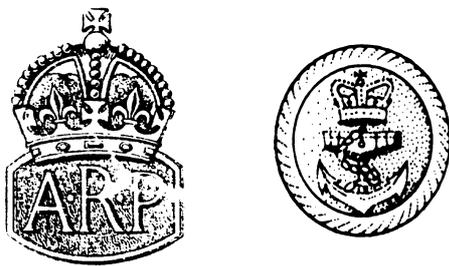


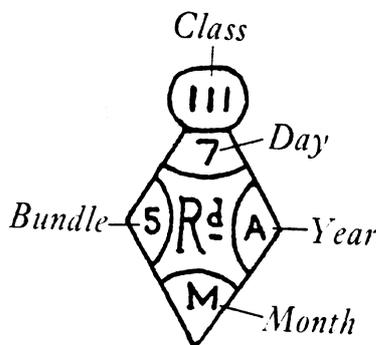
# Goole Museum Information Sheet

## How Old Is It?

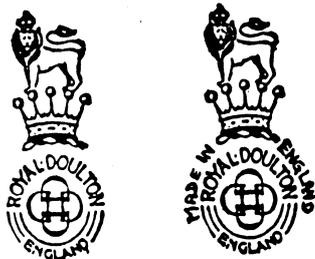
Many old-looking objects which you may come across carry marks which can give you a clue to their date.



The **royal crown** appears on many objects, from buttons to pillar boxes. The crown used differs in shape according to whether the reigning sovereign is a king or queen - the king's crown is dome-shaped, while the queen's is more heart-shaped. In the last 200 years, anything marked with the queen's crown will have been made between 1837 and 1901 (when Queen Victoria died) or after 1952, when Queen Elizabeth II came to the throne.



From 1842, all articles made in Britain could be registered at the Patent Office in London, and given a mark which gave the makers limited legal protection against unscrupulous manufacturers cashing in on someone else's invention by making cheap copies. This was known as the **Registered Mark**. Until 1883, it was a diamond-shaped mark; after this, the diamond was replaced by the letters **Rd. No.** followed by a series of figures. Up until 1916, the numbers started afresh every year - for example 1234\91, or 276\92 - but after 1916, they run consecutively from 100,000, and reference books provide lists of when particular numbers were registered.



In 1891, the McKinley Tariff Act was passed in the United States. This meant that any goods imported into America had to be marked with their country of origin. The majority of objects marked **England** or **Made in England** date from after 1891, to comply with this law.

## How do you tell whether your family heirloom is made from silver or some other metal?



*Maker's mark*



*Standard mark*



*Assay mark*



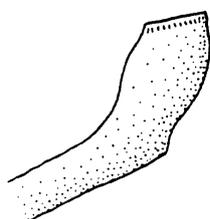
*Date letter*

All objects made of silver have a **Hallmark**, which means they have been submitted to an Assay Office to be tested for purity, and stamped with a series of marks to show they were found satisfactory. The **standard mark** of a "lion passant" - that is, striding along looking at you, with one front paw raised - shows the object is **sterling silver** (that is, 92.5% silver). The **assay mark** is the mark of a particular assay office. The **date letter** shows the exact year that the piece was made - you can look this up in reference books. A **duty mark** - either the head of a Georgian gentleman or a Victorian young woman - appears on silver made between 1784 and 1890. The final mark is the **maker's mark**, usually (but not always) a set of initials. Sometimes there are additional marks to commemorate particular events - examples this century are the special marks struck to celebrate George V and Queen Mary's silver jubilee in 1935, and Queen Elizabeth II's silver jubilee in 1977.

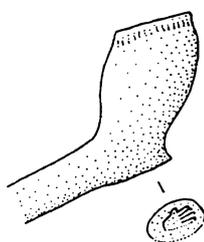
These are the only official marks that are on silver. Items with a silver appearance but different markings are *not* British silver. Electro-plated nickel silver (nickel with a thin coating of pure silver) was very popular in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods particularly, and pieces are often marked with what appear to be hallmarks. If the sterling lion is missing, however, you can be pretty certain that they are not silver! Electro-plate is usually marked **EPNS**, often in old-fashioned Gothic lettering. Objects marked EPBM are electro-plated Britannia Metal, which is a form of silver-plated pewter, often used for teapots, sugar basins and so on.

Clay pipes are often dug up in the garden. They were in general use from about 1575, when tobacco was introduced into England, to about 1920. You can tell roughly how old they are from the shape of their bowls.

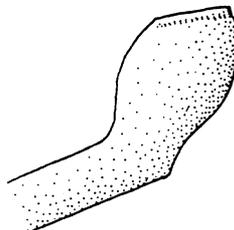
*16th century*



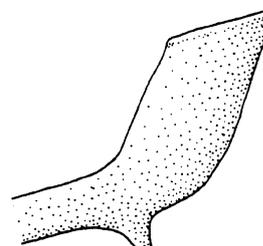
*17th century*



*Early 18th century*



*Late 18th century*



After about 1840, clay pipes were made by machine, and the bowls are often very decorative, or made in fancy shapes. Clay pipes which look like briar pipes were made early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

