

## Treasures and Heirlooms

By Rob Reid

A hopefully warm and sunny spring to all!

This is a nice little collection of bookmarks, the largest of which is less than three inches long. They are all sterling silver but all have a different country's hallmark on them.

The one at the bottom on the right is a silver reproduction of a gold florin. The florin was a coin produced in Italy between 1252 and 1533 and reproductions are a popular tourist item. It is marked with the basic Italian sterling mark as well as .925 which denotes 925 parts per 1000 silver content. For an item to be called sterling it must have a purity of 92.5 percent. To create the bookmark, a simple oval cut in the silver allows the page to slip in, and the bookmark must also be thin enough not damage the page when the book is closed.

The bookmark at the top of the page is made in the form of a hand with the index finger extended, perhaps to mark your spot on the page. The details are quite well done, including hair and knuckle wrinkles as well as a fingernail. The cut-out creating the bookmark is also in the shape of a heart. It too is sterling silver but only bears the .925 mark of purity. This is typical of modern North American silver, which often does not have a maker's name or country of origin.

The third bookmark is made in the form of a trowel and has a mother of pearl handle. The collar attaching the handle is nicely chased and the proportions are just right. This piece bears British hallmarks which lets you date and place it accurately.

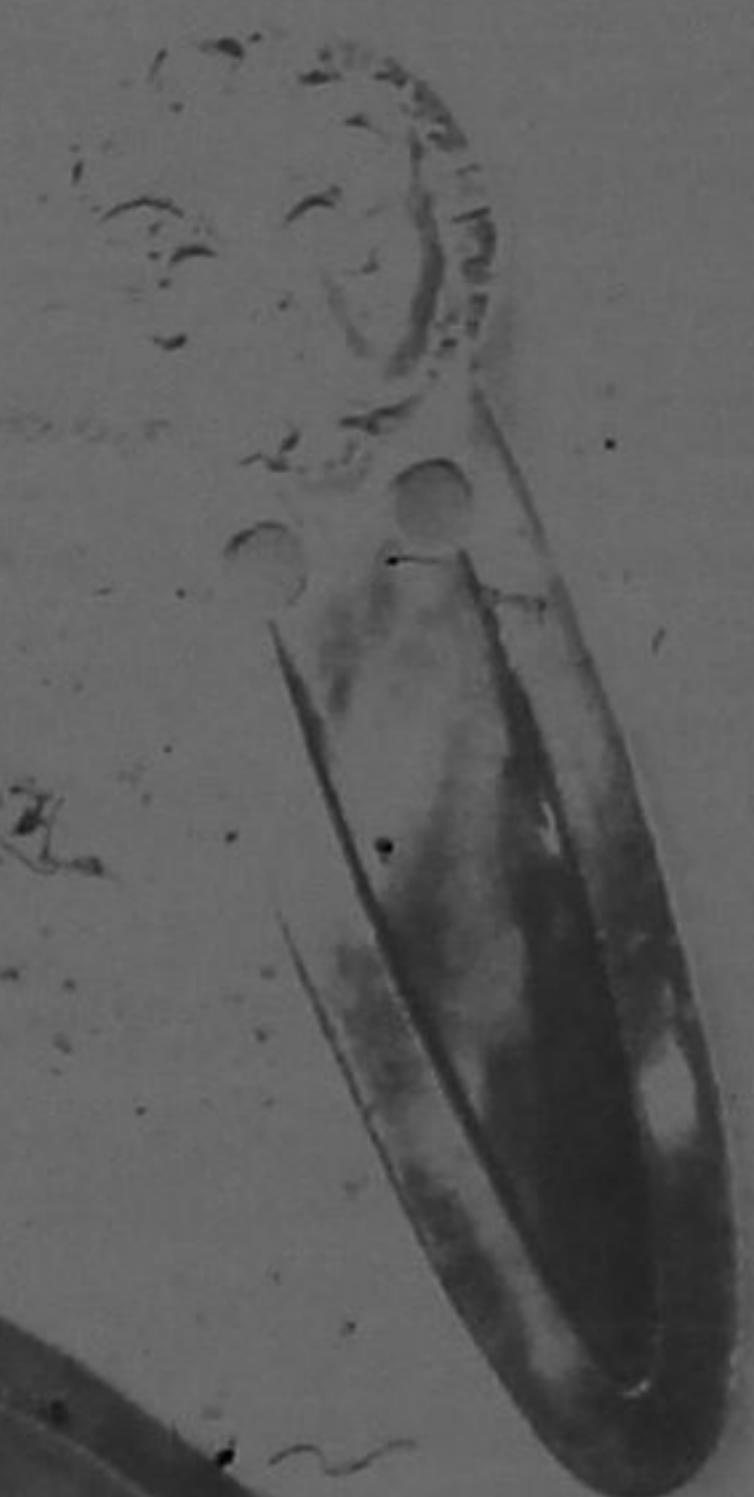
All sterling silver made in Britain should have a "standard" mark which confirms that the piece has been assayed as 92.5 percent pure silver. This symbol is a lion standing on four paws, referred to as the Lion Passant, and was adopted as the "standard" mark in 1544. The next mark identifies the location of the assay office that determined the silver content, such as Birmingham (an anchor), London (a leopard's head),



Newcastle (three towers) or Sheffield (a crown). Lastly it should also have a "letter" mark. This letter represents the year in which the piece was assayed. Every year is assigned a different letter of the alphabet. In each cycle both the font and the case are changed as well as the shape of the shield around the symbol, so that no two years are ever exactly alike. With some pieces one may also identify a mark that indicates the maker.

This piece, which is dated 1913, has the Lion Passant and marks for Birmingham, as well as a maker's mark. While not very expensive, bookmarks makes a great gift for the avid reader and are quite collectable. These ones range in value between \$25 and \$75.

I welcome inquiries about any objects and look forward to seeing and perhaps writing about them. Please forward a photo and a description to me through Stouffville Free Press or drop the material off at Reid's Antiques, 6397 Main St. Stouffville during regular business hours or via my website at reidsantiques.com.

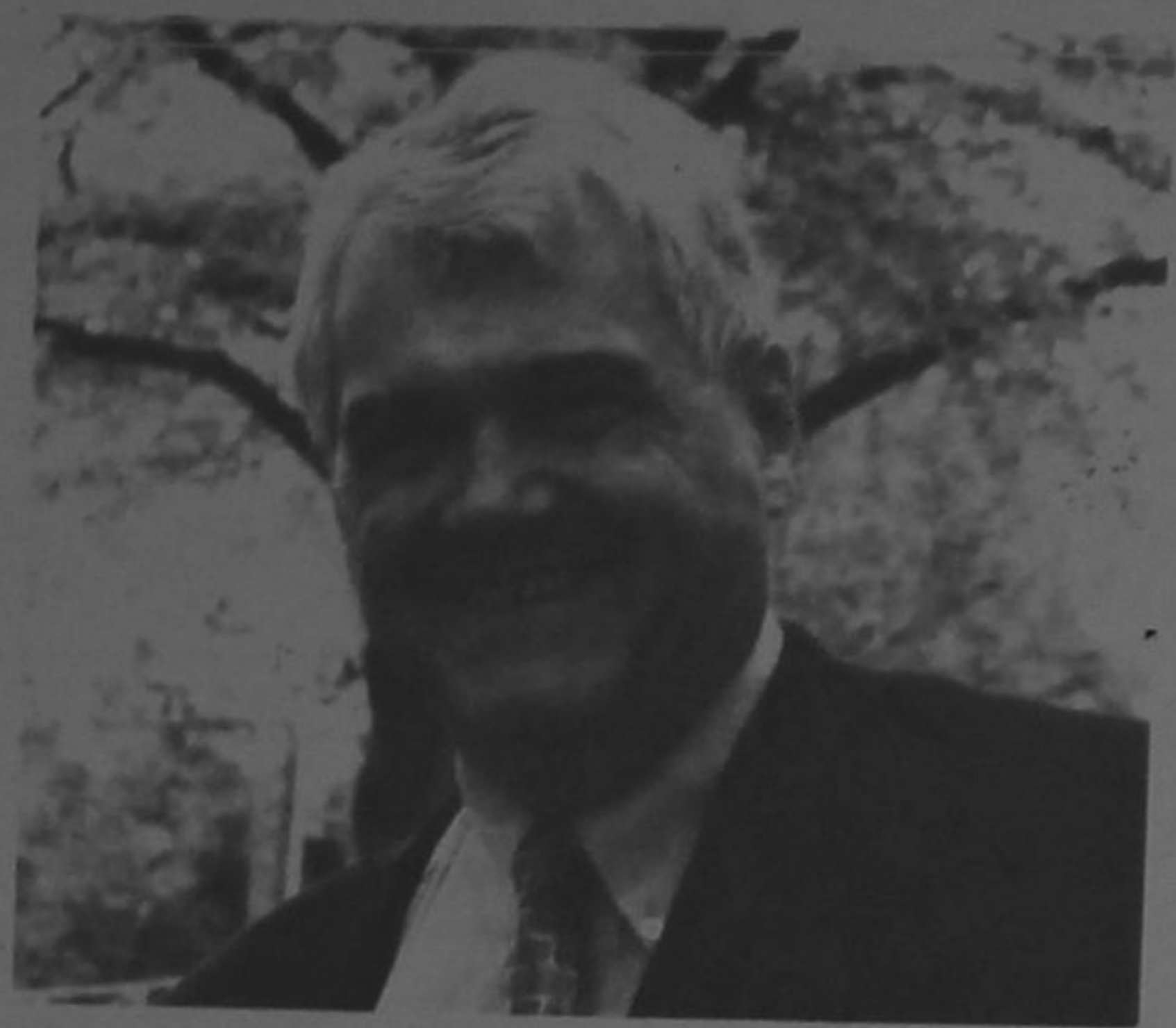


## WS YOU to Host Community Discussion

As Whitchurch-Stouffville grows, what do you want your life to be like, from childhood through older adulthood?

On Saturday, April 18 from 3 to 5 p.m., WS YOU 177 will host a community discussion with special guest Peter Whitehouse MD, PhD, at 6240 Main Street. Dr. Whitehouse is a medical doctor, researcher and founder of The Intergenerational School in Cleveland, Ohio. He will challenge what you think you know about growing up and getting older.

This town hall-style community discussion will connect health, education, aging, the arts and the environment in exciting new ways. To reserve your seat for this free event visit [www.wsyu177.org](http://www.wsyu177.org) or call 905-640-8914.



Dr. Peter Whitehouse



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