

Strange places to find pewter

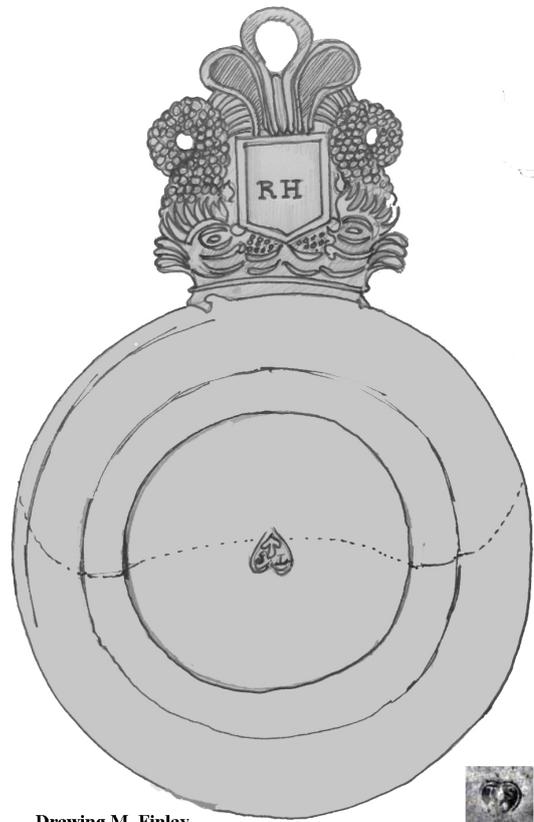
English pewter porringers from the grave

Michael Finlay has drawn my attention to an article by Ronald Michaelis, entitled 'Back from the Dead', (which appeared in Apollo Magazine in 1950). In that article, Mr Michaelis drew attention to two pewter porringers found in an Indian grave near Charlestown, Rhode Island. Both had 'double-dolphin' ornamental ears.

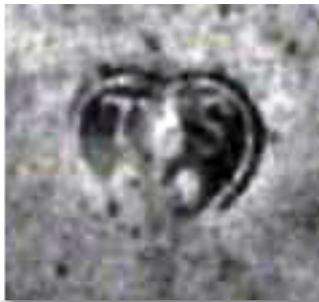
One of these porringers, now at the Park Museum, Providence, Rhode Island, bears a touch mark in the shape of a bell with the initials 'TB', a mark restruck on the London touch plate in c 1668. I assume that 'the London touchplate' refers to the touchplate at the Worshipful Company of Pewterers.

The other porringer (now at the Museum of the Rhode Island Historical Society, also at Providence) bears the touch of Joseph Collier of London.

The grave is believed to be that of a daughter (who died in about 1689 or 1690) of Ninigret, Paramount Chief of the Narragansetts.



Drawing M. Finlay



In the article, the author went on to identify two other similar porringers, one of which is at the Museum of London.

I asked Hazel Forsyth, Senior Curator, Medieval & Post-Medieval at the Museum of London, about this MoL porringer. She told me that the Museum in fact had two porringers. I have reproduced photos and information about them supplied to me by Hazel.

Mr Finlay reports on yet another porringer of similar design (illustrated here):

"This porringer, with a unique ear design, then unknown to Michaelis, is in the Bateman Collection in Sheffield Museum, Ref. J.93.1235. Its Bateman Collection Ref. is L1.127. It was apparently found in a bronze age cyst burial during an archaeological dig by Bateman, at Stanton, Derbyshire, in 1853. Its diameter is 4 3/8 in. Mark: Fleur de lis, flanked by T S, in heart. "

English porringers

The Museum of London's porringers



205 A porringer with a single ear in the form of an escutcheon flanked by 'dolphins' surmounted by a ropework suspension loop. The escutcheon is stamped with ownership initials 'M' and 'B'. The straight-sided, shallow bowl has a flat base (now damaged). There is a touch mark in a beaded circle underneath with the letters 'I' and 'K' with mullets above and below by John Kenton, London, OP2720. Kenton obtained his freedom in 1675 and died in 1722. Date: c 1675–1722.

Porringers with 'dolphin' ears have been recovered from the wreck of a late 17th century vessel off the coast of Quebec (Anse aux Bouleaux) and from excavations in Virginia (Davis, 2003 cat. 182). L max. 200, H 40, d 136mm, weight 243g. Provenance:

206 A porringer with a single ear in the form of an escutcheon flanked by dolphins, surmounted by a ropework suspension loop. The escutcheon is stamped with an ownership triad of 'L' over 'I' ? 'M' (possibly re-struck). The straight-sided, angular bowl has a flat base with a turned circle for decorative effect. The touch underneath of a heart pierced with arrows with the initials 'H' and 'S', is almost certainly a mark of Henry Sewdley of London (OP4193). He set up shop in 1709, was Master of the Worshipful Company [of Pewterers] in 1738 and died in 1747. Date: Early 18th century. There are visible linen marks inside the bowl which shows how the ear was attached.

L 188, H 40, d 128mm, weight 271g.
Provenance: *Found in London.*



English porringers

Michael Finlay is a distinguished academic figure with a number of published books to his name. One of his more recent books is a definitive work called *English Decorated Bronze Mortars and their Makers*. This was published in 2010. Many years ago he undertook a study of the pewterers of Penrith. Called *The Pewterers of Penrith*, it was published in 1985 in Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society, by that Society.

Ronald Michaelis's main article on English Pewter Poringers was first published in Apollo magazine in four parts in 1949; and his article about the discovery of the porringers in America was published in the same magazine in 1950.

Apollo, the International Art Magazine - <http://www.apollo-magazine.com/>

With thanks to Hazel Forsyth and the Museum of London, David Hall and Wikipedia and, of course, Michael Finlay.

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