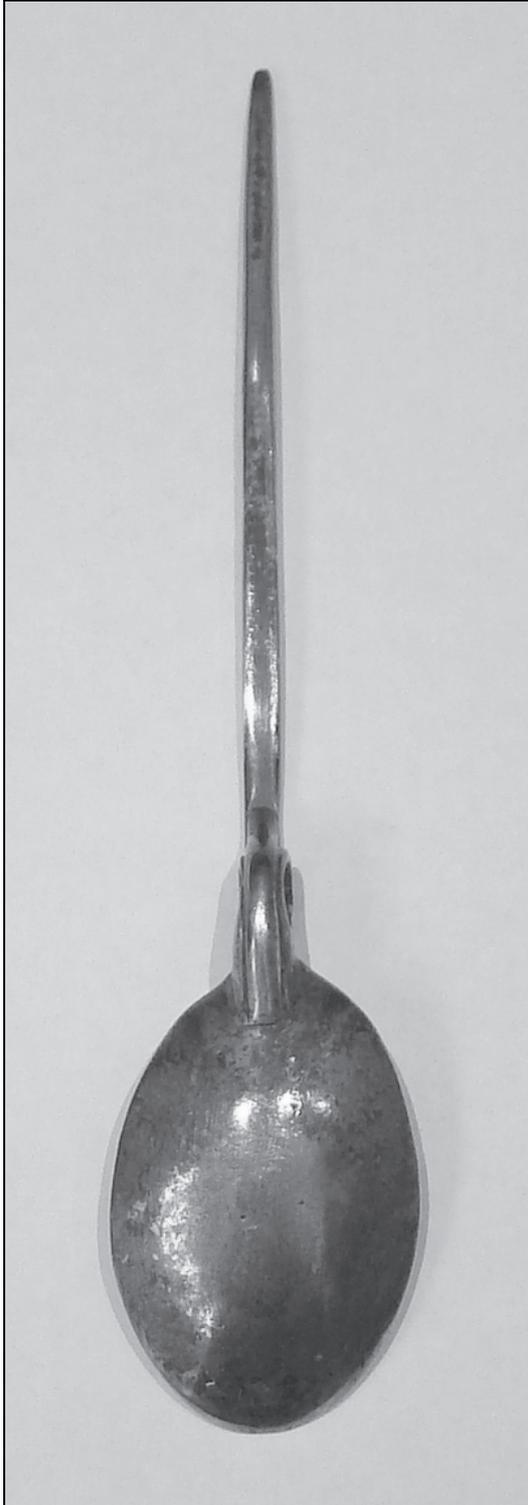


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A Pair of Scottish Spoons From the Breadalbane Collection

By Laurence Joyce

As is well known, the Marquess of Breadalbane (1851 – 1922) made one of the first collections of silver spoons. Examples of marks from this collection were used extensively to illustrate the Scottish sections of the first and second editions of *Jackson's*. Like many early collectors, especially in the Victorian period, Breadalbane stamped items in his collection with his name, in flowing script.



Fig. 1

The two spoons in Figure 1, were bought in 2009 at a stall on the Portobello Road in London, and along with the Breadalbane collection stamp, they bear the maker's mark of William Aytoun, the deacon's mark for Hugh Gordon, and a date letter for Edinburgh 1744. They have been converted, fairly crudely, from Hanoverian pattern to resemble a form of trefid, the handles having been flattened and notched, and the drops filed to form rudimentary rattails. The bowls, which bear obvious signs of planishing – perhaps deliberately so – have been reshaped to resemble a spoon of the previous century.



Fig. 2

Figure 2 shows a Hanoverian spoon by the same maker, but with the earlier deacon's mark of Archibald Ure, 1730 – 39. Such a spoon would have provided the starting point for the conversion described above, and it is easy to see how the faceted drop suggested or perhaps determined the shape of the rudimentary rattail.

Breadalbane's collection was auctioned at Christie's (then Christie, Manson & Woods) on 12th May 1926 and these two spoons appear in the catalogue as the first two items of Lot 43:-

“Two spoons, with notched-top handles – by William Aytoun, Edinburgh, 1744; a spoon, pricked with the date 1672 – Provincial, maker's mark DA, in dotted circle; and one pricked with the date 1682 – maker's mark, an anchor”

They failed to find a buyer on this occasion, though most of the other lots from the collection sold at or above expected prices. Although it is impossible to say with certainty, it is tempting to imagine that these two spoons were converted with a view to a sale to Breadalbane.