

# THE PEWTER SECTION AT THE SCOTTISH EXHIBITION

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IN considering Scottish pewter ware, of which some 130 examples are to be seen at the Royal Academy, it must be remembered that Scotland was, financially speaking, a poor country by comparison with England; whereas in England pewter may be classified under three headings—Ecclesiastical, Domestic and Tavern, in Scotland the output in the second class was

negligible, due to the inability of a large section of the community to afford it. It is probably impossible to find, for instance, a single domestic tankard of the flat lidded Carolean or dome lidded Anne and Georgian types which could definitely be ascribed to a Scottish pewterer.

On the other hand, Scotland can show several ranges of tavern measures, some of which have no counterpart in England, their design being derived directly from Continental sources.

As regards Ecclesiastical pewter, the bulk was made during the Eighteenth Century, very few pieces of earlier origin being in existence; and there is certainly nothing comparable with the fine early seventeenth-century Church flagons of England. However, despite this lack of range, there existed in Scotland a



NO. I.—IN THE CENTRE, A LAVER OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY; EACH SIDE ON ARE XVIII-CENTURY VESSELS SUPPOSED TO BE CHALICES; LENT BY ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, BANFF

tradition of sturdy craftsmanship, graver and more utilitarian, perhaps, than elsewhere, but losing none of its artistic value for that.

The illustrations show certain of the more unusual pieces at the exhibition. The centre piece in No. 1 is one of the earliest pewter vessels left in Scotland. It is a laver, 9 inches high, of Roman amphora design, and belongs to the church of Biggar in Lanarkshire. It



NO. II.—CENTRE, AN ALMS DISH FROM HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, HADDINGTON, BY ADAM ANDERSON C. 1734; FLANKED BY FLAGONS FROM BENTHOLM CHURCH, ANGUS, AND TRON CHURCH, EDINBURGH



No. III.—A GROUP OF PEWTER VESSELS LENT TO THE EXHIBITION BY CAPTAIN SUTHERLAND-GRAEME: THE CUPS ARE DATED 1762: THE MAKER WAS ARCHIBALD INGLIS OF EDINBURGH

occasions they were described as chalices, and one of them is illustrated in the late Mr. Howard Cotterell's *Old Pewter, its Makers and Marks*, with his comment that it would be hard to conceive anything less suited for the purpose, a statement with which one cannot but agree. In the absence of touches or other evidence, one is inclined to assign them to the early Eighteenth Century. They belong to St. Andrew's Church, Banff.

was discovered during the carrying out of alterations in 1870, and is traditionally assigned to the pre-Reformation period, though it appears more probable that it dates from the first quarter of the Seventeenth Century, when an Act (1617) was passed requiring congregations to provide, *inter alia*, a laver and basin for the Sacrament of baptism. On either side of it are two curious vessels, the nature of which is obscure; when exhibited on previous

No. ii shows an alms dish flanked by two flagons. The dish, from Holy Trinity Church, Haddington, is 17 inches in diameter and was made by Adam Anderson of Edinburgh, c. 1734. Its chief interest lies in the 4-inch cup fixed in the centre, presumably to contain coins of higher values. Upon the back is the date 'November 20th, 1748.' The flagon to the right comes from the Tron Church, Edinburgh. Its design, whilst conforming to the

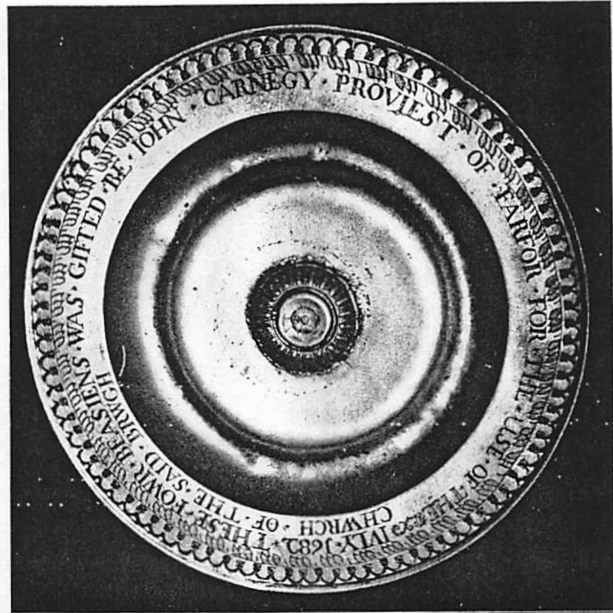


No. IV.—IN CENTRE, A 'POBBLE' FLAGON OF XVII CENTURY, FROM THE CATHEDRAL OF BRECHIN, FLANKED BY COMMUNION CUPS FROM BIRSE, ABERDEENSHIRE, AND COLLECTIONS OF MR. L. CLAPPERTON, MRS. CARVICK WEBSTER AND CAPT. SUTHERLAND-GRAEME

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No. V.—ONE OF FOUR PEWTER DISHES MEASURING 16½ IN. DIAMETER : LENT TO THE R.A. BY PARISH CHURCH, FORFAR



No. VI.—ANOTHER OF THE FOUR PEWTER DISHES, MEASURING 16½ INCHES : THE PROPERTY OF THE PARISH CHURCH, FORFAR

plain principles which governed the manufacture of Scottish flagons for over a century afterwards, nevertheless is greatly superior in detail. The skirted foot, reminiscent of English flagons of the period, and the collared lid, are features which might well have been persisted with, and it is surprising that they were not. The flagon is engraved 'For the use of the Holy Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, in the South East Paroch of Edinburgh, [Anno] 1688.' This piece is 11½ inches in height.

The same remark as to design applies also to the other flagon, which belongs to the Church of Benholm in Angus. It is 11 inches in height and is engraved with the Arms of Scott and the inscription 'Gifted by Robert Scott of Benholme to

the Church of Benholme. Anno Dom. 1690.' Neither flagon bears any indication of its maker.

The group of plate seen in No. iii is in the author's collection. The flagon is of the more usual Scottish type, but the cups are of unusual design. All three are engraved 'Belonging to the Associate Congregation of Norham. Mr. Jas.



No. VII. A TWO GALLON JUG, 15 INCHES HIGH, WITH SHAW STEWART CREST, AND A DISH 15½ INCHES IN DIAMETER, WITH THE ARMS OF DURHAM OF PITKERROW : LENT BY LEWIS CLAPPERTON, ESQ.



NO. VIII.—ONE OF PAIR OF ROSEWATER BOWLS: EARLY XVII CENT. WITH ARMS OF JAMES VI: BY RICHARD WEIR OF EDINBURGH

*Morison Minister 1762.* The maker was Archibald Inglis of Edinburgh, who became a free pewterer in 1732.

A flagon of exceptional interest appears in No. iv. It is of secular type, being a member of the family of tavern measures known as 'Pot-bellies.' It comes from the Cathedral of Brechin, and the records of the Kirk Session contain the following: '1680. Walter Jamiesone, Bailye and Kirk Master gave two tinne Quart stoops for the Communion tables,' and the example shown bears the inscription '*Brechinensi dedicata per W.I. amphora ecclesiae*'; above the inscription is a man holding a chalice, and the date '*Anno 1680 Nov.*' On the lid is engraved a shield bearing a representation of a twin-towered church, presumably the Cathedral as it appeared at that period. The maker's mark is a crowned rose with initials *D.I.M.* Of the four Communion cups flanking the flagon, perhaps the most interesting is the beaker from Birse in Aberdeenshire (left centre). This is a secular design also, but it cannot be said, as in the case of the Banff vessels, that it is unsuited to its sacred use. The inscription upon it reads '*Cup H.E. for Breiss. M.E. Keith Min*' (Mr. Keith was minister at Birse from 1666 to 1684). The maker's touch is a crowned rose with the initials *G.R.*, probably that of George

Ross, who became a free pewterer of the Incorporation of Hammermen of Aberdeen in 1664. To the left of the last is a cup,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, from the collection of Mr. Lewis Clapperton of Glasgow. To the right of the flagon are two cups, of which the inner is in the author's collection. It is of unusual type, 5 inches high, with scarcely any stem. The outer cup belongs to Mrs. Carvick-Webster and is of the more normal 'egg cup' type. It stands  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches high and is engraved '*Baptist Church Dundee 1787.*'

Nos. v and vi show two of four fine dishes from Forfar Parish Church; a full description of these appeared in *THE CONNOISSEUR* for October 1936, but it is perhaps permissible again to refer to the inscription with its quaint spelling of several words, notably '*Farfor*' for '*Forfar*' (possibly due to local pronunciation) and '*ews*' for '*use*.' Two of the four dishes were made by Alexander Ferguson (senior) of Edinburgh (Free in 1660), and two by (probably) his son (Free in 1678).

Mr. Clapperton lends the exhibits seen in No. vii. The bulbous jug, holding two gallons, is unique. It is 15 inches high, and, although unmarked, is almost certainly of Scottish origin by reason of its connexion with the Shaw-Stewart Barony, whose crests appear upon the drum, surmounting the badge of Nova Scotia.

The dish,  $15\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, is engraved with the Arms of Sir William Durham of Pitkerrow, knighted by Charles II at Dundee in 1651. Above appear the initials, *W.D.I.D.*, of Sir William and his wife Janet, daughter of James Durham of Duntarvie. The maker's touch is illegible.

The rosewater bowl seen in No. viii is one of a pair, one being in the collection of Mr. Geoffrey J. Gollin of London, and the other in the author's collection. These splendid specimens of early seventeenth-century work are designed in three tiers with a central boss bearing the Royal Arms surmounted by the initials *I.R.* (James VI of Scotland and I of England), in copper and enamel. They were made by Richard Weir of Edinburgh, who became a free pewterer in 1597.

In No. ix are seen examples of two further types of vessel peculiar to Scotland; the first

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NO. IX.—IN CENTRE, 'THISTLE' MEASURES, CIRCA 1800; LENT TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY BY DR. A. J. YOUNG; ON EITHER SIDE, QUAICHS

is the 'thistle' measure which, though of late date (*c.* 1800), is extremely rare. Unfortunately, these measures fell foul of authority and were eventually suppressed as they did not discharge completely at an angle of 120 degrees. The examples shown belong to Dr. A. J. Young of Christchurch. The vessels which flank the measures are known as quaichs (Gaelic, 'cuach'—a bowl).

In the larger sizes the quaich was the counterpart of the English porringer, though it had ecclesiastical connexions also, being used for the collection of alms, for depositing Communion tokens, and even for Communion wine. In the smaller pocket sizes it held the convivial 'dram'; of the two illustrated, that to the right is *c.* 1670 and measures 5 inches in diameter, whilst the other is *c.* 1730 and is of the pocket size, 2 inches in diameter. They are in the collections, respectively, of Mr. Clapperton and Mr. C. Stewart Murray of Edinburgh. Neither specimen is marked.

No. x shows what may truly be called the most curious piece of pewter-ware in Scotland, the 'Pirley-Pig' of Dundee.

In Jamieson's Scots dictionary the name is applied to a 'circular vessel of crockery. . . which has no opening save a slit at the top only so large as to receive a halfpenny, used by children for keeping their money.' This pewter example is almost 6 inches in diameter and 3 inches high, and has a device of iron rods passing through the body for preventing unauthorized opening. Members of the Town Council of Dundee were fined for non-attend-

ance at Council meetings and it was in this 'Pig' that the fines were placed. The surface is completely covered with incised decoration, in itself an unusual feature. There are four shields, three of which are encircled by inscriptions. The first shield bears the lion rampant of Scotland with the initials J.G.R. for James VI. The surrounding inscription reads '*Feare God and obey the king.*' The second shield bears the Arms of Scrymgeoure of Dudhope and the inscription '*Sir James Schrimgeour, Prowest, Anno 1602, 14 May.*' Around the shield are the words '*Lord blesse the Prowest, Bailzies, and Counsell of Dundie.*' The third shield contains the initials P.L., R.E., M.I., J.L., W.H., and the words '*Bailzeis Anno 1602.*' The inscription reads '*Payment for not coming to the Counsell of Dundie.*' Upon the last shield is the City crest, the 'lily pot,' and motto '*Dei Döm.*' This piece is from Dundee City Hall.



NO. X.—THE 'PIRLEY-PIG' OF DUNDEE, 3 INCHES HIGH AND ALMOST 6 INCHES IN DIAMETER; REIGN OF JAMES VI; PROBABLY MADE BY A DUNDEE PEWTERER