

LIMERICK SILVER.

The earliest records of silverworking in Limerick are the names of Gilladuffe O Cowltayn and Donal Mecgylllysaghte (Lysaght), Silversmiths of Limerick, in 1559. The next record is the name of Robert Smith, goldsmith of Limerick, mentioned in 1674 and 1687. From then onwards during the 18th. and early 19th. centuries the names of numerous Limerick silversmiths are recorded. There is no record of any Guild of Goldsmiths or Silversmiths in Limerick.

The Goldsmiths Company of Dublin had the sole right to assay and mark all gold and silver articles made in Ireland, and the only assay office in the country was in Dublin. Nevertheless, large quantities of plate made in provincial centres during the 17th., 18th. and early 19th. centuries were not sent to Dublin, but stamped locally with the Town Mark and Makers initials.

The date in which Limerick silversmiths first marked their plate is unknown. The Cork Guild of Hammermen adopted a Town Mark shortly after. The earliest mark on Limerick silver is the City Arms a gateway between two towers, the oldest example of which is the Askeaton Chalice and Paten, dated 1663. This mark is frequently accompanied by a star mark, a motif probably taken from the Arms of the Galway family, one of whom, Sir Geoffrey Galway, was Mayor of Limerick in 1652. About 1720, the guarantee mark was changed to the word "sterling", or an abbreviation of it, perhaps in response to regular sending of plate to Dublin for assay after 1711. Another mark of the late 18th. and early 19th. centuries resemble a plume of three feathers, which is found particularly on bright-cut spoons.

The makers initials, usually in capitals but occasionally in script, are enclosed in a punch of varying shape, sometimes accompanied with a device such as a lion rampant. Towards the end of the 18th. century a number of makers imitated the Dublin Harp and Crown punch, substituting the makers initials for the figure harp, with the crown remaining above the initials.

KNOWN LIMERICK SILVERSMITHS

<u>Year mentioned</u>	<u>Smith</u>	<u>Year mentioned</u>	<u>Smith</u>
1559	Donal Mecgyllvsaghta	1770	Robert Bradford
1559	Gilladuff O Cowltaun	1770, 1784	John Hackett.
1674, 1687	Robert Smith	1771, 1784	John Stritch.
1680, 1698	James Robinson.	1774	James Watson.
1720, 1730	Caleb Colbeck.	1777, 1784	Philip Walsh.
1725 (died)	Adam Buck.	1779	W.D. Moore.
1725-1740	Jonathan Buck	1784, 1800 (died)	Thomas Burke
1727	- Hill.	1784, 1788	Patrick Connell.
1730, 1739	John Robinson.	1784	Matthew Walsh.
1731, 1773 Mayor	Joseph Johns.	1786, 1788	Daniel Lysaght
1731, 1782 (died)	Edward Parker.	1787, 1813 (died)	John Purcell
1750, 1768	George Robinson.	1788 (died)	Henry Downes.
1751, 1788 (died)	John Collum.	1788	Francis Phipps
1755	John Gloster.	1798, 1810	William Ward.
1760, 1810.	Maurice Fitzgerald	1800.	William Fitzgerald
1765, 1795 (died)	Samuel Johns.	1800, 1846	Samuel Purdon.
1766, 1804(died)	George Halloran	1802, 1842(died)	Robert O' Shaughnessy.
1767(died)	Joseph Robinson	1810, 1846	T. Walsh.
1768(died)	Collins Brehon	1820	William Fitzger- ald & Son.
1768, 1780(died)	Garrett Fitzgerald	1832, 1840	H. Smith & R. Wallace.
1768, 1784	George Moore	1842(died)	George Hurst.
1769	George Brush	1846	John Laing
		1846	John Walsh.

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