Thomas Boulsover Encyclopedia Article

Thomas Boulsover

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1706-1788

English cutler who invented fused plating, or the "old Sheffield plate," by which two metals could be fused to behave as a single metal. Boulsover made this discovery in 1743 while working with silver and copper. His finding paved the way for economical, mass commercial production of innumerable objects, from buttons to eating utensils. Coating a metal or other material with a hard, nonporous metallic surface improved durability. But previous practices were time-consuming, since plating a metal with another required craftsmen to fabricate a finished object then solder a thin sheet of plating on to it. Boulsover later invented a method for rolling saw-blade steel, previously made only by hand hammering.