

## AN EARLY TAPPIT HEN

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**M**OST collectors of Scottish pewter are familiar with the series of marks used by Edinburgh pewterers which are recorded on the Edinburgh Touchplates. These touches include the town mark (a castle), the craftsman's mark or initials and usually a date, and are found on tappit hens of the Seventeenth and the greater part of the Eighteenth Centuries. Probably, however, few are aware that the pewterers of *all* Scottish burghs were required by law to put a similar mark on their wares. A tappit hen (No. i) bearing a fine example of one of these marks recently came into my possession. The mark, which is shown in No. ii, is in perfect condition—a tribute to the quality of the pewter—and consists of a pot of lilies (the town mark of Dundee) flanked by the initials T.F. So far as I can ascertain this mark has not hitherto been identified or recorded, but there is little doubt that it is the touch of Thomas Forrest, pewterer of Dundee, who was made a freeman in 1693. On the top of the lid are engraved the initials <sup>AP</sup><sub>EB</sub>, while on the lip the initials IP

with the date 1763 have been roughly inscribed. The former, occupying as they do the normal position for the owners' initials, may reasonably be assumed to be those of the original owners, while IP would be a later owner and, judging by the final letter, probably a descendant.

It is interesting to compare this measure, a chopin, with other pieces of known date in order to see how far this confirms its suggested authorship. No. iii shows the only other known tappit hen by a seventeenth-century pewterer—J. Aber-



No. II.—ENLARGED VIEW OF HEAD OF NO. I WITH TOWN MARK AND MAKER'S INITIALS



No. I.—PEWTER TAPPIT HEN, CHOPIN CAPACITY MARK OF THOMAS FORREST : DUNDEE F. 1693



No. III.—PEWTER TAPPIT HEN, CHOPIN SIZE MARK OF JAMES ABERNETHIE : EDINBURGH 1669



No. IV.—PEWTER TAPPIT HEN, MUTCHKIN  
PROBABLY BY JOHN TAIT : EDIN. F. 1700

nethie, Edinburgh—and is our only source of information as to their shape and in-



No. VI.—'GILDING THE LILY': A CRESTED  
TAPPIT HEN : SCOTS PINT : CIRCA 1800

deed their existence prior to 1700. The stone group of figures on the sixteenth-century Cross Well at Linlithgow, amongst which is one holding a tappit hen, is of no value for the purpose as the structure has thrice been repaired since the Sixteenth Century. On two of these occasions it was completely reconstructed, once in 1659 following a visit by Cromwell and again in 1807, and the tappit hen represented is a typical one of the latter period. The 'Abernethie' measure is also a chopin and the touch bears the date 1669. Since it was illustrated in Ingleby Wood's *Scottish Pewterware and Pewterers* the body has been considerably restored and its distinctive shape can be better appreciated. If one were justified in generalizing from a single example it would seem that the characteristic features of seventeenth-century tappit hens were a slender elegant body with an entire absence of shoulder



No. V.—DUNDEE MEASURE BETWEEN TWO TYPICAL EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY TAPPIT HENS  
A MUTCHKIN, BY A. COULTHART : EDIN. F. 1720 : YOUNG COLLN. & SCOTS PINT, CANONGATE (?)

separating head from waist, a somewhat primitive handle, which, judging by its flat section, probably swept down in a continuous curve without the sharp bend typical of eighteenth-century pieces, a high hinge lug, heavy wedge-shaped lid attachment and characteristic thumbpiece. These peculiarities of lid attachment and thumbpiece and the regular sweep of the handle are also found in the fine mutchkin reproduced in No. iv, from Cotterell's *Pewter down the Ages*. This bears a much worn touch with the date 170—, which appears to be that of John Tait, freeman of Edinburgh in 1700. It is almost certainly of the first decade of that century.

In No. v the Dundee measure is shown between two typical eighteenth-century tappit hens, a mutchkin (left) of about 1720 and a Scots pint probably of the second half of the century. Here we have a sturdier type, dignified rather than ele-

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### A BURLESQUE BAND, ETC.

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sives could wreck both transmitters and receivers more completely. If we can get one of our modern composers to restore the dulcet tones of the Marrow Bones and Cleavers in a suitable Ode to the Triumphant Victory of our Royal Air Force, then will come the time for their real enjoyment.

### THE INFLUENCE OF EUROPE ON JAPAN

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weavers at that time. In conclusion, it is interesting to remark that Marcus Huish, in writing on the influence of Europe on the Art of Japan, found that 'the Art introduced (into Japan) was considerable in volume and wide-spread . . . and that it was of such a type as to commend itself to an artistically trained race' (*The Japan Society*, 1892, 3). But in looking for examples of this influence his researches showed 'that its effect, if any, has absolutely and entirely disappeared from the pages of the Art of Japan.' He concluded that this was due to the great reaction which took place in Japan to Christianity and finally to all foreigners. In this conclusion he was undoubtedly right, and the examples of that influence here illustrated must be regarded as mere isolated instances which weathered the storm that swept the relics of an exotic cultural phase from the pages of history.

### AN EARLY TAPPIT HEN

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gant, with a heavy cylindrical head and a thick waist. The handle resembles the figure '7' and the lid attachment is broad and flat. These features remained practically unchanged until the introduction of the Imperial standard capacities in 1826, so much so that it is impossible to date unmarked pieces of this period with any degree of accuracy. Even the crested variety, shown in No. vi, which was in favour between 1780 and 1820, only differs in the presence of a knop on the lid, an adornment rather out of keeping with the simple dignity of the tappit hen.

It is evident that the 'Tait' mutchkin and the Dundee measure occupy a position inter-

mediate between the 1669 chopin and the standard eighteenth-century type. The mutchkin still retains the early thumbpiece and lid attachment but has developed a pronounced sturdiness of body. The shoulder between head and waist has appeared, though not yet fully developed, and the body and head show the shallow flutings, which did not become the standard decoration until towards the end of the Eighteenth Century. Its purposeful handle is unique. The Dundee measure, though at a casual glance showing a close relationship with the eighteenth-century type, has a small well-tapered head and high slender waist which give it a certain elegance reminiscent of the 1669 chopin. The shoulder is fully developed but the prominent hinge lug and heavy lid attachment are still in evidence. The handle with its massive head and graceful sweep, the ornamental bands round the head of the measure and the strengthening band at the foot are peculiar to itself, though the last is sometimes found in a modified form on nineteenth-century tappit hens. These latter features confirm the dating of the piece at a time when the design was apparently still in the course of development.

One cannot help being struck by the contrast between the unusual variety found in tappit hens of this period, and the strict uniformity that prevailed during the century which followed. Probably the measure was of recent origin and a standard design had not yet been evolved. The crudity in some respects of the 1669 chopin supports this theory and it seems doubtful if these measures were made before the middle of the Seventeenth Century. This period also produced the pot-bellied measure, which in the north of Scotland filled the place of the tappit hen.

It will be noticed that the earliest tappit hens are either mutchkins or chopins—I know of at least two others of dates prior to 1725. The earliest touch that I can trace on a Scots pint is that of Wm. Hunter who was not made a freeman till 1749, though an unmarked measure in the Royal Scottish Museum is inscribed—'Bull Inn, 1745.' Can it be that the type was never made in the full Scots pint size, the real 'Tappit Hen,' until towards the middle of the Eighteenth Century?