



The Diversity of British Farming – Grass and milk: Cheshire

(63/18/5)

Location: Our Country Lives

This is the fifth in a series of large wall hangings on 'The Diversity of British Farming' that were displayed at the 1951 Festival of Britain in London. The festival commemorated the centenary of the 1851 Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace and sought to revitalise the economy, strengthen Britain's political and economic position in the world and lift the national mood after years of post-war austerity.

This panel, entitled 'Grass and milk: Cheshire', has a background of small cheese symbols, and depicts a farmstead with unusual hay barns on the left, and a large timber framed house set among fields with rivers and ponds on the right.

The other wall hangings in the series are Upland stock-farming : Scotland and Wales, Grass and meat : Rutlandshire, The family farm : Northern Ireland, The grain belt : Yorkshire, Root crops: The Fens and Fruit and hops: Kent.



Women tending a garden at the Cannington Farm Institute, Somerset

Edible England

This trail introduces 13 objects from our collections which illustrate the theme 'Edible England'.

As you explore the galleries this booklet provides more details about the selected objects. It can be used alongside or independently of the 'Edible England' trail sheet for children.

You can discover more about our collections by exploring our online exhibitions and 'discover' pages at <https://merl.reading.ac.uk/explore/>



Members attending to bees at the Shooting Butts Senior School, Penkridge Bank, Rugley, Staffordshire

Bee Hive Skep (52/60)

Location: Welcome Case

A skep is a type of beehive that has been in use for over 2000 years.

This skep was probably made in the early 20th century and was used at Whiteknights House, Reading from 1914. It is a basket made of coiled straw and is bound with bramble strip, inside which bees make honeycomb.



Cheese Basket (68/14)

Location: Forces for Change

This stilton cheese basket was made by Charles Williams of the Royal London Society for the Blind. It is a round basket, made of brown willow, with straight sides and a slightly convex base. The domed lid is attached to the basket by a twisted handle which also serves as a hinge.



These baskets were in common use until 1956 to transport cheese from farms to markets and cheese fairs, although the cheese was not normally sold in the baskets.



Double Gloucester cheesemaking with Mrs Albert Brown of Actrees Farm, Gloucestershire

Pepper Pot (51/889/1-2)

Location: Making Rural England



Pepper is an important spice to flavour food. The pot is made of blue glass and has a pewter top and base.

Pewter took the place of wood for plates and dishes in the 15th century. It was in general use from the beginning of the 17th century until the 19th century when crockery largely replaced it.

Lemon Squeezer (51/627)

Location: Collecting Rural England

This 'nutcracker' style lemon squeezer is made of birch. It has a round hollow in each half to hold the lemon and a small channel to drain the juice away. Nothing else is known about them.



Cheese Vat (60/32)

Location: Forces for Change

This cheese vat, patented in 1892 as the 'Gornall Patent Cheesemaker', was used for making Lancashire cheese. There is an embossed iron plate above the handle which reads 'J. Gornall No 13671 Patent Cheese Maker'.



It has a cylindrical vat with a perforated lid, which is suspended from iron rods on a four-wheeled trolley. The trolley enables it to be moved easily. After letting the curd settle in the vat, the cylinder would be turned to drain out the excess whey.

Penn's Fruit Picker (60/143)

Location: A Year on the Farm

This is a fruit picker and was made by William Penn Ltd. of High Road, Finchley. It was used in Oxfordshire during World War II for picking apples and pears from tall trees without damaging the fruit.



Lunch Frail (66/346)

Location: A Year on the Farm

This is a flail or 'frail' basket, made of plaited rush sewn round and round to form a flexible flat basket with a cover and has two carrying handles. It was used in High Roding, Essex, in the 1920s.



These baskets were used by farm workers to carry their meals and also their tools. They were usually carried over the shoulder with a short curved stick through the handles.

Milk Churn (59/274)

Location: Town and Country

This milk churn is made of tinned steel, with the upper half covered with brass. It has an outlet pipe at the base, two hinged handles halfway up the sides, and an inner lid and outer domed lid. It also has a plate engraved with 'F. Jarvis Hyrons Farm Dairy'.



It was used for transporting and storing milk for sale, and was probably carried on a milk float. It was displayed at the 1958 British Food Fair in London.

Cloche (65/188)

Location: Town and Country

This pyramid shaped glass cloche was used to protect tender shrubs and smaller plants including vegetables. It is made from a steel frame and glass; with a pyramid lid that lifts off.

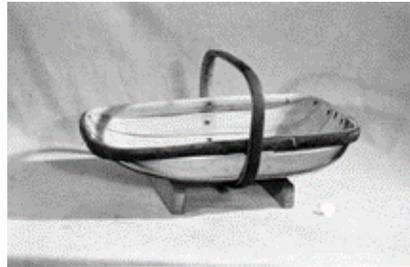


Trug (60/440)

Location: Town and Country

Trugs, widely used in gardening, are an unusual type of basket in that they are 'assembled' rather than woven, the pieces being nailed together. The making of trugs was revived in the first quarter of the nineteenth century by Thomas Smith.

This basket was made post-1945 at Thomas Smith & Sons in Herstmonceux. It has an ash or chestnut rim with boards of willow nailed with copper nails.



Gingerbread Mould (51/108)

Location: Making Rural England



This wooden gingerbread mould has a large figure of a lady carved on one side, and nine small figures (three military, three rural and three musicians) carved on the other.

Although the quality of carving makes this of French origin, it is remarkably similar to English ones. Such moulds were common all over North West Europe and go back at least 300 years.

Sugar Cutters (51/543)

Location: Making Rural England

These sugar cutters probably date from the late-18th century. They are made of iron and have an engraved pattern near the hinge. Nothing is known about their origin.



Until the introduction of cube sugar in the second half of the 19th century, sugar was only available in large lumps or cones and the cutters were used for cutting off smaller pieces.



A typical Essex farmhouse kitchen, showing 16th century beams