

Spoons - Queen Anne

Anne was a popular Queen and it would be surprising to see her as a figure of fun. Here we have a cartoon faux characterisation where with her big loop of pearls she looks more like the cartoon 'Popeye's' girl friend 'Olive Oil' than any known Queen - let alone Queen Anne.

However this design was first known of in the collection of a renowned West Country collector Mr T Charbonnier in 1908 and the following photo is from H H Cotterell in 1918.



H H Cotterell wrote that the 'SS' mark belonged to –

175 Sanders, Simon

of Langtree

Near Bideford. A maker of spoons, some of which are here illustrated by the courtesy of Mr. T. Charbonnier, who has had them specially photographed for these notes

An owner of two of these today tells us -

The spoons bend easily and have no signs of use. The figure of Queen Anne is almost comical as are the two figures either side of her holding the crown. Apparently a pair of these was sold in 1984 for 900 Australian dollars and resold in 2011 for 40 Australian dollars.

(Spoon size - approx 18cms long with bowls 6cmx4.3cm and depth 0.5cm - so clearly desert spoons)



This Australian Collector decided to send the spoons to the UK for a closer look by those with other similar spoons and for another opinion.

So here follow some few photos taken –

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|---|--|
|  <p>1.</p> |  <p>2.</p> |
|  <p>3.</p> |  <p>4.</p> |
|  <p>5.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) – casting fault where stem meets bowl on 1st spoon 2) – casting fault to back half of bowl on 2nd spoon 3) – casting fault to front half of bowl on 2nd spoon 4) – casting fault clearly shows to spoon 2 on the left 5) - SS initials as are seen on Munday fakes and in the one spoon thought to be 'right' These initials look somehow as though worked flatter - |

A collector of considerable experience says that in his opinion these spoons are certainly fakes. He considers it likely that these are from an original mould, used later by someone intending to deceive. They show signs of poor casting where the mould was not at sufficient temperature to take the molten metal. This can be expected by an amateur or faker with little working knowledge. One shows poor casting in the "lee" of the bowl and in the bowl, the other on the back of the bowl - which I suspect that the faker has tried to remedy. Both, at some time, have been darkened to simulate age probably by the use of Nitric Acid.

Ron Michaelis did cast some spoons from a similar mould which he gifted to other collectors, clearly he could not cast without faults.



Close ups show us that the SS here is similar to that from the original Charbonnier to the left of the photo and the alleged Munday fake shown below.

Below the SS with the dotted or broken line below the initials is also the same as the one to the right in the Charbonnier collection of 1908.

Queen Anne spoon photos from another collector....





Re the QA Spoons, - A collector comments as follows:

*** The one cast by Michaelis from an original mould, with the flashing left unfinished, was given to Frank Holt by Michaelis. I also believe that he gave one to each of the then PS Members. It would not be unreasonable to expect that mould to be the one sold at Michaelis Sale bought by Peter Hempson.

*** The spoon that I have which is from the same mould as Michaelis' was bought in our early days of collecting in a shop in Blandford Forum probably in 1978. The back of the bowl has several areas of poor casting caused, I am informed, by not having the mould at a sufficient temperature to accept the metal and produce a good cast. It also has a casting fault in the lee of the bowl.

*** As to the Munday spoon, I cannot say that Munday faked it. However, I understand that when Munday gave the spoon, as a thank you to a young colleague for driving him from London to a meeting in Leamington, to quote " Munday had a wry smile and a mischievous look" indicating that he knew full well that it was a "wrong one".

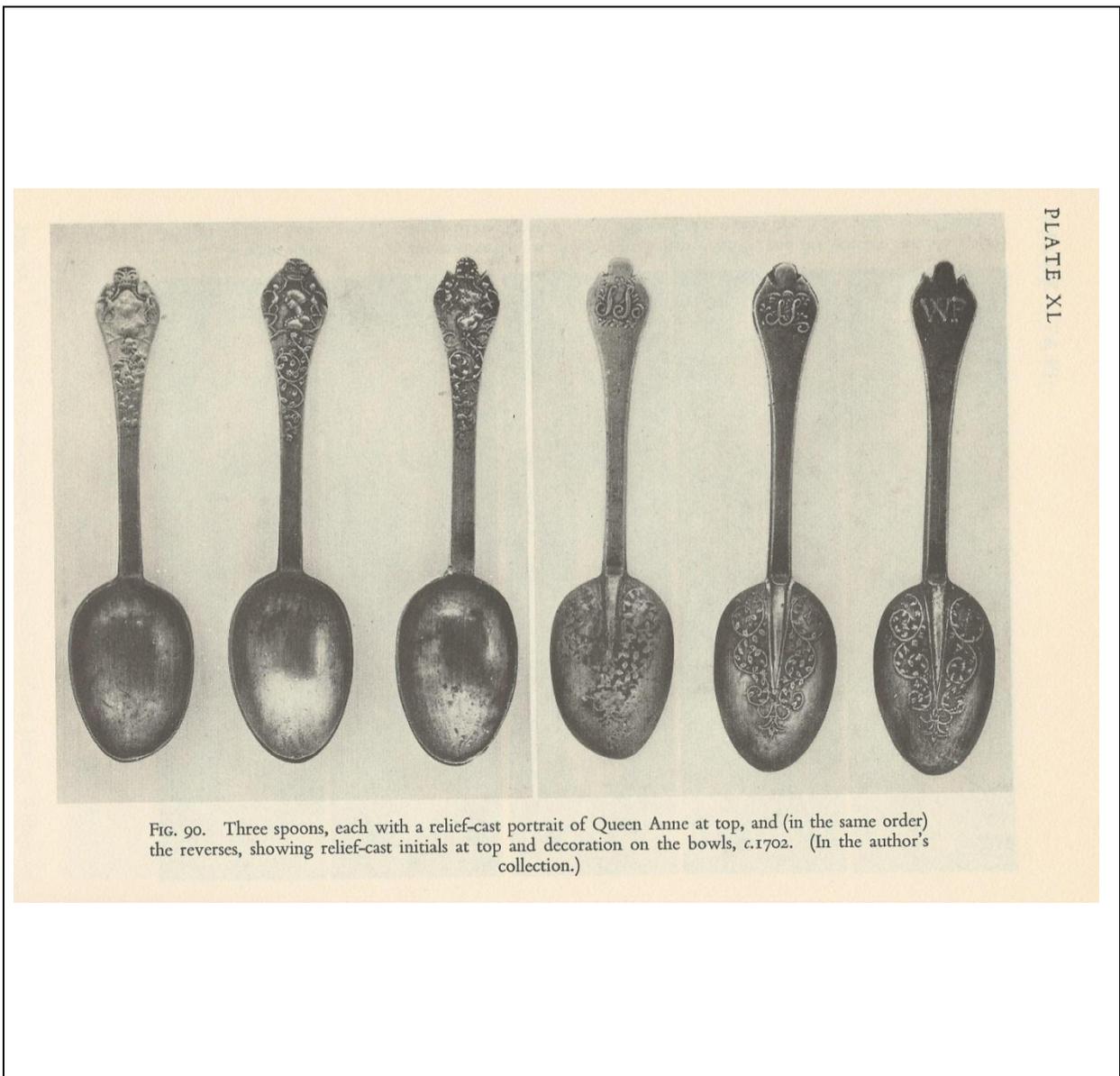
This spoon also has several casting faults both in the bowl and on the back. Like the other fakes, somehow the metal just does not feel right.

You will note that the "Munday" fake is from the same mould as the Australian collector's but not the same mould as Michaelis' original.

I have what I believe is a genuine QA spoon which you can compare looks & feel with the fakes



Below is the extract from the Ronald Michaelis Antique Pewter book



What we have been told is that Ronald Michaelis owned the mould and cast these 'SS' back initialled tea spoons not as fakes but as curiosities for friends and that Richard Munday continued the custom after Michaelis had died in 1973. We cannot prove that though the Munday mould/spoon was the same as the middle one of the three Michaelis chose to illustrate.

This Michaelis illustration of said spoon is found in Michaelis's book - *Antique Pewter* - in the very last illustration fig 90 - as being dated - c1702.

A third very experienced collector writes to say

Ron Michaelis had two moulds for Queen Anne portrait spoons. One of them is mentioned in 'Pewterware with Royal Associations' page 10 item 62, and it was only half a mould, for the front half of the spoons listed as items 44-49 (now in the WCOP collection, S8/810/1-6). These spoons have 'WP' on the back, not 'SS', but as Michaelis didn't have the back half of the mould, this certainly wasn't an original mould for casting SS or WP.

Michaelis made a plaster of Paris back half, but I can't believe he would have carved bogus initials in that.

However, it's possible that someone who owned the mould before or after Michaelis used a back with initials in it.

This mould was lot 71 in the Michaelis sale catalogue of 1973 and was bought by Richard Munday!

However, there were SS spoons around long before that because there are some in the Arlington Court collection, bequeathed in 1949.

Michaelis had a second Queen Anne spoon mould – see lot 70 in his sale catalogue. Frank Holt had a spoon that had been cast in this mould, and it would be interesting to know what it was like (see above where this spoon is shown).

This spoon mould was bought by someone known to have traded pewter in his younger days..

There is a third spoon mould for casting cast-decorated spoons in Arlington Court (item SP45 in the Pewter Society catalogue).

However, the decoration doesn't match that on any of the SS spoons I've seen. It was Charbonnier who linked SS to Simon Sanders of Langtree, near Bideford, and he had two spoon moulds for casting 'rat tailed spoons' (see p10 of his catalogue), but there is no suggestion these spoons moulds were for cast-decorated spoons.

Incidentally, there are three variations of the SS initials – see PS8196. The two examples in the WCOP collection have different front faces, so it certainly wasn't simply a question of someone using a single mould with different backs.

Another collector disagrees just a little –

I disagree in part. I am sure that some of these spoons are genuine (as with the one illustrated above); please don't suggest that fakers would make a bronze mould such as that at the Michaelis Sale to cast fakes- it is just so unlikely.

A conclusion (of sorts) –

It would seem this strange design is probably original, and that genuine spoons were cast from genuine moulds to produce them. These moulds seem to have got into hands where those using them could not cast correctly and hence turned out poorly cast spoons. Two moulds at the least and more likely three or four, have been used by these folk. How to tell them is to look for the fault just in the bowl, at the base of the stem, and the very obvious fault seen above, on the other in the bowl. Spoons without casting faults and with some real crispness to the initials on the back might well be genuine. Look out for mottling within and around the darker patina as this is often associated with the use of Nitric acid to falsely age pewter.