

...The Finial...

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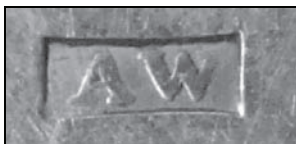


A Scottish Provincial Maker's Mark Identified

By Miles Harrison



Collectors of Scottish provincial silver will know the frustration of finding a spoon with maker's mark only, particularly when the initials are common. Too seldom does one come across an item, like that illustrated below, which narrows down the list of candidates to a single town, and which, with a little research, allows one to identify the maker with near certainty.



This school medal is quite crudely made, bears the mark 'AW', and has been engraved 'Ayr Academy, First Prize, Writeing [sic] Class, 1847'. Presuming that the medal's maker hails from that town, the only likely name matching those initials is that of Andrew Wright.

Listed below are details of his career taken from contemporary sources:-

1841 - Census: watchmaker and jeweller; 20 years old; New Bridge Street, Ayr; born in Ayrshire.

1845, 13th June - Wigtownshire Free Press: 'Births...At High St, Ayr, on the 13th, the wife of Mr Andrew Wright, watchmaker and jeweller, of a daughter'.

1848, 7th April - Glasgow Herald: 'Andrew Wright, watchmaker and jeweller in Ayr, to be examined [for bankruptcy] within the Sheriff-Court-House, Ayr, 26th April...'

Andrew Wright does not appear in the 1851 Ayrshire Directory, nor does he appear in subsequent censuses. It seems likely that he was declared a bankrupt following the 1848 examination. If any member has a similar mark or any other information it would be gratefully received.