

OPEN SALT COLLECTORS

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Issue #23 Summer 2012



Cover photos courtesy of Jim Wrenn

Save the Date

Hosted by NESOSC

Newport Harbor Marina and
Hotel, Newport, Rhode Island

We hope you'll join us for
a wonderful weekend of
presentations, workshops, friends
old and new and salts, glorious
salts! Watch for the convention
packet, to be mailed in September.

For a preview of the beautiful Newport Harbor
Marina and Hotel visit
<http://www.thenewport-hotel.com>



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Editor's Notes:

First and most importantly, many thanks to Joan and Jim Wrenn for contributing their wonderful article on silver salts by the Hennell family of London; you'll find Part 1 of this thorough and well researched article in this newsletter. However, as a result of this comprehensive article, there wasn't sufficient space in this issue to include the second half of the "30 Rarest Pattern Glass Salts" so the balance of this article will appear late this year in Issue #24.

Lastly, there is an on-going need for articles for this newsletter and we need more individuals (and couples, like the Wrenns) to take up the challenge and author an article. There's knowledge inside every collector that is worth sharing . . . so please consider putting pen to paper—or a more likely reality, putting fingers to a keyboard—and write something about something that interests you about our shared hobby. I'll be more than happy to assist in any way I can, but you need to take the first step and volunteer! You can contact me anytime at rcelser@aol.com or 804-898-5224. Thanks!
Rod Elser

President's Notes:

Some exciting changes are soon to happen on the OSC website (www.opensalts.info). Our webmaster, Jeff Kornbau has been expending much effort to bring these long awaited changes to reality. Keep your eyes open and log into the website periodically so you can take advantage of the new functionality. Jeff gave me a preview of the changes and they are GREAT. Thanks, Jeff, for all your great work on the OSC website.

Also, thanks to everyone for their support this past year. It doesn't seem possible that I am already starting my second year of this term and that the next convention (the 13th NOSC!) is now less than a year away!

Sarah Kawakami

OSC Emporium By Jeff Kornbau, Webmaster

The old "Buy & Sell" on the OSC website (www.opensalts.info) will soon be replaced by the "OSC Emporium"! While I had hoped to enable full "do-it-yourself posting" functionality the software promoted, my system testing showed this feature didn't work as easily as expected—so it will still be necessary for me to setup the individual "stores" for whoever wants to sell on the OSC website. All the seller stores will be physically located on the OSC website and we have the ability to post up to 5 pictures per salt. Payment for all purchases made will be handled through PayPal so the seller will need a PayPal account. The buyer can either use their PayPal account or use a credit card instead--securely handled through PayPal as well. We expect each Emporium store to have a brief bio of the seller, including full contact information. When a sale is made, the seller will receive an email specifying the sale and the shipping information, and the website will be automatically updated to show a "sold" sign on the salt.

A sign up form will be available on the website for sellers looking to create a store. This form will also be used for the listing of items within in a store. The form should be submitted to the Webmaster at the following email address: emporium@opensalts.info. This email account will also be used for all correspondence with the Webmaster regarding the OSC Emporium.

A prototype store is already up on the web at the following address: <http://www.opensalts.info/osc-emporium/wolfesantiques>. Although not yet fully functional, it does provide a visualization of what a store will look like. I hope to have full functionality up and running for our Grand Opening on August 1, 2012! Check it out and if you like what you see, become an active buyer and/or seller! Note that there will be no cost to the sellers or buyers for the Emporium (other than the standard service fees for payment through PayPal).

REMEMBERING HELEN SAULTS

Helen Saults passed away unexpectedly on May 17, 2012. She had previously donated her magnificent open salt collection to The Edward-Dean Museum and Gardens in Cherry Valley, CA. A "Collector Profile" article on Helen and her collection was featured in the National Newsletter Issue #16, Spring, 2009. She will be greatly missed by many. Below are "letters" written by several of her closest collector friends.

OSSOTW-SC was honored to have Helen Saults as a member for so many years, but most importantly we were all blessed to know her as a friend. When I met Helen for the first time, she was sweet, kind, humble and shared with me her passion for salt collecting. At that time I had no idea what her collection was all about, but she shared with me the fact that her salts would be going to a museum someday. I could not imagine what her collection must look like for a museum to covet it!

I was invited to Helen's home on numerous occasions and was in awe on each visit. Every time I had the opportunity to view Helen's collection she would graciously allow me as much time as I needed to see it all. Even then I would see beautiful salts I had missed the last time. When Helen took her Plique-a-Jour Viking boat salt out of her cabinet, and allowed me to hold and examine it, I was amazed not only at the beauty of the salt, but also the beauty of Helen for allowing me to actually touch and hold such a valuable item! Helen was gifted when it came to the art of salt display, of which I have attempted with my own collection, but have never been able to master. She was able to display her salts so that each was given importance. Helen gave me a pretty porcelain salt many years back, peach in color and in the shape of a flower. This salt sits "front and center" in my collection and always will.

We love and miss you Helen! Thank you for being a shining star in the Salt Collecting World!

Lisa & Craig Tiedeman

I met Helen when I first joined "Open Salt Seekers of the West, Southern California" about 10 years ago. Her inspiration and knowledge of salts was so inspiring to me. She continued to coach me as to what and how to select and buy the salts I was interested in. When I would buy something on Ebay and take it to her for "Show & Tell" I always knew it was a good open salt when she wanted to buy it from me. She always shared her ideas on how to buy—the primary one was "Buy fewer and buy better!" It was an honor to know Helen.

Robert Rogers



Dear Helen:

How sad we are that you left us without any warning, and we couldn't say a proper goodbye to you. We will miss your always contagious enthusiasm in the search for the next wonderful find! We will miss your generously shared knowledge of the history of each of the salts in your enormous collection. You always impressed us with your ready knowledge of where that precious salt was found, from whom it was purchased, the cost of it and its history. Each visit to your home was a delight with your always warm and generous hospitality. One day soon we hope and trust that we will again be able to view all of your collection together in the lucky museum to which you so generously bequeathed it. Rest in peace, dear friend, with the sure knowledge that we miss you and remember you so kindly. This is indeed a sad goodbye.

Dolli and Wilfred Cohen



Helen Saults was the most discerning collector I have ever known. Her collection of open salts was the finest I have ever seen, comprised of many truly fine pieces. She told me that when she moved to Palm Springs, her choice of the house to buy was dictated by how her salt cabinets would fit! Her display of her salts enhanced her collection.

There is no doubt that her arrangement of salts has greatly influenced many members of the southern chapter of collectors. I have known Helen since first joining the salt club and we traveled to meetings together and when the club met in the desert, the luncheon meeting was held at my house and then we went to Helen's for desert and the special feast for the eyes. I asked her once if her surname influenced her collecting of salts and she laughed and said a dealer from whom she was buying a salt asked her that question which was the first time she associated her name with her collecting passion. Her collection now resides in the museum which did a show of many of her pieces a few years ago. We hope it is soon displayed in the manner Helen intended.

Elaine Cooper

When I think of some of the salt collectors I have met, the one who always comes to mind first is Helen Saults. I met Helen for the first time at the 3rd convention in Asilimor. That was the year we had the first costume parade and Helen was dressed as a floral salt—and she had the salt to match (she had on a blouse and skirt that was a perfect match to the salt).

She was so poised and friendly. At each of the additional conventions it was a pleasure to visit with Helen, and I looked forward to these visits and having dinner with her and Elaine the Sunday that convention closed. It seemed that the three of us always stayed through the Sunday and left on Monday. When I went down to the Southern meeting and got to see her home and collection I was literally drooling! What a collection to behold. She was so gracious and let me take out the salts to take pictures and to admire them. What a lady, what a friend; I will miss this wonderful person.

Sarah Kawakami



Writing the “Collector Profile“ article about Helen in 2009 was a real treat and an honor for me. She was so excited and quite precise in which pictures were to be used. She was most adamant that I not put her age in—Ladies DO NOT do that! Knowing her taste for the beautiful, I called her one day as I had found two Viennese enameled salts on eBay. I wanted to know if she wanted to share with me if “we” could win them. But of course! We did win them and for a mere fraction of their value. Helen was terribly excited and stated that she and I were a buying team and to never forget her when values were found.

About a month later I had reason to call her, but her machine picked up my call. Almost immediately I got a call back. Helen was getting ready to go out, but heard my voice and was not going to miss any opportunity to add to her collection. We had a good laugh—and Helen could laugh, Ladies definitely DO that!!

I will miss my “team-mate”.

Mary Kern

SALTS, SHE WROTE BY MARY KERN

Oh so many years ago my grandmother began to “shove” her open salts off on me. She would pass her little treasures to me a few at a time and we would dust the shelf and spread the remaining salts out so no one would notice. Grandma had overheard a member of the family saying they would make such cute little individual ashtrays. The horror of the thought was far more than she could take and thus started my minor obsession with open salts. At first I was simply honored that she would trust me with them, as I was then a smoker myself. Guess we both knew I was aware of the difference between white granules and grayish dust! It did not take long for me to realize my dear grandmother had passed her addiction on to me.

I had very little color in that beginning collection. She preferred the individual clear pieces. My only color then was a white, smooth-sided Greentown wheelbarrow, a pink tulip, an Amberina D&B and a red-flashed, tapered square salt. Since then my collection has become a garden of colors. Even the ornately cut glass masters put a rainbow on my walls when hit correctly by the sunlight. I have found

that every type of open salt contains pieces with color.

My favorite Bimini is the classy clear with a thin white swirl, but put a neon yellow bowl and stem with a blue rim and I have a sunny day. The most colorful of the convention salts is the 4th one and nothing beats a pink Battersea or a blue opaline on a



shiny gold-bejeweled stand. Teal, cobalt, amethyst and pink lacies are treasures I never thought I would have in my collection. Never was into “those lacy” pieces. Too frilly for my Kern klunker-loving heart! Then I got my first Lacy FooFoo glass was never going to show up in my cabinets either. But along came a piece of FooFoo with a pointy-nosed fish on it like my hubby catches. Then I fell in love with a Bohemian pepper shaker and the open salt just happened to come along with it. Branching out into the world of Art Glass, the arrival of a blue Steuben Optic was not my fault—I blame the seller for listing them incorrectly. Whether

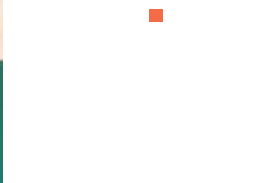


the little pink and blue one falls under FooFoo or Art does not matter: I just have to buy anything that has all its dots.

Even my beloved klunkers come in color. Is this great news or what. . . ! This time just the divided yellow Vaseline gets to strut. There's color in the French Champleve's, Intaglios and Elfinware, Copper Lustre, Doulton and Faience. Wave Crest and Terry Crider certainly knew their blues. With the right liner, even a pot metal says "look at me". The Turquoise double birds just flew in recently from Paris. And Gold

is to die for. My first gold was a basic Tiffany ruffle. It was soon to have many companions including a nice Controlled Drip and then I found Steuben again in a Gold Aurene with a big ole fluffy rim—but Quezel is my gold of choice.

Do you take the time to look in your cabinets and admire your garden of colors? My garden is not as vast as most, but it is my quiet place, my feel good place. It is a garden that I even allow a few weeds to grow in, but those are for another article



HENNELL SALTS BY JOAN and JIM WRENN

Our interest in Hennell salts began with a pleasant surprise. When we purchased our first Hennell (**Figure 1**), we were unaware of the maker's identity, much less of the maker's importance in the history of English silversmithing, especially of silver salts. We were attracted by the salt's trencher shape, a shape we had grown to admire after the 9th National Convention in Salem, Massachusetts, and our trip to the Peabody Museum where we learned about Chinese Export salts, including trencher salts. We did recognize our trencher as being English silver, and the dealer did interpret the date mark for us, but he did not know the maker. Only after we arrived home and found a reference book on English marks, did we know, in spite of the rubbed mark, that the salt was by David Hennell. Further research revealed his significance in the study of English silver.



Figure 1 Our first salt by David Hennell, 1747.

David Hennell (1712-1785) was a London specialist salt maker active in silversmithing from 1736 when he registered his first mark to 1772. With his mark, he founded a family business that evolved over the years from specializing in silver salts, to creating much larger and more elaborate silver pieces, to emphasizing jewelry before it finally closed its doors on New Bond Street in London about 250 years later. According to Christopher Lever, in his book *Goldsmiths and Silversmiths of England*, "...the Hennells are probably the largest single family ever recorded at Goldsmiths' Hall."

It all started with open salts. At the beginning, in the eighteenth century, if you wanted silver salts to grace your table, you may well have patronized a Hennell shop or a shop that subcontracted the

Hennells. While fulfilling their customers' orders, they stayed abreast of changing fashions through the years. Studying their salts is an exercise in salt cellar history.

Although this article will focus on salts produced by at least 5 generations of Hennells, we must also include David's silversmith "ancestors" who, while not members of his blood family, are very important in the telling of how the Hennells became such a prominent family in the fashioning of salt cellars for over a century. In his book, *Rococo Silver 1727-1765*, renowned British silver expert Arthur Grimwade wrote:

"...The making of salt-cellars shows the same line of specialists from Alexander Roode, whose mark appears in the early months of 1697, and who became master in 1700 of James Roode, probably a cousin, to whom Edward Wood was later apprenticed in 1715. Wood in his turn became master of David Hennell in 1728, from whom the family concern of salt-cellar makers developed through the second half of the century to expand in the nineteenth into a wider sphere of production."

In a similar vein, in the biographical entry for Edward Wood in his book *London Goldsmiths 1697-1837, Their Marks and Lives*, Grimwade wrote:

"It is interesting to find Wood in the line of specialist salt-cellar makers, since his master Roode appears to have produced little else and Wood in his turn appears equally limited in his output and became in 1728 the master of the young David Hennell, than whom, probably, no-one in London in the mid-eighteenth century made more salt-cellars."

David was fortunate in the timing of his training. The eighteenth century was a propitious period to be a silversmith in London. It was an age of relative political stability after the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution of the previous century. London was past the Plague of 1665 and was recovering from the effects of the Great Fire of

1666. English merchants were bringing goods from all over the world to the city's docks, becoming wealthy and helping to lay the foundations of a growing "middle class" that was becoming able to afford some of the fine goods formerly available only to the nobility. In the English countryside increasing numbers of this "middle class" became the "landed gentry" with country houses and estates and newly enlarged agricultural endeavors. In these elegant homes displays of fine silver were a means to announce one's wealth and status. Furthermore, silver was a way to store one's wealth. When a family (or even a king) needed money, silver items could be melted down and used as currency. Prominent London goldsmiths (silversmiths were included in that designation) were the country's first bankers.

Trenchers

Our first Hennell salt (**Figure 1**) has, appropriately, the same shape as the first shown (dated 1736) in the ultimate guide to the Hennell family, *Hennell Silver Salt Cellars, 1736-1876*, by Percy Hennell, an eighth generation member of the family beginning with David and the 22nd Hennell to be recorded in the books of London's Goldsmiths' Hall. Our trencher is dated 1747, well beyond the time that what we call the "trencher salt" was fashionable. Perhaps it was ordered to add to a set a family first bought earlier in the century.

It is important to clarify the terms here. At the turn of the seventeenth century into the eighteenth, "trencher salt" referred to any relatively small salt set by an individual's "trencher," (what we now call a "plate") or shared by two people, as opposed to the large, ceremonial standing salts of previous centuries. Today we use the term "trencher salt" to refer to the style and form shown in **Figure 1**, the bowl of which is supported by sides that extend more or less vertically to the bottom of the salt and sit directly on the table.

We are very fortunate to have trencher salts marked by both David's master and, we believe, his "grandmaster" to demonstrate the continuity of the

line. Our probable James Roode (the mark is partly rubbed) salt in **Figure 2** is dated 1717 and fashioned and marked, as required at the time, from Britannia silver, a higher ratio of 958 parts silver per 1000 parts total as compared to standard English silver of 925 parts per 1000 (also the present standard for American sterling silver). The Government ordered the higher standard in 1696 because of a coinage shortage that had resulted from the melting of coins made of 925 silver to produce domestic and decorative objects, in effect, "banking" the silver as mentioned above. The requirement for the higher silver content was lifted in 1720 when England mostly returned to the 925 standard for silver objects.



Figure 2 Mark appears to be that of James Roode, 1717, with the Britannia mark below.

An intriguing feature of our James Roode salt is its flat-chased decoration of C-scrolls, flowers, and cross-hatching. We do not expect early eighteenth century trenchers to be decorated—we expect them to be plain. There has been an ongoing controversy about decoration on a range of items from this period. Some authors hold that the prevailing English preference at the time for simple, undecorated silver means that most decoration we see today was added later, especially during the Victorian period when no surface was left undecorated. Other authors believe that much decoration was done contemporaneously in the eighteenth century and show examples in their books. The flat chasing technique used on our salt was popular in the late 1600s and early 1700s and is seen on many pieces of period English silver. Because of the design similarity, we think that it is

very possible that the decoration on our salt is original.

We have two examples of trenchers marked by Edward Wood, David's master. The oldest is a very simple oval (**Figure 3**) dated 1726. It was shaped from thin sheet silver (925/1000) as is true of many, but not all, of the early trenchers. To give an idea of the silver gauge, the oval Wood trencher weighs just 1.3 avoirdupois ounces (the measure used for most purposes in the U.S.), while the David Hennell trencher in **Figure 1**, although of very similar dimensions, is almost twice as heavy at 2.4 ounces.



Figure 3 Trencher by Edward Wood, 1726.

The second Wood trencher (**Figure 4**) is an octagonal-oblong shape similar to our Hennell of 1747 but with some sharper moldings on its sides.



Figure 4 A second Trencher by Edward Wood, 1735.

Circular on Three Feet

When the previous salt was made by Wood in 1735 the fashion for trencher-style salts was already

rapidly waning, to be replaced by the “compressed circular” (so termed by Percy Hennell, but will be mostly called “circular” or “cauldron” in this paper) salts raised on 3 or (rarely) 4 feet that are so familiar. Our earliest circular salts are a pair by Edward Wood from 1737. One of the pair is shown in **Figure 5**. Its design is advanced for its early date, especially in its “piecrust” top edge, here rather spare and primitive looking compared to piecrust edges that were to come. Another notable feature is the design of the leg in which the “knees,” (the top of the leg at the attachment to the bowl), are a combination of what will soon become two distinct available knee styles, the layered top and beneath that, an early “shell” design. The feet are the standard layered “hoof” feet. The bowl displays a chased and embossed floral design and contains a blown green glass liner that is almost certainly not original, although Percy Hennell does count green as among the liner colors available in the mid 1700s. The salt is heavy with a silver weight of 3.9 avoirdupois ounces.

Our later Wood salts, from 1739 and 1742, are more typical of the period (**Figure 6** and **Figure 7**). They are very similar in weight (1.7 and 1.8 ounces) and size (each 2 ½ inches across the widest bulge of the bowl). The greatest differences are in the simple top edges and the liner present in one. The liner is not original, although similar liners are often seen today in such early salts.



Figure 5 Edward Wood, 1737, with combination knee.



Figure 6 Edward Wood, 1739



Figure 7 Edward Wood, 1742

The first circular salt by David Hennell that appears in Percy Hennell's book is from 1737, just one year after David registered his mark in 1736 and two years after completing his 7-year apprenticeship with Wood in 1735. Our earliest circular Hennell

salt is dated 1746 (Figure 8) and came to us as one of a set of three along with the 1737 pair by Edward Wood mentioned above (Figure 5). It was apparently made to "match" the Wood salts, probably ordered to add to a set purchased earlier by the same family. Perhaps they went to Hennell because Wood was no longer able to make such salts, although he did not die until 1752. The major difference from the earlier salts is the standard plain shell design of the knees. It is thought that working silversmiths purchased cast items such as these legs from other silversmiths who specialized in casting silver in their own molds. Perhaps the hybrid layered/shell knees were no longer available from the casting specialists. It is certainly true that, neither in Percy Hennell's book nor in all our looking, have we seen other legs such as those on the Wood salts.



Figure 8 David Hennell, 1746, with shell knee.

Our simplest circular Hennell salts are a pair dated 1750 (Figure 9 and Figure 10). They have an engraved monogram (may not be original), a

piecrust top edge more developed than that on the Wood/Hennell set, and shell knees. Their weight and width are about the same (3.0 avoirdupois ounces and 2 and 7/8 inches at the widest part of the bowl) as the 1746 Hennell salt.

An interesting and informative feature of these salts is the engraving of “scratch weights” on their bottoms along with the usual assay, date, and maker’s punches. **Figure 9** shows 3=2 on the bottom, and **Figure 10**, 3=0. These numbers are expressed in “troy” weights that are still used today for precious metals. They mean, respectively, 3 troy ounces and 2 pennyweights (3.1 troy ounces) and 3 troy ounces and 0 pennyweights (3.0 troy ounces). They were engraved at the time of making to indicate the original weight of the silver item so that any subsequent additions or subtractions to the piece will be detected. Today their troy weights are 2.78 troy ounces and 2.67 troy ounces. Though we cannot vouch for the accuracy of the troy scale we borrowed, it is common for silver pieces to lose weight over the years, probably by heavy polishing that actually removes silver.



Figure 9 David I, 1750. Scratch weight on bottom of salt.



Figure 10 David I, 1750. Scratch weight on bottom of salt.

The remainder of our David Hennell salts continue to illustrate some of the many variations possible within the same three-footed circular form. Two salts from 1748 are decorated very differently. **Figure 11** shows a slightly everted, very plain top edge and cast legs with hoof feet and layered knees. It weighs 2.1 avoirdupois ounces and is just under 2 3/4 inches. In contrast **Figure 12** is much bigger at 4.5 ounces, more than twice the weight of the previous salt, and about 3 1/4 inches at its widest bulge. It has a piecrust edge and knees of a girl’s head with ribbons and flowers in her hair and shell feet. Each girl’s head is rather rubbed and flattened, probably by years of polishing.



Figure 11 David I, 1748. Layered knee and hoof foot.



Figure 12 David I, 1748. Shell foot, knee with Girl’s head.

Beyond these structural differences, both 1748 salts have gilded bowls and are decorated with embossing and chasing, but in different styles. As mentioned above in the discussion of the James Roode trencher, the dating of such decorations can be controversial. We do not know if these salts were decorated contemporaneously with their making in 1748, although the floral patterning on the larger salt is somewhat similar to that found on salts made in 1747 by Edward Wood and thought

by Percy Hennell to be contemporary with that time.

We have yet another large salt by David alone from 1760 (**Figure 13**). The style is “Chinoiserie,” the English interpretation of Chinese style that was very popular in the 1750s and 60s. The legs are topped by masks of Chinese men in broad hats while the lily pad feet are beaded and scrolled. On the bowl are Chinese inspired small buildings and C-scrolls, very similar to salts in the Hennell book. The author argues that the decorations were done at the time of making, partly because the great difficulty and expense in doing such fine work would discourage later decorators.



Figure 13 David I, 1760. Chinoiserie design.

David Hennell’s son Robert (also known as Robert I in this article) was apprenticed to him from May 5, 1756, to June 8, 1763. The father must have been eager to partner with his son because on the very next day, June 9, 1763, David and Robert I entered a mark together in Goldsmiths’ Hall, bringing the family business into its second generation. The partnership extended until 1772 when David left the business to become Deputy Warden of Goldsmiths’ Hall in charge of Assay Office business. In 1773 Robert entered his own mark and during his time as Master took as apprentices his nephew Robert (the son of Robert’s older brother John Hennell and subsequently known as Robert II), and three of his own sons, David (David II), Samuel, and another Robert. Since no record exists of this Robert’s completing his apprenticeship or registering a mark, he will not be mentioned again in this article nor on the accompanying family chart.

Our earliest salt from David I and Robert I together (**Figure 14**), one of a pair from 1763, continues the circular form. Almost as large as the Chinoiserie (3.8 ounces, 2 and 15/16 inches at its widest), this salt is remarkable for its legs. The knees are shell-upon-shell with C-scrolls and beads, and the feet are similar to lily pads, but again with C-scrolls and beads. The bowl is delicately chased and embossed with flowers and foliage.

Our final circular salt of the partnership (**Figure 15**), from 1764 is smaller (2.7 ounces) than the previous salt. It has a floral design, shell knees and feet, and a gilded interior.



Figure 14 David I & Robert I, 1763



Figure 15 David I & Robert I, 1764

Ovals

The gentry’s taste for the circular form was waning, however, leading to a period of great salt cellar fashion ferment that coincided with the David I/Robert I partnership. First, the tripod circular salt morphed into a compressed oval shape on 4 legs that still strongly resembled the circular predecessor. We have three examples that again vary in size and decoration. Our simplest form, plain with shell knees and hoof feet (**Figure 16**), was

made in 1771 and has a blue glass liner that is likely original to the piece. In that period liners were made by blowing molten glass directly into the silver salt, often leaving impressions of the salt's decoration in the cooled glass (example in **Figure 17**). The outside rim of this liner shows striations similar to the striations of the silver piecrust rim.



Figure 16 David I & Robert I, 1771.

Figure 17 Impressions in glass liner from blowing molten glass into an open salt. This is the liner from the salt in Figure 16



The next example (**Figure 18**, 1769) is approximately the same size as the first and has the same legs, but is decorated with diagonal ribs. The plain version is 3.0 ounces and the ribbed version, 3.1 ounces. This second salt may have had a liner in the past.



Figure 18 David I & Robert I, 1769.

The third example (**Figure 19**, 1768) is considerably larger, 4.8 ounces and about 3 and 3/8 inches long vs. about 3 and 1/8 inches for the first two. The diagonally swirled fluting is more fluid, complex, and interspersed with rows of beads. Shells appear on both knees and feet. The interior of the bowl is gilded.



Figure 19 David I & Robert I, 1768.

Pierced Ovals

At the same time that these oval salts were made, a more substantial shift in styling was also occurring. In the 1760s piercing became very popular in a broad range of domestic silver items. Salt cellars retained an oval shape, but the sides became mostly straight and pierced, usually rising from a flat silver bottom rim that held the now-necessary glass liner, and supported on four legs that commonly ended in ball-and-claw feet. The earliest such salt illustrated by Percy Hennell is from 1765.

Our earliest salt in this style (**Figure 20**), by David and Robert I, is probably from 1766. It has all the features of the earliest pierced salts as described by Percy. Most strikingly it has a wavy top with a wavy edged blue glass liner that is old, but probably not original with this particular silver frame since the peaks and valleys don't line up. Not as readily apparent with the liner in place, but still as striking, is the solid silver bottom. There are few examples of these. It did not take long for the Hennells and other silversmiths to recognize that they were "wasting" silver in a spot that would not be seen or admired by the diner. In spite of all the openwork design and the relatively thin silver gauge, the 3 1/2 inch silver frame with claw-and-ball feet weighs 3.2 ounces.



Figure 20 David I & Robert I, 1766. Solid bottom.

In contrast, our next oldest pierced salt (**Figure 21**) from 1769 has a cut-out base with just a flat ring of silver holding the liner. Its weight is reduced to 2.3 ounces, and it is a more standard 3 ¼ inches long. Percy Hennell states that “almost all pierced salts from 1767 onwards” had the cut-out base.



Figure 21 David I & Robert I, 1769. Cutout bottom.

Gone also in this example is the wavy rim, replaced by a level top edge. Wavy rims were expensive to produce and sell, largely because of the difficulty in cutting and polishing the liner tops to match the silver curves and points. Breakage and wastage were common. Percy states that “Today it is exceptional to find salts of the ‘wavy rim’ period with original liners in presentable condition, almost all replacements being regrettably of the level-topped variety...”

In spite of the additional expense, some wavy rims were still being produced in 1771 when the next salt (**Figure 22**), one of a pair we are very lucky to have, was made. Percy calls this design of birds and foliage “arguably the finest example of delicate piercing by David and Robert.” The design is the same as in the pair shown by Rod Elser and Jane Carroll in the Fall, 2008, *OSC National Newsletter* article on silver salts in London’s Victoria and Albert Museum. The blue liners in our salts may be original. Their points and valleys line up with the silver, and the pattern impressed on the outside of the glass seems to echo the birds and foliage pattern in the silver. Each liner also has an 8-pointed star cut into the bottom, an expensive liner indeed.



Figure 22 David I & Robert I, 1771. Impressions on the liner.

At the other end of the bird-salt scale we have a pair from 1773 (**Figure 23**) with a very similar bird and foliage pierced pattern, but by Robert Hennell alone, with level tops and very thick, clear glass, plain bottom liners that look old. If they are original, they would have cost a lot less than the wavy top, star-cut bottom liner of the previous pair.



Figure 23 Robert I, 1773. Another bird design.

Our last pierced salts by David and Robert together are a set of three from 1771 (**Figure 24**) with an interlocking C-scroll design. Again the glass liner is clear, but with a 24-pointed star in the bottom. These salts are big and heavy: 3 ½ inches long vs. 3 ¼ inches for the previous salts, with a silver weight 50% (3.3 ounces vs. 2.2 ounces) greater than that of the flat-topped bird salts. Their legs end in the typical claw-and-ball feet, as do all the previously shown pierced oval salts.



Figure 24 David I & Robert I, 1771. Solid ball and claw foot.

As mentioned earlier, David left the partnership to work at Goldsmiths' Hall in 1772, and Robert entered his own mark in 1773. Our earliest salt by Robert alone (**Figure 25**), dated 1772-73, continues in the by-now-familiar style of pierced ovals. The most significant change is in the claw-and-ball feet where Robert, along with other silversmiths of the time, again discovered a way to save silver, thereby lowering the cost. From a diner's point-of-view, the claw-and-ball feet appear much the same as before. A closer look, however, reveals that the ball is now hollow, less than half the previous size (as in **Figure 24**). To illustrate the silver savings with this change, this silver frame weighs 1.4 ounces compared to the 2.3 ounces of **Figure 21** that has approximately the same measurements but has solid ball feet. Hollow ball feet would become the standard for most later pierced oval salts.



PW0869 I3G01290B



I3G01332C



I3G01319B



I3G01327C

Figure 25 Robert I, 1772. Hollow ball and claw foot.

In spite of the “depressing economy,” as Percy Hennell calls the hollow ball, Robert I is considered to be an outstanding silversmith. Christopher Lever, in *Goldsmiths and Silversmiths of England*, writes “Robert... is indeed one of the finest craftsmen of the eighteenth century...” Percy Hennell says of Robert, “He was probably the finest and most prolific goldsmith of the entire family, and his work is of a quality that holds its own with any of his period. His aptitude in neoclassical styles is clearly exhibited in an almost endless variety of domestic silver until the end of the century.” The “neoclassical” style harkened back to classical themes and heavily influenced English fashion during Robert’s tenure. Decorative and useful objects were created with pure, simple, elegant lines. Decorations, if any, were classical ornaments such as urns, festoons, swags, and laurel leaves.

Figure 26 shows one of a set of four salts from 1776 that are very similar to a salt illustrated in the Hennell book and said by Percy to be “among the earliest by the Hennells which markedly display the

neo-classical influence.” It has corn-husk swags, urns, and medallions applied to pierced silver now raised on a pierced pedestal foot instead of on four legs. In discussing a similar salt, Percy says “...judging from the comparative scarcity of remaining examples, (the style) was never very popular. Perhaps it was because the basic shape had a medieval appearance which did not marry very happily with neoclassical surface decoration.”



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I3G01349B



I3G01355B

Figure 26 Robert I, 1776.

Having read that statement, we did not expect to ever see any of the style, much less a set of four! But there they were toward the back of a dark cabinet in an antique store in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. The set was expensive, but, much to our surprise, the dealer accepted our offer of well less than half her price. One of the four is repaired, one is a bit crooked, and all have blue plastic liners that fit the salts exactly. Some previous owner loved the salts well enough to pay for the obviously custom-made liners. In spite of the irregularities, we are thrilled to have these unusual salts. They are a transition between the pierced ovals on four legs

Party Favors at the Convention Banquet

that preceded them and the large, un-pierced ovals on spreading pedestal feet that were to come.

Before we get there, though, there are two more pierced ovals to mention. As throughout the period, silversmiths could always replicate previous fashions or add to a family's earlier pattern. The first, **Figure 27**, from 1779, has C-scroll piercing similar to that in **Figure 24** from 1771. The second, **Figure 28**, from 1782, shows a Gothic influence in the piercing along with Grecian urns. Both have beaded edges that became popular in the late 1770s, hollow claw-and-ball feet, and blue glass liners with stars cut into the bottom, although the liners may not be original to the silver frames.



Figure 27 Robert I, 1779. C-scroll piercing and 6 pointed star.

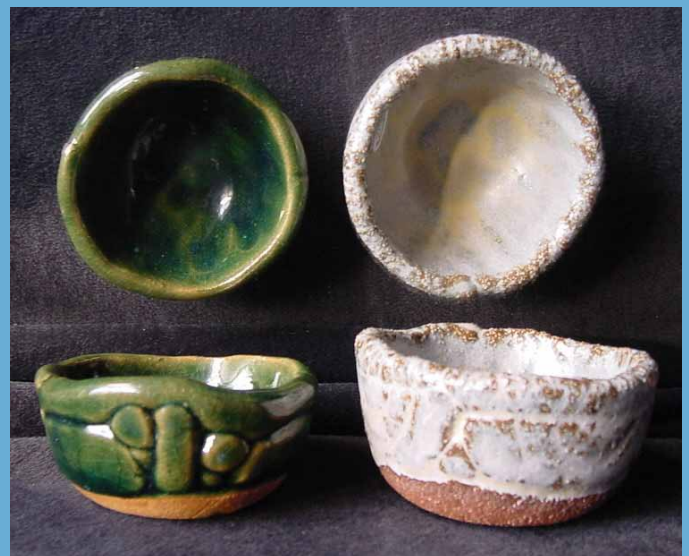


Figure 28 Robert I, 1782. Gothic influenced piercing and urn.

All photos courtesy of Jim Wrenn.

Still to come in Part 2 of this article, in the next issue, are a hundred more years of Hennell family silver salt design.

Due to last-minute availability issues, Donna Wolfe was left without a source for a unique but still relatively inexpensive salt that could be given to each conventioneer at the banquet as a party favor. She scoured the Internet and eventually came across a web site for Two Hearts Entwined Pottery in Temple City, CA. She traded emails with Timothy Whitcomb who has been an independent potter for over 30 years, has both an undergraduate and graduate degree in Fine Arts and specializes in Medieval Pottery. Timothy produces a “mini bowl” that, as he notes, “can be used by artists for water, egg yolk, shell gold, pigment, or just about anything else you wish. Cooks use them for salt cellars, wasabi, or for tiny hot spice containers. Clay used may be white or red. Some bowls are embossed with stars or with moons, and the size varies from 1” to 2” in diameter.” Indeed, they make perfect open salts and since each is handmade, no two are identical! Cost: \$1 each! For those who would want one or more of these open salts (AKA “mini bowls”) and were unable to participate in the Convention, here is Timothy’s contact information—or you can go to his website (twoheartsentwinedpottery.com) and click on the link for “Mini Bowl”. **Timothy Whitcomb, Two Hearts Entwined Pottery, 6142 Kauffman Ave., Temple City, California, 91780 or email at odhinn_us@yahoo.com**



Two of Timothy’s “Mini Bowls” from the Banquet

The State Basket Raffle at the 12th NOSC

We had a little friendly competition at the Convention – a State Basket Raffle which came to fruition when Claragene Rainey of California asked if she could donate a basket full of goodies from California to offer to the attendees in a raffle. This offer by Claragene grew into a competition among 9 attendees who brought baskets full of goodies from their states to compete against one another. Tickets were sold the evening of the banquet with the winning basket being determined by the number of tickets in that basket’s container. The overwhelming choice for Best Basket was the California basket donated by Claragene! For

her efforts, Claragene was awarded one night’s stay at the Holiday Inn Patriot, the Convention hotel. The baskets were then raffled off by pulling one number from the tickets in each basket’s container. Eight very happy basket winners (including Elaine Cooper who won two baskets!) went home with lots of goodies! This Convention activity was an overwhelming success with the attendees and financially added to the Convention income. Thanks to all those who donated baskets and all those who purchased tickets and congratulations to all the lucky winners as well.

State	Donated By	Subject
Pennsylvania	Donna Wolfe	York County, PA: Snack Capital of the World
California	Claragene Rainey	Made in California
New York	Judy Johnson	Finger Lakes, NY Region
Maryland	Connie Kullgren	Made in Maryland
Rhode Island	NESOSC	Guess the location, 2013 Convention
Pennsylvania	Donna Wolfe	Hershey, PA: Candy Capital of the World
Texas	Marsha Powers	Made in Texas
Virginia	CASC	Made in Virginia
Oklahoma	Betty Lippert	Made in Oklahoma

Winners:

Pennsylvania (York County): Jo Patterson
 California: Elaine Cooper
 New York: Elaine Cooper
 Maryland: Jennie Lee Irey
 Rhode Island: Jackie Marenholz
 Pennsylvania (Hershey): John Berg
 Texas: (Sorry but the winner wasn’t noted.)
 Virginia: Karen Ludwig
 Oklahoma: Donna Crossley

Dave W. presenting Elaine C. with “best in show” CA basket



The State Basket Raffle at the 12th NOSC *continued*

VA, OK and PA baskets



Donna C. receiving the OK basket



Texas basket



Dave W. presenting the PA basket to Jo P.



Dave presenting Elaine with the NY basket



NESOSC basket for the 2013 Convention

