

JAMES DIXON

PEWTER WARES FROM SHEFFIELD – by JACK L SCOTT - ISBN: 0-937864-00-5

The above book is the very best source for information concerning the trade and history of Britannia Metal. The information in this article mostly comes from this book. Jack L Scott today has a website – www.pewtermart.com where more information can be found and shows some really good examples of Britannia Metal Pewter ware.

Preparing this article an email from Jack Scott tells the writer that Jack later discovered some information was incorrect and that he would come back with the details. When Jack (who is very busy with many interests) finds time to do this, then this article will be amended. Best then meanwhile to keep an open mind – there is no information available to say that any detail of substance herein is wrong.

This article is incomplete/unfinished - in that pieces showing an example of some of the known marks are not yet available to the writer to illustrate. It is hoped that website readers might volunteer such photos/illustrations which could be added later.

James Dixon is perhaps the most well known name of the Britannia Metal Pewter manufacturers of Sheffield. His descendants and their successors produced a vast range of pewterware and later plated metalware product typical of its age and catering well to the mass market demand. Hence a great deal survives. Very few people collect this and generally speaking values are not high today.

The first James Dixon of known consequence, was born in Sheffield in a metal working family to a father of the same name in 1776.

In 1790 he was apprenticed to Samuel Broadhead. This man was the senior of Broadhead, Gurney, Sporle & Co parent company later to Broadhead & Atkin (1834). The later Atkins Brothers remaining in business until 1957.

1797 and James Dixon finished his apprenticeship and without capital he then worked for a Richard Constantine a successful Britannia metal manufacturer.

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. Although a first mark as simply DIXON is mentioned no pieces known to this writer with this mark have been found to date.

A vast range was made in this partnership including – tea and coffee wares, beakers, candlesticks, pap boats, tankards, snuff boxes, inkstands, condiments. Tobaccos, church wares, dishes, spoons and ladles. The mark for DIXON SMITH might be found with a small number after it being the workman's number. Again, although it is said examples exist with this mark, this writer has not seen any, so perhaps they are scarce.

In 1822 a new factory was built in a rural location at Cornish Place on the River Don. At the end of 1822 Thomas Smith left the partnership and William Frederick Dixon James's eldest son joined his father as partner.

A large export trade to the USA began in the early 1820s and King George IV boosted business with the introduction of Imperial measure in 1824. This standardisation was bigger than the previous wine standard though not by much but new tankards and measures were required throughout all pubs and inns.

Goods marked DIXON & SON with a three or four digit pattern number and a workman's number likely relate to the years 1828-1829. The second half of the 1820s, were boom times for this business.

It was after 1829 that the greatest expansion of the Dixon business took place. In 1829 he registered in Sheffield as a silversmith, acquired a plating business and registered his plate mark in 1835.

A second son James Willis Dixon joined as partner in 1835 and went to America to sell. A son of his was born in New York in 1838. Thus the former name of James Dixon & Son became & Sons.

James Dixon the founder retired in 1842. A third son Henry Isaac Dixon and a son in law William Fawcett also became partners. (Fawcett became Mayor of Sheffield in 1855). Electro plated wares were added to the ranges by 1849. (EPBM or EPNS. The mark BP when found refers to British Plate – not actually plated but highly polished nickel silver – a less expensive alternative to plated goods).

James Dixon died in 1852.

The word SHEFFIELD was not added to the Dixons mark until 1851.

The United States war in 1861 restricted trade severely. The Dixon firm then moved its efforts to selling in Australia, and elsewhere in the world.

A water reservoir which burst in 1864 devastated much of Sheffield town killing over two hundred and damaging much property, especially the Dixon factory by the River Don.

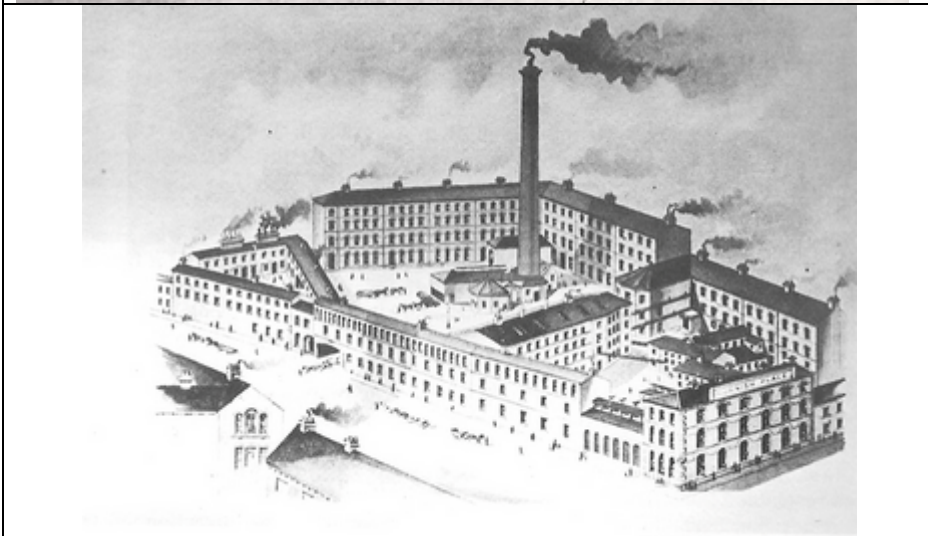
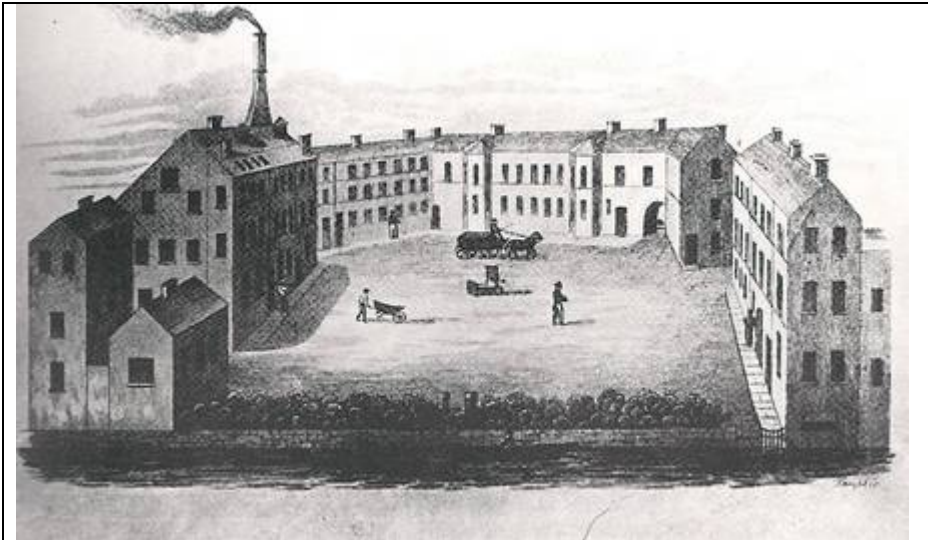
American born James Willis Dixon Jnr took over the firm on the death of his father in 1876. He achieved the greatest financial and social benefits gained by any individual member of the family and was likely viewed as a grand old English gentleman. To avoid confusion with other firms of the same initials in 1879 the Trumpet and banner were added to the mark. This may have been a revival of a much earlier mark that had had little use.

In 1889 Lennox Burton Dixon was taken into partnership. The business grew in the last years of the 19th century and production expanded until the Great War of 1914. After his death in 1941 he was succeeded by W Milo Dixon a grandson of the original James Dixon.

The trade name Cornish Pewter was introduced in 1927. (Cornish Place had been the firm's address from 1822),

The firm of James Dixon produced more Britannia Metal goods than any other firm in the 19th century. It moved on to silver and electroplated wares in the 19th century.

Dixon Plant at Cornish Place c1822



Dixon plant of 1906



**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.


James Dixon advertisement of 1834

A Sequence of JAMES DIXON marks, with likely dating for their use and an example where possible of the mark in use.

DIXON	1804 - 1810	DIXON & SMITH	c 1811 - 1822
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1823 – 1829

DIXON & SON




Two Half Pints



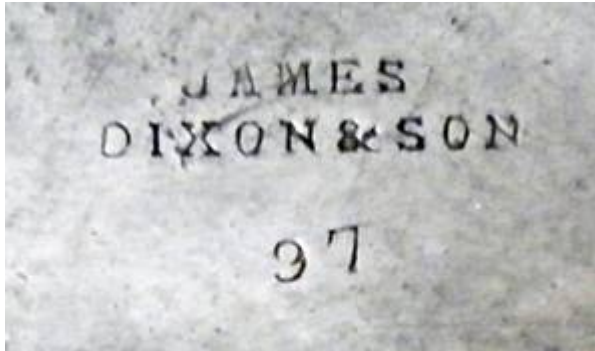
1830 - 1834






JAMES
DIXON & SON

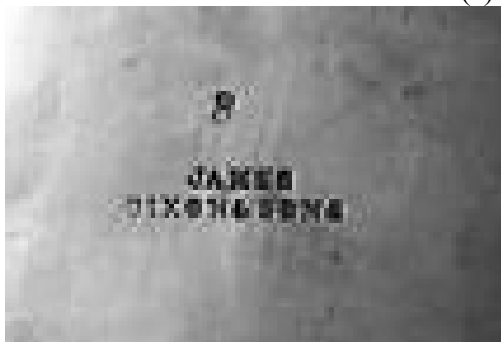
1835 - 1841



1830 - 1834

JAMES
DIXON & SONS

1835-1841(?)



DIXON & SONS	
1835 – c.1841	

JAMES DIXON & SONS	
1835 – c.1841	

JAMES DIXON & SONS	
1835 – c.1841	

JAMES DIXON & SONS	
c1842 – c1851	
This change of style occurred with the rise of James Willis Dixon Snr	

<i>Published by Jas Dixon & Sons Sheffield March 1st 1842</i>	
1842	



**JAMES DIXON
& SONS**

c.1842- c.1851



**JAMES DIXON
& SONS
BEST
BRITANNIA METAL**

c1842 – c1851

 <p style="text-align: center;">1850</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">A poor copy of a variation of this found on a bachelor style teapot</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">JAMES DIXON</p> <p style="text-align: center;">c1841 – c1851</p>	
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<p style="text-align: center;">JAMES DIXON & SONS SHEFFIELD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">c1851 - 1879</p>	
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<p style="text-align: center;">JAMES DIXON & SONS SHEFFIELD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">c1851 – c1870</p>	
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JAMES DIXON & SONS

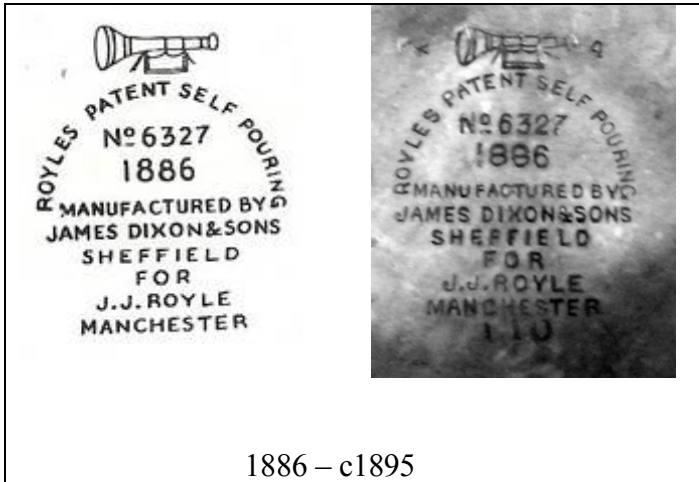
c1860 – 1879




JAMES DIXON & SONS
SHEFFIELD

1879 – 1927





1886 – c1895

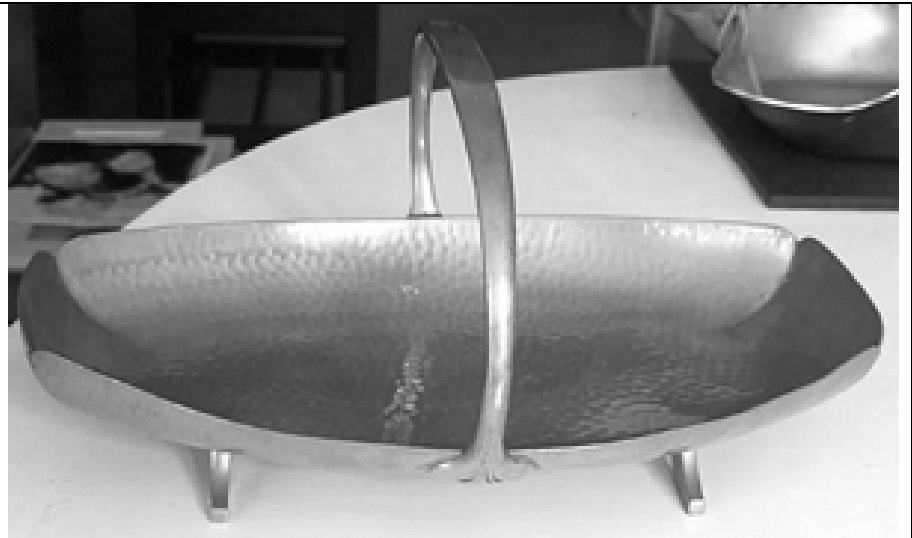


Around 1910 James Dixon & Sons Electro Plated - mark reads likely as **EP. J. D. & S. (Trumpet)**

JAMES DIXON SILVER PLATED MUFFIN DISH. COMPLETE WITH INNER TRAY AND ORIGINAL EBONISED FINIAL AND BAR HANDLES. PROBABLY A LATER CHRISTOPHER DRESSER DESIGN AND PRODUCED AROUND 1890-1910 APPROXIMATELY. GOOD CLEAN LINES AND RETAINING THE ORIGINAL SILVER PLATE. MARKED TO THE UNDERSIDE: JD & S EP AND THE TRUMPET PLUS THE MODEL NUMBER Y3353/1.


 JAMES DIXON & SONS
 SHEFFIELD
 Cornish Pewter

1927 on



J. DIXON & SONS L^{TD}
SHEFFIELD

1929 on



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Others just to give a small sample of the huge range of designs and types that James Dixon manufactured.
