

Searches, part 3

William Grant, the Worshipful Company of Pewterers' Historian, has found more extracts from the Company's records on the subject of the Company's powers of search (see *The Pewterer*, vols 1.1 and 2.1 for the earlier articles on this subject).

Statement of the Court of the Pewterers Company to the Royal Commission

looking into Municipal Corporations

12 December 1833

The Company still continue to hold four Search Courts in the year when three or four of the members of the Court of Assistants take their walks and visit the Master Pewterers who are members of the Company and that they have thus been on the Search is reported as the following Quarter Court of Assistants but from the doubts and difficulties respecting the powers of the Company to make effective Searches which appear by the case submitted to Solicitor General Dunning in the year 1770 and his opinion thereon and the state of the trade which had been many years declining little has been done beyond going round and occasionally inspecting the work.

The Company still exercise the power of calling on the Masters in the trade to strike their touch on the touch plate of the Company kept at their Hall.

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The last time someone was summoned for bad metal 18th June 1789

Mrs. Snape attended her summons to answer for her tablespoon being four grains worse than plate at the last Quarter Search & after hearing what she had to say,

Resolved that the said Mrs. Snape hath been guilty of a breach of the 26th byelaw and hath thereby incurred the penalty of £5 to be paid to the Renter Warden for the use of the Company.

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The first time that the expression "so far as the search extended" was used. 16th December 1790.

The Master reported that he and the Wardens and Court of Assistants had been upon the Quarter Search and so far as the search extended had found things in good order.