

Pewter at Haddon Hall, Bakewell, Derbyshire

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Part Two, the Collection begins to be revealed

Avid readers of this ezine may remember that we published an article early in 2016 about pewter at Haddon Hall. The original article, published in February that year, told of the 'discovery' in the Hall of what turned out to be the tip of a large and historically fascinating pewter collection, and of how the Pewter Society, in the guise of Steve Custons, Malcolm Toothill and their respective spouses, became involved in helping to find, identify, restore and catalogue the Collection.



After the initial work, yet more sadware¹ was found, listed in an inventory compiled in 1917 by the 9th Duke of Rutland. The inventory was found when the archives were being catalogued. The sadware has been found in various rooms that are not

accessible to the public. There remain around 30 pieces, listed on that inventory, that are still waiting to be discovered. - and Haddon Hall has many rooms, cupboards, cellars and towers!



Unrestored Oval Dish



Conserved Oval Dish

A major part of the conservation work

¹ Sadware, the Pewter Society definition: Chargers, dishes, plates and saucers were collectively known by pewterers as 'sadware'. The boundaries between the four categories were not clearly defined. Indeed, although 'charger' is a very old word, pewterers rarely used it, describing all large sadware as 'dishes'. Nowadays we tend to say:

- saucer anything under 7" (17.7 cm) in diameter
- plate 7" to 11" (17.7 to 27.8 cm)
- dish 11" to 18" (27.9 to 45.6 cm)
- charger anything larger.

has been carried out by David W Hall, (the archivist of the Worshipful Company). After 2½ years of hard work removing the thick flaking oxide coating that had accumulated on the pewter items over the last 350 years, part of Haddon Hall's impressive and important collection of 17th century pewter is on display in the larders of one of the many kitchens. Most of the pewter appears to have been made by the Derby and London pewterer, George Smith (working years 1651-1698).

To date approximately half of the 83 chargers, dishes and plates which were listed in the 9th Duke of Rutland's inventory have been found. A majority of these wares were made between 1650 and 1700 and remained at Haddon Hall untouched from 1703, when the family moved to Belvoir Castle, for over 200 years. This left them covered



Cardinal's Hat, as found



As conserved

with a thick, flaking oxide coating.

Significantly over half of the pieces in the Collection were made by the local pewterer, George Smith of London and Derby. But the mark of the London maker, Henry Hartwell, who was born about 1609 in Maidenhead, Berkshire and died during the Great Plague of 1665, also appears.

In the Collection we found a wonderful, rare, "Cardinal's Hat" (see photos above). Unfortunately the "Cardinal's Hat" is not currently on show due to security issues; however it is no longer being used as a plant pot saucer!

Cardinal's Hats are so called because they are thought to resemble the broad-brimmed hats, called *galeri*, worn by clergy in the Catholic Church.

During the conservation work, carried out by Pewter Society members, David W Hall and the author of this article, enough scale was removed to make a large plate!

The enormous oval dish illustrated in the original article (and reproduced here as found and then as conserved - see the first page) carried the small hallmarks of

George Smith. It has been speculated that, because a majority of the many knife marks found on it were at one end of the dish, it was used to kneed and portion bread dough.

George Smith appears to have used one charger mould to make wares with differing rim widths. The narrow rims give the impression that they were 2½” rim chargers that have had their rims clipped, whereas others appear to have had an additional piece of pewter soldered to the rim to make them broader. The huge oval dish appears to have been made from the same charger mould that was used for the large chargers.

The dish was then cut through the centre and an additional strip of pewter soldered to the two pieces to make the oval dish.

The very large chargers would have been used as serving dishes carrying huge joints of meat or large birds such as swan and heron. The meat would have been carved by servants and served on either wooden trenchers or smaller pewter plates that were also known as trenchers.

There is still enough conservation work to be carried out to keep the conservators employed for a number of years.

Steve Custons

Pewter Society Vice President and Database Manager

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Note: a fuller definition of 'sadware' can be found on the Pewter Society's website: <http://www.pewtersociety.org/ware-categories/pewter-for-eating/chargers-dishes-plates-and-saucers>. - Ed

Photos of pewter: Steve Custons

Photo of Haddon Hall: Alan Williams

Acknowledgements

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The Haddon Estate – Making available historical documents

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