



URCHS Pewter Detective!

When we recently catalogued these two large communion plates in the URCHS collections, it was clear where they came from – each has ‘Associate Congregation, Auchterarder, 1814’ engraved around the rim.



But we can learn more from their backs, where there's a set of marks of a shield with a bird on a globe, surrounded by plants, with 'Rob[...]' above and 'Kinniburgh' below; and four smaller shields below, showing a thistle, 'RK', 'Edin', and a rose.



Pewterers used a series of makers' marks, 'touchmarks', and quality marks on their work, and some detective work with the online guide *Scottish Pewter Marks Commonly Found* at Pewterbank to identify the pewterer, it seems likely these plates were made by Robert Kinniburgh, an Edinburgh pewterer active 1794-1831. So the Auchterarder plates were made 50 miles away, in Edinburgh!

This second, smaller pair of communion plates have 'Brunswick Chapel, 1835' engraved on the front. There are various 'Brunswick Chapel' with Congregational and Independent roots in England – in Stepney, Nelson and Bristol. We checked the marks on the backs of both plates: they include a



pewterer's name - 'Edgar & Son' - and a walking animal, a crown, 'E&Co', and a figure with a staff. Some more detective work, with *Munday's Hallmarks* on the Pewter Society website, shows Edgar was a Bristol pewterer working from 1810-1850 – so these maker's marks would suggest these plates are probably from the Brunswick Chapel in St Paul's, Bristol, founded in 1835.

Helen Weller, Archivist

March 2022

'Munday's Hallmarks' on the Pewter Society website: <https://www.pewtersociety.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Mundeys-Hallmarks.pdf>

'Scottish Pewter Marks Commonly Found', on the Pewterbank website: <https://pewterbank.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Scottish-Pewter-Marks-Commonly-Found.pdf>