



No. 1.—QUEEN ANNE TANKARD; PLATE BY WILLIAM ALLEN, CIRCA 1675-86; TANKARD OF THE STUART PERIOD; BELONGING TO MR. T. S. MILLIGAN

THE SOCIETY OF PEWTER COLLECTORS

IT is an undoubted fact that the trade of the pewterer was once one of the busiest and most important in the country; and though its activities began to wane towards the middle of the eighteenth century, pewter was still being made, more or less extensively, until well into the second decade of the nineteenth. It is the more surprising, therefore, that, during the ensuing eighty years or so, popular knowledge of its history and general use practically died out. That this should be so is due to the fact that pewter as a medium of manufacture was almost entirely superseded by other materials.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, however, there came a stirring in the minds of some few who set store by old forms and traditions and things of beauty. This movement first became manifest through newspaper and magazine articles, some of which were well informed, but many decidedly otherwise; and what became known as

the "Cult of Pewter" commenced. Pewter of all kinds, good and bad, British and Foreign, began to appear in shops—a sure sign that interest was growing. Collections began to take form, albeit collectors were largely without definite guidance.

One writer in 1902 complains of the "lack of a handbook (!) on the subject"; his desire was soon to be fulfilled, for in the same year the late Mr. Charles Welch produced his *History of the Pewterers Company*, which, besides being a noteworthy addition to the histories of the City Companies, gave added impetus to the interest which had already been kindled in the craft itself; for it revealed how important a part it had taken in the trade of the country and in the life of the community.

This work was closely followed (in 1904) by the late Mr. Ingleby Wood's *Scottish Pewter and Pewter Ware*, and, in the same year, by Mr. H. J. L. J. Massé's *Pewter Plate*. Shortly afterwards, the first public exhibition of old pewter was held in the

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(Joint Honorary Secretary of the Society)



No. II.—SKIRT-BASED FLAGON BY S. P. [OR R.], C. 1650
COLLECTION OF MR. ROLAND SHELLEY, F.R.Hist.S.

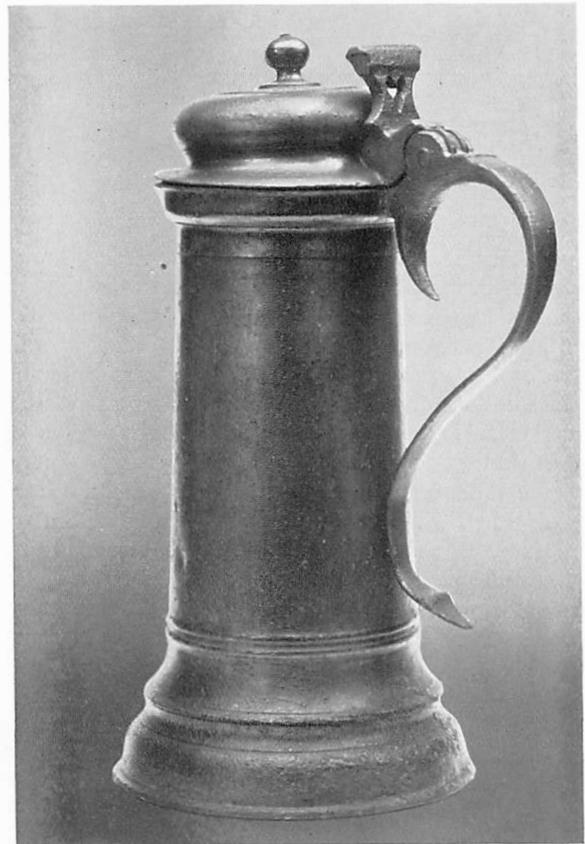
ancient hall of Clifford's Inn. This was organised by Mr. Massé, and caused something of a sensation, being reported in the Press at great length. In the following year appeared Mr. Malcolm Bell's *Old Pewter*, and the spate of newspaper articles increased. A second exhibition, in the same premises, was organised in 1908; a third took place in the fifteenth-century house of Provand's Lordship, Glasgow, in 1909, and yet another in connection with the Scottish National Exhibition of 1911. The exhibitions, and the numerous articles also, established contact between collectors, and it is safe to say that, had the war not put a temporary stop to all such activities, the Society of Pewter Collectors, the *raison d'être* of this article, would have commenced its career earlier than it did.

The idea of such a society first took shape in the mind of Mr. Herbert M. Cooke, of Purley, and a meeting of collectors was convened on December 9th, 1918, at the headquarters of the London Sketch Club, which ever since has extended much-appreciated hospitality to the Society by granting the use of its premises for meetings. At this first meeting the Society was founded under its present title; six collectors were present, and they, together with

six others, were elected Founder members. Five further names were put forward for membership and five for honorary membership; so the Society may be said to have made an auspicious start.

A brief personal note on some of these pioneers may not be out of place. The first President was the late Antonio F. de Navarro, whose death, on October 11th, 1932, was recorded in these columns. He will ever be remembered as an ideal chief, not only by reason of the fine collection of pewter that he formed in his beautiful home at Broadway, or by the exquisite articles that he wrote from time to time, but because of his sterling qualities as a man and a friend, and by his exceeding hospitality.

The first Vice-President, who was also Joint Honorary Secretary, was Mr. Howard H. Cotterell, F.R.Hist.Soc., whose name is well known to all pewter lovers by his frequent contributions to these and other pages, but particularly as being the author of *Old Pewter, its Makers and Marks* (1929), which remarkable book is accepted to-day as the standard work on the subject. His co-Secretary



No. III.—CHURCH FLAGON IN UNCLEANED CON-
DITION, CIRCA 1630: BELONGING TO MR. A. SLOAN



No. IV.—SCOTTISH MEASURES : A FLAGON WITH THE SHAW STEWART CREST AND NOVA SCOTIAN BADGE ; TAPPT HENS, C. 1725-75 COLLECTION OF MR. LEWIS CLAPPERTON, C.A.



No. V.—SET OF ENGLISH BALUSTER MEASURES WITH " BUD AND WEDGE " THUMB-PIECES : SECOND HALF OF 17th—FIRST QUARTER OF 18th CENT. : MR. HARRY WALKER, MANCHESTER.

No. VI.—DISHES
AND PLATES OF
CIRCA 1660-80

IN THE COLLEC-
TION OF MR. E.
HANCOX, F.S.A.



was Mr. Walter G. Churcher, one of the earliest enthusiasts, round whose collection articles innumerable have been written. For several years, Mr. Churcher was wont to entertain his friends at an annual "pewter supper," at which they were served from pewter dishes, ate off pewter plates, and drank from pewter tankards. Even the liqueurs were served in pewter, the tiny goblets for which Mr. Churcher obtained from Morocco!

The late Colonel Croft Lyons will be remembered for his munificent bequest of pewter to the Victoria and Albert Museum, his example being followed by the late Mr. C. G. Port, also an original member.

Of the honorary members, Mr. C. Reginald Grundy, until recently the Editor of *THE CONNOISSEUR*, rendered much assistance to the Society by giving publicity to its doings; the late Mr. W. J. Englefield was a past Master of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers of London, of which he had for many years been the sole member actively engaged in the profession, and whose "touch," struck in 1913, is the last upon the Company's Touch Plates, which

go back to the year following the Great Fire. Mr. Massé and Mr. Welch were also honorary members. Their great services to the cause have already been referred to. Of the original membership of twenty-two, eleven are still on the rolls of the Society, which has never looked back, and is to-day in a flourishing condition with twenty-seven members and six honorary members.

The Society's aims and objects, as set forth in its Constitution, are:—

- (1) To promote the association of collectors of old pewter by holding meetings, reading papers, and mutually exhibiting and discussing specimens of old pewter; and generally to encourage an interest in, and knowledge of, old pewter, its history and associations.
- (2) To assist in the preservation of representative and historic specimens in public collections by the presentation of pieces by its members individually, or by the Society as a body.
- (3) To participate in exhibitions of pewter at home or abroad, and in any scheme deemed

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desirable in the interests of the Society or its members.

As regards the first object, two meetings are held annually: the general meeting in London in January and the summer meeting in the provinces in June. The latter takes the form of a week-end visit to some locality of historic or antiquarian interest, arranged, where possible, to include the inspection of some noteworthy collection of pewter. Thus the Society has visited Bristol, Stratford-on-Avon, Taunton, Canterbury, Glasgow, Manchester and York, and has also been entertained by its provincial members in their country homes. Prior to each meeting the members dine together, and afterwards inspect recent acquisitions. A prospective purchaser who may be in doubt as to the genuineness of the piece offered may, if he desires, and is able, bring it to a meeting and obtain a general consensus of opinion before proceeding. As a safeguard against the purchase of "fakes," this system of collective opinion has its value; but it is by no means the only, nor even the chief, method adopted by the Society as a defence against the menace, which is unfortunately increasing.

As regards the second object, gifts have been made from time to time to museums, and, in particular, the Pewterers Company has received notable additions to its collection from Captain Nelson G. Harries. In several instances, fine old pieces of church plate which were found to be gradually perishing from neglect have been restored and returned to their ancient abodes, where, in the care of enlightened custodians, they will remain objects of veneration to succeeding generations of worshippers.

As regards the third object, the Exhibitions at Clifford's Inn and in Glasgow have been referred to, and though these took place before the Society was founded, several collectors, who later became members, loaned pieces from their collections. The chief event of this kind, however, in which the Society played a notable part, was the *Daily Telegraph* Exhibition of Antiques at Olympia in 1928, where

the pewter exhibit, arranged by Mr. Cotterell, is generally agreed to have been the finest and most representative exhibition of the pewterer's craft ever staged. The exhibit comprised over 460 items, each of which was selected by Mr. Cotterell as being the best of its type; and of this number, over 90 per cent. was lent by seventeen past and present members of the Society.

Since then, individual members have assisted at other exhibitions from time to time, notably at the "Reign of Charles II." exhibition in 1932; and have contributed to the spread of knowledge by lecturing before antiquarian and other bodies all over the country.

Membership is attained by invitation, and only by actual collectors, who must be known to two or more members. Honorary membership is conferred from time to time upon individuals who, though not actually collectors, have rendered signal services to the Society or to the causes which it has at heart.

Mention of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers recalls the fact that the Society has, since its foundation, been on the most friendly terms with that ancient City Company. Although no longer exercising control over such pewter making as still exists, the Company is rightly proud of its historic past; and has ever shown its keen interest in the work of the Society, frequently extending hospitality to its members, collectively and individually. For its part, the Society ever has, and ever will, look to the Company as the fountain head of its inspiration as regards the historical side of the subject for which it exists.

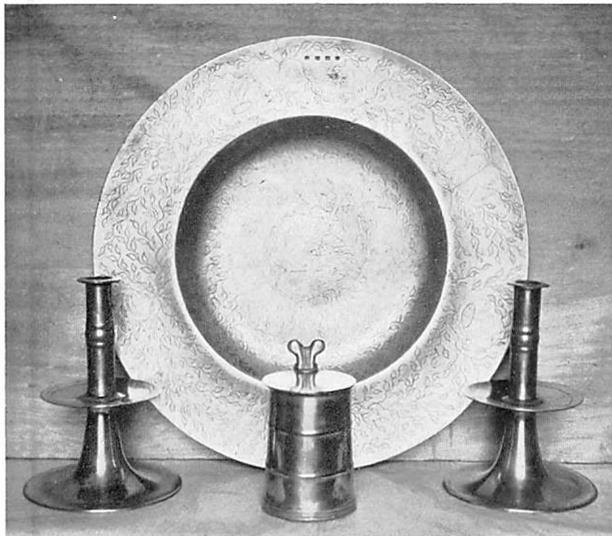


No. 17.—LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.
AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

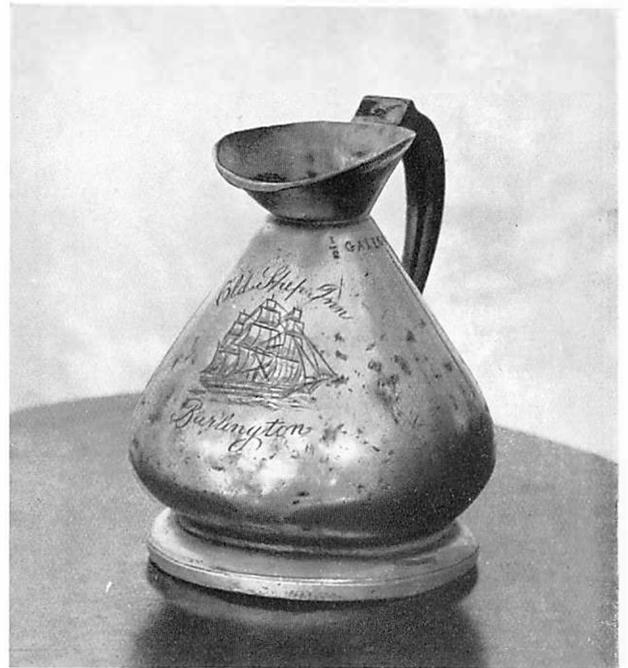
In conclusion, a personal word as to the illustrations. I imagine that collectors generally would agree that no representative series would be complete without examples from the collections of Dr. A. J. Young, Mr. A. B. Yeates, and others, most of which contain unique items. The majority of these collections have, however, been illustrated already, both in these and other pages; so it was agreed that the illustrations should be drawn from lesser-known sources, and should be chiefly of such pieces as are still within the reach of the average collector. To those members who have supplied me with photographs, as well as to those who have so generously stood aside, I tender my grateful thanks.

Extraordinary breadth of rim ($2\frac{3}{4}$ in.) characterises the plate shown in No. i., which comes from Mr. T. S. Milligan, of Edinburgh. It is 10 in. in diameter and was made by William Allen, *circa* 1675-86, Touch No. 240 on the first Touch Plate of the Pewterers Company. The tankard to the right is of the Stuart period, but is later than No. vii., as is evidenced by its deeper lid and base mouldings; its thumb-piece is of the "Ram's Horn" type, and its height is $4\frac{3}{4}$ in. The other tankard is of Queen Anne period, and illustrates the development of the lid from the flat to the dome. It is $5\frac{3}{4}$ in. in extreme height. Neither tankard is marked.

The fine flagon shown in No. ii. is in the collection of Mr. Roland J. A. Shelley, F.R.Hist.Soc., of Formby, Liverpool. It is of the type known as "Skirt-based" and its date is *circa* 1650. It stands $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. high, and bears the mark of S. . . P (or R) . . ., a pewterer at present unknown.



No. VIII.—SECOND HALF OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. GILBERT L. D. HOLE



No. IX.—"BRISTOL" MEASURE FROM THE "OLD SHIP INN, BURLINGTON" [BRIDLINGTON]. IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. J. C. FENTON

No. iii. shows a magnificent English church flagon, 14 in. high, in the collection of Mr. Archibald Sloan, of London. No maker's marks are visible. Its date is *circa* 1630, and it is shown here in the state in which it was found; by comparing it with the flagon illustrated in No. ii., the merits of cleaning or not cleaning may, to some extent, be judged (this applies also to No. v.).

From Mr. Lewis Clapperton, C.A., of Glasgow, comes an illustration (No. iv.) of Scottish measures in his collection. In the centre is a large flagon, unique in shape, and holding two gallons; it bears the badge of Nova Scotia, together with crests of the family of Shaw Stewart. Around it are grouped differing sizes of the measure popularly known as the "Tappit Hen," crested, uncrested, and lidless. The dates of these vary, but lie chiefly between 1725 and 1775. The pair on the left of the middle row are known as "Pot-bellies," whilst at the bottom are Scottish "Balusters" and three thistle-shaped measures. These latter appear to have been fairly common in Glasgow during last century, but were nearly always made of copper, genuine pewter specimens being exceedingly rare.

Mr. Charles Macdonald, Chief Inspector of Weights and Measures in that city, has courteously informed me that these and certain other measures were prohibited for trade purposes by the Weights

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and Measures Regulations of 1907, owing to the fact that they did not completely discharge when tilted to an angle of 120 degrees from the perpendicular; so it may be imagined that they proved a source of considerable revenue to an unscrupulous server.

A set of English measures, from gallon to gill, called by collectors "Balusters" from their shape, is illustrated in No. v. The thumb-piece and lid attachment give them the additional title of "Bud and Wedge," and this and other features dates them between the second half of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth. Some of them bear makers' marks, and they are in the collection of Mr. Harry Walker, of Manchester.

No. vi. illustrates early dishes and plates in the collection of Mr. E. R. H. Hancox, F.S.A., of Nacton. The larger dish is 24 in. in diameter, and has the early feature of a broad rim (in this case $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. wide). It is *circa* 1660, and bears the mark of W . . . W . . ., a pewterer at present unknown, whose mark or "touch" is No. 72 on the first Touch Plate of the Pewterers Company. The smaller dish is 17 in. in diameter with a $3\frac{1}{4}$ -in. rim, and was made by Roger Willoughby, of Bristol, *circa* 1680. The three plates are each $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter, and have broad reeded rims $1\frac{7}{8}$ in. wide; they bear the unrecorded mark S . . . B . . ., and are *circa* 1670. It is interesting to note that these fine pieces are now in the possession of a direct descendant of the original owner, whose Arms are engraved on them.

Early pieces in the writer's collection are the subject of No. vii. The 10-in. plate is by Jacques Taudin (*circa* 1680-1700), a London pewterer of French descent, whose touch is No. 344 on the first Touch Plate. The candlestick is unmarked, and is late seventeenth century; the small salt, also unmarked, has been described as early eighteenth century, but is probably some fifty years earlier. The fine Stuart tankard, with its beautiful "wriggle work" ornamentation and "love-bird-cum-volute" thumb-

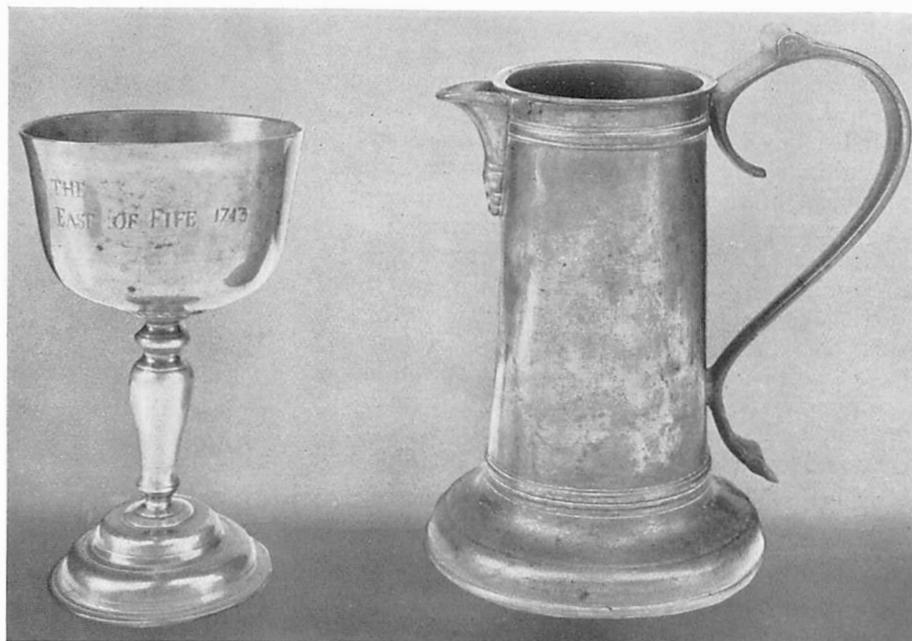
piece, was made by Jonathan Ingles, whose touch is dated 1670, and is No. 170 on the first Touch Plate.

Mr. Gilbert L. D. Hole, W.S., of Edinburgh, sends me an illustration (No. viii.) of fine pieces in his collection. The $18\frac{1}{4}$ -in. "broad rim" is completely covered with wriggle work. It is dated 1671, and the maker's touch contains the initials S . . . W . . . P . . . The candlesticks are by Robert Marten, *circa* 1660, Touch No. 7 on the first Touch Plate. The small flagon is $4\frac{7}{8}$ in. high and has no marks; it is of Scottish type, possibly about 1700.

The subject of No. ix. is an English measure of the type known as "Bristol," in which locality it was chiefly made. Of half-gallon capacity, $8\frac{3}{4}$ in. high, it is of more than usual interest by reason of the spirited engraving of a ship in full sail, the sign of the inn at Burlington [Bridlington], in which, as its finely lettered inscription tells us, it formerly did duty. It belongs to Mr. J. C. Fenton, of Cleckheaton, and is unmarked.

No. x. shows two beautiful pieces from the collection of the President (Mr. Francis Weston, F.S.A., of Croydon). The communion chalice is engraved "Belonging to the Associate [*sic*] Congregation in East of Fife, 1743." It was made by Alexander Wright, of the West Bow, Edinburgh, who was admitted to the Incorporation of Hammermen in 1743.

The lidless skirted flagon (*circa* 1745) is from the Presbyterian Church at Lurgan, Co. Armagh. It holds four pints, and its maker was Roger Ford, whose business was in Cork Street, Dublin.



No. X.—COMMUNION CUP, BY A. WRIGHT, 1743
FLAGON, *CIRCA* 1745
COLLECTION OF MR. FRANCIS WESTON, F.S.A.