

What are Touch Marks?

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A touch mark is a pewterer's "trade mark" and often, but not always, includes the name or initials of the pewterer. In London and Edinburgh pewterers had to record their touch marks on special plates, and we know the names of most of those who did so. However, that practice was not followed elsewhere, and so whilst thousands of touch marks have been recorded, we do not always know the pewterers to whom they belong.

Touch marks vary considerably in style and size. If a touch mark includes a date, this is the date on which the pewterer set up in business, not the date on which the article was made.



From the Pewter Society: Examples of pewterers' marks

Please go to the Pewter Society site for further information. Elsewhere in this article, we offer links to sites that may provide more information on this fascinating subject.

Pewter Marks

Pewter marks or *touches* can be informative and rewarding or complicated and frustrating! Sometimes there are none at all on a piece; sometimes one can tell the maker, the place of manufacture and the year from the touchmarks.

Originally all touchmarks were kept at Pewterers' Hall on large lead touchplates. These melted in the Great Fire and the ones used after 1666 are now at Guildhall for safekeeping. The habit of 'touching' died out as the trade diminished from the 18th Century and the power of the Company to control quality also waned. At the Millennium, and then just over a decade ago, in 2003, however, the tradition was revived by the Company and with it the ability to identify modern pewter with some degree of confidence.

The Pewter Society has detailed information on pewterers' marks, verification marks, ownership marks and merchants' marks.

The Pewter Society: www.pewtersociety.org

Pewterbank

A Beginners Guide to marks on pewter plates

The site linked below is intended to introduce pewter marks to casual or recent collectors. It is neither comprehensive nor definitive, and may only lead the reader to ask for better guidance – and the site makes some attempt to find that for the reader.

Pewter plates, mugs and tankards (generally, it is said that a tankard is a mug with a lid) have a variety of marks on them. Some consider touch marks to be works of art, but to many they are confusing. What do they all mean?

The Pewter Society, and a number of books, may lead you to a better understanding. But this site is intended to set you out on the journey and lead you to where you might want to find out more yourself.

Go to Pewter Bank: http://www.pewterbank.com/html/pewter_plate_marks.html to find out more. Pewter Bank's web site hopes to provide simple and introductory information to those who might be curious about the old pewter that they come across and to this extent the purpose of this web site is -

To nurture nascent interest in British Antique Pewter, and to leave the reader a little hungry for more, but with good clues where to find it....

See also: the companion article entitled "*Touch Mark Ceremony*" describing the Company's latest touch mark ceremony.

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