

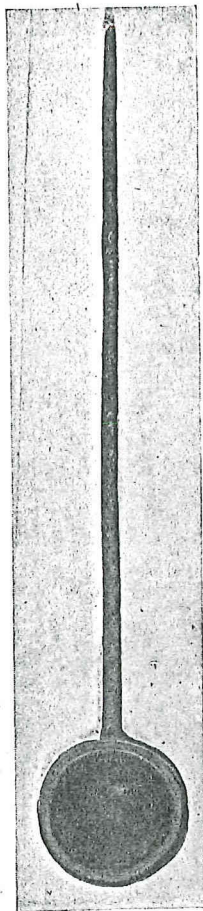
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# A PICTURE-STORY OF ENGLISH SPOONS

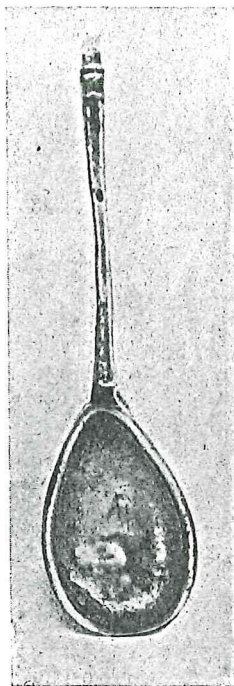
*Sixteen-Hundred Years'  
Development in Design*

By NORMAN GASK

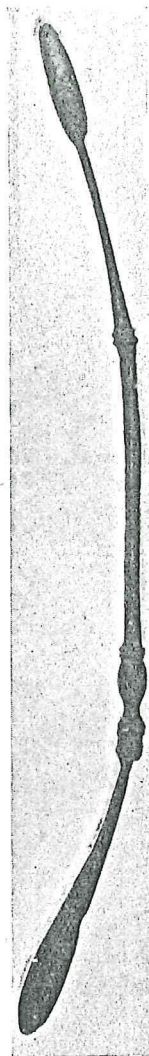
(Author of "Old Silver Spoons of England.")



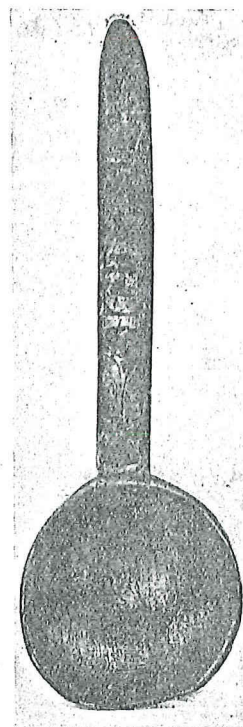
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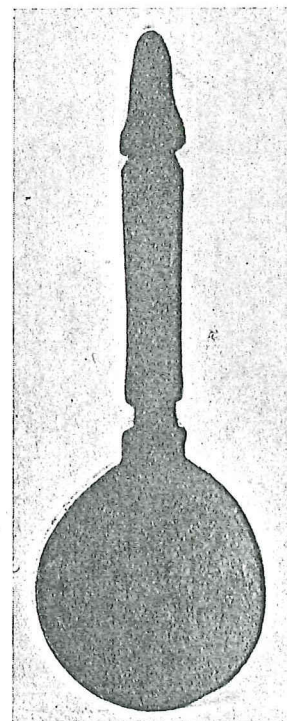
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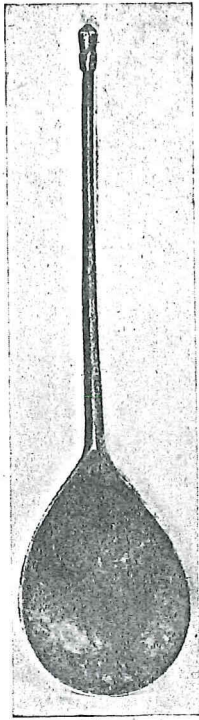
(The examples are from the collection of the Author.)

## THE ROMAN OCCUPATION OF BRITAIN

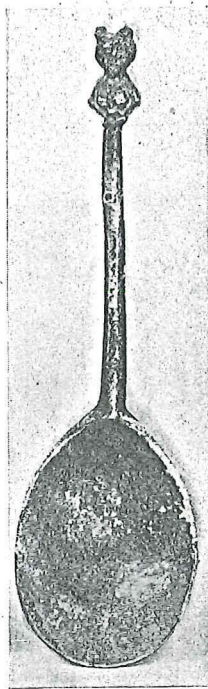
(1) **Disc-and-Spike.** A small bronze spoon, 5 in. long with circular bowl and bodkin-like spike handle. Date about A.D. 100. It is probably an egg-spoon, the spike being used to perforate or break the shell before the egg was eaten, in order, according to Pliny, to avoid evil consequences. The spike was also employed to open shell-fish and extract the edible part. The few Saxon spoons that have survived—there are several fine silver examples in the Maidstone Museum—follow a similar form to this, except that the bowls are considerably larger and deeper, with a protecting "lip" or bracket at the top, enriched with garnets or coloured glass, the stems often terminating in a parallel hook at the back. (Excavated.)

(2) **Knucklebone-Knop.** A small silver spoon, 3½ in. long, the bowl evidently designed from a mussel-like shell. Date about 200 A.D. The shell, the spoon of Primitive Man and doubtless that of the ancient Britons, is thus shown to be the origin of the famous English so-called "fig" or "pear-shaped" bowl which persisted from late Norman times well into the middle

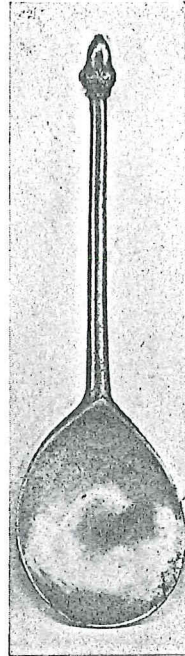
A PICTURE STORY OF  
ENGLISH SPOONS—(Continued)



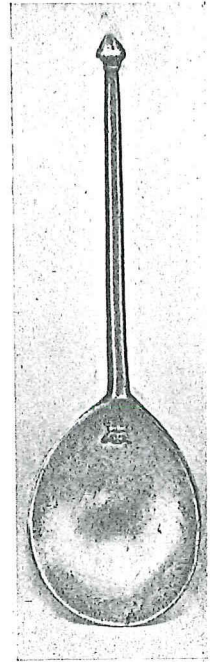
(6)



(7)



(8)



(9)

of the 17th century. The four-sided stem terminates in two superimposed knucklebones, a profile head being struck on the top of the upper one. "Knucklebones" was a favourite pastime of both Greek and Roman women; the same game is played by children to-day. Note the curious but characteristic "elbow" connecting the bowl and stem. This example is probably a honey-spoon. It was excavated and is partly encrusted at the back of the bowl. Later Romano-British examples are considerably larger, generally with long spike-like handles and various forms of oval, fig- and lyre-shaped bowls.

(3) **Olive-Knop.** BRONZE LIGULA, 6 in., with long narrow leaf-bud-shaped bowl faceted at the back and graceful ornamental-baluster handle, knopped with an olive. It was used for extracting cosmetics and unguents from the narrow-necked glass bottles of the period, and for mixing medical ointments, the olive top being employed for probing wounds or depressing the tongue for throat examinations by a doctor. (Excavated.) Date about A.D. 200.

### THE MIDDLE AGES

Horn and wooden spoons were those most commonly used, probably, from

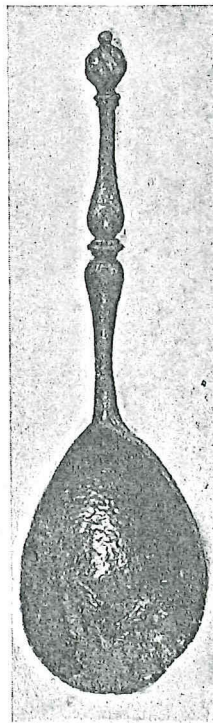
Saxon times, to the days of Queen Elizabeth, and beyond, but because of their perishable nature and small intrinsic value, very few have survived. Here are two:—

(4) A handsome horn spoon,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in. long, with round bowl and flat stem engraved with initials and Wreaths, the handle terminating in a Gothic arch.

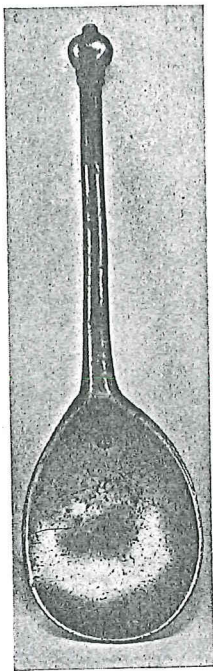
(5) Horn example,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in., with round, almost fig-shaped bowl, the bowl engraved inside with the Lombardic "M," the Sacred Initial of the Virgin Mary, indicating that it was employed for Holy Oil in Church use. The flat stem is engraved with small black letter characters and terminates in an acorn.

(6) **Gothic Acorn-Knop.** A bronze or latten 14th century example,  $6\frac{1}{4}$  in. long, with singularly graceful fig-shaped bowl, and a slender, almost thread-like tapering stem of "lozenge" or "diamond," that is four-sided, section, terminating in a Gothic acorn. The Acorn-Head is one of the first definite types of English spoons mentioned in ancient wills and inventories. It was apparently the most popular metal type in the 14th and 15th centuries.

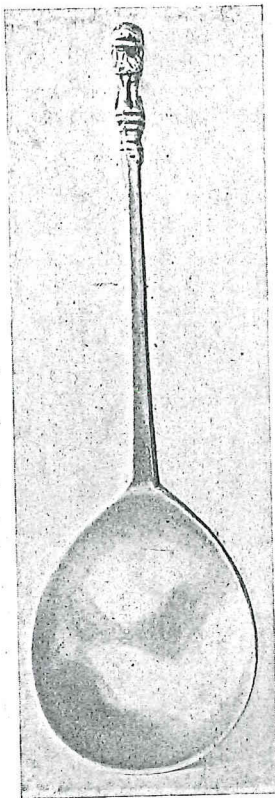
(7) **Horned-Head-dress.** Pewter spoon, 6 in. long, with hexagonal handle knop-



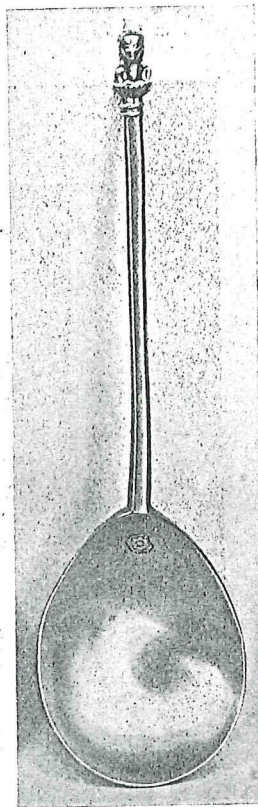
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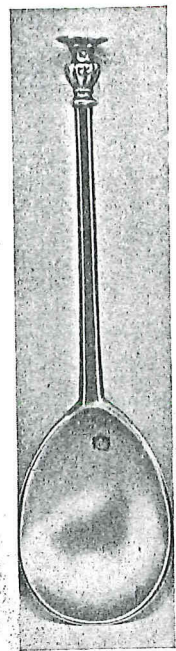
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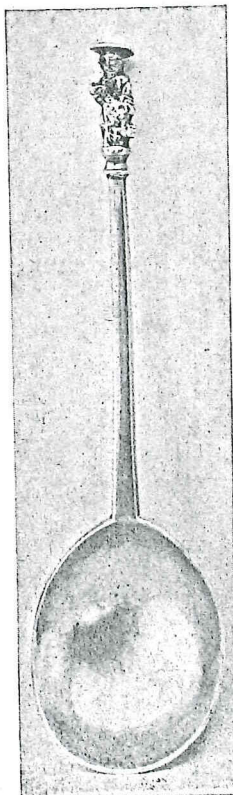


(13)



(14)

(15)  
(below)



ped with the head and bust of a woman emerging from a Fleur de Lys and wearing the fashionable horn-shaped head-dress of the time of Henry V. Maker's Mark in bowl: Two conjoined V's, otherwise a "W" beneath a floral device. Less than half-a-dozen authentic marked specimens in unbroken condition are known to-day of this extremely scarce pewter variety—the life-long quest of some collectors. Only one specimen in silver, an unmarked example, has seemingly survived. The original is shown as excavated. It has iridescent sepia patina and encrustation.

(8) **Pewter Acorn-Head.** 6¼ in. Date: about 1400. Handle almost round. Maker's Mark: Small Gothic "s."

(9) **Diamond-Point.** Pewter. 6¼ in. Maker's Mark: A cross between initials "I. B.", the whole surmounted by a crown. Date: About 1430. Diamond-Points, whether of silver or pewter, are great rarities. The example figured in the illustration is the only pewter specimen known bearing a Maker's Mark. Excavated. Iridescent sepia.

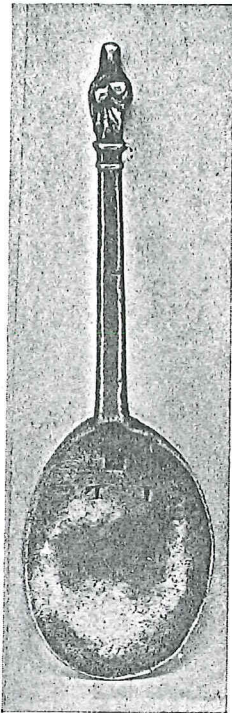
**TUDOR**

(10) **Wrythen-Knop.** Pewter. 6¼ in. Date: About 1500. Another rare type,

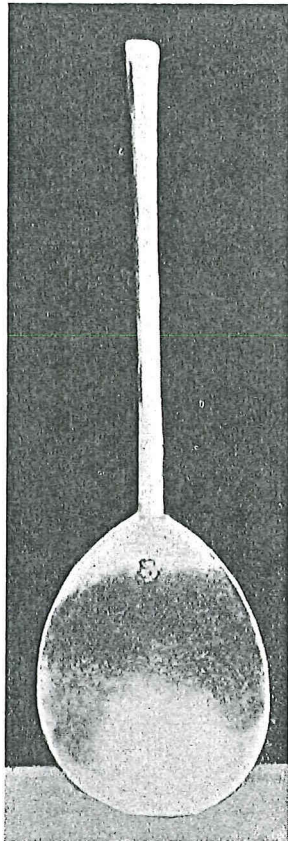
with graceful fig-shaped bowl, double ornamental-baluster handle terminating in a wrythen-knop (*i.e.*, a spirally fluted, ball-knop). The handle reflects the English Renaissance influence of the period. No silver example with this form of stem has survived. Maker's Mark: "RM" within beaded circle. Another specimen in the author's collection, 4½ in. long, and of about the year 1400, is of bronze. It has a much smaller head and a rounded stem like the pewter Acorn-Head here illustrated, and bears the Sacred Monogram, in small black letter, engraved in the bowl. There is an excavated pewter wrythen-knop in the Guildhall Museum with a twisted stem like a thin stick of barley sugar, a large bronze wrythen-knop in the Victoria and Albert Museum with a diamond-section handle, and a bronze excavated fragment in the London Museum with a wrythen top and a flat stem like the horn spoons here illustrated. All the silver wrythen-knops that have survived have the conventional hexagonal handles.

(11) **Six-Squared, or Hexagonal, Ball-Knop.** 6⅝ in. Date about 1500. Pewter. Maker's Mark "AB" within beaded circle. Only three of this handsome variety are known in silver.

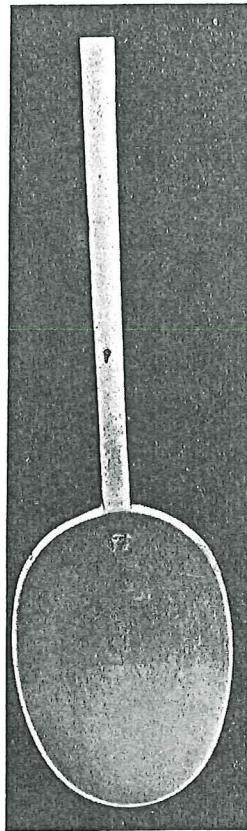
A PICTURE-STORY OF ENGLISH SPOONS—(Continued)



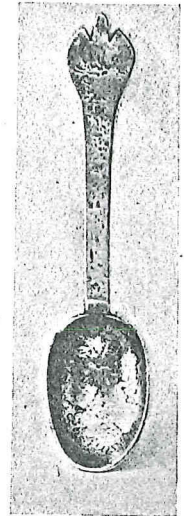
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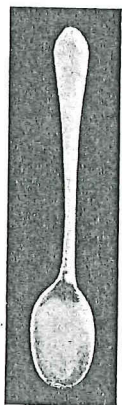
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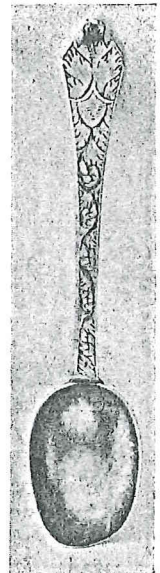
(18)



(19)



(21)



ANSM (20)

(12) **Lion Sejant or Sitting-Lion-Knop.** Silver, 6½ in. long. This type was introduced in the 15th century, and continued to be made in London into the reign of James I, and until early Carolean days in the provinces.

(13) **Maidenhead.** Silver, 6½ in. long. The Maidenhead type, introduced in the 14th century, is one of the most eagerly sought rarities, either in silver or in pewter. The knop shows the head and bust of the Virgin Mary emerging from a Fleur de Lys or

Iris. This type continued to be made until the early part of the 17th century. It was another favourite Tudor type.

(14) **Seal-Top.** Silver. 6½ in. Another favourite of Tudor and Stuart days.

**SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

(15) **Apostle.** A massive silver example, 7¾ in. long. St. Peter with a key. The Apostle type, introduced about 1450 from the Continent, continued to be made in the provinces, well into the reign of Charles II. A complete set consisted of twelve Apostles, each bearing a different emblem, and the Saviour or Master spoon, all thirteen spoons

in such a set being of the same size and date, and bearing the same Maker's Mark. An Apostle spoon was a favoured christening gift in Tudor and early Stuart days.

(16) **Apostle.** A handsome example in pewter. 6¾ in. long, with the date incorporated in the Maker's Mark. Few pewter Apostles have survived, and they are much rarer than silver ones.

(17) **Slipped-in-the-Stalk.** Silver, 6½ in. This simple type, introduced in the 15th century, also lasted well into Restoration days. It is the commonest of all the pewter and latten spoons surviving. Towards the end of the reign of Charles I a new type was produced by hammering out the hexagonal stem so that it became flat and two-sided, two slight notches being frequently cut in the top. The result was the famous so-called Puritan spoon, next shown.

(18) **Puritan.** Silver, 6½ in. This type, the bowl of which gradually developed from fig-shaped to oval or ovoid, then to spade-shaped, is generally

(Continued on page 394)

## WIRKSWORTH CHINA—(Continued)

of Stephan's work. Messrs. Wedgwood point out that Josiah would never have asked him to improve his two models of "Hope" and "Conquered Province" had he not appreciated the possibilities and art of this man: further in Miss Meteyard's "Memorials of Wedwood," on plate 28, she illustrates a "Pair of ornamental candelsticks" which according to the Factory Shape Book are recorded as "Ceres and Flora modelled by Strephan." These are excellent examples of figure work, and I have in my own collection a similar pair modelled for Turner of Lane End (fig. 6).

Mr. Cook of Etruria has been good enough to point out to me that there are at the present time on loan to the Metropolitan Museum, New York, a pair of black basalt figures of "Howe" and "Rodney," both signed "Stephan, f," which are also probably the work of Turner.

It was Pierre Stephan and not his son who was at Wirksworth, because in the first place his agreement with William Duesbury was signed on 17th Sept., 1770, for three years, and he was therefore free to go and probably did go to Wirksworth late in the autumn of 1773. I have found three entries in the registers of St. Alkmunds Church, Derby, which show that the son John was in Derby certainly until May, 1776:—

3/8/1773, married John Stephan and Catherine Yates.

19/11/1774, baptised John Charles son of John and Catherine Stephan.

21/4/1776, buried Frances daughter of John and Catherine Stephan.

There may have been and probably were other sculptors at Wirksworth, but so far their names have not come to light.

It is quite possible that some figures modelled from Bow or Chelsea originals were made at this factory, because David Garrick was an intimate friend of Beighton, the Curate at Wirksworth, with whom he stayed frequently between 1755/60. He was also a guest at Chatsworth in 1762, and it is well known that he was an enthusiast in ceramics. (Reference. *Highways and Byways in Derbyshire*. J. B. Firth. 1905. Pages 303 and 421.)

There is in the Derby Museum a cup and saucer attributed to Wirksworth which the Curator, Mr. Williamson, has very kindly tested for me with a positive, or phosphatic, result; so that these specimens may perhaps be taken as having been manufactured at this factory.

I have given three illustrations of these very interesting specimens. Figure 7 shows the cup and saucer together; figure 8 is a larger one of the cup only; and figure 9 is of the base of the cup showing the mark, v.

(Note that the half obliterated "Wirksworth China" has been written on the base by the Museum authorities, and has of course nothing to do with the original mark.)

In conclusion, I wish to thank all those who have assisted me in obtaining the necessary information for this article, and more especially Mr. Thomas Tudor for giving me permission to use some of his photographs, to the Derbyshire Archaeological Society also for permission to reproduce some illustrations which have appeared in their Journal, to Mr. Rackham and Mr. Williamson for various information and permission to reproduce certain specimens in the museums, and also to Mr. King, of Messrs. Winter, photographers at Derby, for his assistance in producing the photographs of the specimens illustrated.

## A PICTURE-STORY OF ENGLISH SPOONS

(Continued from page 388)

associated with the Commonwealth era in the popular collecting mind, although as a matter of fact, the majority of the surviving Puritans, silver, pewter and latten alike, were made in the royster-ing days of Charles II.

(19) **Trifid or Lobed-End.** Silver. 3 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. Excavated. A custard-spoon of the time of Charles II. The Trifid type of handle, introduced with the Restoration, appears to have been evolved in turn from the Puritan by still further hammering out the top of the handle and deepening the notches. A strengthening true rat-tail was also added to the back of the bowl. Most of the Trifids are modern dessert-spoon size. This type was made well into the days of Queen Anne.

(20) **Trifid.** Queen Anne silver tea, coffee or chocolate-spoon, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., enriched with engraving.

(21) **Shield-Top or Dog-Nose.** Silver. Unusually small example. A toy or tea-spoon, 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  in. long. This type of top, wrought by abolishing the two outer lobes of the Trifid-Top was introduced in the reign of James II, and virtually ceased to be made after Anne's time. It marks the last of the long line of picturesque ancient English spoons. The Hanoverian, "Old English" and Fiddle patterns which followed closely resemble the modern spoon.

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