

*April, April, 1946*

## A BERKSHIRE PEWTER COLLECTION

BY CYRIL C. MINCHIN

PART I

"FANCY a farmer collecting old pewter," said a visitor one day. "Did your father keep an inn or something and did you take over the pewter pots and things?"

An unexpected quality of forbearance allowed my visitor to be informed politely that very little of the pewter to be seen in this old farmhouse would be found in a tavern or inn to-day or on any other day, and in fact a number of the pieces were of some antiquity and rarity and were highly esteemed by collectors of old pewter. Furthermore, that even this small collection had taken some fifteen years of intensive search to find, in all sorts of odd places.

A collector's enthusiasm is not to be denied, and my readers, like my visitor, willynilly, have the choicest specimens and some of my experiences described in the following pages.

The first piece (Fig. I) is undoubtedly a rarity in pewter and is a Romano-British ewer, which was actually saved from the melting pot. It was discovered among a heap of old iron in a scrap metal dealer's yard and was purchased by weight at so much per lb. It was shown to the late Howard H. Cotterell, the great authority and writer on old pewter, and quoting from his letter, he said, "It is a magnificent Romano-British ewer of the late IIIrd or early IVth century, some 13 ins. high and possibly the finest Roman pewter ewer which has so far come to light. There is nothing to equal it in the museums, nor do I know of anything to compare with it elsewhere."

But I am sorrowfully obliged to record that this Roman ewer is the only piece not now in the collection, the specimen having been sold some years ago for a special reason.

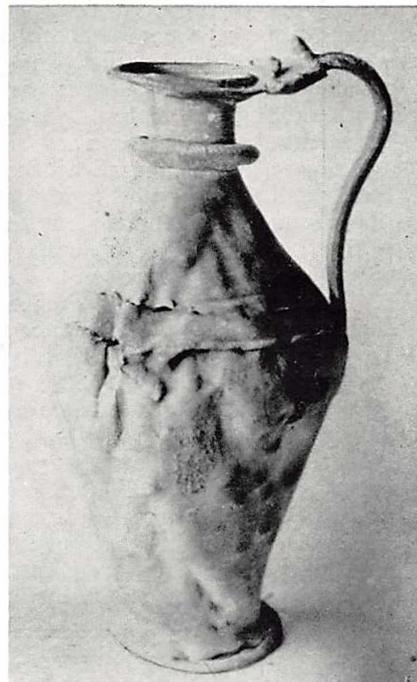


Fig. I. A rarity found in a scrap metal dealer's yard amongst the old iron—a Romano-British Ewer, 13 ins. high, late IIIrd or early IVth century



Fig. II. An appropriate setting for display of pewter in the Berkshire farm dining-room

In Fig. II is shown a portion of the dining-room, and some specimens of the collection in its early days. Most of the pewter under review has never before been photographed and will be news even to collectors, and nearly all of it has been collected in various parts of Southern England, and truly sought out and collected, which is far more interesting and exciting than attending a well-advertised sale of pewter, complete with a fat cheque book.

Surely half the fun in collecting pewter is to find it piece by piece, possibly unrecognized for what it really is and rescuing some of it from total loss, for in this way each piece has its individual associations, and it has only to be seen to bring back memories vividly again.

A little measure on the mantelpiece in Fig. II was found at Chichester in Sussex—Chichester, with its XIth century cathedral of which it is said that it is the only English cathedral visible at sea. It was found on a cold, wet and tiring day after protracted business, but the collector's urge overcame all discomforts and a quick look round the known likely spots was not to be resisted, and the reward, right in the centre of the shop window, a nice little quart baluster measure, with a bud thumbpiece and, better still, a fine unrecorded mark. In a flash the tiredness was gone and the cold, wet day forgotten.

Then there was that fruitless summer evening trip, ten miles out to a vicarage garden party in a small village, because of a whisper of a flagon in the "White Elephant" stall. It was there all right, but not a fine flagon, just a Britannia metal coffee pot, made at Sheffield.

That is collecting, the questing and following of every clue, however small.

Now take the little flagon of unusual type shown in Fig. III. It is a fraction under 10 ins. extreme height and 7 ins. to lip, with a base measurement of  $5\frac{1}{8}$  ins. It weighs  $2\frac{5}{8}$  lbs. and has upon the shoulder of the handle mark No. 5815 (*æ Old Pewter, Its Makers and Marks*, by Howard H. Cotterell). This is the mark of an unknown pewterer of *circa* 1710-30 and there is another flagon by him at Ashampstead Church in Berkshire dated 1731 and another in a Leicestershire church with date 1713. When discovered, this flagon was coated with black scale and it has since been thoroughly cleaned and restored to its original bright condition.

The half-gallon baluster measure shown in Fig. IV has a bud thumbpiece and measures  $9\frac{1}{2}$  ins. to the lip and stands upon a  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ins. base, its weight  $4\frac{1}{8}$  lbs. The maker of this was Richard Dunne (O.P. 1469), who had leave to strike his touch in 1676-77, and his lozenge-shaped mark, with initials "R.D." and date 1677, can be seen in the centre of the lid, Fig. V.



Fig. IV. Half-gallon Baluster Measure— $9\frac{1}{2}$  ins. high—with bud thumb-piece, 1677. Maker, Richard Dunne

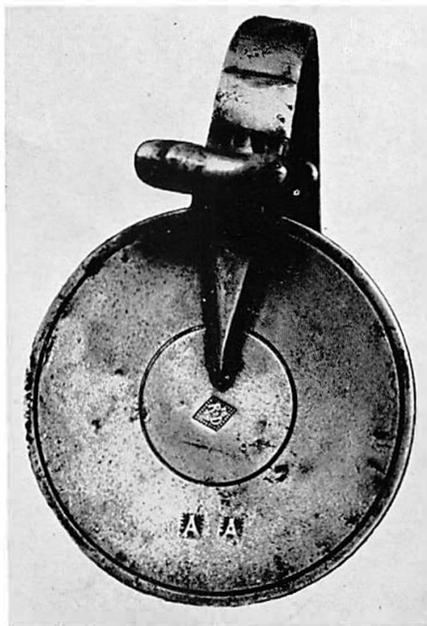


Fig. V. Lid of Baluster Measure in Fig IV, showing lozenge-shaped mark with initials R.D. and date 1677



Fig. III. Little Flagon of unusual type, 10 ins. high, bearing mark of unknown pewterer, *circa* 1710-30

From personal experience, I can say that these "bud" baluster measures can often be found in the quart, pint and half-pint sizes, but the larger and smaller measures with this thumbpiece are very hard to find, and the earlier balusters with the hammerhead and wedge thumbpiece are exceedingly rare, whatever the capacity.

A rather well-proportioned Stuart charger is shown in Fig. VI. It is 22 ins. diameter, with a slightly moulded broad rim of just under  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ins., its weight over  $8\frac{3}{4}$  lbs. This dish is actually round in shape, but the photograph had unfortunately to be taken at an angle, thus giving the dish an oval appearance. It is of interest, as it bears the arms, flanked by plumed mantling, of Mary Fane, Dowager Countess of Exeter, who died in 1681.

It is marked on the back with the touch of James Taudin (O.P. 4651). At some time in recent years, this dish has apparently been used as a target for air rifle practice, for there are distinct bullet marks in the well.

The candlestick shown at Fig. VII is of William and Mary period, 8 ins. high, and is far from common. It is more or less trumpet-shaped in outline with a large knob slightly below its centre, the pillar being encircled with a simple reeding. Its date is c. 1690 and it is marked on the flange at the nozzle with a very small touch, though so much worn that it cannot be identified. It is of fine hard metal. This candlestick was found in a small town in Hampshire and when the proprietor of the shop was asked if he had any old pewter for sale, he said: "No, nothing much, only an old Jacobean candlestick and I cannot take less than — shillings for it."

There are many early and interesting pieces of pewter yet awaiting discovery and recognition and although, admittedly, a great deal of the finest is now in famous collections and museums, rare pewter will continue to crop up from time to time. One piece in mind is a fine Elizabethan, or even earlier, beaker, decorated with the strapwork and woodbine foliage of the period. This piece was fished up from a deep well in a Berkshire village a few years ago.

In Fig. VIII is shown a William and Mary beaker, and it is remarkable how rare these English beakers are. This one is elaborately and clearly engraved with wriggle-work, showing the portraits of William and Mary dressed in their robes and holding sceptres. Between the portraits are festoons of tulips and roses, with below that, two birds, one possibly a heron, the other cannot be

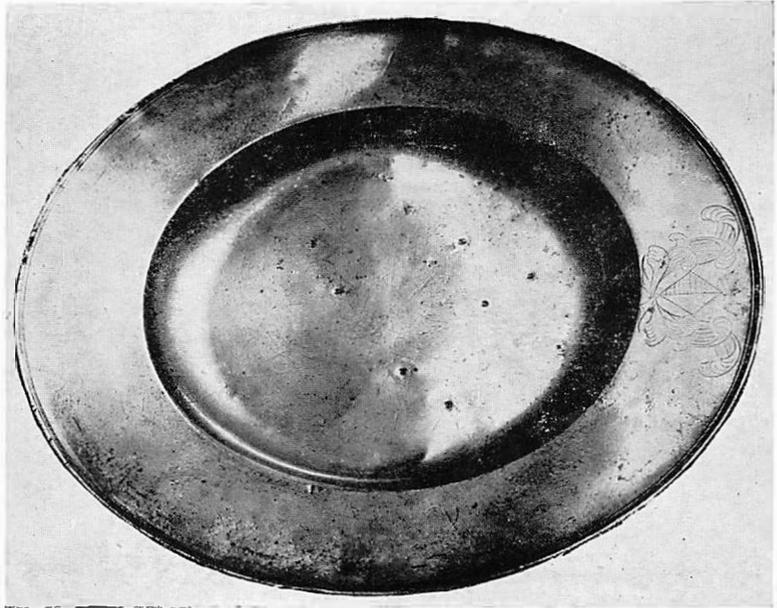


Fig. VI. A Stuart Charger, diameter 22 ins., weight 8½ lbs., bearing the arms of Mary Fane, Dowager Countess of Exeter (d. 1681). James Taudin's touch mark

identified. This piece is also of fine hard metal, 5 ins. high, diameter of base 2¾ ins. and it bears inside at the bottom the small beaded touch of John Kenton of London, c. 1690 (O.P. 2720). It is an attractive piece and its authenticity is without doubt.

The small dish shown in Fig. IX is of at least the first half of the XVIIth century. It is very heavy, 12 ins. diameter, with a rim of full 2 ins. The raised central boss recalls the rosewater bowls of the same period. It has on the back of the rim an early unrecorded mark of a swan in a small beaded touch. The whole dish is heavily coated in black scale, so much so that it looks more like old leather than pewter.

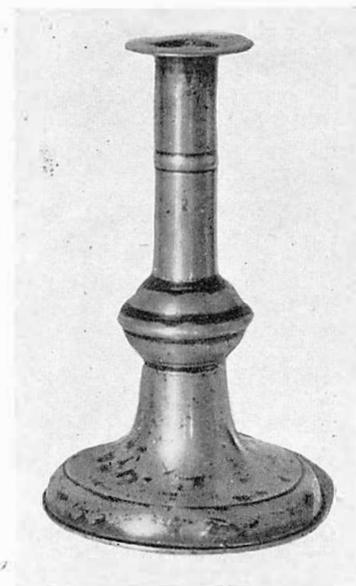


Fig. VII. William and Mary Candlestick, c. 1690. 8 ins. high. Bought for a few shillings

Shown in the same photograph is a small paten plate of c. 1660, its diameter being 6⅛ ins. and the rim ¾ in. It is of very thick metal and is also marked on the back of the rim (O.P. 5791). This is believed to be the touch of Robert Moulins of London, whose mark was restruck in 1670 on the new touch plate after the Fire of London.

A West Country flagon is shown in Fig. X, made at Exeter by Humphrey Evans, c. 1730-80, and his mark is on the inside of the base. With an extreme height of 11 ins. and of 8 ins. to lip, it stands upon a base of 6½ ins. and weighs 3½ lbs. This flagon would appear to be XVIIth century in many respects, were it not for the cover, which, although of a most unusual type, proclaims it as XVIIIth century. This can be understood when it is realized that the moulds used by the pewterers were valuable and made to last many years, often being handed on from father to son or taken over from a predecessor.

Two photographs, Figs. XI and XII, are shown of a "York" flagon of the acorn type, found near Reading a few years ago. It is



Fig. VIII. William and Mary Beaker, 5 ins. high. With the small beaded touch of John Kenton, London, c. 1690

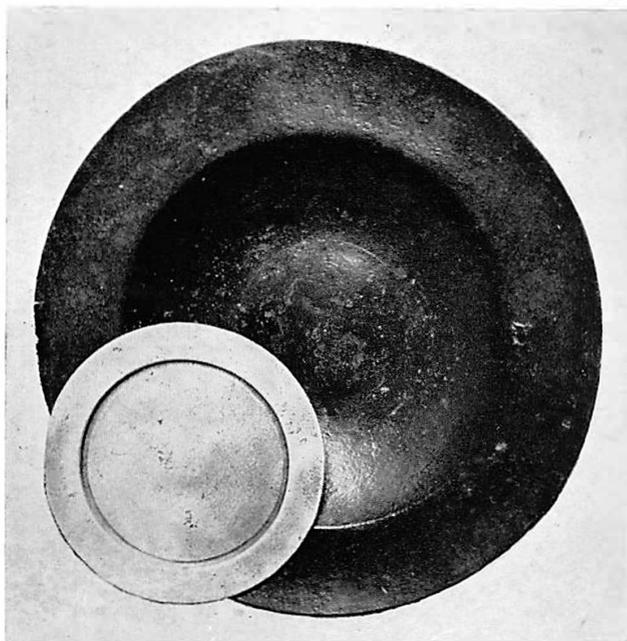


Fig. IX. Early XVIIth century Dish, 12 ins. diameter, and a Paten, c. 1660, 6½ ins. diameter, believed to have Robert Moulins' touch

in perfect condition, although completely devoid of any maker's mark. Its total height is 11½ ins. and 9½ ins. to lip, with a base of 5¾ ins. and weight 4½ lbs. and the fine inscription, shown in the photograph, proves that it was at one time church property, for it is engraved, "Maurice Searle, Church-Warden, Tetney Parrish, 1788." Tetney is a small village



Fig. XIII. Flagon of James I and Charles I period. Height 13 ins. and 11½ ins. respectively. The latter has maker's initials E.G.—on the former they are worn away

some six miles from Grimsby. This flagon would actually date from c. 1740-50 and was probably of domestic origin, being a gift to the church in 1788 by a parishioner from his private plate. This most pleasing type of flagon was until recently supposed to have been confined to the York pewterers, but within the past ten or fifteen years it has come to light that the so-called York flagon were also made elsewhere. Certainly at Wigan, e.g. by Edmund Harvey (see Cotterell, Plate XL



Fig. X. West Country Flagon, 11 ins. high—maker, Humphrey Evans, Exeter, c. 1730-80



Figs. XI & XII. Two views of a "York" Flagon, devoid of maker's mark, of the acorn type, probably c. 1740-50. Engraved "Maurice Searle, Church-Warden, Tetney Parrish, 1788"

(E)), who was Master of the Pewterers Company there in 1676, and whose will was proved at Chester in 1685.

For this information, great credit and thanks from all pewter lovers must be given to Roland J. A. Shelley, Esq., F.R.Hist.S., President of the Society of Pewter Collectors, of Southport, himself a keen collector and well known for his research work on the history of pewter and especially the Wigan pewterers.

There has been no suggestion or idea of reviewing this collection in chronological order, for the last item to be described, Fig. XIII, shows two of the earliest flagons in the collection, and they are both fine examples of the James I—Charles I period and in perfect condition.

The larger flagon has an early mark on the handle, but this is too much worn to be identified. It stands upon a base of  $6\frac{1}{8}$  ins. with 13 ins. extreme height and weighs nearly  $6\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. The smaller flagon measures at the base  $5\frac{1}{4}$  ins., extreme height  $11\frac{1}{8}$  ins., weight just on  $4\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. On the handle is struck mark O.P. 5614A, with maker's initials "E.G." There are a number of flagons by this maker and quite a few of them are to be found in Norfolk churches.

These two flagons were undoubtedly at one time church property, for it is inconceivable that they could have been in domestic use for some 300 years and yet retain their almost perfect condition, but, devoid of an inscription, it becomes impossible to trace their history down the centuries.

"Apollo", July, 1946

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PART II

**R**ICHARD GOING, a pewterer of Bristol, was evidently of some standing in that ancient town, for in Felix Farley's *Bristol Journal* for February 16th, 1766, the year in which he died, appeared a long sale notice of his estate which was of some importance and was situated on the summit of St. Michael's Hill, Bristol.

He was the maker of the lidded tankard shown in Fig. XIV, which can be dated at c. 1720, and it has his early small touch mark of the Lamb with Flag inside the base (O.P. 1909). The slightly-domed lid is a pleasing feature and the height to lip is exactly 6 ins. and its base measurement  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

Another piece of Bristol pewter is shown by the tall flagon in Fig. XV, but this time Allen Bright was the maker (O.P. 574) and his mark is also found inside on the base. This graceful flagon with an unusual type of broken handle would date at about 1760, its total height is  $13\frac{1}{2}$  ins. and the wide spreading base a full  $6\frac{3}{4}$  ins.; the weight slightly more than 4½ lbs.

It is rather remarkable to note that a certain George Benson, of Bristol, working as a Master Pewterer as far back as 1601-1625, can well have had some influence upon the workmanship and craft of this Allen Bright. However, it can be proved, for it is possible to trace back from apprentice to master pewterer, as shown in the appended list, and there is a direct link from Allen Bright to George Benson.

Allen Bright (O.P. 574) 1742-63, was apprenticed to William Watkins (O.P. 4981) c. 1728, was apprenticed to Honor, widow of John Batchelor (O.P. 295) 1676-1727, was apprenticed to

Thomas Lodge (O.P. 2964) c. 1659, was apprenticed to Peter Lodge, father of the above (O.P. 2963) 1630-77, who was apprenticed to

George Benson (O.P. 398) 1601-25.

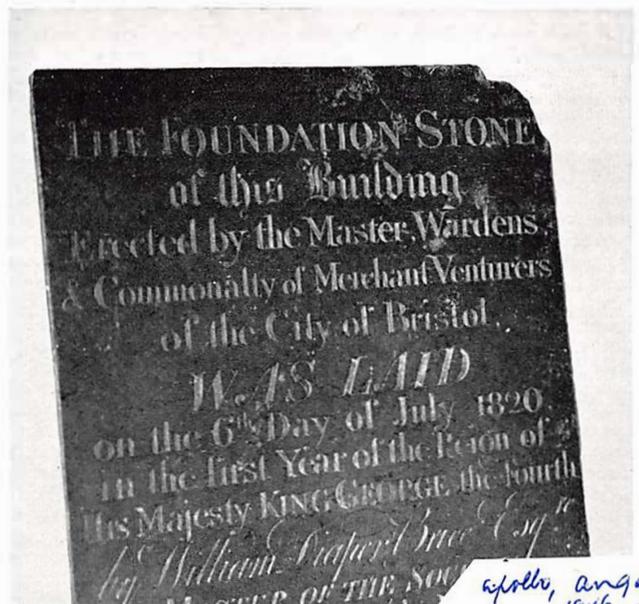
At George Benson lack of further information brings the



Fig. XIV  
Top right:  
Slightly domed, lidded tankard.  
Height 6 ins.  
base  $4\frac{3}{4}$  ins.  
Richard Going of Bristol, c. 1720



Fig. XV  
Left:  
A graceful flagon with an unusual type of broken handle.  
Height  $13\frac{1}{2}$  ins.  
base  $6\frac{3}{4}$  ins.  
Allen Bright of Bristol, c. 1760



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Fig. XVI  
Right:  
A massive and substantial tablet of pewter with the Bristol mark of Edgar & Son, c. 1814-40

## PEWTER

The Society of Merchant Venturers, Bristol, with regard to the plaque in question was placed. In 1820 the Society erected a new 'Pump Room' at Hotwells in connection with the Hotwells Spring, the waters of which were long reputed to have therapeutic value. The building subsequently became the Grand Spa Hotel. Our records show that the foundation stone was laid on the date given, by the Master of the Society in the presence of members of the Standing Committee. The inscription is said to have been on block tin and a bottle containing new silver coins was placed underneath. Hotwells is situated in the suburb of Clifton."

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lineage, as it were, to a halt and yet without a doubt it would, I venture to say, extend right back into the mediaeval period, and beyond, each master craftsman passing on to his apprentices his skill and knowledge in fashioning the metal.

Bristol is again represented in Fig. XVI, and with this piece that usually misapplied word, unique, can, I feel sure, be safely used, for there cannot be another quite like it. This massive and substantial tablet of pewter, for it weighs over 6 lbs., measures 12 ins. by 9½ ins., and clearly struck upon the back of it is the Bristol mark of Edgar & Son (O.P. 1511), c. 1814-40. The inscription reads as follows:—

“The Foundation Stone of this Building Erected by the Master, Wardens and Commonalty of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol was Laid on the Sixth Day of July, 1820, in the First Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George the Fourth by William Diaper Brice, Esqre, Master of the Society, in the Presence of the Wardens, Samuel Lunnell and Henry Brooke, Esqres, and of the Assistants.” Henry Hake Seward, Architect. John Foster, Builder.

The City Librarian of Bristol, James Ross, Esq., M.A., has very kindly examined the local newspapers for July, 1820, and states that there is no account or notice of the laying of this foundation stone in Bristol and he can trace no reference to it in Latimer's *History of the Merchant Venturers' Society*. It seems quite probable, therefore, that the building in question may have been outside the city.

What of the Merchant Venturers? Quoting from Arrow-smith's *Dictionary of Bristol*, second edition, 1906, the Society is now the only Guild remaining in the city. It was incorporated by Edward VI in 1551 and subsequently confirmed by Elizabeth and Charles I and is now established under the authority of the Charter of 1638. The Society possesses manors and lands of considerable value, besides maintaining a large almshouse for old seamen. Many merchants are members of the Society, their best energies being continually engaged in promoting the welfare of the city and the interest of its trade and commerce with all parts of the world. No salaries are paid to the officers, nor does any pecuniary benefit accrue to members. An Elizabethan herald granted the Society its coat of arms, the supporters of which consist of Father Time with his scythe and a mermaid with an anchor.

A flagon with its companion chalice by the same maker is shown in Fig. XVII. These two specimens are of c. 1750 and both show the hall-marks of Thomas Carpenter, London (O.P. 811). The flagon is 12½ ins. total height, with the base measuring 6 ins. and the weight is rather more than 4 lbs. The chalice is just over 7½ ins. to lip. These church flagons are very rarely found with their original chalices and in my own county, and quoting from *The Church Plate of Berkshire*, by J. W. Walker, Esq., O.B.E., F.S.A., there are mentioned some twenty-

one pewter flagons, but only two chalices. In the neighbouring county of Oxfordshire, from information given by the Rev. J. T. Evans, F.S.A., M.A., in his *Church Plate of Oxfordshire*, thirty-two flagons are described, but only one chalice.



Of some rarity and keenly sought by collectors, is the Stuart candlestick (see Fig. XVIII). Standing upon a base of 5½ ins. and 7½ ins. in height, the base, drip tray and nozzle flange are all octagonal in outline. It is marked on the flange with an

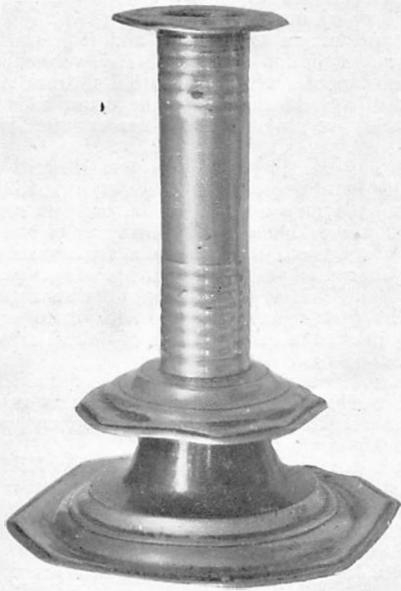


Fig. XVII  
Top right: A rarely found church flagon with its companion chalice. Flagon, height 12½ ins., base 6 ins. Chalice, height 7½ ins. Thomas Carpenter, London, c. 1750

Fig. XVIII  
Left: A keenly sought for Stuart candlestick with unrecorded mark. Height 7½ ins., base 5½ ins.

Fig. XIX  
Right: A Stuart dish, 20 ins. diameter, c. 1670-90, with the touch of the unknown maker H.F.



Fig. XX. A pair of ordinary plates of excellent quality, 9½ ins. diameter. Samuel Duncombe, of Bewdley, c. 1740-75

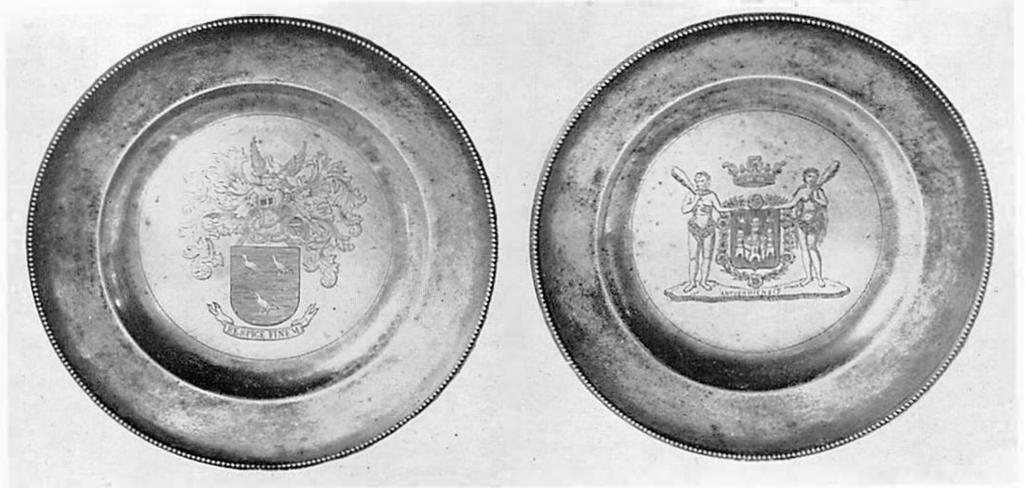


Fig. XXI. Below: An Irish unmarked flagon, c. 1760. Height 11½ ins., base diameter 7¼ ins.



unrecorded mark. This type of candlestick was evidently made to take a large candle. The one under review has a socket of 1¼ ins. diameter.

At Fig. XIX is illustrated a Stuart dish which was found at a furniture sale at the pretty Thames riverside village of Pangbourne, Berks. This dish is certainly not a rarity, although the deep groove running round the rim is not commonly seen. It is of 20 ins. diameter with a width of rim slightly less than 3½ ins. and its probable date c. 1670-90. It is the touch mark that has always intrigued me, and clearly struck on the back of the rim is a small circular beaded mark (O.P. 5584), showing an unknown maker's touch of initials H.F., with a bust between them. Shown on the front of the rim are his four hall-marks, H.F., buckle, leopard's face crowned and lion passant. I have another dish by this maker, found at Reading, with the same touch, but the four hall-marks are buckles (Cotterell shows hall-marks H.F.

repeated), and in Reading Museum there is another dish by him dated 1690. Three dishes found in the same vicinity and all of them by a most uncommon maker. Is it possible that he could have been a Berkshire or Reading pewterer? Perhaps a collector may have a piece by this maker, giving some information as to his province.

A pair of quite ordinary plates of excellent quality, with a beaded edge to the rim and 9½ ins. in diameter, are shown at Fig. XX. They are by one of the most common makers, Samuel Duncombe (O.P. 1466), c. 1740-75, but not of Birmingham, for on the back of the plates, complete with touch and hall-marks, is his label marked Bewdley. They are in remarkable condition and devoid of knife marks, hence the clearness of the finely-rendered coats-of-arms. I give thanks to the Heraldry expert of APOLLO for the following information as to the armorial bearings, although this research work is the more difficult as it is quite likely that they relate to Continental ownership. The right-hand plate shows the Antwerp Arms, but in all records so far seen, they appear without the supporters of a savage man (Dexter), and a savage woman (Sinister), and it is possible that the Arms belong to an Institution or a Corporation of Antwerp. The left-hand plate cannot be traced to any English owner, but a similar coat is that of a Count of Montesquien. They are certainly a pair and therefore must have some relation to each other, but at the time of writing, full information is not to hand.

Turning to Fig. XXI, will be seen an unmarked Irish flagon of c. 1760. Its dimensions are as follows: extreme height 11½ ins., diameter of base 7¼ ins., weight nearly 5½ lbs. This is the only definite type known to Ireland, and it has been found in both lidded and unlidded examples. It is very much like the earlier English flagons with regard to its drum and base and the absence of any adornment to the drum adds to its attraction. The bold sweeping handle shows definite Irish character.

That eminent authority on old pewter, the late Howard H. Cotterell, whose passing I still deplore, for he was a great friend and so ever ready to encourage a young collector, was most emphatic in stating that the evidence was all in favour of footed plates having been used for Church purposes and not as cakestands or domestic salvers. Shown according to their age are three of these footed patens. Fig. XXII is the earliest and with a gad-rooned edge to the rim of the paten and foot, its diameter is 9¾ ins. and height 3½ ins. It bears the mark of John Barlow, London (O.P. 256), c. 1699-1710.

The larger specimen, Fig. XXIII, is of 11¾ ins. diameter and 3½ ins. high and would date from c. 1720. It was made by John Newham, London (O.P. 3372), and he was given leave to strike his touch on January 14th, 1700.

The third of these footed patens, and shown at Fig. XXIV, has a diameter of 9 ins. and height of 2¾ ins. It is touched with four hall-marks attributed to Edward Yorke, London (O.P. 5358), c. 1733-76, but owing to one of the marks being almost detrited, it cannot definitely be assigned to him.

One of the early finds for this collection was made at Beaconsfield, Bucks, in the shape of the rose-water bowl (Fig. XXV).

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It shows the usual raised central boss found on such pieces; sometimes this boss was an elaborate display of the Royal Arms in various coloured enamels, but in this case it is quite plain. Dating at c. 1650, with a narrow rim of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  ins. and diameter of 14 ins., it has besides ownership initials on the rim, a small touch mark on the back of the rim, but as so often happens with earlier pewter, the mark is too much worn to be identified.

In Fig. XXVI is seen one of the so-called York flagons, straight-sided this time. If compared with the York "Acorn" type, Fig. XI, it will be noticed that the handle and thumbpiece are identical and, as far as I know, solely confined to these two rare types. This flagon has the serrated



Fig. XXII. FOOTED PATEN with a gadrooned edge to the rim of the paten and foot. John Barlow, London, c. 1699-1710



Fig. XXIII. FOOTED PATEN, diameter  $11\frac{3}{8}$  ins., height  $3\frac{1}{8}$  ins. John Newham of London, c. 1720

projection to the lip of the cover, found to a large extent on late Stuart tankards.

Dating at c. 1720-40 and with base diameter  $5\frac{7}{8}$  ins., total height 11 ins., its weight is just over 4 lbs. and it is unmarked.

Fig. XXVII is a recent photograph of a portion of the dining room once again, and if compared with Fig. II of Part I it can be noticed that the collection has improved since its early days. A number of lidded baluster wine measures now adorn the top

of the court cupboard, amongst them a set of five with bud thumbpiece from the half-gallon to gill and a rare pint size baluster measure with the earlier hammer-head thumbpiece. Over the fireplace, top shelf, are a pair of Scottish chalices of c. 1760, inscribed UN. AS. CONGN. MUIRKIRK (Union Associate Congregation Muirkirk) and three broad rim dishes of the late 17th century. These dishes, with several smaller ones of the same period, came from Oxford and were the pick of over a hundred plates and dishes from a branch of the Arnatt family and had been in their possession since originally purchased, the ownership initials on all the pewter confirm this. Below these pieces are flagons, some of them



Fig. XXIV. FOOTED PATEN, diameter 9 ins., height  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ins., attributed to Edward Yorke of London, c. 1733-76

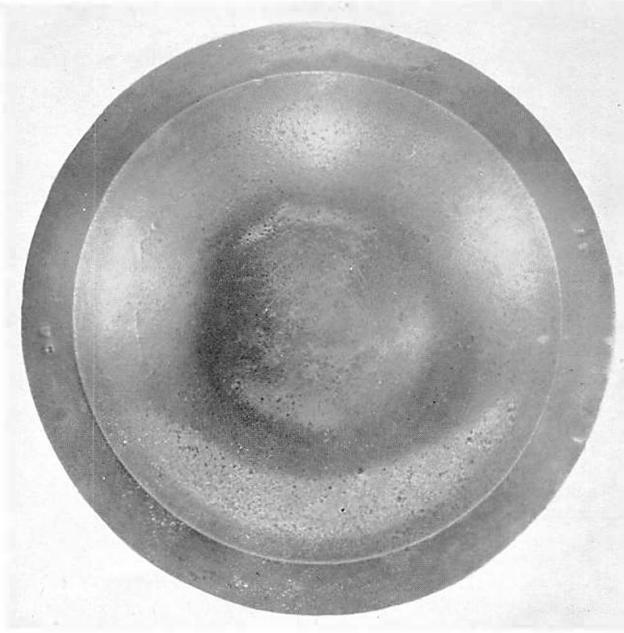


Fig. XXV. An early find made at Beaconsfield, in the shape of a rose-water bowl, diameter 14 ins., rim 1½ ins., c. 1650. The mark is too worn to identify

Fig. XXVI. *Right:* So-called York flagon (straight sided) with the serrated projection to cover lip found on Stuart tankards, c. 1720-40. Height 11 ins., base 5⅞ ins., unmarked



Fig. XXVII. *Below:* Lidded baluster wine measures displayed on the court cupboard, a pair of Scottish chalices, c. 1760, are on top shelf of mantelpiece, and three broad rim dishes late XVIIth century



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already described. The one on the extreme left, of c. 1760, is inscribed "Whatfield" and came originally from Suffolk.

If only to prove my previous statement that early and interesting pewter is still to be found, turn to Fig. XXVIII, and here is one of the earliest types of English flagons, discovered a few days ago and since commencing this article, in a small Sussex town and was glimpsed in a shop window when passing through. It is in really fine condition and so heavily patinated that I doubt if it has been cleaned for well over a hundred years. Its date, c. 1605-20, of massive construction and very thick metal, its extreme height is  $11\frac{3}{8}$  ins., base diameter 5 ins., and weight over 4½ lbs. A desirable acquisition and I was extremely happy to have found such a fine veteran, even though it is unmarked.

These early flagons are beautiful in their purity of form and outline. What a splendid job of work they were, so solid and substantial and how well they stood the test of time. All honour to the pewterer, but it was an age when the standards of design and craftsmanship were at their very highest and nothing but the best would be countenanced.

The historical associations are worth considering, for a moment, for between the years 1605-1620, when these flagons were fashioned, the *Mayflower* set sail for New England and such great and worthy men as William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson were living.

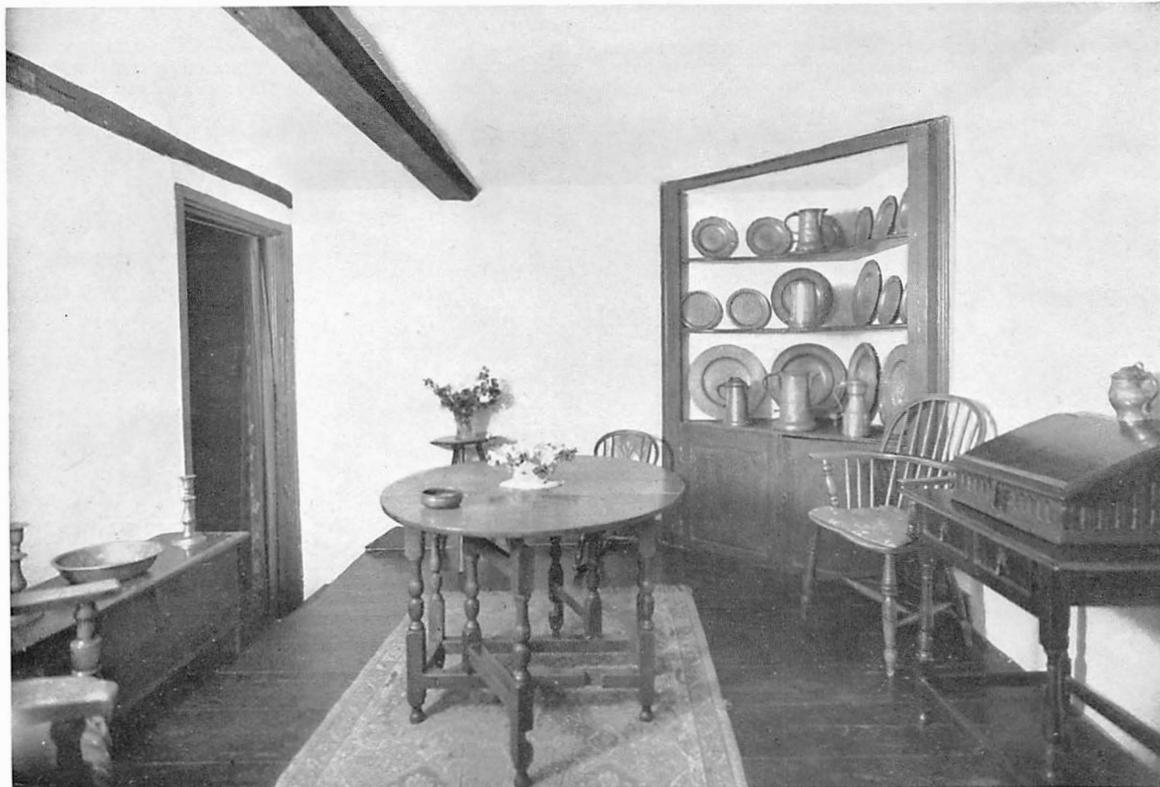
The final photograph, Fig. XXIX, shows pewter in a little room that has always been called the pantry. It is delightfully cool in summer for it is perched over a large underground dairy. Entrance to it is by way of three steps up from the hall and in one of the steps is cut a circular peephole looking right into the dairy, no doubt used years ago to keep a watchful eye upon the dairymaids. Here is more pewter, all of it linked with happy memories.

In conclusion, there is about old pewter a simplicity of contour and colour, a certain restfulness and homely charm, so very difficult to describe, but always there for the enjoyment of the pewter lover in leisure hours.



Fig. XXVIII. *Right*: Early type of English flagon found during the writing of this article, c. 1605-20. Height  $11\frac{3}{8}$  ins., base 5 ins., unmarked

Fig. XXIX. "Here, in a delightfully cool room for hot summer days, is more pewter, all of it linked with happy memories"



# THE EARLY GEORGIAN TEA TABLE

BY JOHN ELTON

THE habit of drinking tea has a history of nearly three centuries in England, dating from its beginnings in Charles II's reign. It remained a precious and expensive luxury until the reign of George I, but in 1715 we are told that tea drinking had become generally customary among "well-regulated families." Though the cost of tea dropped during the course of the century, it still remained a luxury, and tea was kept in caddies under lock and key. A writer in 1753 records that in the country, people used tea, but they seldom opened the tea chest but to the best company and that less than a pound lasted them for a twelvemonth. A few years later, Hanway writes of the "wild infatuation" of poor people who clubbed together for the appliances for the "fantastic amusement" of tea drinking. The reduction in the price coincides with the creation of special types of tables for the service of tea. XVIIIth century tea equipages are well recorded in conversation pieces (which have been defined as "groups of family portraits, connected by some common interest or occupation") and the informal grouping of the family, and the still life renderings of porcelain, silver, and furniture are very attractive. Such pictures show that tea was at first served unaccompanied by eatables. In an unidentified picture once known as the Walpole family painted with attention to details about 1729, the service is set out on a table, while a maid-servant has just lifted a silver kettle from a low tripod stand, on which a lamp stands. The mistress of the house is pouring tea from a canister into its cap; and beside her is a caddy with two compartments. To the right of the picture, a servant in livery is carrying a silver coffee pot. A small milk ewer is on the table; but these do not appear to have been made to match the tea service until the middle of the XVIIIth century. The conversation piece by R. Collins (below) shows the oriental cups without handles, the canister, and the kettle on its silver stand. The customary tea equipage can also be reconstructed from English and American inventories. Tea tables and "tea boards" appear in American and English inventories of the early and middle years of the century. In the inventory of the goods belonging to an American, Peter Cunningham, in 1740, are listed china cups and saucers, fine handle cups, a slop basin with a plate beneath, a milk pot, teapot with its plate and a boat for spoons. The tea was kept in a shagreen tea chest. In the early part of the century japanned tea tables are frequently listed

in inventories, but when their perishable surface decoration became shabby these disappeared from well-to-do interiors.

Tea and other tripod tables were often finely finished. A visitor to America while George Washington was President, states that tea parties were invented by avarice, in "order to see company cheap," but adds that the greatest expense was in the furniture, which was of mahogany. The serviceable tripod (or "pillar and claw") table which was used both as a tea table and for "occasional" purposes, appears frequently in conversation pieces. Their tops ranged from a flat, un moulded surface to patterns with a moulded edge or fretted rim. The top is usually hinged to a square bed, above a "bird-cage" support, consisting of dwarf balusters, which enables the top to tilt when not in use. A small spring catch fixed underneath the top engages it into a socket when the top is in its horizontal position. This bird-cage device is clearly seen in the table (Fig. I). The moulded rim (described as "scolloped" in accounts) was often superseded in George III's reign by a gallery of small turned spindles, as being less expensive in labour. The pillar, or shaft, is sometimes of columnar, sometimes of baluster form, having a bulbous enlargement spirally fluted or carved with acanthus leaves. In the table (Fig. I) the square top is surrounded by a spindle gallery, and the legs are lightly carved with low relief detail and foliage. In the table with an octagonal top, the gallery is pierced in the Chinese taste (and including among its frets the swastika) and the cabriole legs are also perforated to accord with the gallery, while the upper face of the legs is carved in low relief with decorated cabochons and foliage (Fig. II). In the third example (Fig. III) the cluster-column shaft is triangular in section, and clasped by a decorated band, while the tripod finishes in the French (volute) foot. The tripod loses much of its bulk during the middle Georgian period, and the usual termination of the foot is the "French." In Chippendale's *Director* (1754) two lightly-built galleried tables are figured, one having cabriole the other tapered legs, and they are described as serving as tea tables or for holding a set of china. The rectangular table with its larger top allowed more space for the tea equipage, and also appears in several conversation pieces dating from the second part of the XVIIIth century. The flat-topped Pembroke table was in favour as a tea table in the late Georgian period. Accompanying the tea table was a small tripod stand (to support the tea kettle) such as the example (Fig. IV) where the fretted gallery is splayed, and the enlargement and the upper face of the tripod are carved in low relief. The late XVIIIth century stands, with splayed and tapered legs, which were made in a variety of woods besides mahogany, are figured in the *Guide* (1788).



A FAMILY TAKING TEA  
about 1725, by Richard Collins  
Victoria and Albert Museum

## BOOKS RECEIVED

- EUGENE DELACROIX DRAWINGS. (Bruno Cassirer. 9/6.)  
FRENCH DRAWINGS AT WINDSOR CASTLE. (Phaidon. 25/-.)  
RODIN. By RAINER MARIA RILKE. (Grey Walls Press Ltd. 7/6.)  
THE ENGLISHMAN BUILDS. By RALPH TUBBS. (Penguin Book. 3/6.)  
GAUDIER-BRZESKA DRAWINGS. By HORACE BRODZKY. (Faber. 30/-.)

# A BERKSHIRE PEWTER TAVERN POT



*When every blessed thing you hold,  
Is made of silver or of gold,  
You long for simple pewter.*

W. S. GILBERT, "The Gondoliers".



**T**AVERN pots can be of great interest to collectors, and the illustrations show possibly one of the finest yet discovered. This example of the pewterer's craft stands 7 ins. to the lip and is inscribed:

"John Little att ye Horse & Jockey in Reading 99" (Ninety-nine being the last year of the 17th century.)

Above the inscription can also be seen the very terse statement:

"IF SOLD STOLE"

thus giving the souvenir hunter of that time little chance of disposing of his booty.

Stamped close to the handle will be noticed the Arms of Reading, proving that the capacity of the pot had been checked for accuracy by a local official. This mark, together with a crowned W.R. (not seen in the photograph) is evidence that these verification marks were stamped in the reign of William III.

Very few of these unlidded tavern pots remain. They were made of fine quality metal and in many cases were inscribed with the name of the landlord and his inn, thereby adding considerably to their interest. The broad bands around the drum may possibly claim descent from the iron bands used on the wooden vessels which preceded them.

Of great interest is the pewterer's touch-mark which is struck inside the bottom of

by Cyril C.  
Minchin

this pot. The mark shows a blackamoor's head with the initials H.F. in a small beaded circle. Research on the subject suggests that this must be the mark of Henry Frewin, a Reading pewterer who was born in 1635, and died in the early part of the 18th century.

His father, also Henry, born in 1598, died in 1664, was likewise a Reading pewterer, and he seems to have been a man of some importance in the town. The Worshipful Company of Pewterers records that Henry Frewin senior was apprenticed in 1612 to William Hurdman of London for eight years. In the Reading Corporation records it is noted:

"Friday, 17th September, 1624—At this daye Henry Frewin being a freman of London and there using the trade of pewterer, making pewter, requesteth his freedome of this towne, being here borne and here to use his trade".

It seems almost certain that his request was granted and that he commenced his trade as a pewterer in Reading in that year,

for in 1628 he has John Pearse apprenticed to him for seven years, and John Wilder in 1635 for a similar period.

The Corporation records show that he was elected Mayor on August 29, 1653. For some time he lived in James Winch's house in Friar Street, he was there in 1649, and his name appears in St. Laurence's Hearth Tax return in 1663.

Both father and son may have had some interest in recasting the bells of St. Laurence's Church. The church records show that at a meeting of the parishioners on May 29, 1662, it was "Agreed that the five bells in the steeple be made into eight tunable bells". Among those present was Mr. Henry Frewin. Again a year later, in 1663: "Item paid Mr. Frewin for tinn put into the Bells £8 13s. 0d.

Some fine well-wrought pewter dishes have been found in Berkshire with Henry Frewin's touch. Two are dated 1679 and 1683, with yet another in Reading Museum dated 1690. 682T

Cyril C. Minchin is a past president of the Pewter Society.

# A Berkshire Farmer's Collection of

described by Mr.

CYRIL C. MINCHIN

himself—who, at Norcot Farm, Reading, has made this collection and from there sends the pictures too.

## OLD PEWTER

In the other photograph (centre) is a graceful measure 6½ ins. in height. It is an interesting seventeenth century baluster measure, having a thumb-piece resembling a hammer-head. The type is unique, as it was solely confined to pewter, and was never found in any other metal, although the fashion and shapes used at different periods for silver were copied to a great extent in pewter.

### My Scotch "Tappit Hen"

Behind the baluster measure is a pleasing example of a triple-reeded 9-in. plate; also seventeenth century, and by a London maker.

Another possession of which I am proud is a

Scotch measure, mid-eighteenth century, known as a Tappit Hen. It is nearly 11 ins. high and its capacity is a Scotch pint, which is equal to three English ones. This type was only found in Scotland, and has always been most popular with collectors.

With it I have another seventeenth century dish; this time 15 ins. in diameter, and admittedly of a slightly later period than the broad-rimmed previously mentioned. It has what is known as a triple-reeded rim, and is a fine piece, bearing the marks of Robert Lock, of London.

A most interesting early rose-water bowl is another of my treasures. It is of mid-seventeenth century date; 14 ins. diameter; and quite deep; having a raised central boss. Very few of these English bowls have come down to us.

Pewter is shown to its best advantage when in company with old oak; for oak is its affinity, and though it will to some extent harmonise with walnut, with mahogany never. Neither should brass or copper or, in fact, any other metal ware be displayed with pewter. For, like oil and water, they will not mix. Far better confine the pewter to one room than spoil the soft effect of its sheen.

Never overcrowd pewter, or each piece will lose something of its own individuality.

### On Making a Collection

One word as to cleaning. The writer cleans his collection but thrice a year, and it stays bright during the intervals. Actually, pewter is far less trouble to keep clean than other metals.

Do not be misled into thinking that a big collection is necessarily a fine one, for some of the finest are small and specialised. It is, indeed, better to limit a collection; for there can be but little pleasure from association with row after row of nineteenth century coffee, tea and pepper pots and tavern measures—and, to use an Irishism, most of the pewter tea and coffee pots are not made of pewter at all.

There are excellent books on the subject; the most comprehensive "Old

On the right is the Stuart dish and the eighteenth century flagon. Below, the seventeenth century baluster measure and plate.



a clergyman arriving at the vicarage of a new parish discovered in his

greenhouse an old flagon. Later, to get rid of it, he put it in a jumble sale. But no one fell in love with it, and finally it was sold, together with a couple of flat irons, for a shilling or two. Within a very short time, a collector had paid £45 for that dirty old flagon, and was delighted to do so.

### To Keep You Young!

These things still happen. Treasures are still waiting to be found; for always, just around the corner—maybe in attic or cellar, derelict and unwanted—is a rare and valuable old piece waiting to be recognised.

May good hunting be yours. It will keep you young if nothing else, and at least prove a refreshing change from the daily round, for most of us, of cows, chickens and pigs.

which represents a lifetime's research on the subject.

Apert from the interest gained in forming a collection, it can become a profitable investment; for the earlier pieces command big prices from the connoisseur.

To quote an example—not long ago



Pewter, Its Makers and Marks," by Howard H. Cotterell,



Mr. Minchin's Roman-British ewer.

### Treasure Trove

English pewter made prior to the seventeenth century is so scarce as to be almost non-existent. Yet there is ample proof that the Romans used pewter vessels. The photograph on the right shows a Roman-British ewer, dating from the second century, which I discovered. Although it is seven hundred years old, it is still in a remarkable state of preservation. It stands 13 ins. high, and is probably the finest example which has so far come to light.

A representative collection of pewter can soon be gleaned, hunted for, and found, even in these days. One hears of collectors bemoaning the fact that all the treasures have long since been discovered; but it is not so. There will always be treasures for the zealous seeker, and some of the writer's finds are illustrated here. All of them have been found in recent years.

At the top of this page, on the right, is a rare eighteenth century West-country flagon. It is 11 ins. high, and though there is no inscription on it, it was undoubtedly at one time used as a communion flagon in a country church. It has the mark of Humphrey Evans, who was a pewterer at Exeter.

### A Hammer-head Thumb-piece

Standing behind it is a remarkably fine 17-in. Stuart dish. Notice its fine proportions, enhanced by the broad rim: which was a noticeable feature during the Stuart period, and makes this most desirable acquisition for any collection. These broad-rimmed dishes occasionally to be met with; but ones of 9 ins. to 10 ins. diameter with broad rims are most difficult to find, and very rare.

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