

ENGLISH YORK ACORN FLAGONS – A REQUEST

John Bank bought an English York Acorn Flagon in September last year at an auction in Lincoln. The flagon had been in the Norman Merritt Collection and, before that, in the Cyril Minchin collection. John then became curious as to how many of this type of flagon existed, and the types, and variations.



**EDMUND HARVEY STYLE YORK ACORN
FLAGON**

Stockton on Tees

Of the 4 Stockton on Tees style Flagons found 1 is in a private collection and 3 are in Churches, it is likely more are in Churches closer to Teesside than York. (John thinks - there might be another 4 known of in Churches, not yet seen.)

John said: “This type of flagon is not verified¹ as it was only used in Churches for Communion; anyway, it is impractical as it is difficult to empty unless turned through 180 degrees, and the acorn finial (if present) is frequently damaged”.

He now has photographs of 56 different acorn flagons, and he added: “If anyone has an acorn flagon in their collection, or knows of one, I would very much appreciate it if they could send me a photograph (preferably by email, though post is fine) with a note of the height, table to rim, and whether there is a maker’s mark on it”.

John said that this was not an attempt to find all of them; so far, he has found around 13 in private collections, with the remainder in churches or museums - if their location is known.

As a type, John said he thought that these flagons were probably made in Tadcaster, Stockton on Tees and York in the period around 1690-1790. Four or five makers’ marks have been found.

Illustrated, to the left and below, you will see three types of York flagon - there are, also, variations within the types.

“There are, in fact, eight now known of this St Denys type,” John said, “which might reasonably now be called a “Pennington” type. The Pennington family of Tadcaster most likely made many in this style over two or three generations, with Robert Pennington (died aged 32 in 1722) assumed to be the ‘RP’ whose mark appears within several examples, though one dated 1697 would predate him.

¹ Verification was compulsory where a flagon was used to dispense and sell liquid to the public, for instance, through an inn.

The town often had its own mark (and official responsible) which was stamped on the side of the rim near the handle - which indicated that the vessel held what it was supposed to - and had been checked.

As a Church did not sell the wine, but rather used it in ceremony, no such marking was needed.

John went on to say that in 1915 there were recorded, in a book of Yorkshire church plate, some 69 such flagons in 57 churches (and 169 of the straight-sided communion flagon).

He has written to all 57 churches and some are yet to reply. But he has learned that York Museum currently holds four (and apparently in the same condition as was recorded by William Redman in 1903). York Minster have eight. He says that Ripon Cathedral is said to have some, but they have not yet replied.



York - York Style Acorn Flagon

York Type – maker 'I H' assumed to be a John Harrison of York
Variations found in dome lids, thumbpieces, acorn finials, spouts handle, body rings etc. Makers Marks likely to be found inside centre base and occasionally, perhaps unusually, under centre base.
A second maker (or 2) with an unreadable script type mark is seen twice now but utterly unknown (so far).



(Tadcaster0- Pennington style - Early type of York Acorn Flagon (tall - those found are 12", 14" or 16" overall). There are eight of these known and four are in Museums, three are in churches and the whereabouts of the other is unknown. It is possible to likely that they were made in Tadcaster. A type of flagon unknown in most

So, let me end as this article started: if anyone knows of other acorn flagons, please let John know.

John Bank is a pewter collector, and a member, and acting Librarian, of the Pewter Society. He runs a strictly non-commercial website called 'Pewterbank'

This website hopes to provide simple and introductory information to those who might be curious about the old pewter that they come across and to this extent the purpose of this web site is - *To nurture nascent interest in British Antique Pewter, and to leave the reader a little hungry for more, but with good clues where to find it...*

Pewterbank: <http://www.pewterbank.com/>

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