
*Presentation to meeting of the Australian Pewter Collectors in 1987 (?)
see attached Newsletter March 1988*

COLLECTING BRITISH PEWTER TAVERNWARE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Geoff Lock

These notes are written as a general guide to what one may find in searching for old pewter tavernware. For nearly 20 years, I have been collecting British pewter, mainly what is commonly known as tavern or pub ware and the content of the following notes are a reflection of information gathered during that time.

- To begin with ... There are few avid pewter collectors in South Australia.
- ... South Australia was settled at a time when pewter was going out of fashion domestically.
 - ... No known pewterers practiced their trade in Australia.
 - ... Unlike stamps, guns, china, silver, etc., collecting pewter has neither been fashionable nor encouraged.

For the general purposes of this discussion, pewter is defined as an alloy of tin and lead and sometimes antimony, as separate from Britannia Metal which is an alloy of tin, antimony and copper 92:6:2. Pewter has always cast in moulds and soldered together whereas Britannia Metal was often stamped from sheet metal.

The settlement pattern of South Australia largely determines the probability of locating old pewter in this State. Many country towns in this State trace their establishment to the wheat boom period of the 1870's, particularly in the mid North, Yorke Peninsula and far North, by which time pewter ware had been relegated to tavern use. Families emigrating to South Australia prior to the 1870's may have brought pewter tableware from home but by and large this would have been obsolete and old fashioned in the U.K. by 1840's. Further research in this area is necessary to determine exactly what domestic ware did come to South Australia in the early years.

It is, however, well documented that Australia provided a ready market for pub ware pewter during the latter part of the nineteenth century and that ships cargoes bound for Australia included unspecified tin ware. Trade catalogues from the period 1860 - 1900 include pewter ware for sale, sometimes listed under 'White Goods' and at other times under drinking tankards. As yet, I have not located a newspaper item advertising pewter ware although shopkeepers must have had it available as it was in use in Port Adelaide hotes from earliest settlement times. Evidence to support this can be drawn from relics from shipwrecks, shipping lists, pieces in museums and in private collections.

Pewter may have also been in use in church services as examples of collection places, communion cups and flagons used in U.K. from c1800 - 1840 indicate that pewter ware might have seen use in Anglican churches in this State in its infancy.

And so to tavern ware pewter. The most commonly found pieces fall into two categories:

- Δ Ale pots
- Δ Wine measures

Ale Pots or Tankards ... Body shapes and handles

These have various shapes and sizes as I will describe. The capacity of all pieces I have seen in South Australia has been Imperial standard viz. $\frac{1}{2}$ pint (10fl.oz.); 1 pint (20fl.oz.); 1 quart (40fl.oz.). Styles or shapes include truncated cone, U, tulip, concave and glass bottomed. A variety of handle styles is also evident, including standard, broken, tubular and rectangular. Most often, truncated cone pots with standard handles are commonly found for sale with tulip and U shape pieces with "broken" handle being quite scarce. The attractive 'broken' style handle is found on most glass-bottomed pieces.

Wine Measures

The bulbous or pot-belly wine measure is relatively common and ranges in size from quart to $\frac{1}{4}$ gill, viz., quart, pint, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint, gill, $\frac{1}{2}$ gill, and $\frac{1}{4}$ gill. Odd sizes such as $\frac{1}{20}$ pint and $\frac{1}{25}$ pint are sometimes found. This style of measure was used from c1840 onwards throughout Australia. Earlier examples have a ball finial on the handle. The most often found pieces are the $\frac{1}{4}$ gill and gill, perhaps because of their use as spirits measures. These pieces are sometimes marked Quartern, $\frac{1}{2}$ quartern and $\frac{1}{16}$ pint.

MARKS

Pieces from the period under discussion (c1830 - 1900) usually have a variety of marks. These include makers marks, inspection marks and capacity marks.

Makers Marks

Most common makers on pieces I have found include James Yates, Yates and Birch, Gaskell, Gaskell and Chambers, Morgan and Gaskell and Townsend and Compton. All of these companies produced pewter ware in the nineteenth century - Yales & Birch, Yates & Gaskill & Chambers, in fact are the one company, one succeeding the other. The James Yates and later Gaskell & Chambers company exported a large amount of tavern ware to Australia, particularly after the growth in population in Australia due to the gold rushes. Tavern pots generally have the makers mark stamped on the top of the body, close to the upper handle join. Early examples have makers marks stamped inside the body in the centre of the base. With the bulbous wine measures, however, the makers mark, if any, is usually stamped in the base.

Verification & Inspection Marks

Some pieces may have marks such as:

GIV ⊕			IMPERIAL	VR	ER	GR	etc.
				128	128	128	

These indicate that the piece was inspected for its capacity during the reign of the monarch shown, viz., George IV, Victoria, Edward VII, George V. Pieces

stamped IMPERIAL tend to be made c1825 - 1840, as IMPERIAL was stamped on pieces during this time due to the change in capacity size from Old English Wine Standard (O.E.W.S.) to Imperial. Pieces with marks such as:

VR or ER
128 128

indicate they were inspected after 1878 in the U.K., the 128 being a particular location. It isn't uncommon for a piece to have several inspection marks. Australian verification marks are scarce and at present little is known about them. Those found so far include E 8 and several N.S.W. marks.

VIC

I have only seen Australian verification marks on pieces made by James Yates and Gaskell & Chambers, usually on bulbous wine measures.

(VR) (SM) is often found on tavern pots, indicating Standard Measure, Victoria Regina and was probably used c1840 - 1875, perhaps even later.

Capacity Marks

Most pieces I have encountered have their capacity, or fluid quantity, clearly stamped on the body, sometimes close to the handle, others in the centre of the body. Pieces with no capacity mark may well be from an earlier period.

Other Marks

Besides the above, pieces may bear owners marks, in the form of initials or name, e.g.

WLD; J Marsden,

or hotel, such as J.M. FORDE, TOWER HOTEL.

The style of engraving can help to date such pieces. Pieces may also have makers "hall marks" which were used by some makers up to the early years of the nineteenth century.

e.g. Townsend & Compton -  being lion, rampant,
dagger and T & C for maker.

"Hall-marked" pieces are very scarce, generally made before 1830.

REFERENCES

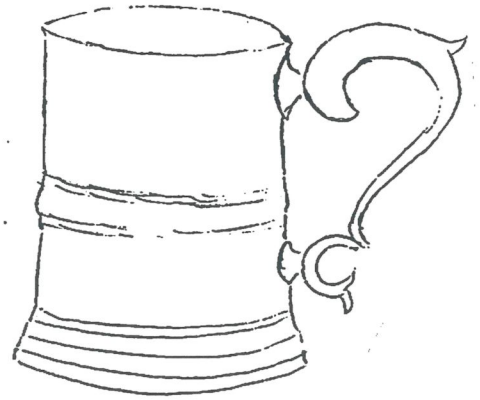
These notes have been written to provide only a general guide to identifying pieces of tavern ware that may be held in museum collections of the National Trust. I have not included notes on pewter ware such as ale jugs, flat ware, candle sticks, spoons, beakers, etc., nor have I attempted to discuss Britannia metal items such as tea and coffee pots, milk jugs, sugar bowls, ewers, etc. Information on these materials can be obtained from several reference books, particularly,

Pewter of Great Britain, Christopher Peal, Pub. J Gifford, London 1983

Old Pewter, It's Makers & Marks, H H Cotterell, Tuttle 1963

GLASS BOTTOM ... c1820 - 1880

This type of tavern pot is relatively common, usually in $\frac{1}{2}$ pint size with pints being scarce and quarts rarely found. Later examples have a plain body with either a tubular or rectangular handle. Quite often, the glass base is cracked or broken.



BULBOUS WINE MEASURE ... c1820 - 1900

This type of measure ranges in size from $\frac{1}{4}$ gill to quart, viz. $\frac{1}{4}$ gill, $\frac{1}{2}$ gill, gill, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint, pint and quart. Other sizes include $\frac{1}{20}$ pint, $\frac{1}{25}$ pint, as well as numerous others. Early examples have a ball finial to the handle. The smaller $\frac{1}{2}$ gill, $\frac{1}{2}$ gill, and gill tend to be most commonly found.



TULIP ... c 1800 - 1860

Usually has the 'broken' handle. Not commonly found. Sizes - $\frac{1}{2}$ pint, pint and quart. Body is usually plain. Flared base and squat body generally made before 1830.

Earlier examples (prior to 1800) may have plain handle with ball finial and also a fillet in middle of body.



CONCAVE ... c1830 - 1880

These tavern pots are relatively common, usually in $\frac{1}{2}$ pint and pint size; quarts are scarce. A large number of this style have been salvaged from the Loch Ard wreck, sunk in 1878.

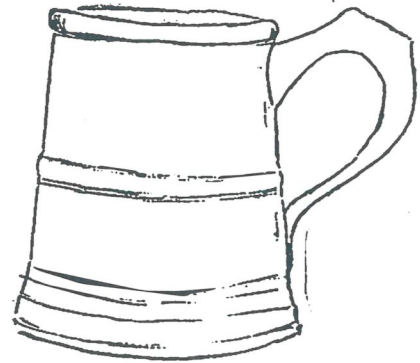
Scottish examples have a more flared base.



TRUNCATED CONE ... C1800 - 1900

Example shows standard handle with fillet rings in middle of body and incised rings at base. Usually found in $\frac{1}{2}$ pint, pint and quart size.

Sometimes has plain body with "broken" handle.



U - SHAPE ... c1820 - 1880

A most attractive style showing "broken" handle and two sets of closely incised rings usually near handly-body join. Sometimes found with single fillet in middle of body, or plain body. Handle normally "broken" but standard examples are scarce. Flared based usually indicates made prior to 1830. Sizes usually $\frac{1}{2}$ pint, pint and quart.



The Carvick-Webster collection, the best public collection in Australia, is illustrated and described by J H MYRTLE in Vol.7, No.4, 1966 edition, of the Art Gallery of New South Wales Quarterly.

Illustrations in this article have been copied from the trade catalogue of James Yates 1872, and the descriptions drawn from pieces either in my own collection or from observations made during my collecting years.

Groff Lock

AUSTRALIAN PEWTER COLLECTORS'

NEWSLETTER MARCH, 1988

Welcome to 1988, if what belatedly! It has been some months since I last wrote to you all and hopefully the points of interest/concern in these notes will stimulate others in Australia to contribute snippets to share.

o Shipwreck Display

Currently in Adelaide as part of its Australian tour and contains numerous relics pertinent to Australia's maritime history. Of particular interest is the Dirk Hartog plate on loan from Holland. This pewter plate inscribed by Hartog was nailed to a post on shore in W.A. in 1616 where it remained until 1697 when it was recovered by Willem De Vlaming and has remained in Dutch hands ever since. This plate is probably the most important piece of pewter in Australia's history and all collectors are urged to view it. Adelaide Group will report on it next issue.

o National Trust Check List

At the request of the local branch of the National Trust, I drew up an elementary check list for branches that might have examples of common tavern ware. Your comments and observations on pieces in collections would be of help in constructing a museum register. Copies of the talk I gave are being distributed to all branches of National Trust in S.A. or can be available interstate by contacting me.

o What's in Museums?

Following from above, I'm sure we all would be glad to know of interesting pieces in museums throughout Australia. This is really putting the ball in your court so to speak. I suggest a Bi-Centenary project from us regarding pewter in public collections would be of great value. Much of South Australia has been covered but little is known about the rest of this place except for the Carrick Webster collection. Your contributions are welcomed.

o Malcolm Blaikie visit to U.K.

By now Malcolm and Lynette Blaikie would be well on their overseas travels and as they anticipate spending some time in Britain, I'm sure they will be attending a Pewter Society meeting. I know they carry our groups good wishes. I'm only sorry they can't carry large suitcases to bring back pieces from the U.K. for us here. To those in U.K. who read this, there is a ready market for pieces at reasonable prices - I'd be glad to forward a 'wants list' for any Australian collectors to prospective U.K. sources.

S.A. Scene

o Adelaide Club Visit

In August, Andrew Murray and I visited the Adelaide Club, admitted through the tradesmen's entrance!! and examined their collection of pewter ware. This comprised a large amount of common pub ware, much of which was in poor condition. However, a couple of nice examples of truncated cone pots with 6133a mark in base as well as a fine quart by Moyse and a flared based concave Scottish quart made up the better pieces of otherwise a dull collection. The majority of the pieces bear the Adelaide Clubs Insignia and various owners names and show signs of neglect and disuse. It is quite possible that similar institutions in other states may hold collections that warrant investigation - again over to you!

o Auction Watch

Bleak overall except for a few bulbous measures and the odd battered 1/2 pint. Remarkably, in July '87 a triple reed 9" plate by Taylor c1700 was sold for \$110 at Megaw & Hoggs to a private collector unknown to auctioneers. I left \$100 on it so someone else is out there - come in spinner!

o N.S.W. Convicts Lists

At the risk of incurring the displeasure of the Worshipped Company of Pewterers, I suggest that the convict lists should be researched for occupations related to pewter. Heresy, stone him, make him drink warm beer you say, but unless pewterers as a group were the most sanctimonious people on earth, it is quite possible that in our distant past, an errant pewtersmith or apprentice found his way to Australia. Maybe Yates had relatives here to set up an importing business (no disrespect mind James). Yet another monumental task ahead to solve this riddle!!

What can we do to make this more interesting?

Whilst I enjoy writing these irregular notes to you all, I really would appreciate some input from yourselves so that these newsletters can become more interesting. You can assist by writing about some of the following:

- o Local museums
- o Favourite pieces
- o Auction watches and Antique dealers' prices
- o Problems
- o Pieces for sale/required
- o Contact with other members.

I am looking forward to your contributions to continuing this newsletter.

Cheers,



Geoff Lock