

Transitional period “Dropped belly and Low belly” measures, c 1820’s to c 1830’s.

By Geoff Lock of Adelaide South Australia ----- part TWO -----

“Dropped-belly” measures



I suppose that this terminology is of my own creation as this form of measure is more slender in body shape than either the squat-bellied measures as described in the previous section or the more commonly found bellied measures.

Initially, I thought that this type of measure was made from parts of balusters as the bodies are similar, being plain and slender.

However, none of these measures are in OEWS capacity so the bodies had to be cast in new moulds that met the Imperial Standard of 1826. A couple of explanations about their manufacture would be to have an extra piece added to the body of an existing baluster to increase the capacity or to somehow stretch the body after casting. There is some evidence to support the first theory, being the adding of an extra section to the body to increase from OEWS to Imperial capacity as I have one example of this practise but I don't think that this was a common method of construction.

It is also possible that they were made from the upper section of a baluster and the base of a salt with an extra section added to increase the capacity to Imperial Standard but this is more unlikely with the smaller gill and ½ gill capacities.

Verification marks, in the absence of any maker's mark, indicates that these measures were made in London, most examples seen having a City of Westminster 1826 Portcullis mark.

It is also evident that these measures travelled widely from their point of manufacture as verification marks indicate use in Yorkshire {VR 300 and 310}, Devon, Norfolk {VR 550, 552}, Kent {VR284}, Wiltshire {VR464}, Essex {VR 180}, Southampton {VR 559} and Berkshire {VR 451}.

On close examination, there are a number of differences between these measures and balusters.

The upper rim has a fine lip which balusters do not have and the foot of the body is convex where-as that of a baluster is concave, following the outward flare of the body. Balusters are of OEWS capacity whilst this variety of measure is in Imperial Standard. None of these measures are lidded.

The upper handle attachment fits snugly beneath the lip and joins onto the body without any attachment or strut, unlike that of the Double Volute baluster. Also, with lidless balusters, the handle usually fits flush with the top of the rim.

The handle has no evidence of having any hinge lugs for a lid and has an up-turned ball finial.

As part of this article, all the “Dropped belly” measures in my collection were photographed in May 2010, both individually and in groups. I will now describe each of these measures, by capacity.

Pints

There are three examples, all having slight variations to each other, which suggests possible different makers and also method of construction. None has a maker’s mark.



The first piece was acquired in Adelaide in 1980 and from first impressions, gives the idea that the body might have been stretched as there is a slight longitudinal tear in the body at the back of the waist.

The lip of the rim also appears to have been “pressed” to increase the capacity, being wider in the lip than the lips of the other pints.

Dimensions for this pint are as follows; height, 127mm, diameter of top, 84mm, diameter of base / foot, 89mm and width, 93mm. There are two circular verification marks for Devon on the rim as well as the capacity stamped in cursive *1 Pint*.



In 2006, I acquired a second pint which shows signs of possibly being made by having a section added in the middle of the body. There are two clear seam lines on the outside of the body approximately a centimetre apart but only one join line visible inside the body. The handle does not have a ball finial as does the other examples but a weak drawn-out pointed finial. A clear City of London crowned G IV mark is on the rim but no other marks of any kind. Its dimensions are similar to the other pints, being 128mm high, 92 mm wide, top diameter of 83 mm and the foot diameter of 86 mm. It is the only piece that I have seen with a possible section added to increase the capacity.



The third pint was bought in 2007 from M and H Kashden in London and is the best of the three.

Its dimensions are similar to the other pints, being 128mm in height, 95 mm in width, top diameter of 85 mm and base / foot diameter of 90mm. The handle has an up-turned ball finial. This piece has verifications for City of Westminster {Portcullis 1826}, crowned VR over 300 and 310 for York, West Riding, and a capacity of 1 PINT stamped as individual letters.



Half Pints,



There are three examples of this capacity, all very similar in construction and dimension. Each has a City of Westminster 1826 Portcullis mark. None has a maker's mark. All three have verification marks of pre and post 1879 and show use in South-east and East coast regions of England.

The first was acquired in 1987 from Albert Bartram. It is 97 mm high, measures 78mm at the widest part, has a top diameter of 71 mm and a base diameter of 74 mm. On the body is a wiggled capacity mark, being ½ PINT. On the rim are several verification marks. These include a City of Westminster 1826 Portcullis, a crowned W IV in an ellipse for Norfolk and a post 1879 crowned VR over 552, also for Norfolk

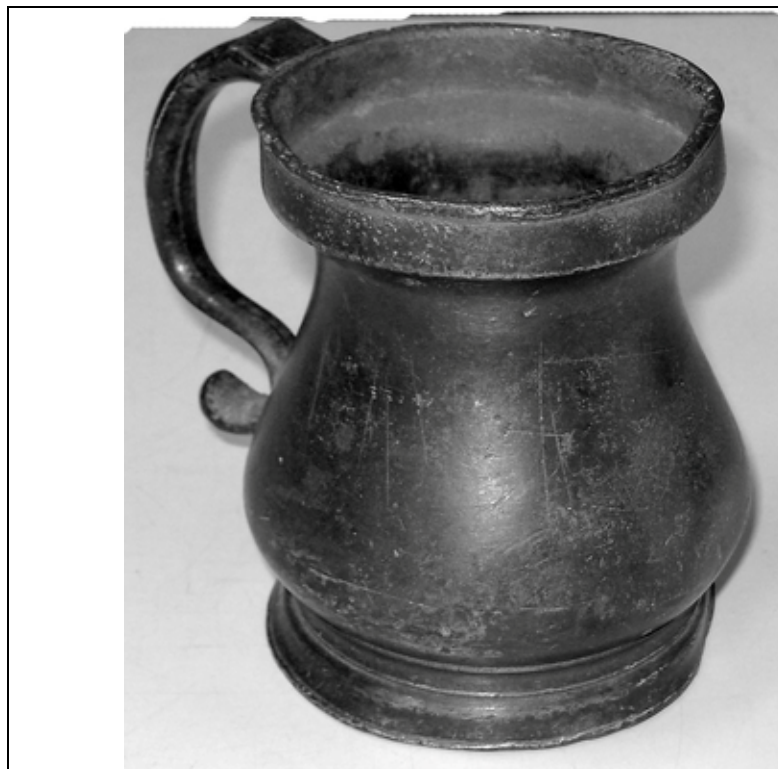


On 1998, I acquired a second ½ pint in Adelaide from a fellow collector, Doug Allen. The dimensions of this piece are as follows: 98 mm in height, 79 mm in width, top diameter of 68 mm and a base diameter of 70 mm. This example is the smallest in dimensions of the three ½ pints. There are several verifications on the rim including a City of Westminster 1826 Portcullis, a crowned VR over 284 for Deal, Kent, and the earlier Deal mark of a sailing ship. The capacity is struck as individual letters being HALF PINT.



A third $\frac{1}{2}$ pint was purchased from a fellow collector in Britain, Ashley Greensmith, in 2008. It is of similar dimensions to the others, being 98 mm in height, 79 mm in width, 70 mm across the top diameter and 72 mm for the base diameter. There are several verifications on the rim, showing that this piece was “In service” for about 90 years! Marks are as follows; City of Westminster 1826 Portcullis, crowned VR over 559, crowned GR over 559 over 16 {for 1916} and C*S over E for Southampton County. Capacity mark of $\frac{1}{2}$ PINT is struck on the centre of the body and also on the thumb-rest of the handle.

An unusual capacity”Dropped-belly” measure of 8 fl.oz



In April 2010, I purchased a grubby “Drop belly” measure from Ashley Greensmith. After some cleaning, it is most unusual as it is of 8 fl. oz capacity but devoid of any marks at all.

It measures 64mm across the top diameter, 65 mm across the base, 87 mm in height and 75 mm in width.

It could be of the “Reputed quart” capacity of 1803 .Its measurements indicate that it was cast from a mould, not made from a cut-down ½ pint or an added-to gill.

Gills,



I have two examples of Imperial gill capacity, both with the 1826 Portcullis verification mark.

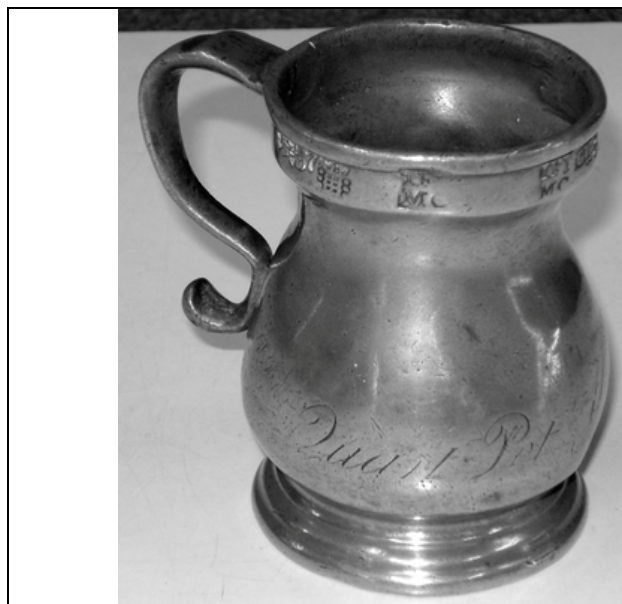
Both are similar in dimensions and have no maker’s mark. Each has pre and post 1879 verifications.

The first I acquired in Sept 2007 as a gift. At the time, it had some heavy solder from an old repair which I had removed by a silver-smith in Mt. Barker. This piece has verification marks for City of Westminster 1826 Portcullis, crowned VR over 464 for Wiltshire Co. and crowned WR over W for Wiltshire, c 1835. The body is stamped for capacity with individual letters, ¼ IM over PINT.

The dimensions for this gill are as follows; top diameter, 55mm, height, 79 mm, width, 63mm and bottom diameter of 60mm.



The second gill was bought in April 2010 from an English collector and had been offered for sale previously at the PS auction in May 2006. This piece is in good condition and has several verification marks, capacity stamps and also inscribed "*Quart Pot, Maidenhead*". Verifications are crowned VR over 451 {Berkshire}, crowned VR over 466 {Maidenhead 1884-'90, IFI over MC, {Maidenhead town} and City of Westminster 1826 Portcullis. Capacity is stamped QUARTERN and over-stamped GILL. The dimensions for this gill are as follows; top diameter, 55mm, height, 80mm, width, 63mm and bottom diameter of 59mm.



Half gills,



I have three examples of “Dropped belly” measures of Imperial half gill capacity, all purchased in 2010 from England. I am grateful to Ashley Greensmith for his part in my purchasing these delightful pieces, all dating c 1826-1830.

The first $\frac{1}{2}$ gill arrived here in March 2010. It is in good condition and has several verification marks as well as a capacity mark of $\frac{1}{2}$ QUARTERN stamped with individual letters. Verifications include crowned VR over 180 for Essex, a rubbed crown and IV, {possibly City of London G IV}, crown over SSEX for Essex on the body and also on the thumb-rest. It measures 42mm top diameter, 65mm in height, 50 mm in width and 48 mm bottom diameter. Handle has an up-turned finial.



The second example arrived here in April 2010 and is most likely to have been in use in the same tavern or inn as a similar ½ pint dropped-belly measure in my collection. This ½ gill had been adapted for pouring as the rim had been formed into a small side-spout. The capacity of ½ gill has been “wriggled” on the front of the body in the same fashion as ½ pint had been “wriggled” on the ½ pint. Verification marks include a rubbed City of Westminster 1826 Portcullis, a rubbed Norfolk castle mark, crown over I of E {Isle of Ely} and crown over VR over 552 for Norfolk. All of these verifications, except for the I of E are also on the ½ pint measure. It’s incredible that these two measures are re-united after 23 years. This piece measures 43mm top diameter, 62 mm in height, 50 mm in width and 48 mm bottom diameter.



The third ½ gill arrived here in May 2010, again from Ashley Greensmith. It has several verifications for Norfolk including castle over NORF, crowned VR over 550 and crown over an ellipse containing W IV over N {Norfolk}. This last verification is struck under the base. Capacity mark is ½ GILL, struck as individual letters. Although the bottom handle joint has been pushed into the body, it can be repaired.

Dimensions for this piece are as follows; top diameter 42mm, height 63mm, width 50mm and bottom diameter being 47 mm. Handle has an up-turned finial.

