

# THE SEARCH NOTEBOOK FOR 1675

Amongst the Worshipful Company of Pewterers' records, at the Guildhall in the City of London, is a small notebook (MS 7125). In it was found the report of an early search by the Company of working London pewterers for the year 1675. It appears that this was the first search in London following the Great Fire. Country searches had been carried out in 1669-83 and the late Ron Homer transcribed and recorded the later London searches of 1689, 1690, 1691 and 1692 (*Journal of the Pewter Society*, Spring 2001).

On 27<sup>th</sup> April 1675, the Company searchers, consisting of the Master, Robert Martin, and two Wardens, John Bennett and William Pettiver, had visited the premises of 30 pewterers. Then, on 9<sup>th</sup> June, another search was made and followed, on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, by a search of another 10 premises. In total 41 London pewterers' premises were searched that year.

Interestingly, while at first glance I had assumed that all those given the courtesy title of 'Mr' were members of the Livery, this was not the case here. However, it is the case in the Members' Lists. But there is no consistency in this notebook; perhaps the hasty jottings were notes to be copied out properly, at a later date, into the Accounts or Court Orders & Entries (Minute Books).

The first name to appear is that of a Mr Winkworth (also sometimes referred to as Wentworth). He was Moses Winkworth, of the parish of St Martin in the Fields. His children's baptisms are registered there, as also is his own burial, in 1693. He was a maker of spoons. He never became a member of the Livery, so perhaps this was a courtesy title.

The second name to appear is one Mr Britton. This was interesting because there is no 'Mr Britton' on the Database for London. (The Database of the Pewter Society, which is only available to members, was created by bringing together information that has been published in numerous sources over the last 100 years. It is now being expanded as a cooperative effort, with new marks and information coming in constantly from members and the public. It currently has around 7,000 marks and details of 18,000 pewterers. Where known, it includes their marks, hallmarks, dates, locations, wares, family trees, published sources and other information.)



The search Notebook

Nor does his name appear in the book *Pewterers of London 1600 – 1900* by Carl Ricketts et al. (Published by the Pewter Society, January 2001. ISBN 0-9538887-0-3)

His name, however, is clearly written on the Members' Lists and is listed in the Livery every year from 1670 to 1681 where, by the side of his name, there is annotated the word 'mort'. It seems that he jumped from obscurity into the Livery, but the turbulent years 1665 and 1666 had intervened and the Members' Lists for a few years are decidedly sketchy.

(Sometimes referred to as the Beadle's Call Book, these lists date from 1570 and (usually) recorded annually the names of those in the Yeomanry or Livery of the Company in order of precedence. The record each year started with the names of all the Livery. After this came the section which contained the names of those in the Yeomanry. The newest members in each section appeared at the end of each of the lists.)

Cliff Webb's wonderful book *London Livery Company Apprenticeship Registers Vol. 40 Pewterers' Company 1611 to 1800* records a Henry Brittell or Bittell, who must surely be the same man as ours? I have seldom found an error in this book but differences may sometimes arise when transcribing from different sources in different hands. Referring back to *Pewterers of London*, this same person is recorded as Brettell. His stock is listed as 'stick heads' and 'plates in the rough'. His parish is yet to be traced.

Whilst 'stick' heads is clearly written, this is probably in error for 'still' heads, i.e. the upper part of a still, into which the vapour rises. The vapour may condense in the head or it may be conveyed from the head into a separate condenser. The heads of stills were often made of pewter. 'Plates in the rough' would be unfinished plates, probably just at the cast stage.

The third entry is a Mr Witter (Samuel) about whom quite a lot is known (see *Journal of the Pewter Society Spring 2010 pp. 22-30*). From St Sepulchre's Parish, he died in 1688. He attained the Livery in 1676. His stock consisted of chamber pots of his own making; also spoons by Goodman and spoons by Wentworth/Winkworth (the one who was first to be searched), porringers by Waites, Masters's Wine Quarterns (who is later searched) and Richarson's (sic), (Christian name, Charles) half pints and his chamber pots. Clearly Mr Witter saw the benefit of variety in his stock.

The fourth to be searched, appears to have been one Daniel Barton I, also of St. Sepulchre's. His stock consisted of his spoons, Freeman's chamber pots, Masters's half quarterns and his wine quarterns. Barton was not to attain the Livery until 1678, so at this time he was not eligible to use the title 'Mr'. (A quartern was a term equivalent to a gill or quarter pint.)

The fifth entry is Mr Jon (sic) Johnson. His stock comprised of his own spoons. His death is recorded in the same year as the search (1675) and, if the records are correct, he would have been approximately 85 years old when he died. He was a Liveryman and perhaps his advanced years guaranteed him his appropriate title. Interestingly, his apprentices had been Edward Goodman and Moses Winkworth, both of whom appear in this search; and both became spoonmakers in their own right.

The sixth search is at Mr Browne's. This was probably Ralph Browne, who made pot bottoms. His parish is unknown and he is still in the Yeomanry List in 1677, so the title

'Mr' is an enigma as he never appears to have attained the Livery.

The seventh entry "At Marsh" would appear to refer to Ralph Marsh II. From St Sepulchre's Parish, he joined the Livery in 1669, but again he has not been given his correct title. His stock lists 'double measures without touch'.

The eighth entry is a Mr Ralph Hulls. He was on the Livery and was to become Master in 1682. The items on his premises were Peter Parks's Wine Quarts, his still kirb (*a still kirb, or circubit, is the lowest part of the still which sits in the fire and contains the substance to be distilled*) and Charles Richarson's potts (another term for mugs) and his wine pints.

Mr William Ditch was the ninth to be searched. His lay was found to be 'at ½ gr.' (that is ½ grain heavier than the acceptable standard - an indication that lead might be present).

He joined the Livery in 1669 and is on the Members' List until 1675, when his name has been lightly crossed out. He must have died around then, for his will was proved in 1676. He, too, came from St Sepulchre's. This church was severely damaged in the Great Fire and was rebuilt within four years. It was a large church and, even today, it is the largest of the city churches.

The tenth premises to be searched were those of Mr Richard Masters. His parish is unknown. His Wine Quarterns were at 'ye say' and his fine glass cups were at 2 gr. At 'ye say' meant that the item met the correct standard. 'At 2 gr.' meant it was heavier than the accepted level - again, evidence of the presence of lead.

Because of the number of premises searched, and to prevent this article becoming too lengthy, the remaining searches will be detailed at a later date.

Working between the Search Book, the Database and the Members' List is both rewarding and revelatory. The Book is also an insight into business relationships and what the individual pewterers traded and made and sold.

Perhaps, mention should be made here about the notebook itself. This rather small, and seemingly ramshackle, notebook measures approximately 3" x 7 ¼". The cover is of vellum and, where with age, it is peeling away, layers of paper are revealed, resembling pasteboard. It has two brass clasps. Inside, the words "Robert Tarlton, Pewterers Hall, Lyme Street" is written in black ink.

Mr Tarlton's book appears to follow no particular order. Pasted inside are 46 pages of '*Riders 1675 British Merlin with notes of Husbandry, Physick, Fairs & Marts, Directions and Tables to all Necessary Uses*'. The entry for 27<sup>th</sup> April 1675 appears towards the back of the book. Before this entry there are many pages left blank and prior to these blank pages is an entry dated 10<sup>th</sup> April 10<sup>th</sup> 1676.

These rough notebooks were primarily for recording wares which were to be fined or confiscated due to poor quality of metal or inferior standard (or both), but interspersed amongst these notes are a few presentments of apprentices, again noting payment to be made to the Company. At the back of the book, upside down, are written various notes, including expenses, monies received and even mileage from London.

But within its covers is a wealth of information. The fines imposed or subsequent action taken can be found in the Court Orders & Entries and Audit Books of the Company. The wares listed were those items which were deficient, not the full stock.

It is interesting to note that this is the first recorded search in the nine years that had elapsed since the devastation of the City by the Fire. One wonders what the City and its pewter trade was like. The premises which are recorded fall into the geographical area which had not been seriously affected by the Fire; but change was to come and the area towards Westminster was soon to become increasingly attractive. Why the move west? Peter Thorold provides an answer:

"Up to 1666. the withdrawal of the nobility and gentry from the City and its immediate neighbourhood had been steady rather than precipitate. Now it was made urgent by the crowds of homeless flooding westwards, fleeing the ruinous heap, or that Chaos which we now call London. The Fire with its destruction of so much of London's housing, acted as detonator for a demographic explosion, a massive migration which was anyway inevitable. It was a flight by the rich, but hardly a reluctant one, for they were happy to go, to take their money and abandon to speculators and builders the massive, often obsolete buildings descended to them from other, different times. ... As the rich moved west they were followed by the trades which depended on them and on which of course they in their turn depended."

(Peter Thorold: *The London Rich – The Creation of a Great City from 1666 to the Present*, pp29-30. Viking, published by Penguin Books Ltd. London 1999.)

© **Diana German**, 2013

Diana is a member of the Pewter Society, and its Publicity Officer; and also a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.

This article has been adapted from one previously published in the *Journal of the Pewter Society*, Spring 2012 pp27-30.

[LINK to the Pewter Society](#)

In the last issue: The first of two parts of an article by Ron Homer, adapted, and reprinted from Issue 04 of *Pewter Review*, detailing the problems, costs and so on of a search outside London in 1702.

In this issue: The second of the two parts of Ron Homer's article, this one detailing the food consumed!

RICKETTS, Carl

Pewterers of London 1600-1900. [S.I.]: Pewter Society, 2001. 238p.  
No.1 of a limited edition of 200.  
E RIC

WEBB, Cliff

Pewterers' Company 1611-1800 / abstracted and indexed by Cliff Webb. London: Society of Genealogists Enterprises, 2003. vi, 148p. (London Livery Company apprenticeship registers; v.40)



*The Pewterer*, Volume 4, number 4. December, 2013.

Editor: Alan Williams

Published by Alan Williams, 21 Elder Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6BT and endorsed by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, Pewterers' Hall, Oat Lane, London EC2V 7DE

Articles: copyright the several authors 2013. Get-up: copyright Alan Williams, 2013.

No reproduction without permission.

All enquiries to the [Editor](#).