

## **The early days of James Dixon are not well recorded but the following seems likely -**

There are recorded several people by the name of James Dixon in Sheffield. One is recorded as James Dixon of Campo-lane, (in the centre of Sheffield an old lane behind the Church) in a list of Common Pocket and Penknives - Manufacturers in Sheffield; he is also listed at that address as a Cutler. Is this the correct James - (in the sense of this being the James Dixon's father?) - and if so his mark is also listed ('Dixon' below a + sign).

To confuse matters another James Dixon is listed at the same time as a Joiners tool maker - his address is Silver Street which is of course where Dixon and Smith were later located.

In 1790 the James Dixon was probably apprenticed to Samuel Broadhead. This man was the senior of Broadhead, Gurney, Sporle & Co (parent company later to Broadhead & Atkin 1834). (Some detail regarding the Broadheads can be found at the end of this article).

It is thought (but not found) that Jack Scott wrote that James Dixon was apprenticed to Samuel Broadhead The Nowills who were cutlers must fit in somewhere as James Dixon married their daughter against the wishes of her parents. If indeed James Dixon had worked for the firm of Nowills, it may have been for only a very short time and perhaps as a journeyman.

(Whereas the firm of Broadhead (or Broadhead and others) went on to mixed fortunes - as is shown at the end of this article - James Dixon clearly prospered, considerably.)

1797 - James Dixon finished his apprenticeship and without capital he then worked for a Richard Constantine a successful Britannia metal manufacturer. (A Sydney Constantine became James Dixon & Sons works manager in the 1930s)

In 1804 James Dixon was at last able to start his own business. Records are vague as there were a number of James Dixons at this time in Sheffield. He was the right man, in the right business at the right time, for both place and a rapidly growing market.

Evidence suggests he took a partner by the name of Thomas Smith with him from 1811 – 1822. A vast range was made in this partnership including – tea and coffee wares, beakers, candlesticks, paper boats, tankards, snuff boxes, inkstands, condiments. Tobaccos, and much more besides.

The following Directory entries give some clues as to James Dixon's development in the early years -

3) Directory entries :

### **1816-17 England Commercial Directory**

Britannia metal manufacturers : Dixon and Smith 42 Silver St.

### **1822 Baines Directory**

- a) Dixon and Smith, manufacturers of Britannia metal goods, and dealers in cutlery, &c. 16, Silver St. proprietors of rolling mill, Green Lane
- b) Britannia Metal Manufacturers/Cutlery - Dealers : Dixon and Smith, 16 Silver Street
- c) Dixon James : house, Broom lodge.\*

**1822 Historical Directory and Gazeteer Yorkshire West Riding Vol I - Sheffield**

Dixon and Smith, Manufacturers of Britannia metal goods, & dealers in cutlery, &c. 16, Silver Street. proprietors of rolling mill, Green Lane

James Dixon was living at Broom Lodge in 1822, 1825, 1828 and 1833.

**An 1825 General & Commercial Directory of Sheffield shows the following**

Dixon and Son, (late Dixon & Smith,) manufacturers of Britannia metal goods, spoons, tin, petty pans, scollop shells, &c. Cornish Place.

also

Dixon James, merchant, Broom lodge\*

In 19th Century Broom Hall was divided into three - was this Lodge part of the previously 16th Century Hall in own grounds?

His son James Willis Dixon moves into that property after James Dixon purchased Page Hall.

Page Hall was built in 1773 for Thomas Broadbent a banker and industrialist (Sheffield City Council, 1997 [Firth Park entry]. The building originally stood in large grounds which extended to the north (now Firth Park) and was accessed by a sinuous driveway affording view of the park from Barnsley Road. The building was bought by Mark Firth in 1840 and the listed building citation mentions alterations and enlargement in the 'mid nineteenth century'.

This link following should take you to [www.picturesheffield.com](http://www.picturesheffield.com) The link is to a picture and brief description of Page Hall which James Dixon certainly lived at as did his eldest son.

A few trade directory entries follow continuing to plot the business of James Dixon and his son.

**1825 The Leeds Mercury Saturday Sep 24 Issue 3141**

BRITANNIA METAL SPOONS.- A CAUTION to the Public.- Messrs. Dixon and Son, of Sheffield, Britannia Metal Manufacturers, (formerly Dixon and Smith,) having discovered that Britannia Metal Spoons have been Manufactured in BIRMINGHAM, of their patterns, but inferior and lighter than their Spoons, and Stamped DIXON AND SMITH, think it right to apprise the Public of these facts: conceiving that their late Firm, Dixon and Smith, can only have been used for the purpose of imposing on the Purchasers, and inducing them to believe that such Spoons are of the genuine Manufacture of the House of Dixon and Son, late Dixon and Smith, of Sheffield.-Cornish-Place, September 7th, 1825.

**1828-29 Pigots**

Alphabetical : Dixon & Son, metal manufr

Britannia Metal Manufacturers : Dixon and Son, Cornish place, Green lane

**1834 Pigots**

Powder Flask & Shot Belt Makers/ Silver and Plated Manufacturers/Spoon Maker (Also German Silver Spoons) : Dixon James & Son, Cornish Place

**1834 Whites Directory**

**Dixon James and Sons, Cornish Place**

Britannia Metal manufacturers, German Silver ware manufacturers, Powder flasks & Shot Belt Manufacturers, Silver and Silver plated ware manufacturers, Spoon makers

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(A little information follows showing some of the pewter produced by - Broadhead. The later Atkins Brothers remaining in business until 1957.)

Also we are pleased to show one piece produced by James Dixon marked simply DIXON which implies it was made between 1804 and 1811. and another piece marked Dixon & Smith which implies it was made between 1821 and 1822.

Whilst such pieces must be scarce they appear to have little value.

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**TEA COMFORT by R Broadhead of Sheffield**

As nearest found illustration known as Spirit Kettle on Stand on page 126 of Pewter Wares from Sheffield

This piece stands and impressive 15” and was made by R Broadhead of Sheffield who appear to have traded in this style from 1853 to 1859 at Love Street Sheffield this was large producer of Britannia metal pieces and appear to have dropped the R from their title about 1859 allowing reasonable dating of this piece.



**FOUR BRITANNIA METAL COFFEE POTS**

3 by James Dixon and one perhaps the most elaborate by Broadhead and dated 1873, showing the elaborate work and design that went into producing good coffee pots. These would look to be as silver when they left the factory. Height table to lid top is about 9”.



A cast pewter plate

and two mugs from the partnership with Thomas Smith from 1811 – 1822.



These are very interesting mugs being of the transitional period for Dixon between Britannia Metal and cast pewter, in that the foot and lighter coloured base part are in fact cast pewter and the upper is of Britannia Metal - but interestingly of the same gauge thickness as the upper foot.  
There is also a flat plate to the under base (sits on the table) which is Britannia Metal on which the Dixon & Smith has been punched out from the back.  
This is a very scarce pair of mugs. (verification is for Yorkshire West Riding district - 9)

By 1828 he was clearly in business on his own account as this advertisement shows



**DIXON AND SON, Britannia Metal MANUFACTURERS**

CORNISH PLACE, SHEFFIELD.

**JAMES DIXON AND SON,  
CORNISH-PLACE, SHEFFIELD,**  
MANUFACTURERS OF  
**Superior Britannia Metal Goods,**  
WHICH,  
FOR STYLE, VARIETY OF PATTERN, AND BRILLIANCY OF POLISH,  
Combined with excellent Workmanship, stand unrivalled.

**JAMES DIXON AND SON,  
MANUFACTURERS OF SILVER GOODS,**  
OF THE NEWEST AND MOST SUPERB PATTERNS,  
AND  
**RICH SHEFFIELD PLATED WARES,**  
*With strong Silver Edges, and Shields,*  
UPON WHICH TO ENGRAVE ARMS AND CRESTS, WARRANTED OF THE MOST SUPERIOR AS  
WELL AS DURABLE QUALITY.

**JAMES DIXON AND SON,  
MANUFACTURERS OF  
Bronze Copper Powder and Pistol Flasks,  
LEATHER SHOT-POUCHES, BELTS,  
GAME BAGS, &c. &c.**  
OF EXCELLENT WORKMANSHIP,  
IN THE GREATEST VARIETY.

In 1834 (Pigots  
Directory advt)

Here follow a few internet blog comments from people enjoying looking into James Dixon Pewter

**mrclose**

14-10-2004, 07:15

Hi Everyone!

I CAN'T believe that I just found this forum AFTER a year of searching out information on this Dixon tilting water kettle that I purchased .. By Accident!!

Moon Maiden, I have a similar problem on dating my kettle as you do.

On the bottom of the kettle, all it has is D\*S

I had No idea that this was a Dixon piece until I wrote to a gentleman at the Silvervault in London.

He seemed very excited and had me send close-up pictures of the bottom and of the ivory and pins in the handle.

He confirmed that it was Dixon and true Sheffield Plate but, he couldn't give me a date.

I am not even sure if this is Dixon and Smith or Dixon and Son.

The curator said that the piece looked Alot like a Paul Storr design.

I have pictures if anyone is interested and I Think that I saved the letter from the curator.

I am so happy to have found this forum.

Thank You 8)

MC

P.S. There are some numbers on the base too.

A 3 above the D\*S and 1213 below the D\*S

**Timbuck**

09-11-2004, 20:05

A lot of these James Dixon items, Tea pots, coffee pots, and water jugs, all have a single number on the base 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5,

This denotes the size of the item in servings of 1 third of a pint ( a teacup full)..I have an old pewter teapot with the number 7 and it,s really a big one and it will pour out 7 cups of tea easily.

Other ways to date pots:

The highly ornate metal knobs or finials seen on teapots, date the pot from 1830 to about 1870. No metal knobs were seen prior to 1830. The bone and wooden knobs used from 1780-1830 re-appeared in similar form in 1870 but this time they were secured by a screw thread instead of being soldered into the lid.

The earlier tea and coffee pots had wooden handles. Unlike silver pots, the handles remained wooden until Broadhead and Atkin brought out their patented anti-caloric metal handle in 1840.

Up until 1800 the coffee and teapots had flat bottoms. Then ball and lion-paw and bracket feet reigned, soon to be followed by rounded rim bases. The Adam revival around 1870 saw the return of the flat base.

The shape of the pot can also help with dating. Bullet shape, lid with concealed hinges, or bight cutting are usually from the late 18th Century. Some of the 19th century teapots were covered with cuttings.

I hoped I've helped answer some of the questions out there and made it a little easier to decipher some of the marks on your item.

Please, do not hold anything I have written as fact, it is merely an overview of my research.

EVERYONE!

DID MY RESEARCH AND FOUND THE INFORMATION I WAS LOOKING FOR REGARDING JAMES DIXON AND SONS, SHEFFEILD.

HERE ARE THE URL'S THAT MAY HELP THE REST OF YOU WITH FINDING THE MARKS, AGE OF THE MARKS, SILVER, SILVERPLATE, AND THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1864.

[www.silvercollection.it/silverplatehallmarksJJ.html](http://www.silvercollection.it/silverplatehallmarksJJ.html)

[www.925-1000.com/dlSheffield.html](http://www.925-1000.com/dlSheffield.html)

[www.silvercollection.it/electroplatesilver.html](http://www.silvercollection.it/electroplatesilver.html)

[ttp://freespace.virgin.net/a.data/sheffplate.htm](http://freespace.virgin.net/a.data/sheffplate.htm)

ww.mick-armitage.staff.shef.ac.uk/sheffield/flood.html[/url]  
THERE ARE NO VIRUSES IN ANY OF THESE SIGHTS. I SPENT HOURS FINDING THESE SIGHTS AS THE BOOK ABOUT MARKS I CANNOT FIND IN THE STATES.  
ISBN 1-901587-52-5  
THE SIGHT ABOUT THE FLOOD IS REMARKABLE AND FULL HOURS OF READING AND PICTURES. TRAGIC LIVES LOST. INTERESTING STORIES OF SURVIVAL.  
LIKE THE LITTLE GIRL THAT WAS FOUND SLEEPING IN HER BED AFTER THE FLOOD WITH NOTHING LEFT BUT THE CORNER OF THE HOUSE AND HER ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR. JUST THE CORNER OF HER ROOM JUST BIG ENOUGH FOR HER BED. SHE HEARD HER DAD, MOM AND BROTHERS GO DOWN THE STAIRS AND YELL FOR HELP AND THOUGHT THEY CAME BACK UP AND WENT TOO SLEEP...SO SHE WENT BACK TO SLEEP...SHE WAS THE ONLY SURVIVOR. JAMES DIXON AND SONS COMPANY WAS DAMAGED IN THE FLOOD AND YOU CAN READ ABOUT IT!  
THE MARKS I FOUND REGARDING JAMES DIXON AND SONS ARE VERY HELPFUL AND EXACTLY WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR.  
HAPPY RESEARCHING AND READING EVERYONE!  
SNAPPYTHING~USA\*:love:

**ksulliv6**

24-04-2007, 18:12

Hello all,  
I've just discovered this post and have been learning a lot.

I too have a teapot that I am researching. But mine doesn't say "son(s)". My teapot just says DIXON&SMITH with the number 6 below the name (i've learned that is most likely the # of servings the teapot can hold) and an S above the name.

Since my teapot does not include the word SON or SONS would I be correct in guessing it's date is btwn 1811 and 1822?

The handle and finial are also an odd black which could be wood, but doesn't feel it. As for being soldered vs. screwed on, I am guessing soldered.

Any thoughts would be greatly appreciated.  
Just having fun researching.  
Karin

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And finally some notes regarding the Broadhead firm in Sheffield where James Dixon was likely apprenticed -

Samuel Broadhead PS Nos 989/988 - some extra detail:

1) 1791 Universal British Directory: Sheffield  
Broadhead, Gurney, Spoule, and Co. Scissor, Knife, and Britannic-metal Goods, Makers

2) London Gazette 23 Feb 1811 Issue 16458  
*Sheffield February 21 1811*  
*The Partnership between the undersigned, in the Businesses of Merchants, Factors, and Manufacturers, carried on under the Firm of Broadhead, Gurney, and Spoule, is dissolved by mutual consent, so far as concerns Robert Spoule, who retires.*  
*Samuel Broadhead*  
*Edmund Gurney*  
*Robert Spoule*

3) 1811 London and County Directory: Sheffield  
Broadhead and Gurney, merchants and manufacturers of fine scissors, table knives, and Britannia metal goods. Work house croft

4) London Gazette 26 June 1813 Issue 16745  
*Whereas the acting Commissioners in the Commission of Bankrupt awarded and issued forth against Samuel Broadhead and Edward [sic] Gurney, of Sheffield, in the County of York, Britannia Metal-Manufacturers, Scissor-smiths, Dealers, chapmen,*

*and Copartners, have certified to the Right Hon. the Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, that the said Samuel Broadhead and Edmund Gurney have in all things conformed themselves according to the directions of the several Acts of Parliament made concerning Bankrupts: This is to give notice, that, by virtue of an Act passed in the Fifth year of his late Majesty's Reign, and also of another act passed in the Forty-ninth Year of his present Majesty's Reign, their Certificate will be allowed and confirmed as the said Acts direct, unless cause be shown to the contrary on or before the 20th July next.*

5) London Gazette 25 January 1814 Issue 16848

*To be sold at auction, by order of and before the major part of the Commissioners named in and acting under a Commission of Bankrupt against Samuel Broadhead and Edmund Gurney, both of Sheffield, in the County of York, Britannia Metal-Manufacturers, Scissorsmiths, Dealers, Chapmen and Copartners, at the house of Mrs. Healey, the Hotel in Sheffield aforesaid, on Friday the 4th of February next, at Three o'clock in the Afternoon, in such lots as shall be then declared, and subject to conditions then to be produced.*

*All those two leasehold dwelling houses, with the capital warehouse, extensive workshops, and other conveniences in the yard thereunto adjoining, situate in and fronting to Workhouse Croft, (now called Paradise Street -) in Sheffield aforesaid, as the same were lately in the possession of the said Samuel Broadhead and Edmund Gurney.*

*The ground plot of the premises contains 642 superficial yards, and is held under the Town Collector and his assistants, for two several terms of 99 years and 93 years, the former of which commenced on the 29th September 1791, and the latter on the 29th September 1807, under yearly rents amounting together to 3l. 16s.*

*The premises are principally new built, and are very convenient and well adapted for carrying on a considerable mercantile and manufacturing concern.*

*Application may be made on the premises for a view of the same, and further particulars may be had at Messrs. Brockfield and Hodsons' Office in Sheffield.*

6) London Gazette 15 February 1814 Issue 16859

*The Commissioners in a Commission of Bankrupt, bearing Date the 1st Day of May 1813, awarded and issued forth against Samuel Broadhead and Edmund Gurney, of Sheffield, in the County of York, Britannia-Metal-Manufacturers, Scissor-Smiths, Dealers, Chapmen and Copartners, intend to meet on the 11th March next, at Twelve at noon, at the Tontine-Inn, in Sheffield aforesaid, to make a Dividend of the Estate and Effects \*\*of the said Bankrupts ; when and where the Creditors, who have not already proved their Debts, are to come prepared to prove the same, or they will be excluded the Benefit of the said Dividend. And all claims not then proved will be disallowed.*

*\*\* two other notices of the same wording also appear except here is inserted a) Effects of Samuel Broadhead, one of the said Bankrupts b) Edmund Gurney, one of the said Bankrupts.*

7) London Gazette 7 June 1817 Issue 17257

*The Commissioners in a Commission of Bankrupt, bearing Date the 1st Day of May 1813, awarded and issued forth against Samuel Broadhead and Edmund Gurney, of Sheffield, in the County of York, Britannia-Metal-Manufacturers, Scissor-Smiths, Dealers, Chapmen and Copartners, intend to meet on the 4th July next, at Twelve at*

*noon, at the Hotel, in Sheffield aforesaid, to make a Final Dividend of the Estate and Effects of the said Bankrupts ; and where the Creditors, who have not already proved their Debts, are to come prepared to prove the same, or they will be excluded the Benefit of the said Dividend. And all claims not then proved will be disallowed.*

8) 1822 and 1822-23 Baines Directory/ Pigots 1822 and 1828-29 - Queen Street  
Samuel Broadhead Britannia Metal Manufacturer  
Also in 1822-23 Baines listed as Spoon maker

9) RE PS991 Broadhead and Atkins London Gazette 13 December 1853 Issue 21502  
*Notice is hereby given, that the partnership heretofore existing between Rogers Broadhead and Charles Atkin, of Britannia works, in Sheffield, in the county of York, as Manufacturers of Silver Plated and Britannia Metal Goods, and Electro Platers and Gilders, under the style or firm of Broadhead and Atikin; was dissolved on the 29th day of May last, in consequence of the decease of the said Charles Atkin ; and that the business will be continued by the said Rogers Broadhead, under the new style or firm of R. Broadhead and Company, who will receive and pay all debts owing to and from the said partnership.- Witness our hands this 9th day of December, 1853.*

*Rogers Broadhead. W. Fisher, jr. J. Law, M.D., Thomas Marshall, Executors of the said Charles Atkin, deceased.*

NB Rogers Broadhead is the son of Samuel born 1807 Sheffield - listed in 1841/1851 as a Britannia Metal Manufacturer. 1871 Retired Britannia Metal Manufacturer. Rogers dies in 1876 aged 68.

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