

Company

The Pewterers' Company is an ancient and continually evolving foundation with medieval origins as a City Guild. The earliest documented reference to it is in the records of the Corporation dated 1348 and the Company's own records are extant from 1451. The first charter was granted by King Edward IV in 1473. It is number sixteen in the order of civic precedence among over a hundred livery companies.



The history of the Company reflects that of the use of pewter. The first reference to 'the makers of vessels of pewter' is dated 1348 when they asked the Mayor and Corporation for approval of articles drawn up for trade governance. It was much later that Edward IV granted the first charter in 1473/4. This gave the Company the right to be self-governing, to hold goods and property in perpetuity and to govern the trade throughout the kingdom. This last is unlike the powers granted to the majority of other companies whose jurisdiction was limited to the City and its environs. Arms were granted to the Company at the same time.

Groups of tradesmen naturally congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest. Since in feudal times any gathering was considered suspect by the authorities, companies usually had a religious affiliation. Ours was to the Virgin Mary, and her symbol, a lily pot, appeared in our original arms. This was changed in 1533, during the Reformation, when the one in present use was granted.



Last years Lord Mayor of London, Alderman David Lewis with Company member Richard Mullens looking at a piece just made in the Pewtersmithing Marquee 2008.

The Company was concerned with trade matters, costs, prices, raw materials, quality of pewterware and training of apprentices, as well as relief to the poor within the trade, funeral expenses, general charity and civic duties. The Company continues to support the trade, charities and the City as well as meeting together in Pewterers' Hall.

The first Hall, completed in 1496, was destroyed in the Great Fire. The second Hall, on the same site in Lime Street, was demolished in 1932, although from the mid 19th century the premises were let to a firm of hatters. We do however still own the site. The present Hall was opened, on a new site, in 1961.