6807

6807

HUGH WALLIS

Artist
and
Art Metal Worker

Margaret Thompson

Hugh Wallis
(1871 - 1943)

Artist and Art Metal Worker

Margaret Thompson

Bushey Museum and Art Gallery

...

Hugh Wallis

Home Arts and Industries Association) was one of the ways in which craftsmen and women got to know each other's work, and became familiar with current trends and developments. It is perhaps unsurprising then to find similarities in the work of different craftsmen. A typical edge design which Hugh Wallis often used on plates, dishes and other pieces of simple design, consisting of a series of diagonal lines and dots or chevrons and dots, can also be found on some of the work of the Keswick School. It is almost certain that this was a design created by Hugh Wallis.
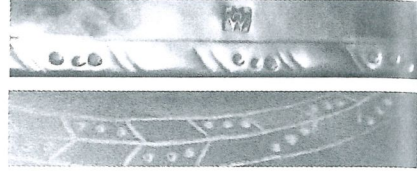
Oxidised copper with pewter decoration

The technique of combining oxidised copper with pewter decoration was almost certainly developed by Hugh Wallis. There seem to have been no examples of this kind of metalwork before his time, though his son Brian continued to make similar pieces when he was running the business on his own. After Hugh Wallis's death examples appeared showing a marked resemblance to this style of metalwork. They were produced by Harold Holmes, a former apprentice of Hugh Wallis, who used a touch with his own name. He died in the 1970s.
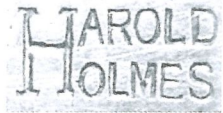
The touchmark of Harold Holmes.
(Reproduced courtesy of Oldcopper Website)

There are other, later examples of oxidised copper with pewter decoration, bearing the marks PG or VH.

These were made by Paul Gilling, a friend of Brian Wallis. The two had met in the 1970s through a shared interest in art metalwork and from Brian, Paul Gilling learnt the technique of producing oxidised copper with pewter decoration. After Brian Wallis was no longer able to work, Paul Gilling, with Brian's full approval, began making and selling this type of metalware under his own name. For about two years, from 1976 to 1978, he used the touchmark bearing his initials. As the business expanded he changed the mark to that of VH (Victoria House) which he continued to use until about 1990 (Brian Wallis died in 1981), after which he stopped making larger items of metalware, and developed a range of smaller pieces using a completely different and original technique.
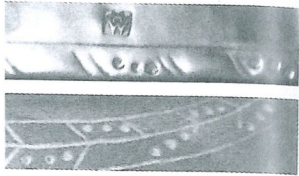
of the ways in which
rk, and became familiar
unsurprising then to find
pical edge design which

pewter decoration was
seem to have been no
, though his son Brian
ing the business on his
ared
ork.
mer
own
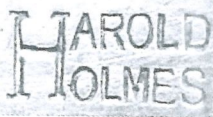
HAROLD
HOLMES

mark of Harold Holmes.
ed courtesy of Oldcopper Website)

vith pewter decoration,

Vallis. The two had met
k and from Brian, Paul
d copper with pewter
vork, Paul Gilling, with
pe of metalware under
o 1978, he used the
nded he changed the
ued to use until about
ed making larger items
es using a completely
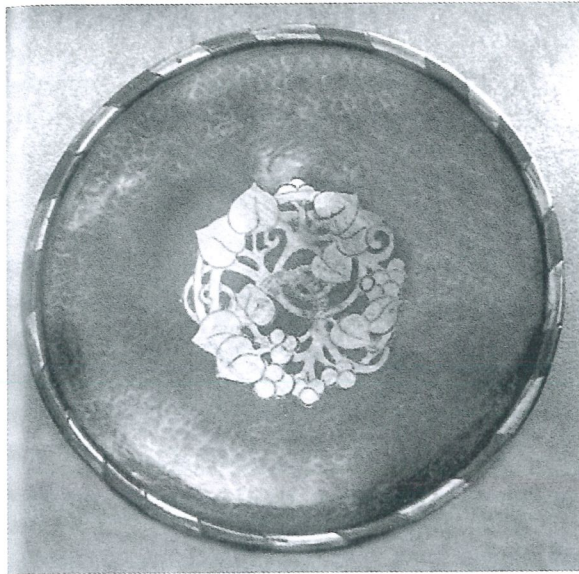
Oxidised copper bowl with
pewter decoration.
(The author's collection)

In his descriptions of this type of metalware Hugh Wallis usually spelt 'oxidised' as 'oxydised'. This is an alternative though archaic form, which is also to be found in the relevant literature of his time. The term oxidised itself is technically incorrect in this context. Also referred to as 'bronzing', it applies to the various methods by which copper can be darkened to give it a bronze-like appearance. This effect can be achieved either by the application of bronzing powder which is mixed to a paste, or by immersion in one of several chemical solutions, the latter method being the one used by Hugh Wallis.

Bowls and trays are among the most representative examples of his work in this genre. A brief description of how a bowl was made will perhaps best illustrate the processes involved.

The first stage, after having cut out the copper disc, was to soften it by annealing whilst beating it into the required shape in a wooden forming block. If the rim of the bowl was to have a banded pewter decoration as in the above photograph, the edge was then rolled and wired on a hand-operated jennying machine. After this the copper was cleaned by dipping it in an acid bath. Hugh Wallis used soft copper (1mm gauge) and the metal hammer with which he worked would have been fairly flat - a planishing or blocking hammer - and would not be used for any other purpose, as any blemish on the hammer face would be transferred to the copper.

1 Gilding Metal
sticks
ishes

l Silver decoration on
ge cups

ndlesticks

xes
morative plaques,
s, tablets
tion plaques and shields
namel

h Pewter decoration
bells

h Brass and Silver
e cups

uit
rious
cks
es
andle brackets
ses
s

holders
r bowls, with or
pierced grille,
and wrought or cast
ith oak handle

Trays
Vases
Wall vases
Weather vanes

Copper and Brass
Christening fonts
Trays

Copper with Pewter decoration
Bowls, various
Bracket bells
Candlesticks
Firescreens
Hearth stands
Jars
Masonic tablets
Trays
Vases

Copper and Silveroid (Silvoid)
Candlesticks
Crosses

Copper and Stainless Steel (Staybrite)
Bowls

Gilding Metal
Baby's first shoes
(reproduction of)
Trays

Gilding Metal and Brass
Candlesticks
Fruit dishes

Oxidised Copper
Ash trays
Ash trays with champagne cork
Book ends

Bowls, various
Cake dishes
Coal scuttles
Electric reading lamps
Font ewers
Grave vases
Memorial tablets
Mirrors
Plant pot holders
Trays
Vases

Oxidised Copper and Brass
Bells
Boxes with lids
Clocks

Oxidised Copper with Pewter decoration
Ash trays
Biscuit barrels/boxes
Bowls, various
Cigarette boxes
Electric reading lamps
Electric reading lamps with
cigarette cupboard in base
Fruit bowls
Jugs
Letter racks
Plant pot holders
Plaques
Plates
Table bells
Tea caddies
Tobacco boxes/jars
Trays
Vases

Oxidised Copper and Stainless Steel
Mirrors

Pewter
  Alms dishes
  Altar ornaments - candlesticks,
    crosses, vases
  Altar sets
  Bowls, various
  Candlesticks
  Ink stands
  Jewel cases
  Pen trays
  Plates
  Tankards
  Tea caddies
  Tea sets
  Vases

Pewter decoration on:
  Bronze - see Bronze with Pewter
    decoration
  Copper - see Copper with
    Pewter decoration
  Oxidised Copper - see Oxidised
    Copper wih Pewter decoration

Silver
  Bowls
  Caskets with lids
  Challenge/presentation cups,
    some with enamel
  Challenge/presentation bowls
  Hot water jugs, some with
    walnut handle
  Jewellery (chains and pendants)
  Serviette rings
  Spoons
  Tea sets
  Trays

Silver and Brass decoration on Bronze
  Challenge cups

Silver with wood
  Photograph frames in ebonised

wood with silver hinges and
mountings

Silveroid
  Crosses

Silveroid and Copper
  Candlesticks
  Crosses

Stainless Steel (Staybrite)
  Ash trays
  Book ends
  Bowls
  Candlesticks
  Fire tongs
  Fruit dishes
  Log boxes
  Mirrors
  Posy bowls
  Trays
  Vases
  Wall vases

Stainless Steel and Copper
  Bowls

Stainless Steel and Oxidised Copper
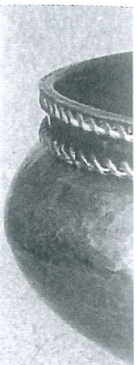 Mirrors

Stainless Steel and Wrought Iron
  Firescreens

Wrought Iron
  Candlesticks
  Fire tongs
  Toasting forks

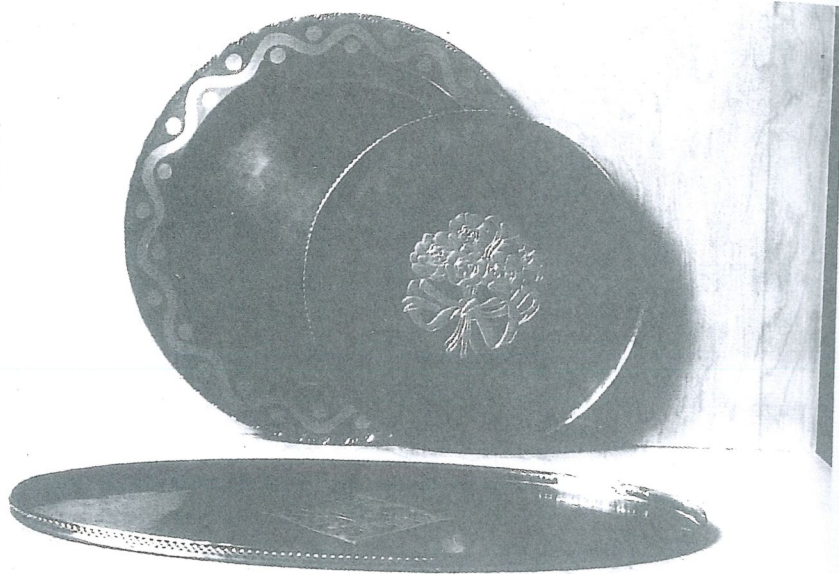**Wrought Iron and Stainless Steel**
  Firescreens

Above: "Copper Bowl with double twisted wires and Staybrite Steel band round top. Mounted on half-ball feet. About 8" diam: - 35/-"

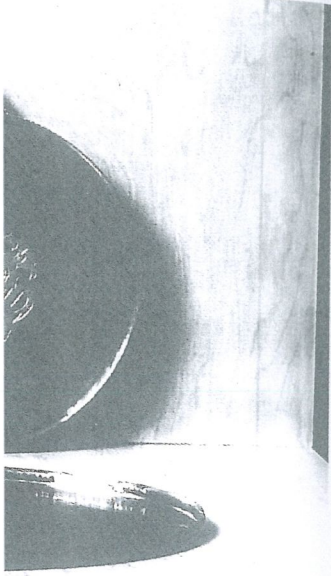*Left: "Electric Reading Lamp in oxidised Copper decorated with Pewter. Cigarette cupboard in base."*

Oxidised Copper Tray with wide
Pewter border :- 11" diam ... 25/-

  ditto   with fine twisted wire
Edge and pewter a. t. :- 25/-
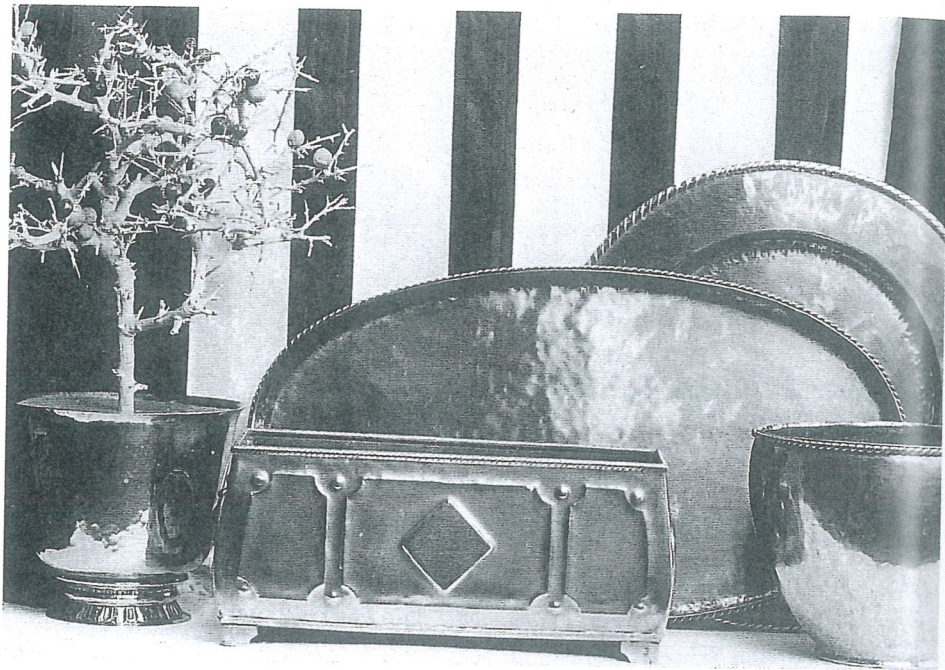
  ditto   — Oval 15"x 7½ - 25/-

Hugh Wallis

Left:
Font Ewer in Brass or
Copper.

Below:
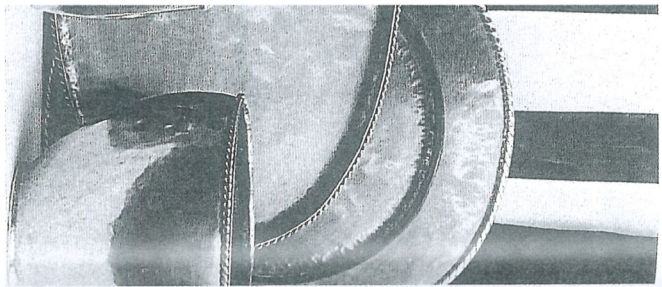Tea Set available in Silver
or Pewter.

61

Huyb Wallis   72 The Downs Altrincham

Trays, and Plant Pot Holders in hand
beaten Brass.

Designed as simply as possible in the best
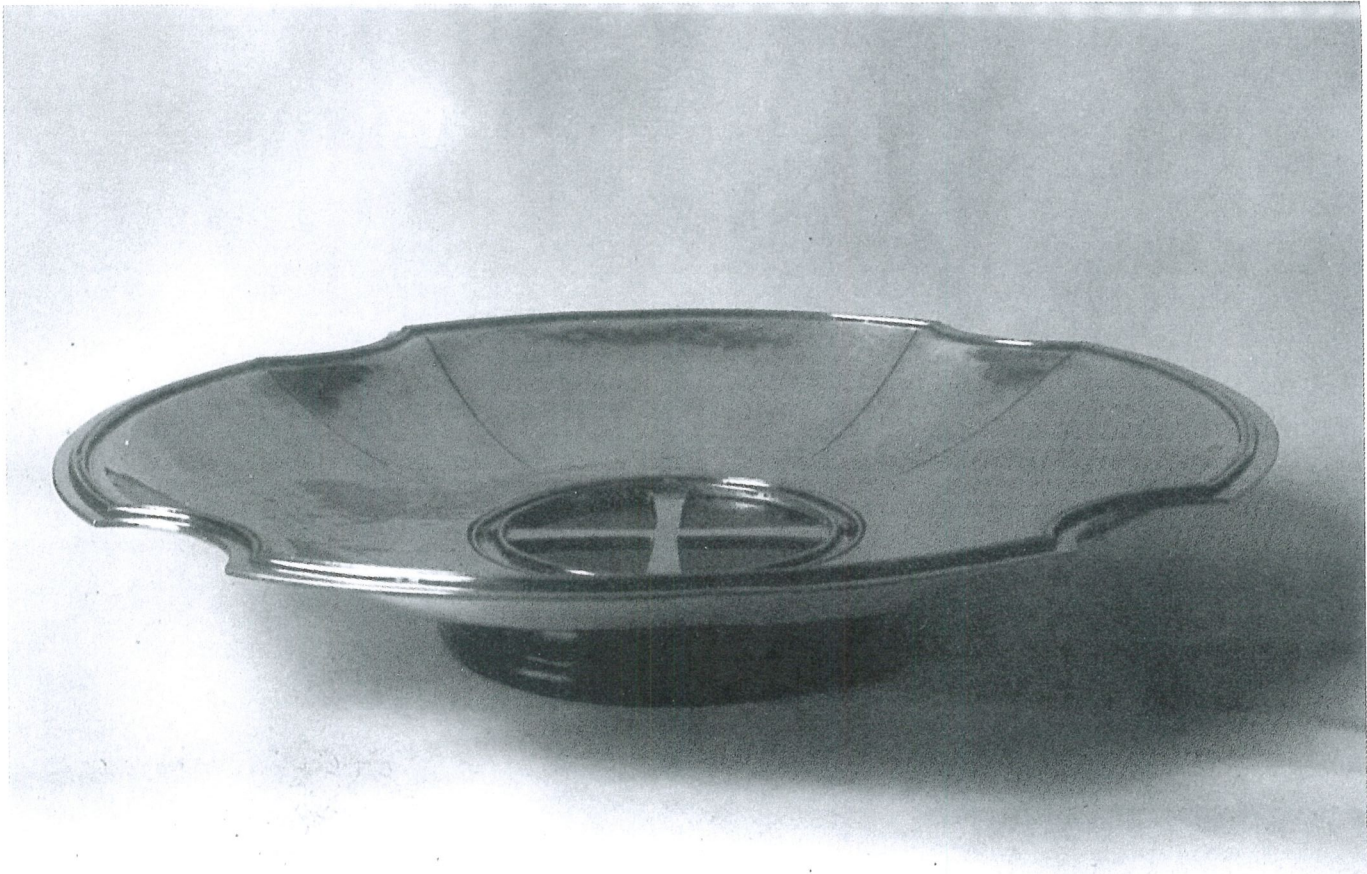form for the job for which they are intended.

The rectangular plant holder takes 3 four inch
pots in a row.

"*Pewter Alms Dish with pierced base showing Ebony Stand.*"

"Pewter Tankards from 17/6 - 25/-"

"Weather Vane, about