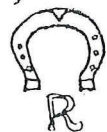
City of Nottingham



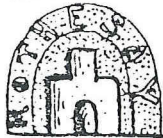
H.M.
Portsmouth



Plymouth



Rutland



Rothesay

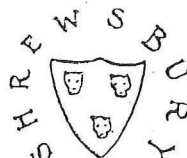


Reading

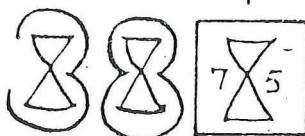


B. S.

Sheffield



Shrewsbury



1873 1868 1875

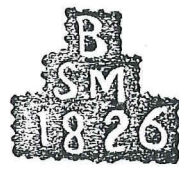


1877

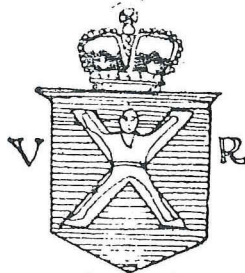


1879

Sunderland



St. Marylebone



1848

St. Andrews



VR

Saffron Walden

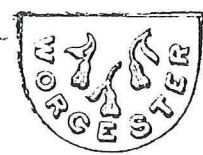


WALSALL

Walsall



Worcester (County)



Worcester (City)



North Riding
of Yorkshire

THE stamps illustrated herewith are not "touches," but are local marks certifying that a pewter measure has been tested for accuracy. They are generally placed round lips and sides, with ancient and modern marks together. The modern stamp is the uniform design introduced by the Board of Trade in 1870, formed of a crown, the initials of the reigning Sovereign, and a number. The number indicates a town, according to an official list kept at every weights and measures office, and thus the locality of an early stamp can always be ascertained from the modern stamp alongside it.

requested all local authorities to withdraw their old stamps in favour of a uniform design consisting of a crown, the reigning Sovereign's initials, and a number allotted to the town, and this is the design of stamp in use to-day.

Most of the pewter measures in second-hand shops have both the ancient and modern stamps marked upon them, and the "uniform" stamp is often to be found side by side with the old heraldic stamp (see illustration of Carlisle stamps). Thus a means is provided whereby the place of verification can be traced, for every weights and measures office has a list of the numbers allotted by the Board of Trade to the various local authorities of the United Kingdom.



Northumberland pewter measure with old Northumberland stamp

There are many interesting features about the designs of these old stamps as, for instance, the "canting" significance of the swallow (French: *hirondelle*) for Arundel, and the Congleton stamp which is derived from an ancient seal which depicted, in addition to the lion standing upon a *tun*, two supporting *conger* eels, the "conger-tun" idea being a crude pun on Congleton!

Then there is the tongueless boar's head of Bradford which perpetuates the legend of the killing of an enormous wild boar which infested the Cliffe Wood in the days of long ago. A reward was offered for the destruction of the boar and two men claimed the money; one of them, however, was wise enough to cut out the boar's tongue and to produce it as a proof of his exploit.

CONGLETON

BERWICK

NORFOLK

HADDINGTON

Old stamp of
CARLISLE

Victorian uniform
design for
CARLISLE
"VR" 392

