

MEDICINAL PEWTER

Pewter was used to help treat the ill. It was a reasonably priced, clean choice, for those who could afford care and for those dispensing it.

In illness - the feeding of the sick, receptacles for normal bodily functions, and items made to treat such illness, were all produced in pewter.

This subject is clearly one where those with an interest in it might begin to collect pieces used from the 1700s through to the early 1900s which can still be found today.

A frequent question this website receives (and does not often answer) is as to value. Well there is very little value to anything in pewter unless you find two or more who might be collecting it and would compete for what you might have.

The better the condition, any marks that might indicate a maker, any evidence that might support an owner or user – all these factors add to value, along with scarcity.

Some pieces are self evidently more collectable than others. Elsewhere in this Collecting Index Section we have a range of syringes collected by a retired medical man with a fascination concerning syringes over the ages, and he does have a remarkable collection.

Some uses of medicinal pewter ware -

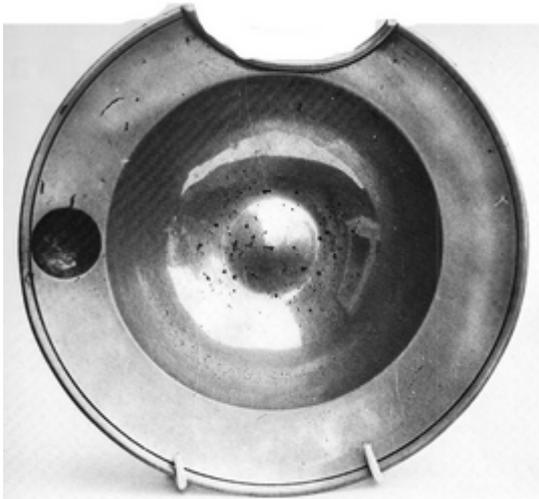
- 1) - Bleeding the patient, involved barbers bowls with a cut out – not as this writer thought for the chin being shaved, but for the arm being bled. A likewise purpose for Porringers and there were containers for the use of leeches.
- 2) - Babies and young children (in a time of high infant mortality) were fed with “nippled” pewter bottles or pap boats. These may be similar designs but varied enough for collections to be formed. Pap boats also fed the very sick. Feeding bottles were used for those seriously ill of all ages.
- 3) - Medicines were stored for personal use and for dispensing.
- 4) - Chest infections were common and inhalers were made to offer treatment.
- 5) - Urinals – very necessary for the bedridden and others - and for those interested were available across Europe in considerable variety.

6) - Spoons of many different medical styles were made but all in simple terms to ensure the medicine reached its target.

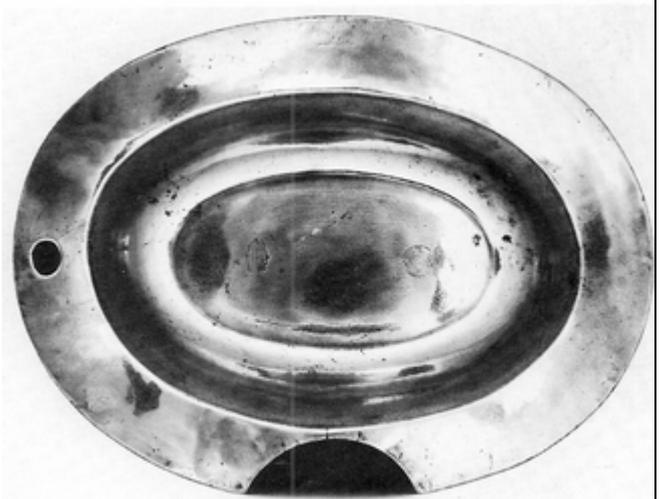
The lists above are not complete, simply offering an idea of what can be found. Medical people will know of other needs that pewter served. (Served that is - if you could pay for the treatment.)

It is possible to collect all of these or simply those that interest the collector.

Some of the following have longer text descriptions than others - the text being taken as written from the source wherein it was found.



English Barbers Bowl – used for shaving but also by Barber Surgeons – for bleeding. This one was made by Henry Joseph working 1736-1793



Oval French Barbers Bowl – made throughout 18th and 19th centuries. Oval shape also made elsewhere in Europe.



See opposite –
Pewter ‘Blood porringer’ mid 18th century
 Very small porringers like this one are rare as their purpose limited the numbers made. The Sizing Tables of the Worshipful Company list them (C Ricketts London book page 21) as blood porringers with cast ears flat. Some authors wrongly describe Victorian examples with incised lines showing capacity as bleeding porringers, as they were more likely measures. 3¼” diameter, 4⁵/₈” overall, and holds just under 5 fl oz weighs only about 4 ozs In very good used condition, with small linen mark, and concentric turning lines under base.
 Reference OAXY-016-392 Photos 278 - 286
 Collection perhaps



English 18th Century Bleeding Bowl



Without handles and plain, English c 1800



English Bleeding Bowl graduated 12,8,4, c 1800



Common Type of Northern French Leech pot from early 1800s



Important Pewter Infant Feeding bottle c 1750 very rare.
The Cow and Gate collection describes these as sucking bottle and has one similar (theirs has incised body lines whilst this is plain) 5" high the base has a 2" diameter and weighs just under 8 ozs.



Bulbous form of nursing or sucking bottle with a screw top and 1 1/2" long nipple second half 18th century. Unmarked, and from its form could be American or European. In excellent used condition with minor wear including a few scratches. Light polished surface. 6 1/2" overall

height.



French Feeding Bottles 1800-1900



Dutch or French Feeding Bottles tallest at about 16cms tall 1775-1800



English 19th Century Pap Boat



Eastern France 19th century Pap Boat



Three feeding cups – European 1780-1820



English or Dutch Bubby or Invalid feeding Cup of the 1700s.



Theriac (Cough Mixture) Container Scandinavian c 1700



Austro Hungarian Pharmacy Pots 19th century



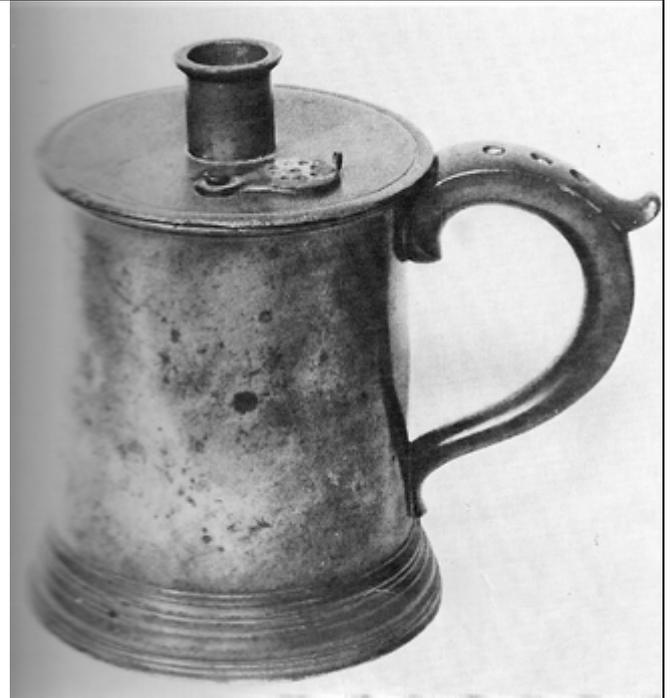
English Ointment Pot early 1800s.



Small containers can have many uses, although written underneath this pot is 'French chrismatory from Ferney Ain c17(?)'. It is well made, and has beautiful turning lines under the base, so may be earlier than its apparent 19th century appearance. Possibly an ointment pot, and there are the remains of indecipherable lettering on the lid. In excellent condition, with medium-grey original surface patina. 2" high with 1½" top and 1¼" base diameters. (these have previously sold by dealers as pill containers).



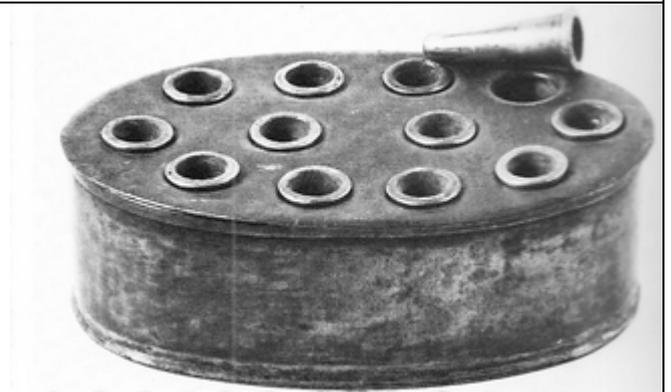
Inhaler by Solomon Maw, London c1835-56 marked in base. Unusual C handle with fishtail terminal and three holes before the thumbrest. Lid of inhaler has a grouping of six holes around one central hole, below which is a small domed housing with a simple ball valve. It differs from most inhalers that tend to have a flap over that hole. The lid's 'chimney' would have tubing attached when in use. North shows a complete assembly at Fig 216 p138 *Pewter at the V & A Museum*. Inhalers were used with herbal hot water to treat respiratory diseases. In excellent condition, with medium-grey original surface patina. 5½" high.



English Inhaler 5 ½ inches tall 19th century.



Male Dutch Urinals 19th century



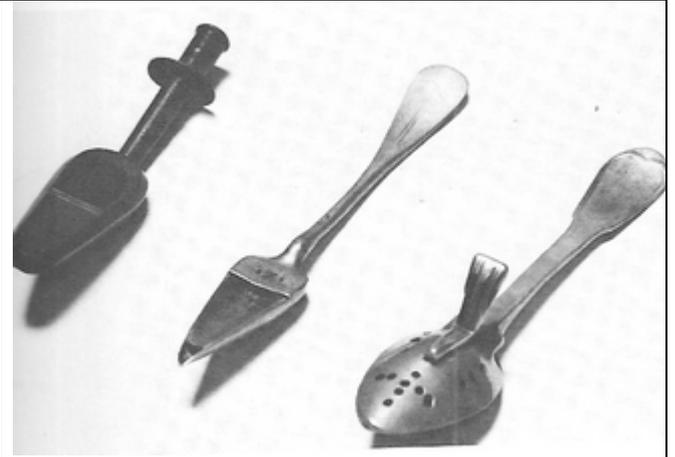
Suppository Mold - American 5 ½ inches wide 1800-1900



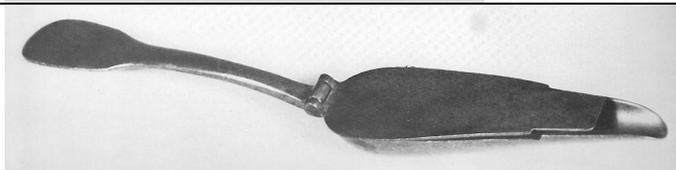
This example opposite was made by J & S Maw of 11 Aldersgate Street, their mark on hinged cover. Several members of the Maw family were pewterers specialising in medical items, but their location at this address was brief, allowing very close dating for this spoon c1834-36. It is said that a Mr Gibson invented the so-called Gibson spoon in 1828 for giving a dose of castor oil (a strong laxative). It was originally advertised for administering medicine 'to lunatics and fractious children'. The oil was put into the spoon, the hinged cover closed, and the spoon thrust into the patient's mouth, with the thumb covering the end. When the thumb was withdrawn it allowed air pressure to force the oil into the patient's throat. This spoon is in excellent condition, with a light-grey lustrous patina. 5 1/8" long.



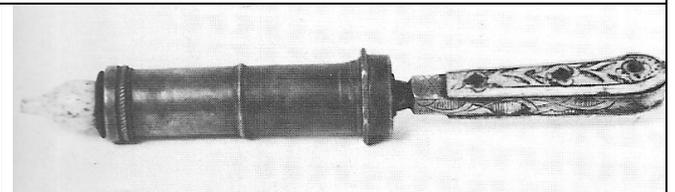
Another for the poorer people



English and French Medicine Spoons from around 1830



French Castor Oil Spoon for young patients 19th Century



English Pistol Handled Syringe with Ivory Inlay see another article for a large collection of Syringes



English or Dutch Eye Bath or Cup from the 1700s.

In this 'Collecting' article this website does not set out to write the history or the detail of the subject. What is attempted is to tempt you the reader into taking an interest in the subject – no more – by showing you examples - giving just a little simple information. If your interest develops then the UK Pewter Society and the Pewter Collectors' Club of America (PCCA) offer in-depth articles on many subjects in this year's and previous years' publications. Therein also resides a wealth of collecting experience. This website is simply for encouragement that the reader might take interest and progress themselves further with it. Any prices quoted mean only that they are one off 'heard of' sales and may not reflect today's value in any which way.