















*The Journal of The Pewter Society Volume 11 No 3
Spring 1998*

**Hallmarks - fake and pseudo silver marks on pewter in 1636
and later. By Jan Gadd.**

March, 1998

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>Nicholas Kelk 1638 – 1688 London</p> |  <p>John Stile 1688 – 1746 London</p> |
|  <p>John Shorey I 1683 – 1722 London</p> |  <p>Thomas Shakle I 1675 – 1709 London</p> |
|  <p>William White (Wette) 1661 – 1684 London</p> |  <p>Samuel Jackson 1658 – 1716 London</p> |
|  <p>John Barlow 1698 – 1744 London</p> |  <p>Again John Barlow 1698 – 1744 London</p> |
|  <p>John Greenbank II 1675 – 1700 Worcester</p> |  <p>John Trapp II 1677-1713 Worcester</p> |
|  <p>John Sherrington 1694 – 1714 Wigan</p> |  <p>Jonathan Ingles 1668 – 1705 London and Southampton</p> |
|  <p>George Smith 1651 – 1698 London and Derby – the first three hallmarks may appear in any order.</p> |  <p>Samuel Smith 1727 – 1761 London</p> |

This is the year that the Goldsmiths' Company decided to take action both against an individual pewterer and later in 1636 against the Pewterer's Company for the malpractice of using silver hallmarks on pewter.

The librarian of the Goldsmiths' Company, Mr David Beasley, has kindly researched this incident from the Company's archives and given his permission for his observations to be published here:

The details of the particular case are recorded in the Court Minutes of the Goldsmiths' Company. In the minutes of the 12 January 1635/6 (Court Minute Book S, part II, fo. 166r) a pewter trencher plate bearing the leopard's head, the lion and the letter "s" was put into the hands of the Wardens who were much concerned with the deceit which might practised, (those marks resembling those used on all plate and vessels of silver to be marked at the Hall in this year). With the assistance of the King's Engraver of the Mint, Mr Greene, a warrant was to be processed against the pewterer and the engraver of the stamps. Some months later (7 July 1636) the Clerk reported that the pewterers and the engraver of the stamps had all been prosecuted and had been fined. He requested that the trencher plate in question be returned to its owner and the counterfeit stamps kept in the Company's Treasury. An account of the Company's petition to the King and to the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen followed. The Pewterers' Company was required to order its members to strike one mark only on their plate; to confiscate any stamps which were similar to the Goldsmiths and to hand them over to the Goldsmiths; and to melt down or deface the marks on all pewter currently bearing those similar marks. (His order was dated the 3 March 1635/6). The indictment in Latin followed - the names are in Latin but may be Richard (Radus - Ricardus) - Hall, the engraver, and William Artyn, the pewterer (Court Minute Book S, part II fo 209-211r.).

Mr Beasley asked me to point out that his research covered the earlier period only and that the Latin names could be interpreted differently.

The Pewterers' Company-records suggest that the first offender's name was indeed William Artyne. He was from London Thorpe in Lincolnshire, was free in 1621 and had his own shop in April 1622. He was apprenticed 1613-1621 to Peter Brocklesby I, together with Brocklesby's son, Peter Brocklesby II, both guilty of similar and other offences as can be seen below.

It is interesting to note that the engraver, logically, was fined as well as the pewterer! These engravers and die-makers would of course have supplied goldsmiths and pewterers alike.

So severe, then, were the prospective consequences for the pewterers and the potential disgrace for the Pewterers' Company that it must be regarded as highly unlikely that the practice was carried on systematically by officers of the Company in the following decades! That the Goldsmiths still kept a watchful eye on counterfeit pewter is apparent from their Court Book during the years of 1638, 1639 and 1643 where the

above Brocklesbys, who seem to have been "serial-offenders", appear twice. Under the date of July 21, 1638 (not July 20 as noted by Markham) it is stated that the full Court was not sitting:

"... but taking into consideration the abuse of a pewterer in Holborn who setteth 4 marks upon his pewter in resemblance of the silver touch by name Peter Brocklesby one dish of whose making was brought hither by Francis Baker, the engraver, who complains of the abuse herein, whereupon Mr Roberts, one of the Wardens of the Pewterers was now sent for and after the clerk had read unto him the letter from the Lords of the Council directed unto Sir Christopher Clitherowe, late Lord Mayor of London and the order of the Court of Aldermen made in that behalf he did acknowledge the same to be a great abuse."

The Master and the other Warden Mr Fulham and Brooks of the Pewterers' Company were called in after the meeting and were "acquainted with the matter" and accompanied the Goldsmiths' Warden (the Master of the Goldsmiths' Company) on the search. With such large and impressive entourage on the march, it was not at all surprising to note that Brocklesby had disappeared and with him the offending pewter. The search-party did, however, find and confiscate silver "pounsons" in his absence. Upon their return to the Goldsmiths' Hall the pewterers were told to "deal with the offender at the next meeting." - all this in one single day!

The Goldsmiths' pursued this case and could on June 22 (not June 20 as in Markham/Prideaux), 1639 report to the Court of Assistants of the Goldsmiths' Company:

"This day Mr Wardens receiving information that Vaughan the graver in Kerry Lane had diverse parcels of pewter of silver fashion and stamps with 4 marks in resemblance of the silver touch....the said pewter being made and sold by one Peter Brocklesby a pewterer next to St. Andrews Church in Holborn from whence the Master and Wardens of the Pewterers last year took the like stamps and delivered them to the last Wardens of this Company. [The Pewterers' Officers had such authority, whereas the Goldsmiths' Officers, also present on this occasion, had no authority to interfere with the inventory of a pewterer.] And now Mr Wardens intending to speak with the Master and Wardens of the Pewterers about this abuse they had noticed that this morning they were at Pewterers' Hall unto which place Mr Wardens repaired and took the graver with them and some pieces of pewter of several sorts by which it appeared that the said Brocklesby made the said pewter although his mark was so defaced with the hammer that it was scarce discernible [probably his own touch rather than the hallmarks?] of which abuse Mr Wardens complained to the Master and Warden of the Pewterers it being an offence against an order of the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen made 3rd of March 1635 granted upon a letter directed unto them from the Lords of the Council both which as they are entered in this Company's Court Book at a Court of Assistants holden the 7th of July 1636. Mr Wardens did now course to be read unto them of which the Pewterers had long since notice by a copy of the said order left with them and they did confess that the said order was read at their Hall at a General Meeting and that the said Brocklesby had notice thereof the said Master and Wardens and some of the Assistants of the Pewterers protesting they do not know any other which attempteth the like and they

do promise to give him notice once more of this complaint and require a reformation thereof and if he will not obey the said order and their government they will assist this Company in their complaint to the Court of Aldermen against him but first will acquaint this Company of their proceedings with him."

(Vaughan had been commissioned by an owner to engrave his arms on Brocklesby's pewter.)

Peter Brocklesby I appears as an offender in 1617-18 (Welch Vol. II, pp.74-75 - in 1616 according to Markham p.111) when he was first ordered to "amend and make perfect his marke" (19th March) and later on 10th December was found to be in breach of the order of the Court of Pewterers to use one touch only (one touch was then confiscated). Peter Brocklesby II was sued by the Pewterers' company "for arrears of money due from him under his wardenship" when in 1638 he was serving as Upper Warden. This offence could be classified as "embezzlement" and was by far the more serious (Welch Vol II, p.101).

Only one further case is mentioned in the Court Book of the Goldsmiths' Company on August 31, 1643 when the Assayer, Mr Jackson, produced before the Court a pewter pot with hallmarks.

"... It is therefore ordered that Mr Jackson shall cause another pewter pot to be bought and upon finding out the offender then to proceed as shall be further directed by a Court of Assistants."

The pewterer "appears to have been" Butcher of St. Ann's Lane. (Robert B. OP 750 or Thomas B. OP 751?) The vagueness here seems to indicate that the Assayer purchased the items from a retailer rather than directly from the pewterer? This case does not appear to have come to Court and it can be assumed that the Assayer was unsuccessful in repeating the purchase directly from the offending pewterer.

So why is it then that London sadware often routinely carry similar hallmarks over a long period of time? (The probable starting date of this praxis is much later than the above fraud cases. Evidence in the shape of hallmarked items point at a time after the Great Fire of London or from the Restoration in 1660.)

One answer can be deduced from the above. Pewterer Artyne copied the London Goldsmiths' marks *exactly*, including the date-letter "s" for the current year, thus fraudulently following the Ordinance of the Goldsmiths' Company when marking his pewterware, and therefore also breaking the laws of the land! (Had Artyne also neglected to mark the pewter with his own touch, which is not clear, he would then have been in breach of the rules of the Pewterers' Company too.)

Contrary to common belief, it would appear that the Pewterers' Company had very little to answer for during the early period - it was evidently a family affair involving run-of-the-mill fakers selling silver-marked pewter.

In "A History of Agriculture and Prices in England 1259-1793", volume V covering the period 1583-1702, James Thorold Rogers states under "Pewter" that "Towards the

end of the period a new kind of material for plates is quoted, under the name of hard metal... It costs from 18s. to 14s. the dozen, ordinary pewter being quoted at 11s. the dozen pounds. Perhaps the material is the same as that which at 1s. 4d. the pound is spoken of in the year before (1695) as the new fashion dish... The material is probably some late discovery."

What is interesting here is not so much the prices, but the fact that *the old style pewter* ("ordinary pewter" according to Rogers) was available alongside the new and more expensive hardmetal! (See also pewterers' trade cards in OP, such as No. 19, p. 73 of William Sandys and many others, paying tribute to Jaques Taudin and the "French pewter".)

Would it then not be logical for the London pewterers to distinguish the new, *silvery* hardmetal pewter with the modified hallmarks, in addition to the small crowned X we usually associate with the new alloy - how else could the customers know the difference during these early days?

The Lion Passant was the Sterling Silver quality mark and the London town mark of the leopard's head was, if crowned, referred to as the "King's Mark" (from the royal arms) and used by the Goldsmiths' with the Sterling Lion. Several Masters and senior officers of the Pewterers' Company did use these very marks as their Nos. 1. and 2. as did William Artyne in 1636. It seems, however, that the pewterers eventually found themselves a legal loophole. *A third device was added and (current year's) dateletter avoided or the marks were all or mostly individual inventions.* No lawyer, even today, would accept to challenge in court such modified hallmarks, especially as they were now *always accompanied by the required touch* and by other marks. That is perhaps the reason why the Goldsmiths never again challenged the pewterers?

Three-times Master Nicholas Kelk, Master John Stile, Upper Warden John Shorey, (fined Master) Thomas Shakle and William White (Wette) all used the above lion/leopard's head-combination for their hallmarks' Nos.1 and 2 as did many others, although sometimes "scrambled". Kelk and Shakle used a buckle as their No. 3. (Mr Beasley informed me that versions of a buckle always formed part of the arms of the Goldsmiths' Company.) Stile and Shorey used versions of a bird and William White a thistle as their No. 3, thus seemingly avoiding the renewed wrath of the mighty Goldsmiths Company.

The early and small hallmarks used by the pewterers (c. 1670-1680) coincide in size with the silversmiths' marks. The height of the crowned leopard's head-punch, for instance, seems to average some 5.5 mm in height on both silver and pewter items of this period. The fact that these early sets of pewterers' four hallmarks all had individual shield-outline suggests that they were purchased as an off-the-shelf item from die-makers, such as Richard Hall, who also supplied the silversmiths with their punches. Had these pewterers especially ordered complete sets from a die-maker, the shield-outline would logically be the same for each mark in a set. Kelk, Stile, Shakle and William White (mentioned above) all seem to have *identical* dies for their No. 2 leopard's head, crowned (see illustrations). These dies have the same elaborate outline, following the outline of both crown and head. The crowns all have three pointed "ears" which with wear give a stylised wolf-impression. The chins of the lions

are decidedly pointed. John Stile, and Thos. Shakle used identical punches for their No. 1 lion passant (and probably William White/Wette too). From Cotterell's drawings under OP 5741 it would appear that five times Master Samuel Jackson too used identical punches and die-maker as did Kelk and Shakle, for his HMs Nos. 1-3? There is a certain "generation-gap" between some of the pewterers above, which could indicate a take-over or purchase of punches. There is, however, enough evidence here to suggest that the same die-maker supplied several London pewterers with more or less identical punches during this period.

Another combination of silver hallmarks appeared in 1696/97 denoting the Britannia Standard with higher silver content. This standard replaced Sterling until 1718/19 and was introduced to prevent the melting down of the coinage for conversion into plate. (This preventive move was very clever, as such melted down Sterling plate would not comply with the Britannia silver Standard during this period.) The silver marks were those of the seated figure of Britannia in combination with the Lion's head erased (in profile with a jagged neck). The silversmiths used their initials on their Sterling silver before and after the above dates but the first two letters of their surname during the Britannia silver period. The famous Huguenot silversmith Paul de Lamerie's mark on his Sterling silver was P.L.[Grimwade No. 2203] but earlier, in combination with the Britannia marks, "LA" [Grimwade No. 1892]. All marks with the exception of the silversmith's own mark were struck by assay officers at the Hall.

This combination of marks too was used by a "third generation" of hardmetal pewterers, again always with an added device and without a dateletter. The innocence of the pewterers is here often demonstrated by their use of an unholy blend of Britannia *and* Sterling symbols in the same set of hallmarks which could not possibly be construed as a "fraudulent use of silver hallmarks"! A set of four unrecorded hallmarks of this period, all *within the same shield outline* by John Barlow of London (on a 20 ¼" charger with Swedish provenance), have the lion's head erased repeated twice as Nos.1 and 3 which saved the pewterer some money (see illustration). This combination avoids the Britannia figure and shows instead a lion rampant. This lion rampant was struck twice as Nos. 1 and 3 in Cotterell's example in OP No. 256 and the lion's head erased is here struck once as No. 2, again avoiding the cost of a fourth die for Mr Barlow. The distinctive outline of Barlow's identical shields is unfortunately blurred (as always with the shields) in Cotterell's OP-illustrations!

Provincial pewterers like John Greenbank III and John Trapp II (see illustration) of Worcester very often used combinations of four different hallmarks within *identical* shields. The logic here to explain such extravagance would be that they had to order a tailor-made set locally (or possibly from London?), whereas the London makers had an ample choice of specialist die-makers and could buy individual punches "off-the-shelf." John Sherington of Wigan struck the same mark four times, much to the same effect (see illustration).

The appearance of Britannia and/or the Lion's head erased in a set of pewter hallmarks could be an useful aid in dating as they ought not logically to be found on pewter items earlier than c. 1700?

Both Markham in 1909 and later Cotterell (with reservations) wrongly assumed that

hallmarking was common practice by pewterers from 1636 onwards. Cotterell, having accepted the statements of Markham/Prideaux about this "common practice from 1636", was probably very confused indeed in the face of overwhelming hallmark evidence to the contrary before him - see OP page 51, last sentence of the second paragraph under "Hall-Marks".

Markham states on p. 23 : "Although the Pewterers, as a company, professed obedience to this [order], as to other orders, it does not appear that the Pewterers, as individuals, paid the slightest attention to them." (The first "case" in 1601 quoted by Markham from Prideaux is, strangely, a case where a *latten* spoon had been found with marks *nearly resembling* the touch and no action taken.) Cotterell states in OP p. 51 "...the Company was in constant trouble with the Goldsmiths over them, which in 1635 culminated in the Court of Aldermen *forbidding* their use by the Pewterers."

The evidence on remaining sadware, however, is as clear to us as to Cotterell, and it tells us that the Goldsmiths' order was very well observed indeed with just a few exceptions as described (and a few others, no doubt), until the later period mentioned above. Cotterell further states on the above page, again presumably utterly confused that "...for neither had they [the hallmarks] connexion with, nor were they in any way recognised by, the Authorities at Pewterers' Hall". These very "Authorities" from successive Masters down did, however, use the "modified" hallmarks with some gusto on hardmetal sadware from this later date, as Cotterell must have been very well aware of indeed!

Conclusion

The assumption that hallmarks were widely used by pewterers from 1636 (and earlier) seems to the author to be utterly wrong. The Goldsmiths' Company did in fact diligently and efficiently pursue each and every case of fraudulent use of silver hallmarks they came across, as has been seen above. Had it not been for the notorious Brocklesbys, the sum total of offences dealt with by the Goldsmiths' Court would, in fact, have been reduced by fifty percent. It should also be noted that the informers were mostly honest engravers and die-makers such as Francis Baker and Vaughan above. Their allegiance to the Goldsmiths, who provided the bulk of their work is obvious, although the fraudsters willing to make fake touches could be found amongst their ranks, such as Richard Hall, mentioned in the first case above. Pewterers fraudulently marking their ware with the silver marks were of course permanently running the risk of being caught by engravers loyal to the Goldsmiths, commissioned by pewter owners to engrave names and arms.

The hallmarks used by the pewterers during the Golden Age of first London and later provincial pewter from c.1660-1665 on the London hardmetal pewter, did not infringe the rules of the Goldsmiths' Assay Hall as has been shown above.

Some items do exist with the "legal" hallmarks on older style of pewter items. Such items by often unidentified/provincial pewterers are sometimes dated c.1650 because of this older style. These items could of course be later and simply illustrate a prolonged use of the older style moulds which would especially be the case with provincial pewterers.

Acknowledgement and reference

- The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths: i. Court Minute Book T, ff.111^{r-v}; ii. Court Minute Book V, ff.1^v-2^r; iii. Court Minute Book W ff.87^v-88^r. Spelling and punctuation has been modernised.
- Correspondence and conversations in November 1997 with Mr David Beasley, librarian of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, and conversations with Mr Luke Schrager of the Goldsmiths' Company for publication and silver marking details.
- Thank you to Dr John Richardson for suggesting and researching William Artyne in the card records of Masters and their apprentices held at the Pewterer's Hall.
- Thanks also to my son, Ian Gadd, for useful suggestions and a speedy translation and dictation of the Court Minutes at the archives of the Goldsmiths Company.
- **Cotterell, H.H.** *Old Pewter*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1929.
- **Markham, Christopher A.** *Pewter Marks and Old Pewter Ware*. London: Reeves and Turner, 1909.
- **Welch, Charles.** *History of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, Vol. II*. London: Blades, East and Blades, 1902.
- **Prideaux, Sir Walter Sherburn.** *Memorials of the Goldsmiths' Company*. London: 1896.
- **Grimwade, Arthur.** *London Goldsmiths 1697-1837, their marks and lives*. London: Faber & Faber, 1990 (revised).
- **Rogers, James E. Thorold.** *A History of Agriculture and Prices in England 1259-1793, Vol. V, 1583-1702*. London: Macmillan and Co, 1882 and 1887.
- **Hatcher, John and Barker, T.C.** *A History of British Pewter*. London: Longman Group Ltd, 1974. (pp. 224-228)

March, 1998

Jan Gadd

3557 words