

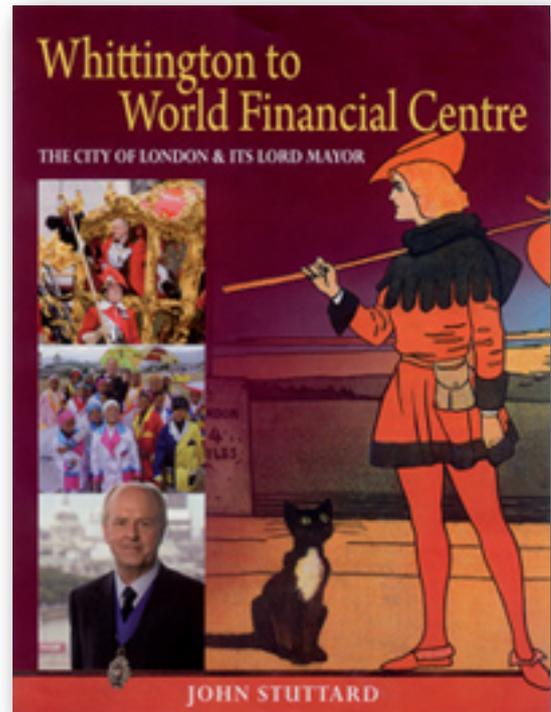
# Pewter in London and in Brazil: a Mayoral Connection

Sir John Stuttard wrote a book (*Whittington to World Financial Centre: The City of London & its Lord Mayor*, published by Phillimore) about the Civic City following his Mayoral year, 2006, the year after the one in which he and Kevin Kearney (past Master of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers) were Sheriffs of the City together.

He made a fascinating reference to pewter in the book; it was in connection with his visit to Brazil, where he came across an Englishman whose grandfather had established a pewter business, taking his expertise to Brazil at the end of the 19th century when so many English entrepreneurs established businesses there.

He wrote:

*Our next few days were spent in Tiradentes, a smaller gold mining town founded in 1702 and named later after a revolutionary hero. Set, like Ouro Preto on a hillside, it is one of the prettiest towns one can imagine, with restaurants, cafés, art galleries and artists' workshops. Two of the more interesting shops sell cutlery, the brainchild of an Englishman, John Summers [aka Sommers and Somers], who established a pewter manufacturing business in nearby São Joao del Rei. Our hotel was an old farm, with outhouses and duck pond, all owned and managed by Raquel, the wife of a local gynaecologist, Luiz Ney Fonseca. His hobby was cooking at the farm and his speciality was Leitao a Pururucha, a dish of special suckling pig cooked slowly for days and then finished off by heating the skin to make it crackle. They had invited friends to dine with us and these included Robert Ballantyne, an English resident of Tiradentes and a former member of the FCO. Our time in Tiradentes was relaxing, enabling visits to many churches, a steam train journey to nearby São Joao del Rei and many pleasant meals.*



I asked Sir John about his knowledge of pewter. He said: *“The Worshipful Company of Pewterers is today's guardian of a craft that has existed for over 3,000 years. It was a pleasure for Lesley and me to get to know more about the craft when Past Master Kevin Kearney and I were Sheriffs of London together in 2005. Kevin's wife, Mary, has had longstanding connections with the Company. Today,*



*the e-zine The Pewterer highlights the modern uses and features contemporary designers and craftsmen in pewter, demonstrating the versatility of this alloy and the wonder and practicality of its products. Eighteenth century Pewter tankards that were given to my parents are amongst our most treasured possessions.”*

*I googled the City of São Joao del Rei and found that it is “famous for its pewter and tin artisans who are found mainly in the historical center. They*

*make tea and coffee sets, candle holders and vases and other tableware and utensils.*

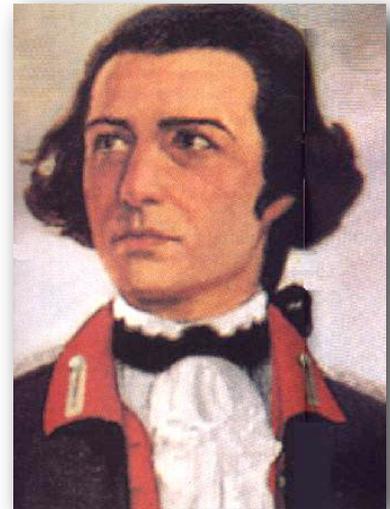
*Pewter, when new looks like silver and is very beautiful.*

*For a better understanding visit the factory John Sommers and the Tin Museum ... A well-known firm having shops in the area is “Imperial Pewter”. Rua da Prata 132A Tel:(32) 3372-1465 and Praca Embaixador Gastao Cunha, 85 (32) 3372-3519”*

And presumably, John Somers Estanhos!

Sir John’s book is a 'must' for all those with an interest in the City of London’s business, its traditions and the different roles of the Corporation, the Foreign Office and UKTI, not to mention business and trade associations, the Livery movement, and significant charitable organisations. It clearly defines the significance of the Lord Mayor’s role in maintaining London as the prime international financial capital in the world. It is still available on Amazon.

I wrote to John Somers “c/o Sao Jao del Rei” before Christmas in the outside hope that the letter (sent by post as I could not find an e-mail address) might find its way to him. If it did, no reply has yet found its way back to me. I shall give the contact attempt one more go, via the good offices of our Embassy in Brazilia. It would be interesting to learn something of the pewter trade in that country!



Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, known as Tiradentes, was a leading member of the Brazilian revolutionary movement known as the Inconfidência Mineira whose aim was full independence from the

Alan Williams



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