

TOWNELEY HALL

In family ownership for over 500 years, the Towneley family of Burnley sold the Hall to the Burnley Council in 1901 with some surrounding Parkland. The Hall has been open to the public as a place of Historical interest and local Heritage. Exhibitions and events of interest to the local community have also been staged here. A shop and separate café, private garden centre and parkland provide added attraction. The parkland itself hosts a local golf club.

An introductory letter produced a friendly response from the curator of 37 years standing, Susan Bourne, who asked if I could help her to update the catalogue of the pewter that had been gifted to Towneley Hall over the years. There was no Towneley family pewter given with the property and the objects in the collection now are instead gifts from as far away as Southport but also from local farming families. There are some ninety pieces mostly sadware in the collection with an emphasis on pewter from Wigan and some from Bristol - all of it English made.

During two visits on November 4 and 13, 2008, the curator Susan Bourne and I recorded their entire pewter collection which included photographing and writing a description of each piece, with a reference to each object with available marks. Another day spent at home correcting copy and using the PS database for further accuracy with some very limited editing of photographs, I then provided this information in such a form that Towneley Hall could save it all on their computers and also adapt to their recording system.

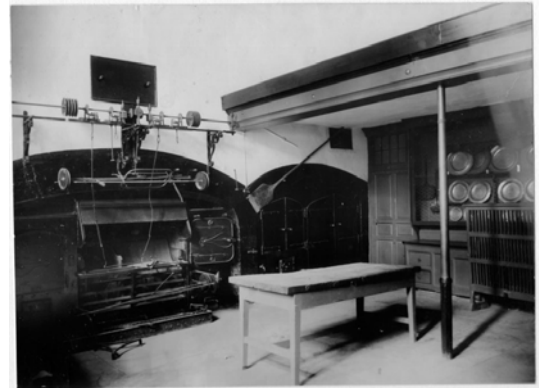
Fifteen hot water plates and six or more 9 inch plates by Garrad Ford of Wigan were severely damaged (the latter ones with rim-splits above the bouge). A broadrimmed plate, some marks never seen before and perhaps six or twelve marks in total of some use for the Pewter Society Database made it all worth while and turned a tiring day or two into a rewarding experience. Doubly so because of the sheer enthusiasm and encouragement of the Curator and her staff, not to mention the lack of cost to me on the day!

The Towneley Hall pewter is mainly used for decorating the kitchen area. Some of the chargers I was able to state were interesting might now get more of an airing, however.

After my visit I was asked if I would be willing to help them to put on an exhibition at the Hall in early 2010, also with the use of pewter from my own collection. Perhaps members of the Pewter Society who have been involved in similar efforts might have words of advice as how to make such an exhibition effective?

It is my hope that I can further pursue my interest in Pewter by offering such assistance to other venues and also to individuals or heritage groups that might be interested in the subject, with the proviso that such places are no more than a comfortable car journey from my home so that I might go and return in the day.

Towneley Hall Burnley Lancashire BB11 3RQ is open Monday to Thursday, (closed Friday) and Saturday and Sunday from 12 noon to 5 pm. 01282 424213 www.towneleyhall.org.uk



Towneley Hall, Burnley, also showing the kitchen with the 'range' and to the right a large rack displaying some of the pewter.



Broad Rim 18 1/2" Dish likely from the middle 1600s. A set of difficult to read hallmarks to the front. The rim is 3 3/4" and hence 40% of the overall diameter. No marks could be found to the back though there might be very faint remains but it is too difficult to tell or to get any image other than of oxidation. Ownership initials of I D M to the front rim. Small holes and cracks detract. The interest is if the hallmarks can be deciphered and placed. The last hallmark is a puzzle especially as it might say D Y C in which case it would be unlikely to be English - other than the style of plate is likely far too early to be anything but English, bearing as it does, contemporary hallmarks.



Unrecorded and unidentified marks perhaps of a provincial pewterer by name of Robert Tomlisson (today there are by chance 34 Tomlinsons in the BT directory for Wigan). Research on the name Tomlisson *with this spelling* got some 80 hits. One hit concerned Wolverhampton c. 1735 plus and another the general location where this name was used - Derbyshire was one and a county in N Wales another. Likely too late for this to be a European useage as the plate is a plain rimmed standard piece taken usually as being about 1720 onwards. Perhaps this pewterer then became free in Queen Anne's time and used the A R on his mark accordingly. Jan Gadd suggests that this would take it outside London and it would also be late enough to escape the eagle eyes of officers of the London Company. Jan also reports seeing only one provincial W R used before and says there are no other provincial pewterer's own touchmarks (including name, crown and rose) known of, with A R also used.

Furthermore on the remains of the second touch there appears to be another name at the base JO MA**** so perhaps a Joseph Ma*****. A partner? The business he has taken on? (Marsden/Maud**?) All guesswork but intriguing.



one hall mark enlarged –
- note the shape of the shield and the whiplash apparent in the tail

20 1/2" Pewter Dish Multi reeded 3 1/4" rim making it perhaps a semi broadrim. Some clues remain as to maker with unusual hallmarks of what look as though winged dragons repeated. A touchmark to the back that is nearly impossible to read anything though remains of a name are there. Ownership initials in a 1600s style the triad is in almost crown like shapes of W W E..... so mid to late 1600s. The split is serious and past reasonable repair. The interest here is if the hallmarks can be identified Alyson Marsden thinks they are four Lions and likely to be those of Roger Willoughby of Bristol.



The marks of **Thomas Boulton I**, 1723 - 1750 OP504A The Bolton family of Wallgate, Wigan - the marks had previously only been sketched and were here cleanly shown on a 14 ½ inch plain rimmed dish. The attribution to Thomas Senior is kindly given by Jamie Ferguson.