

The Crowned Rose as a secondary touch on pewter. By Jan Gadd

(Revised 6.4.99 and again 14.4.99 - words shaded)

After the destruction of the London pewterers' touch plates during the Great Fire of London in 1666 new ones were started in 1670 with the re-striking of surviving pewterers' touches. Cotterell's Old Pewter 1) therefore mainly illustrates registered London marks from the period after 1670 in the main section 'Alphabetical list of pewterers'. It is necessary to consult Cotterell's section of 'Alphabetical list of initialled marks' to understand the marked difference in size and design of the earlier marks. They were very small indeed also on sadware and rarely contained more than the initials of the pewterer and sometimes a very small illustration such as flowers, stars, an anchor etc. The absence of secondary marks here is significant too. Cotterell recorded these marks as he found them, although, with the exception of spoons, he very rarely specified on which type of objects he found the marks.

On August 15, 1671 the Court of the London Pewterers' Company found it necessary to issue the following order:

'It is agreed and so Ordered that from henceforth no person or persons whatsoever shall presume to strike the rose & crowne with any additional flourish or the letters of his own or anothers name, whereby the mark which is only to be used for goods exported, may in time become as touches and not distinguished.'

This order was no doubt issued for a very good reason and the demise of the mark as used on exports only correctly forecast!

By the very end of the 17th Century the demand for pewter, especially the new hardmetal, made competition fierce and old Ordinances and Orders, specifying 'touch only' when there was now ordinary and extraordinary pewter to mark, were blissfully ignored by all London sadware pewterers. (There were well over 300 pewterers in London by the mid-seventeenth Century - see Hatcher 7)) Cotterell quotes the Court books on p.27 in OP 1) and it is made clear from these quotes (not all from Welch 2)) that the Company now had severe problems with the pewterers' marking practises. The minutes during this period rarely name any particular pewterer which was otherwise common, but mention pewterers in general; it was simply too late for the Company to interfere - if the Pewterers' Court really wanted to do so which is questionable? Crowned roses, mostly within embellished oval touches, Xs and also the hallmarks were used, if not willy-nilly, at least 'illegally' by just about every pewterer of the Company in order to advertise extraordinary quality for the domestic market. This practise was also favoured by Masters and other members of the very Court that was supposed to supervise and uphold the Company's statutes and who actually wrote or supervised these very minutes! The Court minutes during this short period, ruling on these particular marking practises can therefore only be described as somewhat hypocritical! (Do as I say, and not as I do!)

The earlier period prior to 1685/90 is the more interesting where some different types of crowned rose can be identified, each possibly typical of a particular period in time. The 'Company controlled' mark then had a distinct export related purpose. An

attempt is made here to put these crowned rose marks into some sort of chronological order with a 16th Century (or earlier) start. The first mention of the mark on English pewter abroad is probably in the magistrates court books of Antwerp in November, 1523. The pewterers there had copied the mark 'as it otherwise rendered their pewter unsaleable' against the English (p.4, Journal Spring-95). It quickly spread to Mechelen, Ghent and into today's Holland.

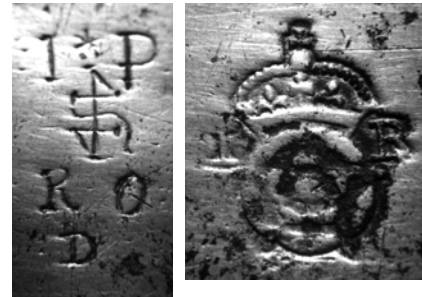
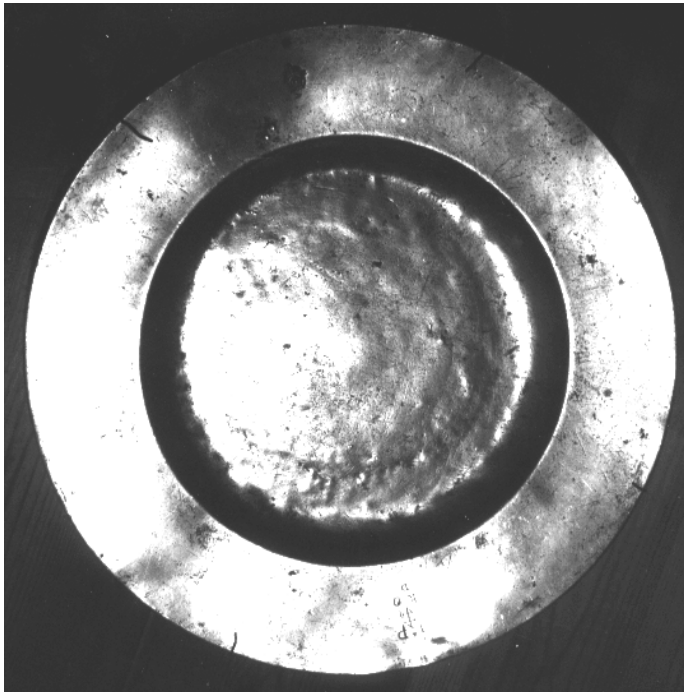
Below are some recorded versions of the crowned rose:

Crowned rose on exports to the Netherlands during the early 16th Century or earlier.

Flemish documentary evidence only exists here. It is entirely possible, of course, that this mark was also used on other English exports, although no evidence on actual objects seems to have survived.

Crowned rose with the King's initials flanking the rose (the royal badge).

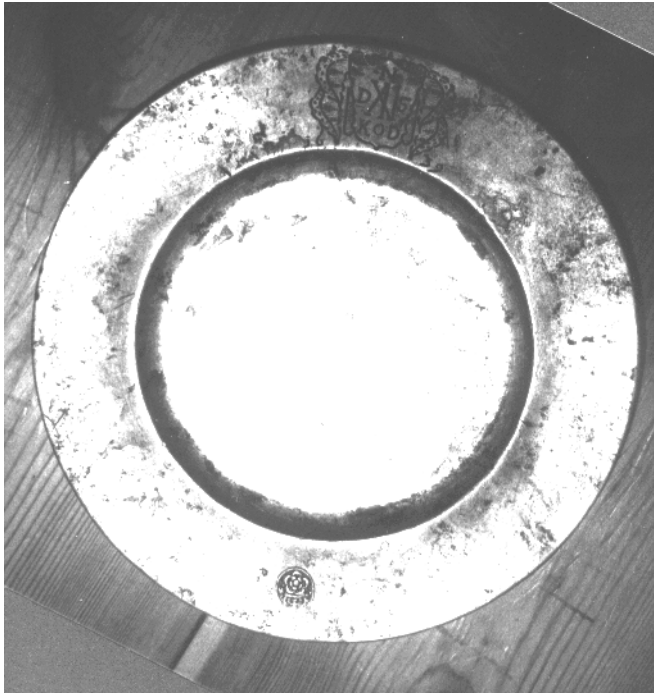
The above version has been found on exported sadware. A broad rimmed dish with bossed (now levelled) base and a broadrimmed plate, both with Swedish provenance, are illustrated and described here. This mark is proudly struck on the front of the rims but touches are on the back of these objects (see illustrations).



Dish showing the Royal Badge, in the author's collection.

The bossed dish (diam. 410 mm) has three owners' marks on the rim. The earliest one is a house mark and the others scratched or 'engraved' by different hands.

Opposite is the royal badge of King James I, here sharp struck (outline of touch follows contents of touch). This mark shows remarkable similarities with the mark on the broad rimmed plate below. The touch underneath the dish is too worn for any attempt at interpretation.



Touch and Royal badge on semi broadrim plate in the author's collection. The rubbing (top right) is MPM 5879a.

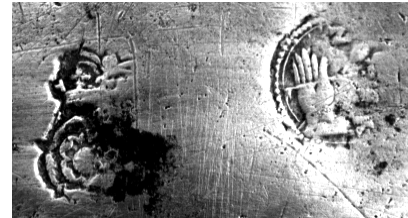
The plate (diam. 223 mm) was excavated from the River Göta Älv near Trollhättan some 30 miles upstream from Gothenburg and has a Swedish wedding engraving dated 1639 on the front rim. The initials are N DS and K OD with the typically split male and female surnames, perhaps Nils DavidsSon and Karin OlsDotter. Opposite the engraving on the front rim is the Royal badge of King Charles I in an oval touch within a beaded border, with C and R flanking the crowned Tudor rose, the crown with the Royal orb. An almost identical touch is shown in MPM, No. 5879a, illustrated here, found on a rosewater dish and reported by A. Sutherland Graeme. The CW initialled touch, also within a beaded border on the back of the plate has not been identified. The mark, however, appears with a portcullis which is the mark of the City of Westminster. Many pewterers, although freemen of the London Company, have worked in Westminster over the years. Did they use the royal badge in addition to their touch during this period? The Pewterers' Company polltax list of 1641 4) gives all Company pewterers' parish addresses and two yeomen were resident in Westminster at that time; Thos. Johnson (OP 2639) of St Margrett and Thos. Fountaine of the same parish (not in OP). No 'CW' pewterer is listed with a Westminster address, however. This pewterer could have been dead by 1641 but might also have been a non-member of the Company. Only one pewterer with these initials appears on the Company's polltax list; Christopher Weale of the parish of Stepney (not in OP). The use of town initials in pewter marks is very unusual in English pewter. The letters 'CW' illustrated above with the portcullis could, however, be read as 'City of Westminster'.

The crowned rose is very carefully and well struck on both examples (and also on the rosewater dish which is made clear from the MPM rubbing), giving a full impression of the mark which is difficult with a large touch. Do these marks indicate a) an appointed 'Royal' pewterer, b) a pewterer working in Westminster or both (one of the touches is by the unidentified pewterer 'CW' with the portcullis mark), or c) a Company approved export mark of this period? Why was this mark struck on the

front of the rim?

Crowned rose without initials, sharp struck (outline of touch follows outline of contents).

This mark is frequently noted in Sweden and Norway on pewter exports from London from c. 1660 but could be somewhat earlier as it was found on a very early Kelk plate, c. 1640-50 in the Nordiska Museum in Stockholm. Nicholas Kelk's exports carried this mark which does not seem to appear on his domestic production. (See Sotheby Billingshurst catalogue June 16, 1998, lot No. 357.) This Kelk broad rimmed 26 cm plate was here described as 'c. 1650 - 60' (but is probably some 10 - 20 years later) and had LTP touch only. An almost identical 26 cm broadrimmed plate by Kelk delivered to the Swedish Royal Court of Queen Hedvig Eleonora and dated 1680 was on display at the June meeting in Stratford upon Avon and showed the above mark near his touch. Other pewterers using the sharp struck version of the crowned rose on exported pewter were William Hull (OP2459) (illustrated here) and Richard Allen (OP57), both with estimated dates of c. 1670 - 80.



Nicholas Kelk's crowned rose and touch.



William Hull's crowned rose.

Crowned rose with the pewterers' initials flanking the rose, sharp struck as above.

Thomas Shakle's mark with his 'TS' is a good example here and is always found on his exported sadware (see MPM4207 showing a drawn example from a dish excavated at Port Royal). Johannes Gahlnbäck 3) has recorded and drawn the marks on many 17th Century. London dishes, some 49 in total, (without giving sizes) in a Moscow inventory after Sophija (died in 1704) and Theodosija (died 1713) Alexejewna and Peter and Johann Alexejewitsch, the daughters and sons of Tsar Alexej Michailowitsch. Shakle was the main supplier, but other London pewterers are also listed here; John Shackle, Samuel Jackson, Thomas Powell and one example by John French (illustrating a harp-touch different to the one in OP 1)). A photographic example of Thomas Shakle's crowned rose is illustrated here next to Gahlnbäck's drawn version. (Gahlnbäck's illustrator possibly made a mistake with the positioning of the petals of the rose here. Compare with the photograph and also with John Shakles crowned rose and see explanation of this feature below.) Objects by Thomas Shakle are very rare in British collections and no objects at all seem to have been recorded by John Shakle and very few by Samuel Jackson - they might well have been exporting specialists like Thomas Shakle. Thomas Powell's touch or crowned rose do not appear on any of the Russian dishes, but his hallmarks appear on 14 of them together with either John Shakle's or Samuel Jackson's touches. This strongly suggests that Powell helped the Shakles out with a large export order.



Thomas Shakle's export mark on Swedish and Russian exported dishes.



Samuel Jackson and John Shakle

Some evidence exists that provincial pewterers too used the sharp struck crowned rose on their exports. If this was for the same reasons the Dutch, Danish and other pewterers on the receiving end of London exports used the mark is open to discussion. The crowned rose was, however, a well respected quality symbol all over



Europe. The mark illustrated here shows the initials ‘S’ flanking the rose and was struck by one of the Newcastle pewterers Francis or Henry Salkeld.

Sharp struck rose and crown mark by Salkeld of Newcastle on a hammered, triple reeded dish, diam. 515 mm, in the Kaare Berntsen collection, Oslo.

Crowned rose from c. 1685 - 90 within a shaped touch, with or without the pewterers’ initials flanking the rose.

Some features are similar to the above versions, but the crowned roses are not sharp struck. They were incorporated in mostly oval touches, often with additional ornamentation such as palm leaves, with names and initials and sometimes with ‘London’. This is the later version, used by pewterers who thought it worthwhile to order such a touch which appears to be the overwhelming majority. This mark is now found on both domestic and exported pewter (as Cotterell was the first to record) and used to denote the better quality alloy, much the same as the mark was used by domestic pewterers on English export markets in answer to the ‘English threat’!



Gabriel Grunwin’s unrecorded export marks with the new style of crowned rose with ‘London’ approved by the Company from December, 1690 also for domestic use.

Some pewterers’ marks, however, have been recorded from this later period illustrating the continued use of a *special* crowned rose, exclusively used on exported goods. One such pewterer is Gabriel (Gabriell) Grunwin of London (OP2039), with a livery date of April 13, 1693. The set of marks illustrated here are from a massive triple reeded, deep and hammered charger of superb quality in the collection of Kaare Berntsen of Oslo. The marks too are superb and very well engraved indeed and not previously recorded. The 1694 date in the crowned rose mark is either the year the touch was ordered or a celebration of one office or another?

Richard Smith (OP4 and MPM 4374) used two different crowned rose marks. One is typical of the period and was possibly intended for use on pewter for the home market. The one illustrated here is of the earlier sharp-struck type with a split London flanking the rose.



Richard Smith's export mark.

The tradition of using a crowned rose mark exclusively on exported sadware carried on well into the 18th Century. The illustrated mark by George Grenfell of London (OP1994) was recorded on a c. 1760-70 plate with American provenance in the collection of Jeffrey O'Connor. The prominence of the actual motif of the crowned rose is further reduced during this late period in favour of advertising content. Touches were, however, still made at some considerable cost to the pewterer and struck on their export ware which is probably significant and an attempted explanation will be found in the conclusion below. Like some other Grenfell touches, this one is very well engraved by a master engraver.



George Grenfell's crowned rose mark, used on his exported sadware.

Crowned rose mark other than the ones listed above.

Colonel John Shorey used a crowned rose touch that can be assumed to be an export touch for the simple reason that it has only been recorded on pewter found abroad. This mark shows the royal initials 'WR' flanking the rose, and 'London' in an integrated label below. Six examples have been recorded recently in Sweden and the illustrated mark is from a pair of triple reeded, diameter 216 mm (8½') plates in the author's collection. This mark, however, may well be John Shorey's own idea of celebrating the coronation of William III in 1689, or simply an export touch marking his best export ware during the reign of the monarch?



John Shorey's WR-mark found on his exported sadware.

Orientation of the petals in the Tudor rose

English 'Tudor' pewter roses are invariably 'double' with five petals in each row. Some 75% of examples in OP show a single petal at 12 o'clock as can be seen on Gahlnbäck's drawn TS mark above (and on the rose in the Society's emblem). The other drawn crowned roses above by SI and IS has the *space* between two petals at 12 o'clock which is much less common. Gahlnbäck's illustrator has possibly mixed up the initials IS and TS as Thomas Shackle's rose has this less common feature as can be seen on the photograph. The IS crown too is closer to Thomas Shackle's crown. (It all goes to show the obvious advantages of photographic reproductions of marks!) The above feature is a good method of eliminating rather than identifying a particular rose and therefore a pewterer.

Conclusion

The background to Royal iconography such as the Tudor rose found on Royal charters of Guilds and other organisations has been researched by Dr Elisabeth Danbury with reference to the charters of Doncaster 5):

‘It was seen as necessary to immortalise the community receiving a royal grant, as well as the sovereign who had bestowed it. However, under the Tudor monarchs, the emphasis of the decoration [on charters] was to honour the crown more than the recipients of royal favour’

It is possible that this courtesy towards the crown was extended also to include the marking of the best and exported pewter with the royal badge from the Tudor period of Henry VII, and was for this reason struck on the front rim of sadware as illustrated above. If this marking practise co-coincided with the Company’s third Royal Charter of 1504, it would then explain the Antwerp court case episode of 1523.

The Pewterers’ Court order of 1564 concerning the use of the Crowned rose has been interpreted differently by Cotterell, Ingleby Wood and John Hatcher. The relevant sentence from Welch Vol I, p. 240 is quoted here:

‘And that no man shall geue for his proper marck or touch the Rose and crown with letters nor otherwise, but only to hym to whome it is geuven by the felowship.’

Cotterell elaborates on the restrictions of the mark for use in touches (OP p. 47). Discussing the much later use in Scotland of the crowned rose, Ingleby Wood states in 1904 (p. 153) that ‘It was placed upon the ware by the craftsman himself, and not as was the case in London by an official of the company.’ He also states that ‘...but never to have indicated in that country [Scotland], as it did in England, that the piece of ware upon which it was stamped had passed the assayer of the company.’ He may have had some other source for these statements (not referred to) or simply over-emphasised some aspects of the London Court order. John Hatcher states (p. 184) that ‘...in 1564 the Rose and Crown was an additional mark used by the London Company to denote ware of exceptional quality, and that the right to strike it was, at this time, [important remark] a jealously guarded privilege awarded by the fellowship to a limited number of deserving manufacturers.’ None of the above writers seem to have had the opportunity to identify and examine or even refer to actual examples of pewter carrying this mark, from the period of 1564 until some years after 1671 (which is the date of the order quoted in the second paragraph of this article, here restricting the use of the crowned rose ‘to be used on goods exported’).

All exported London pewter carrying the crowned rose mark examined and recorded by the author was made by important merchant pewterers, all of them sadware manufacturers. Several plates and dishes by such pewterers from the collection of the Nordiska Museum in Stockholm were on view during the Pewter Society’s summer meeting 1998 mentioned above. Identified pewterers of the above period are Samuel Jackson (OP2564), Nicholas Kelk (OP2704) and William Hulls (MPM 2460a), all Court members and therefore members of an inner circle of pewterers. They did, of course, award themselves the exclusive right to the use of this mark - there was no higher authority in the ‘fellowship’, after all. It is also important here to consider the hierarchy within the Pewterers Company. The upper echelon (and also the larger group) were the sadware manufacturers or hammer men and they sometimes closed ranks against the hollow-ware men or triflers which is illustrated in a Court book entry of 1640. King Charles’ I gift of £200 per annum for the Company’s poor was

originally claimed by the hammer men exclusively for themselves. At a Court meeting, however, a show of hands decided that the grant was intended for the poor of the Company generally (Welch II, p. 104).

It is not clear when marking of pewter started in London, but it would appear that the early marks were hammers and crowned hammers like in the early French and Flemish pewtering regions. Welch 6) refers to such touches (Vol I, p. 251) in 1565-66 when the Pewterers' Court decided on the future of one 'Touche of the hamer and the crowne' which originally belonged to a pewterer of an earlier generation. Scottish pewter was also marked with the crowned hammer during the 16th Century, confirmed by an act of the Scots Parliament, James VI. 1567. (Ingleby Wood, 7), pp. 145-146).

The marking of *hollow ware* started with the Henry VII statute, passed by Parliament in 1504. This was in connection with an attempt to standardise the lay metal alloy in the whole of England and the City of London standard was to be adopted everywhere. The marking was a logical step here to identify the pewterer. It was in the King's interest for the pewterers to use as much tin from the Royal mines as possible, of course. (Welch I, pp. 93-97 - who remarks on p. 94 on the importance of the statute and the compulsory marking of all *vessels* of pewter.) Many of the major European pewterers' guilds emerged from founders' guilds, common in northern Europe. Others emerged as general craft guilds from the earlier affiliation with religious orders, such as the Brotherhood of St Eloi, the saint with the hammer. It is not clear what preceded the London pewterers' guild. The London Blacksmiths' Company used the crowned hammer mark for proving guns in the 16th Century. It is interesting to speculate that there might have been a common background prior to 1348 for these two categories of hammermen.

From the early recorded appearance in Antwerp in 1523 *as a mark of quality indicating best, lead free pewter* (not yet verified from English sources) it would appear that the crowned rose mark became well established as a London export mark from this early period on, no doubt also insisted upon by foreign importers and merchants. Legislation as to the appearance and restrictive use of the mark was therefore important for the Company.

There seems to be a distinct succession in the change of style of this mark as has been illustrated above. The last decade of the 17th Century, however, weakened the Company's total control of the image and the representation of this their 'own' crowned rose mark and therefore also their restrictions as to its use. The sudden surge in pewter demand during the decades following the Great Fire of London and the subsequent increase in the number of pewterers competing to fulfil this demand, is probably responsible for this lax attitude of the Company's Court towards the liverymen, especially the hammermen, breaking the marking rules during the period from c. 1685. Versions of the mark are now found on domestic pewter as well, always on sadware and always marking the best alloy, exactly the same as was the earlier marking tradition on the exported pewter.

The problem during the latter third of the 17th Century in London of visually distinguishing between two different alloy qualities of sadware must also have played a major role in the relaxation of these marking rules as is made clear from the minutes

in the Court book.

(Flemish and other foreign pewter normally contained some 10-20 % lead, more or less following the early Nürnberg Proof of allowing 9% lead in sadware and twice the amount or more in holloware. London pewter by major merchant pewterers was lead free, as has been shown in various X-ray Fluorescence tests. It was therefore brighter in appearance than the foreign product and the London crowned rose remained a symbol of quality over the Centuries, much copied by the European pewterers, although the difference in quality remained the same, until the very last decades of the 17th Century. This is when the lead free alloys appeared in countries whose domestic trade suffered considerably from the London exported sadware. As the crowned rose was 'previously engaged', [marking the European 'best' when the alloy still contained lead], the new 'Angel' symbol was now introduced to coincide with the introduction of the new hardmetal pewter from London which had a severe effect on several export markets. [See Journal Vol 10, number 1, p. 16.]

Most if not all of the large and important 17th Century pewterers were sadware manufacturers, but the hollow ware manufacturers too had considerable exports during this Century. Their exports (of tin/lead alloys) consisted mainly of salts, candlesticks and tea and coffee pots, as national standards of measure and also local form/shape traditions (often *very* local) regarding measures, drinking vessels and flagons worked against the exportation of the London vessels. (Compare with the British situation of very distinct London, Scottish and Dublin style of church flagons during the 18th Century.) Examined candlesticks exported during the second half of the 17th Century were all marked according to the old practises of the Guilds. London-made candlesticks were struck once with the maker's LTP touch and York examples were struck twice as was the tradition there. On no occasion has a secondary touch such as the crowned rose been observed on English exported hollow ware during the 17th Century which seems to confirm the observance of the rule of use of the crowned rose mark for the best, lead free alloy.

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