



# xing

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## Cleaning pewter

Throughout its long history pewter has had an almost infinite variety of compositions, even today there are still numerous varieties produced. The only common factor is a relatively high tin content which is hardened by additions of other elements. In most countries newly manufactured pewter is a lead free alloy usually being hardened with additions of antimony and copper, containing over 90% tin. Other elements such as silver and bismuth are sometimes used.. Modern pewter can be polished to a bright silver like finish or if preferred chemical darkeners can be used to simulate the patinas associated with old pewter.

To clean **Xing** pewter finishes that are a matt finish use either the fine grade wire wool mentioned bellow with soapy water or a scotch bright green pad that is available for washing up & again use with soapy water.

Antiques should retain their grey patina to maintain their value they should not be cleaned with metal polish, **for particularly fragile or valuable pieces seek expert advice from the antiques trade before attempting any sort of cleaning.**

**Never** put pewter in a dish washer.

As long as the item is not damaged then warm soapy water is the safest way to clean all pewters. Dry thoroughly then buff with a soft cloth. **For antiques and for anything valuable or old seek expert advice before doing anything other than washing.** For bright modern pewters of no great value & washing does not restore a good appearance metal polish with a soft cloth can be used (silvo or brasso). For severe corrosion and if you are confident you know what you are doing metal polish applied with ultra fine wire wool grade 0000 only (anything other than this will scratch). If necessary follow with metal polish on a soft cloth. Once restored to a good appearance use warm soapy water to keep the item looking good without the need to resort to such extreme measures again.

If you have a severely corroded item and are not confident about working on it seek my help of either an antiques restorer or pewtersmith as appropriate for the object.



## Lead in Pewter

In the past pewter often contained lead but as awareness has grown into the harmful effects of lead around the time of WW II it should now have been eliminated

Most antique pewter contains lead that's why it goes black & most modern pewter should now be lead free. The produce of Sheffield is lead free and has always been so dating back to the time when it was called Britannia metal but pewter contained lead. Until fairly recently even lead free pewter used for food and drink applications & appendices soldered with tin / lead solders.

## Cleaning Silver Plate

The ideal way to clean the yellow to brown tarnish from silver plated items is to use a liquid dip solution called either Silver Dip or Silver / Jewellery Sparkle. This is a solution that will remove the tarnish chemically without removing any silver that has been deposited onto a base metal. If one uses a silver polish cream like Silvo or equivalent you are actually removing this plate ! Remember that the black mark that appears on the cloth after a bit of rubbing is metal...silver !! & eventually you will remove all the silver deposited in the plating process & return the product to base metal. Use a tooth brush or similar to get into the difficult bits.

## Cleaning Silver/ Gold's

To clean the surface of Sterling Silver or gold's or any non plated metal one can use either Silvo to restore the shine on slightly tarnished articles....or brasso if the surface is more tarnished then Silvo to buff it up ( Brasso being slightly more abrasive ) or the liquid silver dips mentioned above if the finish is matted or has a texture on it. Use a tooth brush or similar to remove the dried cream from difficult area's & use the products regularly so that the article will build up a natural patina that helps to stop the build up of the tarnish....

This tarnish is a reaction between the oxygen in the atmosphere & the base metals ( usually copper ) used in sterling silver & 9 carat not a reaction with the silver or gold that is in the alloy.

