Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOOD AND DRINK — H166/A

Bone Spoon

This spoon has been finely worked out of bone. Bone spoons are still thought preferable to metal ones today for eating caviar and boiled eggs, as it is thought metal can taint the taste of the food.



Ginger Beer Bottle

Ginger beer was an extremely popular drink with both adults and children in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It could be made in both alcoholic and non-alcoholic form and was often brewed by local firms. This company Royal Berks also produced mineral water. Since it was a cloudy liquid it was nearly always stored in stone bottles like this one. Once empty the bottles would be returned to the bottlers for sterilisation and refilling. This bottle is transfer marked with the name of the makers in order to advertise their product.



Trivet

This metal stand is known as a trivet. Many people still use them today in kitchens, or at tables to place hot items on. They could also be used to stand flat irons on when they were being heated by the fire. This trivet is of a very simple, yet efficient design- note how the legs have been formed from the same piece of metal.



Ladle

This metal ladle may have been used as a scoop for a variety of liquids, foodstuffs or household products. The handle of the ladle advertises 'Dairy Lime Soap', most probably a milk based soap made by the Christian Hansen's Laboratory in Little Falls, New York in the 1930s and 1940s.



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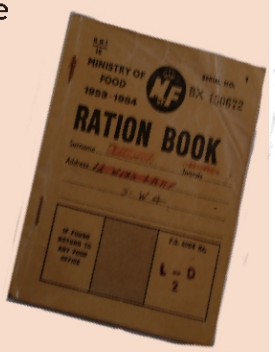
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Wooden Butter Pats



These wooden boards are known as butter pats, or scotch hands. The butter maker would hold a pat in each hand and work the butter into blocks. They are thin, light and easy to hold. The grooves on the inside face would help to grip the butter and allow any excess water to be squeezed out. They could also be used to indent patterns into the surfaces of the block.

Ration Book



This ration book was issued by the Ministry of Food during the period 1953-1954. Food rationing began on 8 January 1940, four months after the outbreak of the Second World War. It was introduced to ensure that everyone received a fair share of the limited amount of food that was available. Ration books, like this one, were issued to every home. They contained coupons that people would have to present to their local butcher or grocer in return for supplies. Different products were rationed at different times and in different ways. Butter, bacon and sugar were the first goods to be rationed in January 1940. They were then followed by meat and preserves in March 1940, tea, margarine and cooking fats in July 1940 and cheese in 1941. Sugar, bacon, butter, cheese and cooking fats were rationed by weight and the relevant coupons entitled the customer to buy a given weight. Later items such as rice, canned fruit, condensed milk, breakfast cereals, biscuits and cornflakes were added to the ration list. Clothing also became rationed from June 1941. Everyone was expected to adhere to rationing- even the Royal Family! Some goods continued to be rationed for many years after the war. Meat continued to be rationed until July 1954.

Chocolate Tin



The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on Tuesday, 2 June 1953 was celebrated all over England. Like other manufacturers, Cadbury celebrated the day by producing an extensive range of commemorative chocolate products, packaged as souvenirs. This tin features a portrait of the new Queen and could be reused as a pencil case.

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Bone Marrow Scoop

This utensil would have been used to scoop out marrow, the spongy tissue found inside bones. Bone marrow is not commonly eaten these days, however, it was once very popular as it is rich tasting, and a good source of protein.



Knife With Ebony Handle

This knife is stamped on the blade with the name of the manufacturers, 'Joseph Rodgers & Sons of Sheffield'. They are today one of the best-known producers of quality cutlery in Sheffield, and one of the oldest in the world. They were appointed cutlers to His Majesty King George IV in 1821 and proudly display their royal appointment on their knife blades. Sheffield is famous as an industrial city, and from the nineteenth to mid-twentieth century it was the capital of the world for steel, cutlery and tool making.



Child's Fork

This fork may have belonged to a child as it is on the small side and would fit a child's hand more sensibly. The handle on it is made of bone that has been finely polished to make it look like ivory. Eating with a knife and fork has been the fashion now in England for several centuries. However, It was not until the nineteenth century that it became fashionable to have such a number of different types of knife, spoon and fork.



Pint Measure

Containers like these were made to ensure that people received a standardised amount of liquid in return for their money. This one would have been used to measure out a pint of liquid, such as milk or ale. If you look closely at the inside rim you will see that the metal has been stamped. These marks are to show that the amount of liquid this container will hold is known to be the correct legal amount.



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Ceramic Bread Mould

This dish would have been used to bake bread. People still use similar ones today, although nowadays in this country considerably less people bake their own bread. In the twentieth century gas ovens began replacing wood and coal brick burning ovens and it became easier to produce more evenly baked bread. However, in the 1930s the first ever bread slicing machines were introduced in large bakeries and the number of people purchasing ready sliced, wrapped bread increased dramatically. Do you know of many people today who make their own bread at home?

