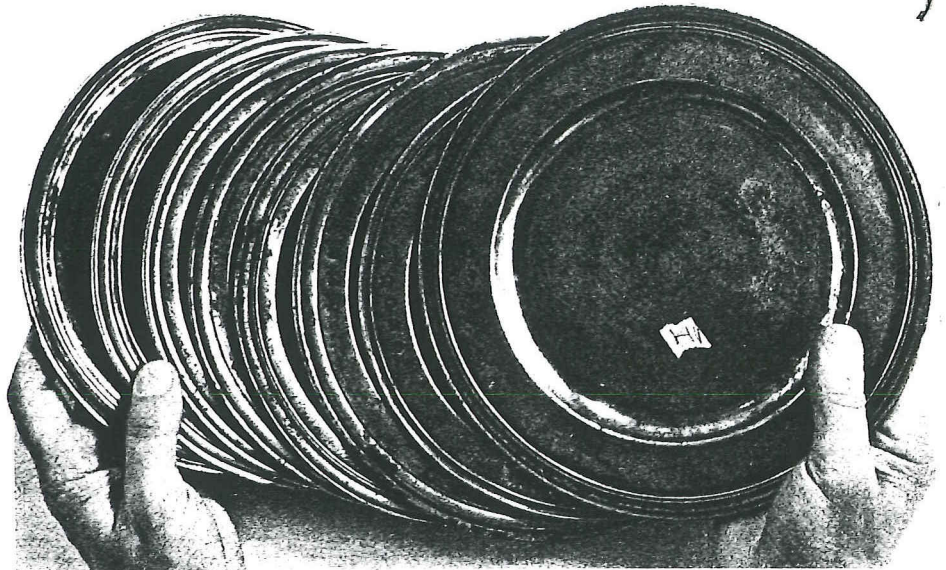


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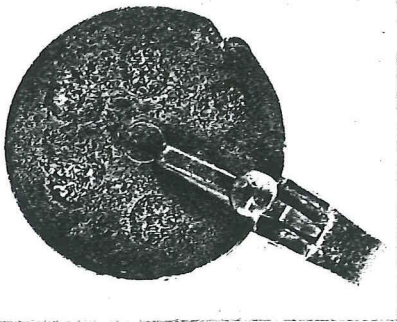


# Pewter 1650 to 1700

CHRISTOPHER PEAL, Honorary Secretary of the Pewter Society, has already discussed 19th century Pewter (September 1973, Collectors Guide), Britannia Metal (January 1975); and 18th century Pewter (March 1976). Here he turns his attention to Pewter 1650/1700.



2. Narrow rim and triple reed plates



1. A fake lid of a purported early baluster—see the over-glamourising and the speckly appearance of the surface. Not all fakes will be so distinctive!



3. Dome lid tankard, 1 pint, Cott. O.P. 5886, c. 1690. Wriggled narrow rim plate (William and Mary), Cott. O.P. 5942, 1692. Flat lid tankard, 1 quart, Cott. O.P. 4169, c. 1695, 5¼in. to lip

I am fascinated beyond measure by the styles and products of pewter made during the second half of the 17th century and would like to deal with the subject in quarter centuries.

## 1675-1700

This is the glamour period of English pewter. It almost seems to be the period when all pewter was good pewter, when all designs were worked up most elaborately and in the utmost good taste—and whence a remarkable quantity survives in collections. But, do beware of fakes. They are true to style, detail and technique. Sometimes they have been over glamourised, often they have been 'repaired'. They are very convincing, especially when dirty, and seen in poor light (Fig. 1).

The most likely items to be met with in this period are the triple (or multiple) reed dishes of 15in. or more in diameter. Sometimes, like plates, they bear the owner-family crest, the maker's mark is on the back of the rim, and 'hall marks' on the front. This was a style which ran

into the early years of the 18th century. Late plain broad rim dishes are rare.

Triple reed plates during this period are less common (or, you may feel more rare) and ran from about 1675 to about 1705. The mark is on the back of the well. Narrow rim plates appear to overlap probably at both ends, and are slightly more rare (Fig. 2). The detail of the rim development is fascinating, but temptation to call a triple reed merely a young narrow rim is false. They were concurrent.

The hundred odd year span of 'wriggling'—the zig zag surface decoration—was at its most popular with the advent of William III and his marriage to Mary (Fig. 3). Doubtless, this was a boon to the pewterers as an 'additional sale'. When delicately and punctiliously carried out it is a delightful added attraction to pewter, well able to stand unchallenged and unadorned. Understandably, the height of the pewter collector's aspirations is a wriggled flat lid tankard, and narrow rim wriggled plates to go with it.

Occasionally dome lid tankards bear wriggling. These lids do not carry the same ace-high cachet as flat lids, but to the true connoisseur there is probably much more interesting detail and opportunity for research.

The first good piece I bought was a bud baluster measure and, since then, I have always remained faithful to their enormous fascination. What a vigorous and attractive lot they are: tall and slim, short and thick set. In this period they are heavier, a little more basic (usually), but sometimes endowed with delicacy and grace, with just the amount and positioning of the incised lines circling the body to proclaim '17th century'. In sizes they run from half gill which is rare, to one gallon. (I have seen several quarter gill specimens, but never a true one—no matter what thumbpiece). It is much more usual for the buds of this period to be marked, either on the lid, or lip. Very often the maker is not identified; quite frequently the mark bears a date, but remember that this is





4. Top row: Measures, hammerhead baluster,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pt. (O.E.W.S. all balusters), mark Spread Eagle and '6? Note weak hammer, c. 1680. Hammerhead, pt., c. 1680,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in. to lip. Bud, pt., 'RB,' bird and 1671, c. 1680. Bud,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pt., 'NM 1687,' c. 1690. Bottom row: Hammerhead,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pt., 'RP' and anchor, c. 1680. Hammerhead, gill, early 17th or 16th century. Bud, gill, Cott. O.P. 4170a (struck and dated 1669), c. 1690. Bud,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pt., '16 WD 68,' c. 1680



5. Flat lid tankard, very rare or unique thumbpiece and finial. 1 pint, Cott. O.P. 6028. Tall flat lid tankard, no mark, c. 1690. Tavern Pot engraved 'Ino French att ye Rose and Crown. . . . Strete, Sohofields,' Cott. O.P. 1415a (struck and dated 1685), c. 1685,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. to lip. Wriggled flat lid tankard, Cott. O.P. 425, c. 1690

the date of striking the mark, and the piece may have been made 40 years later.

Much of this applied to the overlapping hammerhead, whose style of thumbpiece probably came in 150 to 200 years before (Fig. 4). These tend always to be masculine, and the thumbpiece is utterly suitable and compatible. They have the triple attraction of ancient ancestry, rich rarity, and a fairly heavy hammerhead. The fakes always have very heavy hammers, while many true ones are rather

insignificant. The bodies at this period are just like buds.

Flat lid tankards are again much prized by collectors (Fig. 5). The lids are rather deep, the bodies tallish and tapering, probably a little concave-sided, with a generous base. Thumbpieces are most usually the ramshorn, less frequently the twin love birds, and even more rarely the backing 'C's'. It may seem anomalous but the plain bodies are more scarce than those wriggled, yet command less on the

market since the increased appeal causes a greater demand. Probably in say 1690 there may have been ten times as many plain as wriggled flat lids, but the latter were probably honoured heirlooms, and so were preserved.

Concurrent with this period (1675-1700) are the much more rare true tavern pots, lidless, in which beer was taken round to lodgings etc. They must have been subjected to extremely rough treatment—collected in the morning having been hurled about, strung on a loop, clattering and chafing, after a drunken and bawdy evening use. The flat lids were in private possession and some have been preserved. Of the tavern pots far fewer have survived.

Now we come to candlesticks. (Fig. 6). The knopped stem probably 'started' in the 1690s (although knops, balusters, tear drops etc. had graced their stems throughout the century). Automatically we think of the glorious skirted candlesticks with octagonal base, tray and lip. Often grape vine decoration is cast in the base. The stem has incised rings, sometimes cast, sometimes lightly swelling segments. But by about 1690 (very roughly) wax improved and carrying the candle no longer involved the near certainty of spluttering fat searing the hand and clogging the clothes. So now very rare specimens occur with circular base and no skirt.

All salts pre-1750 are very rare, and in the last quarter of the 17th century survivors are very scarce indeed, but are extremely attractive. (Fig. 7). The gadrooned capstan started earlier than 1700, but was chunkier, and was preceded by the plain version. In coin terms these are RRR, and I know of less than five of the octagonal salt (collar and base), and one (fragment) marked.

You will not meet many porringers pre-1675. Those of the latter part of the quarter have a handle reminiscent of, but far more attractive than a monochrome peacock's tail (Fig. 8).

I think that on a level of function it is interesting to consider porringers' shapes in relation to spoons of the same date. Surely spoons and porringers were as scoop and Stilton—one fitting the other efficiently and, it is only in this quarter that the porringers puffed out their



6. Candlesticks—Skirtless, Cott. O.P. 5452, c. 1680. Skirted, with cast grape and vine decoration on base, no mark, c. 1670,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. to lip.

7. Salts. Gadrooned capstan, no mark, c. 1690,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. to top. Octagonal, no mark, c. 1670. Plain capstan, no mark, c. 1680





8. Porringer, 'WB,' c. 1695

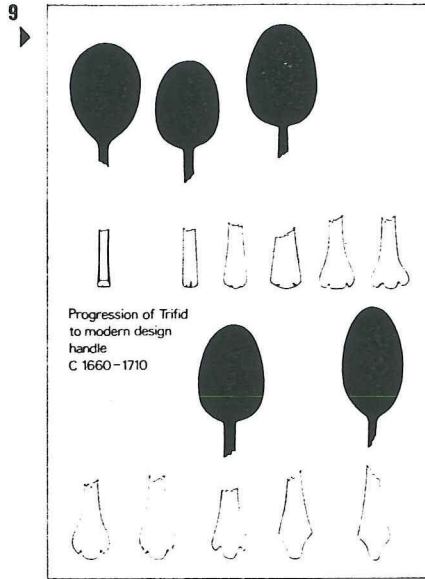
hitherto straight sides—while the spoon modestly withdrew their full curves to the embryo of the modern shape. For some years the spoon went through an earthquake of evolution. It would seem that the spoon maker and the porringer maker used different pubs! But in spoons the pewterers had lost nearly all the ground. The Pewterers Company had fought hard and long to prevent other base metal alloy taking over, but many progressive, undisciplined pewterers knew a good thing when they saw it and several recognised what a pitiful medium pewter was, with the thin stem for its purpose. So, despite apparently hypocritical statements, several went ahead and produced far more practical and lasting spoons in latten (brass) which they tinned, the greater to simulate silver, the greater to throw the searchers off.

I feel that latten and pewter spoons should be taken as one subject, each medium having been complementary to the other through the preceding three or four hundred years. Rather naturally the pewter spoons of the 1675/1700 period are much more scarce than those in latten, and the illustration of latten spoons does not really cheat, because the styles were the same (Fig. 9).

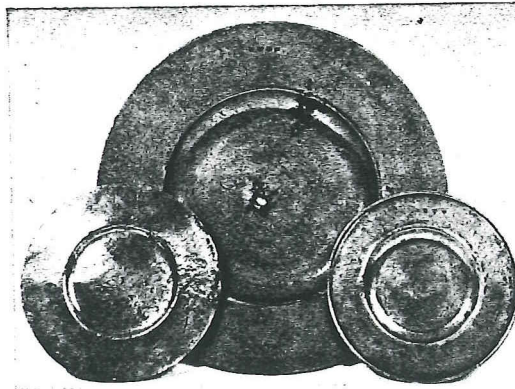
11(a). Broad rim plates and dish. Plate (ex Mount Edgcumb) 'ND', c. 1655. Dish, Cott. O.P. 5741, c. 1670, 18½ in. diameter. Plate with reed, Cott. O.P. 5961, c. 1640  
11(b). Restoration charger, one of several different makers, with similar wriggled decoration, 1660. (Formerly in the collection of the late R. W. Cooper, Esq.)



10. Flagons, probably all for church use, but might be domestic. Beefeater, 'Thomas Lupton' with griffons head (unrecorded), c. 1660, 8½ in. to lip. 'Two Band' flat lid, 'IF' in diamond, c. 1685. Type confined to John Emes, Cott. O.P. 3092, c. 1685. Tapering flat lid, Cott. O.P. 6028, c. 1695



You would think that church flagons would be easy to comment upon. What flagons are there in this period? Very few. One maker, with two dated marks of 1675 and 1686—John Emes, made a very distinctive type, with many variations of thumbpiece—and his examples are very rare, but widely distributed. Then there are two scarce types of flat lid flagon. Scarce they are and illustrated here (Fig. 10) for the record.



## 1650-1675

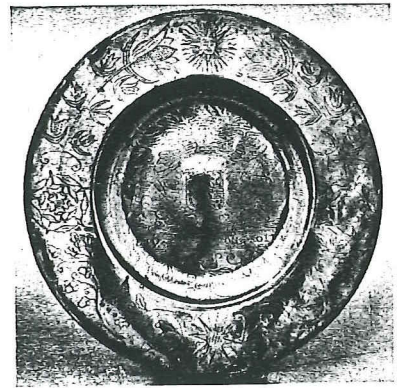
This is the period when relief at freedom from the stark Puritanism burst out as a preliminary to the quarter just dealt with. The Beefeater flagon, usually with twin cusp thumbpieces, is the most common type, yet seldom seen other than in major sale rooms, though many are to be found in churches.

As far as tankards are concerned everything at this time and preceding it has a lid. They are very rare, the flat lid being very shallow, little to show for base mouldings, the body squat, and the thumbpiece probably the twin cusp.

The dish of the moment is very broad rimmed, curving very slightly upwards, and sometimes a lightly incised line just inside the edge (Fig. 11(a)). 1660-1662 saw these used for the wonderful wriggled 'Restoration' chargers (Fig. 11 (b)). I have heard doubts cast on the authenticity of some, but I have never seen one which looked doubtful. Yet there are a surprising number surviving....

There are very broad rim plates, too. Although these do bear knife marks, it is difficult to accept that they were the normal fashionable table-ware having such a very small well. The weakness caused by the strain on the broad rim could answer why so few survive.

Of the measures hammerheads, rare



11(a)

11(b)

except as fakes, are the most usual of very few, although a ball thumbpiece ran from medieval times through to the mid-18th century in England in various slight variations of detail. It is possible that buds started in this quarter. I have one with the maker's mark struck in 1668, and two in 1671. It is conceivable that these buds were made in their makers' earlier years.

Candlesticks of this period are probably very ornate with knobs, drip trays, skirts, etc. but these are usually taken as a little latter than 1675.

The spoon development in this period was quite revolutionary, from sliptop of 1650 to the trifids of 1700. What a break from tradition. □