

# Pete Graves – Amateur Silversmith



I obtained degrees in theoretical metallurgy and as a result had very little experience of metallurgical processing. In 1983, at the suggestion of my artistic daughter, I enrolled in an evening class in Silversmithing & Jewelry Making at Chelmsford College of Further Education. Here I was introduced to the ancient craft of hammering silver into shapes – using techniques and tools that have changed very little over the centuries! After the course closed in 2003, I continued attending classes run by John Rogers, a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, until that closed in 2012. Over the years I have built up my own workshop with tools and equipment, but sadly do not have a casting facility. I have a personal maker's mark registered at the Birmingham Assay Office.



*Sugar sifter*

My interest has been largely in making hollowware, plate/strip ware and forged articles to my own design, and the basic processes for each are:

## Hollowware – By Blocking

The starting material is Sterling (92.5%) or Britannia (96%) silver sheet of an appropriate thickness for the amount of work to be carried out to achieve the designed object shape (generally 0.9 to 1.2mm). The processes involved in making a bowl are:

1. Blocking the sheet to form a shallow recess
2. Raising to the rough shape of the object design by hammering on a steel stake
3. Planishing numerous times to remove the marks from the raising hammer
4. Caulking to thicken the rim if an additional rim is not to be added
5. For a faceted bowl, mark out and crease by chasing
6. Between each of these stages the silver has to be heated to a dull red colour to remove any work-hardening then quenched and pickled in acid to remove any copper oxide (7.5% in silver)
7. Soldering on a base or handle as per the design
8. Polishing the object to remove scratches and achieve a high reflective finish.



*Rose bowl after raising and before planishing*



*Octagonal bowl in progress*



*Naming cup with cast handle*



*One of set of 4 conical Britannia silver beakers decorated with 'Suzuki' chasing*



*Bowl with chased Tudor rose in the base*

Photos of some of the items I have made are shown here, and some of the items are exhibited in the display cabinet.

## Holloware – By Deep Sinking

- Here the thickness of the silver sheet is thicker (about 1.4mm) and only blocking and planishing, with intermediate annealing and pickling, are used to achieve the bowl shape. As a consequence, the bowl thickness decreases towards its base.



*Start of deep sinking of oval bowl*



*Completed deep sunk oval bowl with coronet base*

## Sheet/Strip Ware

- Items fabricated without the use of hammers, using only a saw and solder!



*Möbius strip serviette rings*



*Crumb brush and tray*

## Composites

This is my terminology for designs which incorporate a combination of hollowware, sheet/strip, castings and forgings, examples being:



*Wine coaster with cast sycamore seeds and sycamore base*



*Cake slice; profiled thick sheet with forged handle. Design inspired by Georg Jensen Vivana cutlery*