



European Pewter Union

Annual General Meeting, 2016

Held in Sheffield, United Kingdom - June 10th and 11th 2016. Report by Jayne Abdy of AR Wentworth.

The EPU meets on an annual basis to discuss issues concerning the European pewter trade. This year the most important of the issues to be discussed was the state of the regulations coming out of the European Commission on alloys and solders. Last year, the EPU met in the Netherlands; this year it was the turn of Sheffield.

The EPU weekend started on Friday afternoon when the assembled delegates from Italy and the

Netherlands were taken on a visit to the Sheffield Assay Office. The guided tour was led by Librarian, Emma Paragreen and Head and Analytical Services, Belen Morales. It included both the precious metal hallmarking and the analytical services divisions of the Office and a look at how they had worked on pewter issues for the ABPC.



Cutlers' Hall

On Friday evening delegates were invited to Dinner, organised by the Association of British Pewter Craftsmen, at Cutlers' Hall in Sheffield city centre. Chris Hudson, an ABPC Council member, first gave an informative and interesting tour of the Hall, including the main hall, and a look at the Norfolk Knife. Those who had never visited before were very impressed.

The Norfolk Knife, made by Joseph Rodgers in 1851 for The Great Exhibition of 1851, took two years to complete. It features 75 blades with etchings of Queen Victoria, Chatsworth House and The White House amongst others.

The tour was followed by Dinner in the Neal Room – a rare honour, as this room is generally only used for board meetings and dinners when the Master Cutler himself is present. However, Chris Hudson delivered apologies from the Master Cutler, who had been unable to attend due to commitments in Canada.

Richard Abdy led the Toast to HM The Queen on her 90th Birthday.

Each guest was presented with a pewter napkin ring made by Chimo Holdings and donated by Chris Hudson.

After the meal, the Stag pub was the venue to try some local Sheffield Ale, unfortunately not in pewter tankards. Delegates later retired to the magnificent



The Norfolk Knife

The Pewterer, volume 7.3, August 2016

Kenwood Hall Hotel, famous as the hotel that Dennis Taylor stayed in during his 1985 world championship snooker victory!

The EPU AGM took place at the Kenwood Hall Hotel at 10:15 am on Saturday morning. Delegates from Italy, the Netherlands and the UK attended; apologies were received from Portugal and Austria.

A new Chairman was appointed: Martijn van Zon from the Netherlands, taking over from Richard Abdy, who had been chair for the past few years.

After the formal business, there followed two talks, the first by Belen Morales from the Assay Office about the chemical analysis the Assay Office does for APBC members; and an interesting conversation followed regarding the breakdown of pewter material in a cocktail shaker taken for analysis by Wentworth Pewter. The discussion looked at how different manufacturing techniques such as spinning versus casting and hand polishing versus vibro polishing affected the release of tin into any liquid.

The second talk was by Jonathan Rickwood of ITRI. In the course of this talk, he tabled the ITRI's proposed new Code of Conduct, and concluded by asking all members to sign up to it (See the [ABPC Newsletter, volume 9.3](#)).

A slightly negative air was present when delegates moved on to talk about the State of Trade – the number of pewterers is down and orders are hard to find; companies are continuing to go out of business and everyone is generally finding it very tough at present. Not much hope was expressed that things would get any better in the future.

Richard Abdy told delegates that the EPU website would be updated alongside the ABPC one. It was noted that the EPU part of the site was very much out of date.



The 2016 EPU AGM in progress

Everyone was encouraged to invite new members to the meetings from any European countries, although it was noted that past attempts had not produced material results!

The proposal that EPU meetings should only be held every two years, instead of annually, was not accepted. The general consensus was that everyone benefited from meeting every year as European legislation was too important for members not to be constantly updated on progress. It was felt that longer times between meetings might mean that the EPU could start to disappear altogether and not exist in the future.

The EPU secretary, Cathy Steele, would ask Portugal and Austria if one of them would be willing to host the EPU next year – if not, then the Netherlands offered to do so instead.

It was agreed that Membership subs should remain at the same price as in previous years.

After the meeting a lovely leisurely lunch was held in the hotel restaurant. Later, Mr Michael Pinder and Mr Keith Tyssen led a quick trip to look at the Derbyshire hills on the outskirts of Sheffield before it was time for trains and planes to be caught for the journeys home. All agreed that the meeting had been a great success, and a vote of thanks was proposed for the organisers.

Jayne Abdy

[Home](#)

The Pewterer, Volume 7, number 3. August 2016.

Editor: Alan Williams

Published by Alan Williams, 14 Dandridge House, 31 Lamb Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6ED and endorsed by the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, Pewterers' Hall, Oat Lane, London EC2V 7DE

Articles: copyright the several authors 2016. Get-up: copyright Alan Williams, 2016.

No reproduction without permission. All enquiries to the Editor.