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# Further Notes on Commemorative Porringers

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In October, 1927, ANTIQUES published an article by Conservator Adolphe Riff of the Museums of Strasbourg, describing several commemorative pewter porringers, and pointing out certain peculiarities in their form and decoration. He likewise raised question as to the identity of the pewterers whose marks appear upon these pieces. An editorial note, further, suggested the possibility that since, in various essentials, these porringers exhibit obvious departures from English practice, they may possibly have originated on the Continent.

Thus the status of a number of interesting considerations relating to these porringers was left somewhat indeterminate. Now, however, Mr. Cotterell offers a wealth of further enlightenment, which enables us to identify the immediate authors of these porringers, their nationality, and the periods of their activity. It is regrettable that an important additional note on this subject from Mr. Cotterell has reached ANTIQUES too late to supplement his original material. It will, however, be found in the Editor's Attic this month.

By way of brief summary of preceding discussions, it may be noted that M. Riff divided these commemorative porringers into four types: Type I, displaying a relief bust of King William in the bottom of the bowl, on the lid portrait medallions of William and Mary, four shields bearing the arms of Great Britain and Ireland, the cypher of William and Mary, and the motto *Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense*; Type II, displaying the heads of King William and Queen Mary in the bottom of the bowl, on the lid the portraits of the sovereigns with the cypher *W. M. R.*, and with the mark *I. W.* over a pair of scales; Type III, displaying a mythological figure in the bowl, on the lid the two portrait busts, the cypher and the inscription *God Save P. George and Queen Ann*; Type IV, lid only, without handle, and with the inscription *God Save Prince George and Queen Ann*.

**P**EWTER enthusiasts the world over will be grateful to Conservator Adolphe Riff for his brave plunge into the complex subject of commemorative porringers\*; but he has so established himself as the *écuelle à bouillon* specialist that no one was more likely to take the plunge or so calculated to do it in a masterly way, allowing no conjecture to interfere with establishable fact, a feature which guides all his writings and makes them, therefore, so reliable.

Had I known of M. Riff's intention to write upon this subject I could not only have supplied him with further examples and notes, but also have cleared up the mystery of the mark *I. W.* with scales, which appears on the Essex Institute example, illustrated in M. Riff's article.

I will, therefore, begin these notes with an illustration (Fig. 1) of this mark, that of John Waite of London,

\*See ANTIQUES, Vol. XII, p. 294.

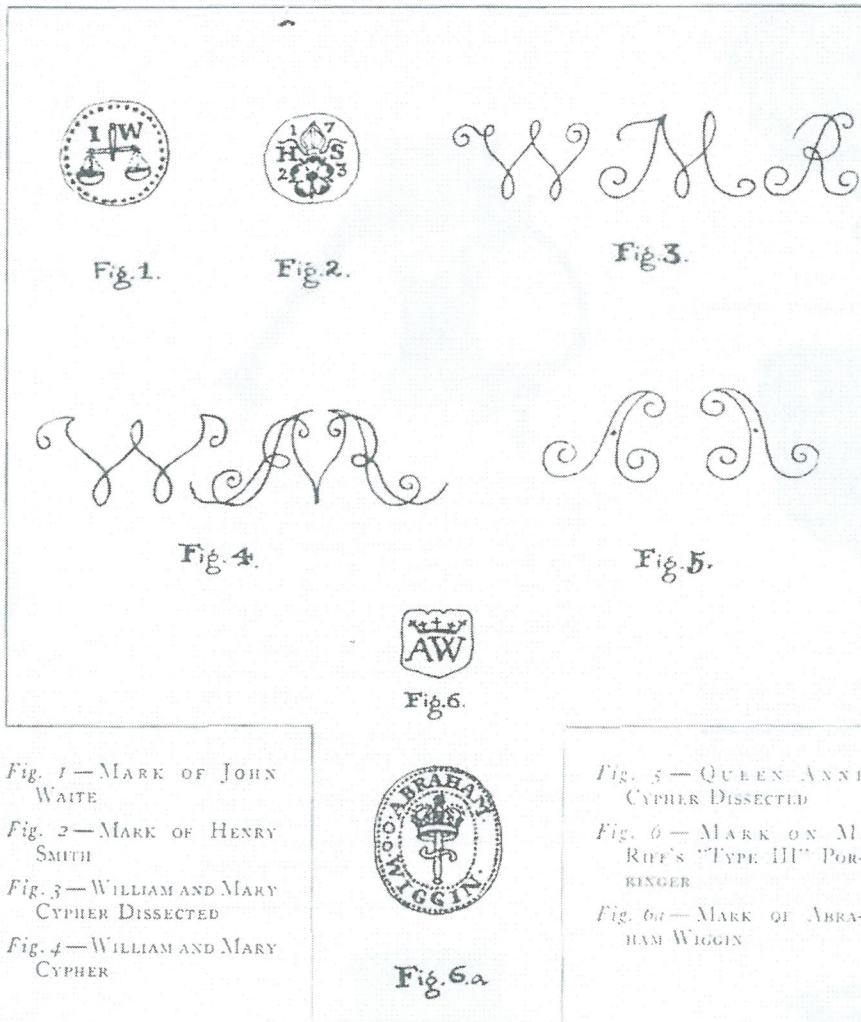


Fig. 1—MARK OF JOHN WAITE

Fig. 2—MARK OF HENRY SMITH

Fig. 3—WILLIAM AND MARY CYPHER DISSECTED

Fig. 4—WILLIAM AND MARY CYPHER

Fig. 6

Fig. 6a

Fig. 5—QUEEN ANNE CYPHER DISSECTED

Fig. 6—MARK ON M. RIFF'S "TYPE III" PORRINGER

Fig. 6a—MARK OF ABRAHAM WIGGIN

which he was given leave to strike on the London touch-plate in 1673-4. This gives us the date of 1673-4, or later, for the porringer considered under "Type II" of M. Riff's notes and for all other pieces on which this mark appears: for it must be remembered that a touch, once struck upon the touch-plates, had to be used throughout a pewterer's career, unless express permission for varying it was given.

In Figure 2 I give an illustration of the mark of Henry Smith, which appears on the porringer considered under M. Riff's "Type I." Henry Smith was made a free pewterer of London in 1724, but was not given leave to strike this

touch until March 23, 1726, which gives us the date of 1726, or later, for all pieces on which this mark appears.

Now where have we arrived? Well, in the first place, an interval of at least fifty-two years between the striking of the two touches. This leads us to the very natural



FIGS. 7, 7a, 7b — THREE VIEWS OF PORRINGER Showing resemblances to the porringer of M. Riff's "Type I," accompanied by various differences. Design by Alfred B. Yates.

conclusion that, in all probability, John Waite was gathered to his fathers before Henry Smith had leave to strike his touch. Thus Type II becomes, beyond any doubt, the earliest of the series. Having thus placed M. Riff's Types I and II in point of age, where does his Type III come in?

The mark on this piece, which I illustrate in Figure 6, tells us nothing. It may possibly be a mark of Abraham Wiggin. If so, it certainly bears no trace of resemblance to the mark which he struck upon the touchplate, and which I illustrate in Figure 6a. It may quite equally well be the mark of Allen Walley or Anthony Warford of London, Arthur Wharton of York, or of half a dozen others, all of about the same period as Wiggin.

But what have we to lead us to some definite conclusions concerning this type? First, the cypher of Queen Anne, the very appearance of which proves the type to be not earlier than 1702. That is one point established; and now comes conjecture: The Peace of Ryswick, which the porringer commemorates, would seem to suggest a still unforgotten gratitude for a recent blessing. One would, therefore, think that it would be placed during the reign of Queen Anne, and probably not long after her accession, let us say 1703 or 1704. We then get our porringers in the chronological order of Type II, Type III, and Type I. Though there may be doubt as to the ac-



tual date of Type III, enough, I trust, has been said to allow this sequence of the types to pass without further question.

We now come to the correct interpretation of the script monograms or cyphers on these pieces. Mr. Riff has interpreted them without fear and without error.

Possibly the simplest way to settle the matter is to resolve these cyphers into their respective letters, which I have done roughly in Figures 3, 4, and 5. If these be traced on tissue paper

and set superimposed, one upon the other, they will, when held against the light, display roughly the monograms illustrated on the pieces shown in M. Riff's article.

My Figure 3 shows the cypher which appears on his Types I and Ia; Figure 4, on Type II; and Figure 5, on Types III and IV. The MR of my Figure 4 is done in cypher, and, if folded down the centre, it will be found — after making allowances for my faulty penmanship — that the two sides roughly correspond.

There remains for me only to illustrate two further examples of this type of porringer from the fine collec-

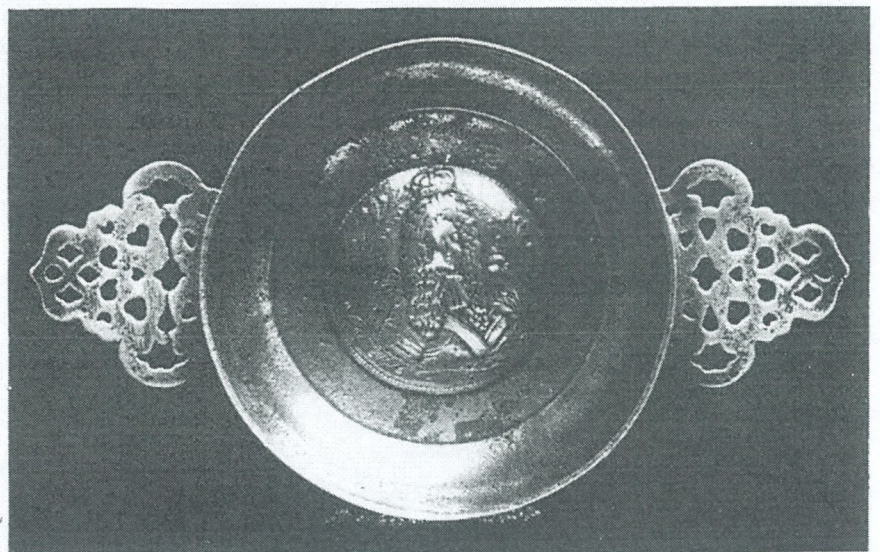
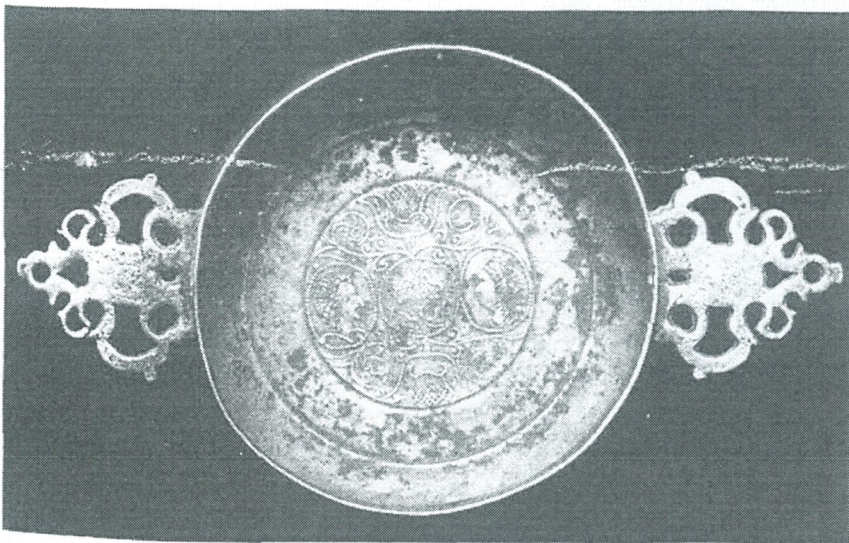
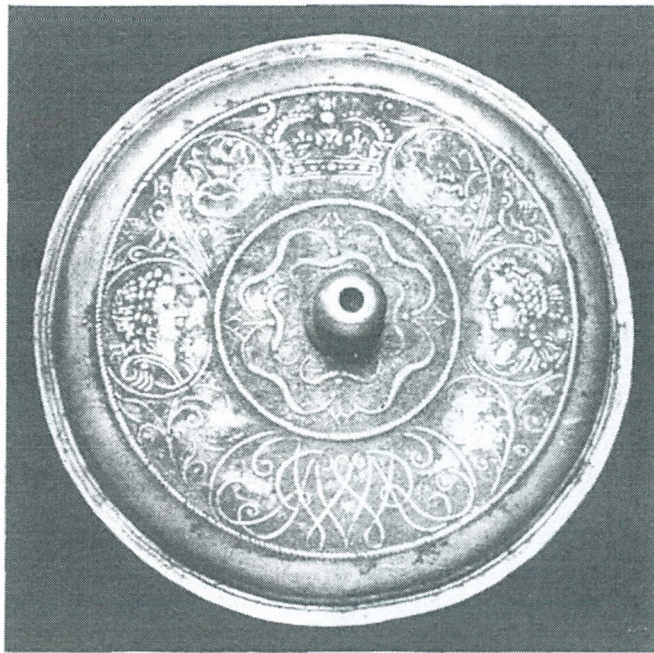


Fig. 8, 8a, 8b—THREE VIEWS OF PORRINGER showing resemblance to those of M. Riff's "Type II," but with a spool-shaped knob replacing the cock handle of the Essex Institute example, owned by Alfred B. Yeates.

tion of Alfred B. Yeates, F. S. A., F. R. L. B. A., of London. Figures 7, 7a, and 7b show the porringer, its cover, and the sides respectively. This piece, in many respects resembles that of M. Riff's Type I; but it also materially differs. First, the Arms of Scotland and Ireland on the lid have, for some reason, changed sides. Second, the three cocks on the cover have been supplanted by three quite delightful *lions sejants*. Other details of the cover offer slight differences. On the inside of the porringer, the monarch's head carries a distinct crown, only part of which appears in M. Riff's example, in which, further, the actual bust of the sovereign occupies more of the field, possibly because the size of the latter is some half inch less than that of Mr. Yeates' example. Finally, the handles have a decidedly more English flavor. The dimensions of this piece are: diameter of bowl, six inches; height of bowl alone, two and one-quarter inches, and with the cover, exclusive of the feet, two and three-quarters inches.

The mark on this piece is very indistinct, the letter



S alone being readable. But it is quite possible that it is the same mark as that on M. Riff's example, in which case Henry Smith must have possessed two molds for the lid, a point worthy of note when one considers the high cost of such molds.

Figures 8, 8a, and 8b show a further example of Type II bearing the mark of John Waite—*J. W.*, with scales (Fig. 7c). It will be noted that the cover handle which, on the Essex Institute example, is a cock, in this one has been converted into a capstan or spool-shaped knob. In other details the two pieces would seem to be pretty generally alike,

and they are probably from the same mold.

The dimensions of Mr. Yeates' piece are: diameter of bowl, six inches; height of bowl alone, two and three-eighths inches, and with cover, exclusive of the feet, three inches. No dimensions of the Essex Institute example are given.

The question of English origin would thus seem to be established beyond peradventure, for, of the few examples before us, we have two by John Waite, two and possibly three by Henry Smith. Types IV and V give no marks, and the only one in doubt, therefore, is the *III* mark on Mr. Flaye's fine piece. I do not think the question of the English origin of these porringers need keep us awake of nights.