

# Obituary

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Derek Stanley Weeks (1932 - 2015)

Derek Weeks died peacefully in the early hours of 25th March after a short illness. It was cancer. Not a man to bother the doctors if he could help it, he let the warning signs pass him by, and then it was too late.

Born in 1932, Derek served his National Service in the RAF as an 'instrument basher', service slang for an aircraft instrument mechanic. He recollected that he was paid ten shillings a week, plus one shilling a day 'aircrew money'. He was demobbed in August 1953 and instead of returning to his old job with an advertising company in Fleet Street, he began an apprenticeship with Englefields in Worthington Street, off the Gray's Inn Road, where he learned his trade from "the last of the great hammer men of London - Ralph Englefield - for the princely sum of five pounds twelve and six for a forty five hour week".



He completed a large number of commissions during these years and was involved in the project to supply the many candlesticks (to be wired for light) for the choir of St Paul's Cathedral. Five and 1/4 inches tall, they were of a complex and intricate design.

Derek subsequently, after many years at Englefields, was made redundant, and took on a job with a large silver manufacturer in north London, where he became production manager for their brand of silverware.

He became a Freeman, and then a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers. He was very proud of this association between a small craftsman and an ancient City company; and rather sad that after his retirement he felt he could not afford the increasing costs, both of membership and of travel to attend functions.

On his eventual retirement, he continued to cast small items from home for special commissions; and wrote a delightful little Mémoire, called "Englefields, Reflections of a Pewterer, 1953-1986".

He married Margaret Moorey nearly 59 years ago. They had two children, Dawn and Claire; five grandchildren and four great grandchildren. Amongst the warm tributes she paid to him in her eulogy at his funeral, Dawn, said of him:

*"Dad loved nature particularly birds & coast/sea and we spent our holidays mostly in Devon/ Cornwall where we would always look up the local craft; and he loved pottery, glass blowing, tin mining and the like. He loved to fish in his spare time and once owned a boat with two friends, Tom (T) Derek (D) and Mick (M), which was called appropriately 'TeDieM' He lived life to the full, was honest and hardworking, always upbeat and jovial with a great sense of humour."*

Ian Wilkie, a fellow Liveryman, who knew him well, said: "He was the best pewter craftsman I knew." Charles Hull, a pst Master of the Company and a pewter craftsman himself, agreed, adding: "Derek was one of our last contacts with the old Englefields firm; and an excellent craftsman. I got him to come up to the Hall on one of our Court days and he gave us a short demonstration of the skill of turning a small tankard body on our lathe in the Hall basement - I still have the body he turned!"

## Addendum

When Ralph Englefields died, Englefields was bought by their metal suppliers, Fry, who installed a man called Alan Blower as the new MD. But after just two or three years, Fry sold the company to Royal Selangor of Malaysia, a move that caused much consternation, both to the trade and to the Worshipful Company of Pewterers. A number of English pewter companies would have been interested had they been given notice. The result was that after a few further years, Selangor closed what was left of Englefields and shipped production, including many priceless moulds, out to Malaysia.

The historic interest in the moulds is enormous, as Englefields had, over the years, absorbed the moulds of numbers of London pewterers, whose businesses they had bought.

I have previously mentioned Derek's little book of recollections of his life in the pewter trade, *Englefields, Reflections of a Pewterer, 1953-1986*. Looking through it again the other day, I came across what he called a 'Timeline' for the Englefields business. And there, against the date '1700', was the name 'Thomas Scattergood', apparently the progenitor of the business. With the family's permission, I reproduce the relevant page from the book (in a separate article in this issue). Please, also, see my article about Thomas Scattergood in *The Pewterer* [issue 5.3](#); and the Correspondence page in [issue 6.1](#). More about that in the next issue.

## **Alan Williams**

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