

Loving cup

A loving cup is a large ornamental drinking vessel. It is commonly used as a presentation trophy to winners of games, or as a shared drinking container at ceremonial events such as weddings or banquets. Loving cups usually feature two handles, and are frequently made of silver. They can be found in several European cultures; variations include the Celtic Quaich and the French Coup de Mariage¹.

The history of the loving cup dates back to Saxon times, before the Norman conquest of 1066. The ceremony surrounding it is said to derive from the assassination of King Edward the Martyr. The King was murdered while drinking, as by lifting the cup with both hands he left himself vulnerable to attack. Consequently, it became customary for those who stood to drink to have a companion stand with them also. The companion was then able to protect them as they drank.²



The Museum has a loving cup which is made of china, with a gilt rim and inscription, and two delightful frogs fastened to the inside. It was donated to the Museum in 1967 by Miss Mary Hamer, niece of the Herbert Hamer who was the owner of the cup. Research into the Hamer family shows that Herbert Hamer was the son of a farmer from Bettws who was baptised there in April 1849.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loving_cup

² <https://www.acsilver.co.uk/shop/pc/History-of-the-Loving-Cup-d330.htm#:~:text=The%20history%20of%20the%20loving,left%20himself%20vulnerable%20to%20attack.>

The cup was presented in 1872, so this would indicate that Herbert was 23 at the time and as he did not marry so the reason for the presentation is a bit of a mystery.



The farming family moved to Llanllwchaiarn and Herbert died in 1877. Herbert's younger brother Richard married and had three children, one of whom was Mary – our donor.

