

TWO YORK ACORN FLAGONS – By CARL RICKETTS



Edmund Harvey flagon

Dated 1725 plus names of 4 churchwardens.

ex Carvick-Webster.

This is, in my opinion, one of the very finest pieces of English pewter now in existence. The boldly sweeping handle, the massive acorn-shaped body – a feature reproduced in miniature as a lid-knob – the serrated lip cover, and the well formed thumbpiece, must be seen and handled to be properly understood and appreciated. (HHC 1932)

Fig 118 Pewter Down the Ages
Cover and Fig 5 Old British Pewter, Connoisseur booklet
Plate XL(e) Old Pewter

John Harrison flagon?

ex Carvick-Webster.

The evidence from my research suggests this is the quintessential 'first edition' form of acorn flagon made by John Harrison in York during the first third of the 18th century.

Note, the solid handle, relatively deep spout, unadorned upper body (drum) and simple incised reeds at the join of the two elements comprising the bulbous lower body. (CR 2003)

Fig 118 Pewter Down the Ages
Fig 7 Pewter Art Gallery NSW July 1966
Plate XL(c) Old Pewter

Several years ago I did attempt to draw a comparison as to the rarity of acorn flagons, and attach my findings for what they are worth, and if you want to use them in some way I shall be pleased they are being shared. I appear to have lost the handout I created when I gave a talk about acorns to the PS, but have my 'cover', which I also attach

The Crowned X in the base is good enough to relate closely to others used by the John Harrisons of York especially JH (II).

The issue with the knops on these flagons is that the original design(s) were very tall and stood up higher than the top of the thumbpiece, which meant they were very weak, easily damaged or knocked off, so most have had replacements. Additionally, the later ones with hollow cast as opposed to strap handles may have had a different knop design to recognise the inherent weakness in the original.

Anyway, also note the end of the handle terminal, which is asymmetrical, and not a damage but another inherent weakness in the original mould. I have now seen several 'IH' acorns of the first strap handle type, and they all have this offset/unbalanced terminal.

I don't know if they were faked. Ron Homer and I spoke at length about such things, and his conclusion that was also based on a lot of experience as a metallurgist and amateur workshop chap, was that the cost of the moulds would have been prohibitive in relation to any sales that could be made. So no known faked one have I yet seen.

Carl

ACORN FLAGONS

Rarity

These are considered 'very rare', although no statistics were previously known to confirm this assumption.

The author conducted a survey of literature and collectors in an attempt to identify as many examples as possible.

Capacities are rarely noted, although two hold an OEAS half-gallon, and another 125 fl.oz. Only two known makers: OP2185/6 Edmund Harvey, Stockton-on-Tees (fl: c1719-65), and OP2162 John Harrison, York (fl: c1719-50).

Value: auction prices over past 20 years: £750 (1981), £2800 (1991), £2500 (1993), £3600 (1998), £4800 (2001) plus premiums

#	T/p	Knop	Spout		Fillet/lines to:		Handle	Hinge	Terminal	Height to:	
			Lid	Depth	Drum	Bulb				Lip	T/p
1	Open chair	Short	No	49%	No	Yes	Solid?	3-lug?	Ball	7.0	8.75
2	Spray	None	Yes	61%	No	No	Solid	3-lug	Spade?	8.5	10.5
3	Ram	Short	Yes	50%	No	No	Solid	3-lug?	Spade?	9.2	11.0

4	Ram	New	No	62%	No	Yes	Solid	5-lug	Spade	9.5	11.5	Unclear	R V
5	Ram	New	No	75%	No	Yes	Solid	5-lug	Spade	9.5	11.5	Crowned X	C R oth
6	Ram	Short	No	45%	No	No	Solid	5-lug	Spade	9.5	11.5	No mark	ex t (Pe
7	Ram	Short	No	42%	No	No	Solid	5-lug	Spade	9.5	11.5	No mark	Wo
8	Ram	Med	No	75%	No	Yes	Solid	5-lug	Spade	9.5	11.5	Crowned X	A C
9	Ram	Tall	No	65%	Yes	Yes	Solid	?	Spade	9.5	11.9	?	Scr Phi
10	Ram	Tall	No	68%	No	Yes	Solid	5-lug?	Spade	9.6	11.7	?	ex t
11	Ram	Tall	No	65%	No	Yes	Solid	?	Spade	9.75	12.5	IH – York	F P
12	Ram	New	No	90%	No	Yes	Solid	?	Spade	9.8	11.5	Unclear	DM
13	Ram	?	No?	74%?	?	?	?	?	?	10.4	13.0	No mark	ex t
14	Ram	Tall	No	65%	No	Yes	Solid	?	Spade	?	?	?	Yor
15	Ram	Tall	No	90%	No	No	Solid	?	Spade	?	?	?	(Th
16	Ram	Short	No	52%	Yes	Yes	Sol/dble	?	?	11.2	13.4	?	ex t Phi
17	Ram	Tall	?	37%	Yes	No	Solid	5-lug	Spade	?	?	?	Ex
18	Ram	Short	No	39%	No	Yes	Solid	5-lug	Spade	?	?	?	(Fi
19	Ram	Tall	No	65%	Yes	Yes	Hollow	5-lug	Spade	10.5	13.0	IH – York	ex t Col
20	Ram	Tall	No	65%	Yes	Yes	Hollow	5-lug	Spade	10.5	13.0	IH – York	S S
21	Ram	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	13.0	?	ex t
22	Ram	Tall	No	58%	Yes	Yes	Hollow	?	Spade	10.5	13.4	?	Tor
23	Ram	Short	No	58%	Yes	Yes	Hollow	?	Spade	?	?	?	Yor
24	Ram	None	No	58%	Yes	Yes	Hollow	?	Spade	?	?	?	(Ma
25	Ram	New	No	63%	Yes	Yes	Hollow	5-lug	Spade	11.0	13.0	IH – York	Sot
26	Ram	New	No	63%	Yes	Yes	Hollow	5-lug	Spade	11.0	13.0	IH – York	Sot
27	Ram	Short	No	64%	Yes	Yes	Hollow	?	Spade	?	?	?	ex t (Dr
28	?	?	?	?	?	?	(weird)?	?	?	?	14.5	?	Sot
29	?	?	?	?	?	?	(weird)?	?	?	?	14.5	?	Sot
30	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	Sto
31	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	– H
32	Spray	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	Gre (17
33	Ram	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	Cra from
34	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	Hil
35	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	St M
36	Leaf?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	13.1	16.1	No mark	Sha Inse
37													
38													
39													
40													

Locations of inscribed flagons:

Acklam – Yorkshire North Riding – 2+ miles from Stockton

Crathorn - Yorkshire North Riding – 3+ miles from Yarm

Great Stainton – Durham – 7 miles from Darlington

Hilton – Durham – 6+ miles from Bishop-Auckland

Kirby Stephen – Westmorland – 11 miles from Appleby

Kirklevington - Yorkshire North Riding – 2+ miles from Yarm

Stoxley (**Stokesley**) - Yorkshire North Riding – 41 miles NW from York

Tetney – Lincoln Lindsey – 10+ miles from Louth

A Fine Acorn Flagon -

