

A Porringer to think about



Original Query –

*After reading your article, we have what appears to be, a quite plain early English porringer. We know nothing about the subject and this one has been in the family for years!
Just out of curiosity we decided to do a little research. Perhaps you could tell us more about this bowl and if it is of any interest, please feel free to use the photos on your web site.*

The diameter measures 6 1/2" Depth measures 1 3/4" The width across the ears 9 3/4"

The base is inscribed --- I CHOKER and there is what appears to be a Tudor Rose in the centre.

Response from a very experienced collector of porringers –

I think caution is justified. The shapes of the bowl (particularly the deep rim) and ears don't match any of those recorded by Michaelis. Now that isn't enough to condemn it because we do come across new shapes from time to time, but the rose is highly suspect, and I can't see why one would have an engraved rose on a genuine early porringer. I can't match the bowl or ear shapes to any of those in Dutch catalogues either. I think I've seen this shape of bowl/ear on pieces that have been a more-blatant fake/forgery, but I can't remember where. From the underside, the ears looked as though they had been soldered on, but I couldn't be sure.

Further thoughts - the porringer shape bowl looks as though well used but the ears look as if added new much later. The rose is likely (not certain but likely) to deceive, and the name a former owner's - perhaps. Of course none of this is certain and if deceit did take place it is may have happened in the 1920s or so, as well off collectors were then gathering and others were "finding" for them.

The owner also pointed out, that after applying an enormous amount of pressure to the ears of the bowl, there was no movement whatsoever. He thought this might suggest that the ears were moulded to the bowl. If they had been soldered on as an after thought, he suggested they would have yielded slightly, if not given way altogether!

He also remarked on the strange crudely incised symbol that can be seen underneath one of the ears.



[A further response from the collector –](#)

Ears were normally cast on, the give-away being the linen mark on the inside. Making the ears an integral part of the mould for the bowl wouldn't make any sense because that would have prevented the pewterer turning the bowl on a lathe to finish it off (or at least, made turning on the crude lathes available very difficult). Pewterers weren't supposed to solder ears to the body, although some must have done so because otherwise there would have been no need for an edict against them. However, I am not convinced that a well-soldered joint would have been significantly weaker than a cast-on joint. A cast-on joint is effectively a weld because the two parts are fused together.

One of the appreciable advantages of exchanges such as this is the opportunity for this writer (and hopefully for website readers) to learn a little more about these matters.