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From Council

The Association of British Pewter Craftsmen held their annual London Council Meeting on the 18th March. It was held at the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in the City of London.

The good news from the Meeting is that, for yet another year, Council members voted to hold the annual membership subscription at the previous year's rate. This was done with the *caveat* that with all the work due, particularly on testing, this year it would be difficult to hold the rate again next year.

The bad news is that regulations coming out of Europe (on metal leaching and on lead content) are going to mean that: pewter manufacturers are going to have to undertake a lot more testing of their product; and that the industry standard, EN611, will need redrafting to take account of the lower permitted lead content in pewter products. (See earlier issues of this Newsletter for more detail about these regulations.)

The regulations will affect both the pewter (sheet and ingot) delivered to manufacturers and the finished product. The Council recognised that funds will have to be spent this year on further and increased testing; and set up a sub-Committee to look into the implications for the British pewter trade of both the proposed regulations, with a direction to report back to Council prior to the European Pewter Union meeting in Brescia on 22nd to 24th May.

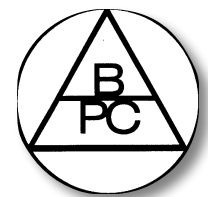
Other matters discussed included: widening both the membership of the Association, and members' representation on Council; certification proposals; members' obligations; and the Association's Commercial Prize at *Pewter Live* (2nd to 4th June) this year.

A more detailed report of the meeting will appear in the next Newsletter. The Chairman's report on the latest testing results, carried out by the Sheffield Assay Office, Analytical Services Division, appears later on in this Newsletter. After the Meeting, the Chairman said:

"Metal release limits and testing issues are where our efforts have been concentrated in recent years and it's a particularly busy time at present in trying to sort everything out. However what we really need is input from members and potential members as to other areas where we can support the trade, to allow us to focus energy and provide a service that members use."

Ten Reasons for being a member of the Association

I buttonholed Richard Abdy, the Chairman of the ABPC, recently and asked him why anyone interested in pewter should, if they were not already a member of the Association, join it. He started by telling me that five new members had joined over the past year and the common reason was not just that there was strength in numbers but that a community of like-interested people could help each other in an increasingly complex world.



Those were the first two reasons for joining.

The third reason for joining was to make it easier to keep up with the regulations governing the trade and the metal. *"The detail is in our recent Newsletters and I refer readers to them"* (see <http://www.britishpewter.co.uk/newsletters>), *"but briefly there are several initiatives from Europe and elsewhere, not all of them friendly,"* he said. *"Perhaps I should mention two pieces of new regulations; we are currently working on these with the International Tin Research Institute and Council of Europe to protect pewter products.*

"First, the level of release limits of metals from any product used or usable for food and drink is being lowered; the Council of Europe do not accept our existing testing arrangements as proving that modern pewter passes these limits, so we are launching into new testing of several pieces (whilst debating with the Council of Europe as to a sensible test method) to try to discover if any element's new limits cause problems for pewter products. Secondly, the EU is currently proposing to lower the maximum lead content of any piece that can fit inside a child's mouth (or section of any piece) to levels that are below the natural trace level in raw tin before we process it. Therefore a lot of work is needed in this area to advise members how to meet this, for instance with special alloys; and which solders are safe etc."

When I suggested that this was all exotic stuff that was of little interest to most manufacturers and of nil interest to customers, he said that he appreciated that many customers were not interested in this sort of stuff, but that the likes of, say, a high street store would necessarily be aware of them. *"Whether you are interested or not, my message to manufacturers is that you and your products will need to comply."*

The fourth reason for joining is that Members can, if they comply with the undertakings they sign up to when joining, use the Seahorse and the ABPC Marks, an assurance that everything is in order, that the products comply with the regulations.

Fifthly, we publish a regular Newsletter containing articles of general and specific interest about the trade and about pewter. Back copies of the Newsletter are available on the Association's website: www.britishpewter.co.uk.

Sixthly, we have a strong relationship with the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, and meet there once a year. The Company supports pewter and the trade financially in many ways.

Seventhly, Richard said that: *"It is our hope that having completed our work on testing, we can aim for a position where we can offer proper guidance to members and have the facility (after testing products) to issue certificates to members that can be displayed and used to confirm that the products comply with all the new legislation/regulations"*.

Eighthly, members of the Association can join the Council and help to direct the work of the Association.



Ninthly, members can join the annual meeting with other members of the European Pewter Union and get direct access to information about what is happening to the pewter trade on the continent.

Lastly, members will have the opportunity to contribute to their trade.

Alan Williams

Richard Abdy offers a post-Council Meeting update on the proposed new regulations and the testing regime

Since the Council Meeting in March, we have continued work on the new/proposed regulations concerning the pewter trade as follows:

1. Statutory Release Limits – new European rules

We have had testing carried out on a pewter tankard and a flask using the methods and testing agents recommended to us by the Council of Europe, through ITRI - citric acid tested after 2 hours at 70 degrees C followed by 24 hours at 40 degrees C.

We tested two identical tankards and flask designs to see if there were any discrepancies between them – the results are shown below (feel free to use those sent to us by the Assay Office).

The maximum amount of tin release allowed is 100ppm; it appears that the tankard design was fine but the flask was not. Therefore, we are going to commission further tests on an alternative flask design, and also other products, to see a bigger picture result and to try to discover if any identifiable trends/issues exist.

Following the advice of Dr Fabien Bolle of the Scientific Institute of Public Health in Brussels, we will also carry out the same tests again, but with the actual alcoholic beverages likely to be used with the products, in order to clarify whether, eventually, members might become obliged to advise customers of those liquids that can safely be used with the designs and which not.

2. Lead in articles ... that can be mouthed by children

This new legislation will, at the very least, affect the current standard EN611 for pewter in some way or other. We have made contact with the BSI Group who are the official publishers of the standard and they are aware that we need to investigate whether the standard needs amending. They have acknowledged our interest; the next stage is for the ABPC to become temporary members of the relevant committee so that we can assist with a review of the standard.

In the meantime we have been invited by ECHA (The European Chemicals Agency) to submit our comments on the draft guidelines for the proposed restrictions that seek to clarify the scope of the regulations. We have until 11th June to submit a response so, after studying the document and having had time to consult with our EPU partners, we will seek to do just that. The Link to the new consultation paper [Lead and its compounds] can be found below - and I welcome any contributions to this debate - by the end of April please, if possible.

The first Link is to the invitation page; the second link is to the draft guidelines themselves. You are welcome to make your observations direct, but I will try to co-ordinate any that are sent to me.

<http://echa.europa.eu/addressing-chemicals-of-concern/restriction/calls-for-comments-and-evidence/-/substance-rev/7902/term>

<http://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/a55e40f4-9515-475a-a6de-25bd991c3f84>

The current testing results are reproduced below.

DATE-S/N	REFERENCE	ELEMENT	RESULT	METHOD
06/03/15 0063	FLASK 1	Copper	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Lead	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Antimony	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Tin	115ppm	ICP-OES

Citric Acid elution.

Tested for 2 hours at 70C, followed by 24 hours at 40C.

Signature: A.S. Team Leader - M Wood



DATE-S/N	REFERENCE	ELEMENT	RESULT	METHOD
06/03/15 0064	FLASK 2	Copper	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Lead	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Antimony	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Tin	120ppm	ICP-OES

Citric Acid elution.

Tested for 2 hours at 70C, followed by 24 hours at 40C.

Signature: A.S. Team Leader - M Wood




DATE-S/N	REFERENCE	ELEMENT	RESULT	METHOD
06/03/15 0066	CUP 2	Copper	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Lead	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Antimony	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Tin	84ppm	ICP-OES

Citric Acid elution.

Tested for 2 hours at 70C, followed by 24 hours at 40C.

Signature: A.S. Team Leader - M Wood



DATE-S/N	REFERENCE	ELEMENT	RESULT	METHOD
06/03/15 0065	CUP 1	Copper	<1ppm	ICP-OES
		Lead	<1ppb	ICP-OES
		Antimony	<1ppb	ICP-OES
		Tin	87ppb	ICP-OES

Citric Acid elution.

Tested for 2 hours at 70C, followed by 24 hours at 40C.

Signature: A.S. Team Leader - M Wood

