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# An Old English Provincial Trade Guild

By HOWARD HERSCHEL COTTERELL AND WALTER GRAHAM CHURCHER

IN the January, 1926, number,\* the Editor, in his *Casual Notes on American Pewter*, gave to us a thrill of the first magnitude in his reproduction of the old

almost encouraged to hope that something analagous to these regulations may be discovered as governing the operations of American pewterers.

painted silken banner of the New York Society of Pewterers, for which, very wisely, he claims no more than that it gives evidence of the existence of such a body, though there is at present no means of knowing whether or not it was of a permanent nature or created for a special purpose — to wit, the great Federal parade of July 23, 1788.

Well, one prefers to be with him on the safe side rather than to allow one's self to be led off into all manner of wildcat conjectures and speculations. But, surely, among our American cousins there is someone who will be willing to seize the baton from the Editor and to do another lap or two in the race for further knowledge; for it is surely to be found, if the search be made in the right channels and with real keenness.

At the time when the January number came to hand, we had but recently completed some notes bearing on two English painted banners, pennants, or streamers, also of silk, with fringed edges, and having reference — *inter alia* — to the pewterers, and displaying the pewterers' arms.

These notes furnish a good example of the regulations which governed, and the bounds which limited the work and the actions of the early pewterer, and open up ground which has hitherto not been cultivated. They cannot be without interest at the present juncture, and one is now

\*See ANTIQUES, Vol. IX, p. 19.

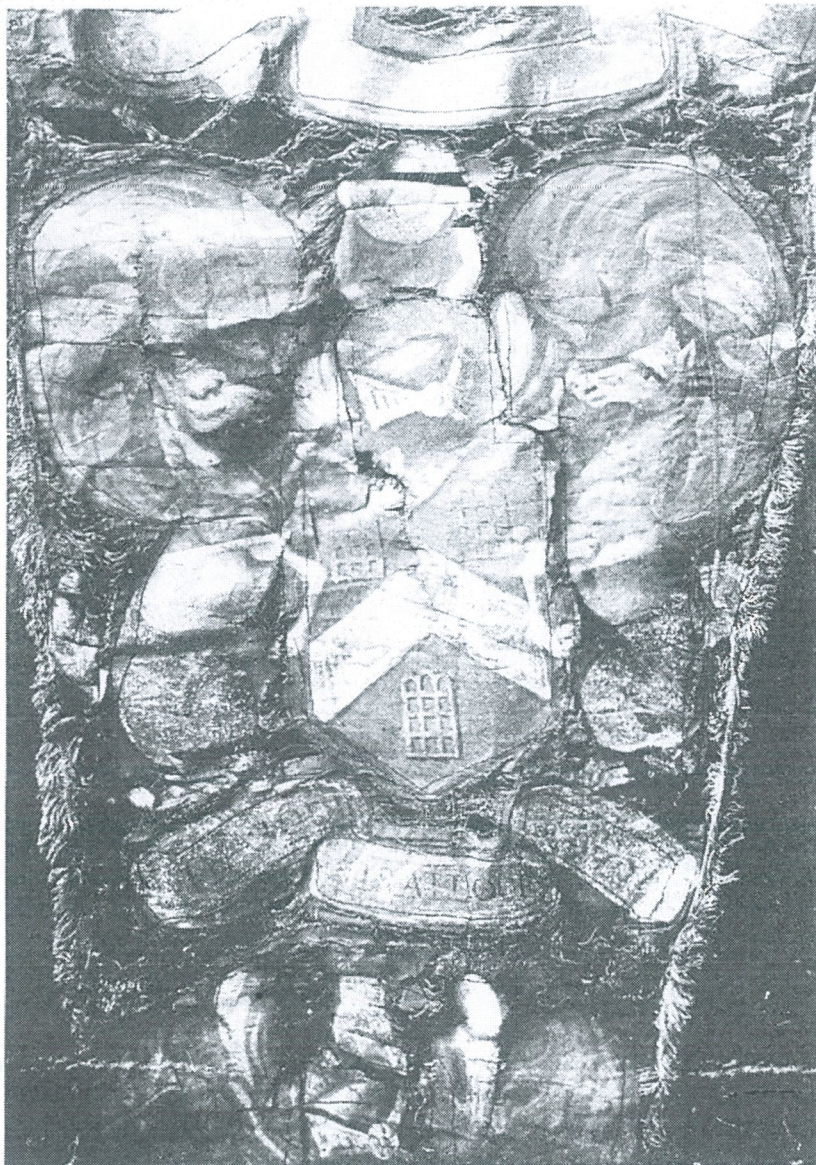


Fig. 1 — THE PEWTERERS' ARMS  
Enlarged from a part of the banner shown in Figure 2

That a more ready comparison may be made with the arms on the American banner, an enlarged illustration is given in Figure 1 of that part of our banners which contains the arms of the London pewterers, though the banners we write about were not of London but of the Hammermen's Guild of Ludlow in the county of Shropshire, England; and the use of the London pewterers' arms by provincial guilds would seem to have been either permitted or winked at.

Ludlow is one of the oldest and most interesting towns in England, with its old and fine feudal castle and wonderful half-timbered houses, and is well worthy a visit by Americans when in the Old Country.

From the most cursory glance, it will at once be seen that the American shield bears but one point of resemblance to that on our banner — the chevron bearing the three slipped roses. In the English example

this chevron appears between three "strakes of tin", or ingots, somewhat in the form of a porcellis; whereas the American version appears over the spiral "worm" of a still. Again, the New York crest is a *teapot* in place of our *pewter dish supported by two arms embowed* which rise from a horse resting upon a helmet, which latter feature is absent in the New York banner; and, in place of the sea horses for supporters, that banner has what are described by Sarah H. J. Simpson as "two miners holding burning lamps" (tin

miners presumably?). We cannot, at this distance, either prove or disprove this suggestion, since the banner is not before us for examination, but may we put forward as an alternative that these individuals may be pewterers with melting pots full of molten metal?

The only remaining point for comparison is the mottoes: that of New York being *Solid and Pure*, against our *In God is all Our Trust*.

From the above there would seem, at first sight, not much where-<sup>d</sup> upon to base a connection, but that chevron with its three slipped roses is sufficient, for it shows that whoever was responsible for the American conception was not without knowl-<sup>b</sup> edge of, and, who shall say, affection for the old tradition. This is well; it proves that the American interpretation is not chimerical, but that it stands upon a foundation of granite — a conclusion which gives greater force to the hope that some-<sup>d</sup> thing more than an in-stitution for the temporary participation in the Federal Parade was in the mind of the American designer; the hope that, even yet, it may be discovered that the pewterers of the New World were organ-<sup>d</sup> ized and had their ordi-nances formed on lines similar to those obtain-<sup>d</sup> ing in the Old Country.

Turning now to the story we have to tell: The Archives of the Ludlow Hammermen's Guild are deposited in the town museum at Ludlow, and it is to the courtesy of John Palmer, one of the joint curators of that institution, that we are indebted for much of the information here given.

Two interesting mementoes of the Guild have found a safe resting place in the museum, in the form of two much frayed silken streamers, or pennants, with fringed edges, each about fifteen feet long, upon one of which appears the date 1734. Each side of these streamers is painted with the arms, helm, crest, supporters, and motto of the various trades constituting the Guild. Illustrations of these are given here from photographs taken by W. E. Harper of Ludlow. These trades and mottoes are as follows, reading from top to bottom in each case:

Figure 2	a. Ironmongers	Motto — <i>In God is all our Strength</i>
	b. Goldsmiths	" — <i>In God alone be all Glory</i>
	c. Pewterers	" — <i>In God is all our Trust</i>
	d. Masons	" — <i>In God is all our Trust</i>
	e. Blacksmiths	" — <i>By Hammer and Hand all Arts do Stand</i>
	f. Saddlers	" — <i>Our Trust is in God</i>
	g. Coopers	" — <i>Love as Brethern</i>
	h. Bricklayers	" — <i>In God is all our Trust</i>

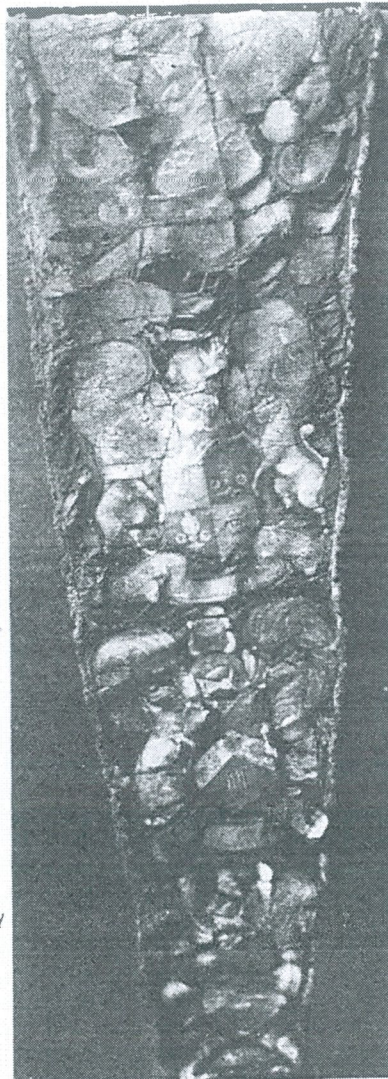


Fig. 2 — STREAMER OF THE LUDLOW GUILD OF HAMMERMEN  
Obverse and reverse. For a full description of this streamer see accompanying text.



Figure 3	a. Plumbers,	Motto — <i>In God is all our Hope</i>
	b. Glaziers,	" — <i>Non sine Lumine</i>
	c. Tinplate workers	" — <i>Unite in Love</i>
	d. Carpenters,	" — <i>Honour God</i>
	e. Joiners,	" — (None)
	f. Cutlers,	" — <i>Pour parvenir au Bon</i>
	g. Plasterers,	" — <i>Let Brotherly Love Continue</i>
	h. Farriers,	" — <i>Honour God</i>

Figure 1 gives an enlarged view of the pewterers' arms — which are, in every detail, the same as those of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of London — as well as a better idea of the present frail condition of these banners.

The use of these arms by local guilds would seem to suggest some affiliation with or license granted by the parent companies of London.

The streamers were carried by the youngest freemen on all state occasions, at the head of the fraternity when it marched in procession. They were also paraded at the pleasure fair held annually on the first of May.

Figure 4 shows the old membership badge of the Guild, recently acquired by Thomas Warburton of Manchester, by whose courtesy it is here reproduced. This badge is of copper, one and one-half inches in diameter. The reverse side is left blank to receive the name or number of the member; the edge is milled diagonally.

Prior to the reign of Richard I, the smiths, with some sixteen other allied trades, formed themselves into a trading fraternity under the name of *Smiths and Others* for mutual protection, benefit, and support,

and, in course of time, became a prescriptive corporation.

It is laid down in an ordinance made by Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward IV, whilst Lord of the Castle of Ludlow, and confirmed by the "twelve and twenty-five", the then governing body of the town, that:

No manner craft make no foreign Brother but it be a man of this same town, dwelling and occupye the same craft that he is made brother of, under payne of XLII, so as it playnly apperth under the said Duke's seale and the Comon Seale of the town, to be forfeit as ought times as it may be proved.

King Edward IV, by his Charter dated December 7, 1461, granted to the Burgesses of Ludlow, their heirs and successors forever:

That they have in their Town or Borough aforesaid, the Merchants Guild with a Company and all other customs and liberties to the Guild aforesaid appertaining, and that no one who is not of that Guild shall use any Merchandise in the aforesaid town or suburbs of the same unless by the license and leave of the same Burgesses their heirs and successors.

The Guild or Company, of Smiths, met in the south aisle of the parish church for the transaction of their business, held pews there, and contributed towards the maintenance of the church.

In the year 1511 a charter was granted to the Guild, wherein the following trades would appear to be members: smiths, ironmongers, saddlers, braziers, pewterers, spurriers, bucklemakers, brygand ironsmakers [*sic*], armorers, masons, cardmakers and coopers. Under its Charter, the Guild was ordered to choose from among themselves six of the "most honest and saddest men", to be called by the name of "the six men"; and two stewards, to be called by the name of "stewards"; and the same six men and two stewards to continue in office for two years from the date of their election; and the two stewards yearly to make a true account of all such goods and monies as shall come to their hands, before the said six men.

In the Charter it was provided that any master summoned, and not appearing upon his summons, was to be fined by the stewards in half a pound of wax; and every

master who was apprenticed, in the town of Ludlow, to any of the occupations "shall have his Freedom in the Guild on payment of 6s 8d and those not apprenticed there on payment of 13s 4d." Any journeyman of any of the said occupations rebuking any master was to forfeit half a pound of wax as often as he offended.

The first record of proceedings is in 1539, when certain alterations were made in the election of stewards and the fees payable by masters on their admission.

Under the new rules, the six men were to choose but one steward, and the body of the fellowship the other. The fees for admission differed according to the different trades — the list of which varied considerably from that of 1511 — and included sixteen trades instead of twelve, the pewterers paying 10s 6d for admission if apprenticed in the town, and 40s 8d if otherwise.

In 1573 a new composition was drawn up under the seal of the fraternity and that of the borough, and approved on the third of April 1576 by the law officers of the Crown at Bridgenorth. This composition is a long document, the chief items of which were much the same as those already in force.

The stewards were each required to give a bond with sureries for £40 on election.

Members were forbidden to bring action against fellow-members without the consent of the six men, under pain of forfeiting 3s 4d.

Apprentices could not be found for less than seven years — to end when they attained the age of twenty-four. The apprentice was to be made free of the occupation on payment of the customary fee.

A "foreigner", or one not apprenticed in the town, had to produce testimonials as to where and with whom he had served his apprenticeship and that he had been "of good name and fame" during that time. Should he fail to comply, and set up in business without being made free of the fraternity, he was fined 3s 4d for every day he so offended.

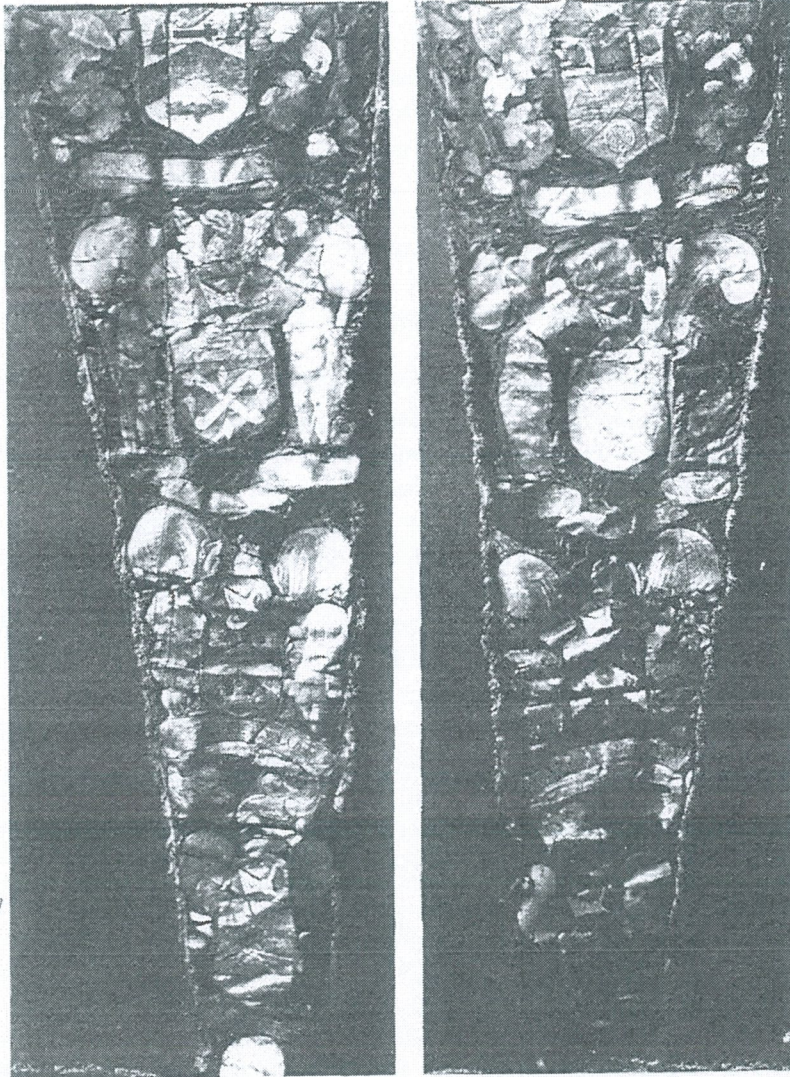


Fig. 3 — STREAMER OF THE LUDLOW GUILD OF HAMMERMEN  
Obverse and reverse. For a full description of this streamer see accompanying text.

The bailiffs and council of the town were given power to correct, reform, amend, or alter any ambiguity that might arise in any clause.

The charge to masters on their being made free provided for their attendance at meetings when summoned, under pain of a fine of 3s 4d; to pay Hall-money 1s 0d, yearly; and a fine of 3s 4d, for using "railing words", or commencing a suit against a brother member without leave, or procuring work out of another master's hands.

Finally:

No master of this Fellowship shall suffer his servant or prentyce to come to the occupacons supper, only suche as shall paye their IIIId upon payne of forfeiture of 3s 4d, and lastly, you nor your wief [sic] or other in your behalf shall not use to knele in the Occupacons pews before you have been Steward.

About the year 1580, there are in the minutes and stewards' accounts many instances of money being spent on the furnishings of soldiers, the stewards also having charge of the fraternity's small armory.

Like other similar fellowships, the Ludlow Guild seems to have had its annual feasts, and the stewards had an annual allowance of "a pottle of sack and a pottle of claret" for their stewards' suppers.

In the year 1600 the fraternity numbered about sixty-five free-masters. After the year 1694, the admission forms bear a one shilling Inland Revenue stamp.

Among the meetings of the fellowship were Election Day, Stewards' Hall, Quarterly Meetings (reduced to two in 1790), with special and private meetings. All these were held in the pews belonging to the fraternity, situate under the east window of the south aisle in the Parish Church, on

the spot formerly occupied by the Warwick Chapel, but "an adjournment was frequently made to an neighboring inn".

Members were summoned by notice and by the ringing of a bell. Election Day was formerly held on the Sunday, afterwards altered to the Saturday, after Holy Rood day, and finally to a Tuesday early in May. The fine for refusing to serve as steward, finally fixed at £5, had previously been 13s 4d, and 20s 0d. The six men were chosen, as a rule, from amongst the latest past stewards, the four key-keepers and box-keeper being chosen next.

Stewards' Hall was generally held on Whit Monday. In later years the audit was transferred from Election Day to this meeting.

Up to 1710 the clerk was chosen from among their own members, but in this year Richard Perks, town clerk of Ludlow, was appointed to the office, about which time also the silversmiths, clockmakers, cabinetmakers, and others were admitted to the fraternity.

In 1792 a motion was set on foot for getting rid of the six men on the ground that they should have no more power than other members, but this came to nothing. Trouble commenced as in other similar guilds early in the nineteenth century, and, from 1815 to 1835, great difficulty was experienced in getting refractory hammermen to take up their freedom. The deathblow came in 1835 in the shape of the Municipal Corporations Act, which enacted that any man might carry on any lawful trade in any borough, whether free of any trade guild or not.

The fraternity drifted on for many years after this, until, one by one, its old members died off and its pews in the parish church were swept a way.

FIG. 7 — MEMBERSHIP BADGE  
OF LUDLOW HAMMERMEN'S  
COMPANY  
Reverse blank to receive name  
of member.  
Diameter 1 1/2".



## Book Notes

### *The Preservation of Early Americana*

By GEORGE H. SARGENT

ONE of the problems continually confronting the collector of early Americana is how to care for printed books and pamphlets which, in spite of weak bindings, inferior paper and unattractive typography, are yet rare and valuable. For it is the sad truth that many of our rare early American printed books, so far as their typography is concerned, are merely horrible examples. Franklin's *Cato Major*, which has, indeed, a beautiful and well-designed title page, is pointed out in booksellers' catalogues as the finest example of American typography of its time (1744).

Yet this title page — in black and red — is equalled, if not surpassed in simple beauty, by many of those in books published today, and "this first translation of a classic in this Western World" was originally bound in calf, which frequently becomes discolored by time.

Nearly all of our American incunabula, — books printed here before 1700 — the multitudinous sermons of the Mathers, and a host of rare and highly-prized American books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were originally bound in cheap-looking