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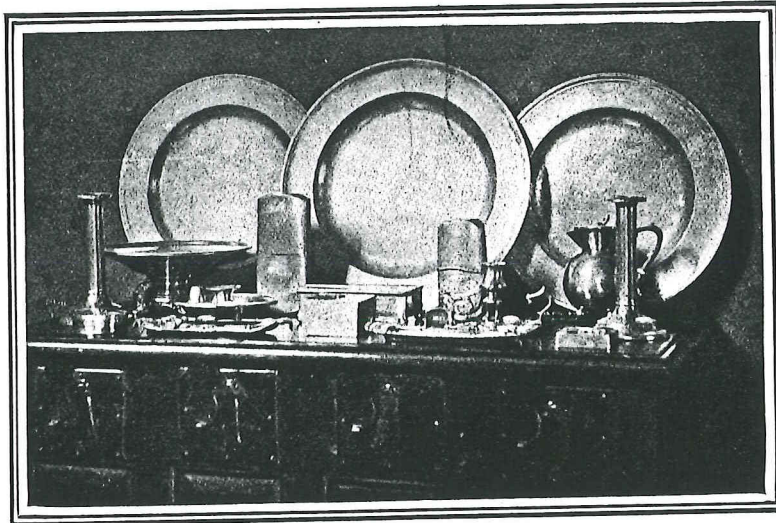
My Collection of Old Pewter: By C. Rowed.

THERE is an old axiom that a man is no good unless he has a hobby, but some of my friends say that I have been no use since I took up the collection of old pewter. Be this as it may I have no intention of giving up the hobby. Many may wonder what induced a busy man to go to the trouble of getting together a collection like that shown in the photographs. It all arose through my rummaging in a broker's, while waiting for a friend who was looking for old books, and finding a mug dirty and black with neglect but inscribed "70th Regiment." My curiosity was aroused, and I became the owner. On submitting this to a tinsmith it was pronounced to be old pewter, and from the time it was polished, about three years ago, I have been on the look-out for more.

My experience was that the collectors of old pewter belonged to that class with whom money is little object, and that what they mainly strived to obtain were very old, unique pieces, Communion vessels and historical specimens, quite out of the reach of an ordinary householder. This I recognised when visiting the exhibition of old pewter at Clifford's Inn Hall recently. It must be patent to any reader that if those were the only articles of interest that were worth securing for exhibition purposes then the rest of the old stuff occasionally turning up might as well go to the melting pot for solder, the fate of so many tons in years gone by, and even now men in ignorance of the antique value of old pewter are daily melting specimens which would be fit to decorate many a shelf. I have given my attention exclusively to British pewter; the old associations appeal to my imagination, and I am not drawn to the foreign.

Turning to the photographs it is apparent there are many duplicates, but I must explain that when decorating pairs are often desirable, while many of the mugs which look very similar if examined would reveal a variety of old makers' names, marks, excise stamps, or inscriptions. The three lipped mugs in my possession all bear aged inscriptions such as "Hope, Islington"; "The Feathers, Chiswick"; "Baptist Head, High Holborn." One tankard I specially prize has written on the front, "D. Saul, Shipwrights' Arms, Limehouse Hole," with the toper's initial,

One tankard bears evidence that there was once a Post Office Hotel, Church Street, Soho, but the oldest inhabitant in Soho could give a Fleet Street friend no date for it. Some imposing Scots tappit hens I have bear on the lids the initials of the initials of three generations of a fine family whose old greystone hall still stands in its lonely but grand surroundings on the Pentland Hills, of which I am constantly reminded by the kindness of a descendant, who has placed these treasures in my hands. Some of the old plates carry family crests on their rims, and as I have failed to trace any of the crests I look on them as relics of bygone days, and possibly they belonged to wealthy families who have gone under. To describe the pieces, however, is not my intention. The photographs are reproduced on this page in order to give an idea of the effect a large collection of pewter has in the home. Room will not permit me to increase the number of exhibits in my own home to more than, say, 400 pieces, but I shall as opportunity occurs improve the specimens and dispose of the discarded ones.

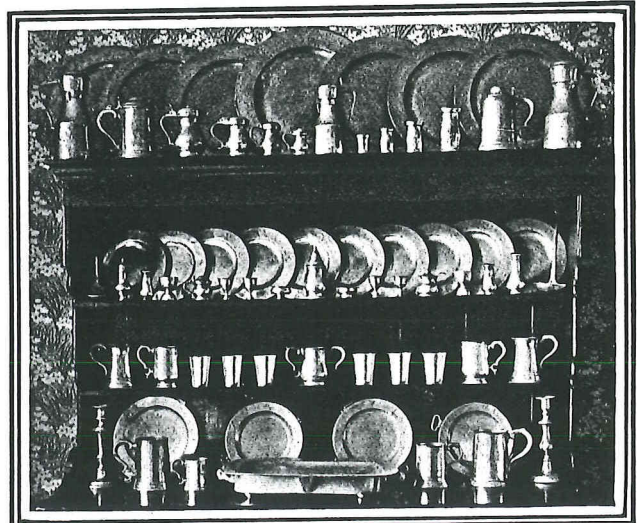
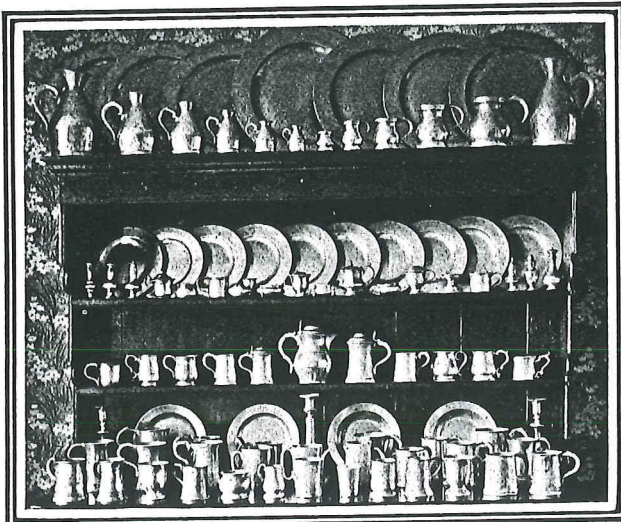


SOME OF THE EXAMPLES FIRST COLLECTED

"K," and the number of his peg, "55," on the bottom. This was given by a publican to a soldier when leaving home, and there is no doubt he brought it back to England after going through the Indian Mutiny. Surprise has often been expressed as to where all this pewter has been found, and when I say that the four mugs I have just mentioned were bought in Widnes, Dublin, Matlock, and St. Helens respectively, that I have a porringer from Jersey, an egg cup from St. Bees lighthouse, and whisky stoups from Dundee, it will be readily believed that it has been drawn from all parts of the British Isles.

Old furniture is specially adapted as a surround for old pewter, and to that end I purchased an early seventeenth-century elm dresser and a Welsh oak dresser of a little later period.

As to the ages of the pewter the plates are by makers who mostly lived in the eighteenth century, but one was in the seventeenth. The earliest tankard is about 1710, while it will be seen that some of the exhibits go no further back than the middle of the nineteenth century. Still, their appearance is interesting as thereby the evolution in style and workmanship can be traced.



SOME FINE EXAMPLES OF OLD PEWTER COLLECTED BY MR. C. ROWED