

Love-Spoons

Giving someone a love-spoon is a tradition which dates back to the 16th century in Wales.

In the 1600s, people in Wales didn't get engaged and married like we do today. Instead of proposing with a ring, people would give someone they liked a love-spoon that they had carved themselves.

A love-spoon is carved from one piece of wood using a special tool called the 'twca cam' (the curved dagger). It is a special tool with a long handle and a hooked blade used to carve the bowl and neck of the spoon from a block of wood.

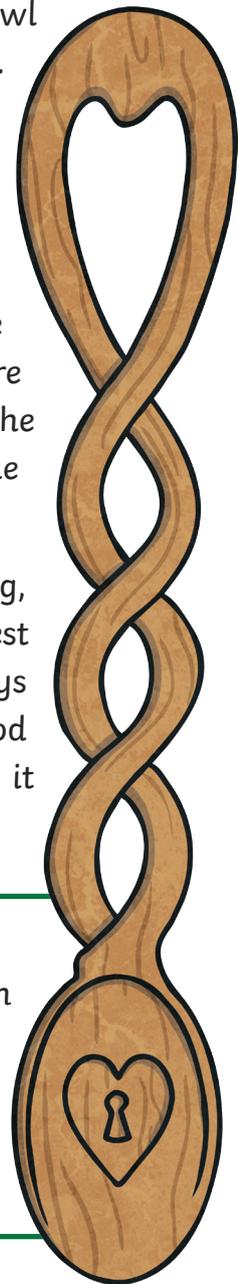
The first love-spoons looked very simple, a lot like a normal 'cawl spoon', sometimes with a heart carved into it for decoration. Over time, people began to carve more and more symbols into their love-spoons. Some symbols came to have special meanings, for example, a heart means love, a bell means marriage, and a cage with balls inside is a symbol for children.

When a love-spoon had been carved and finished, it would be given to the young girl's father to look at. He would make sure that the spoon and carver were good enough. If the person the spoon was given to and their father liked the spoon, the couple were allowed to be together.

Usually, love-spoons measure between three and ten inches long, but, in 2007, a man called Ed Harrison carved the world's largest love-spoon, outside of Cardiff Castle. It took him ten full days to carve the record-breaking spoon and he used red cedar wood from Caerphilly to make it. When the love-spoon was finished, it measured a massive 44 feet!

Did You Know...?

The oldest Welsh love-spoon, which is at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, dates back to 1667. People still give love-spoons as presents today but now they can be given for lots of different reasons: to celebrate a wedding, the birth of a baby or to wish someone good luck.



Love-Spoons

Giving a Welsh love-spoon to someone is a beautiful tradition which dates back to the 16th century in Wales.

During these times, people didn't have many personal possessions. The things in their homes belonged to the family or to the community, not to a certain person. The only things that people considered to be their own were the clothes that they wore and the utensils they used to eat with. They looked after these items very well. The Welsh 'cawl spoon' was considered to be so important that it led to the tradition of the love-spoon, a tradition which is still going strong today.

In 16th and 17th century Wales, people didn't get engaged and married like we do today. Instead of proposing with a ring, people would give someone they liked a love-spoon that they had carved themselves.

A love-spoon is carved from a single piece of wood using a special tool that Welsh craftsmen created, called the 'twca cam' (the curved dagger). Many different types of wood are used to make love-spoons but the most common type to be used is sycamore.

During long evenings, or while men were away working, they would spend hours carving their love-spoons. The very first love-spoons were simple and looked like a normal 'cawl spoon', sometimes with a heart carved into the neck of the spoon for decoration. They created a language of symbols, each one with its own meaning. For example, a heart symbolises love, a bell indicates marriage, and a cage with balls inside represents children. These were carved into the spoons as a message to their sweetheart.

When a love-spoon had been carved and finished, it would be given to the father of the person receiving the love-spoon to inspect. He would make sure that the spoon and the carver were good enough. If the person the spoon was given to and their father liked the spoon, the couple were allowed to be together.

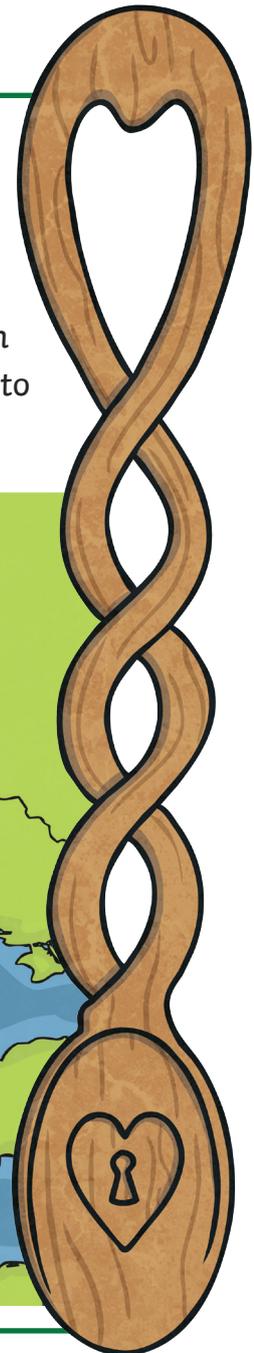
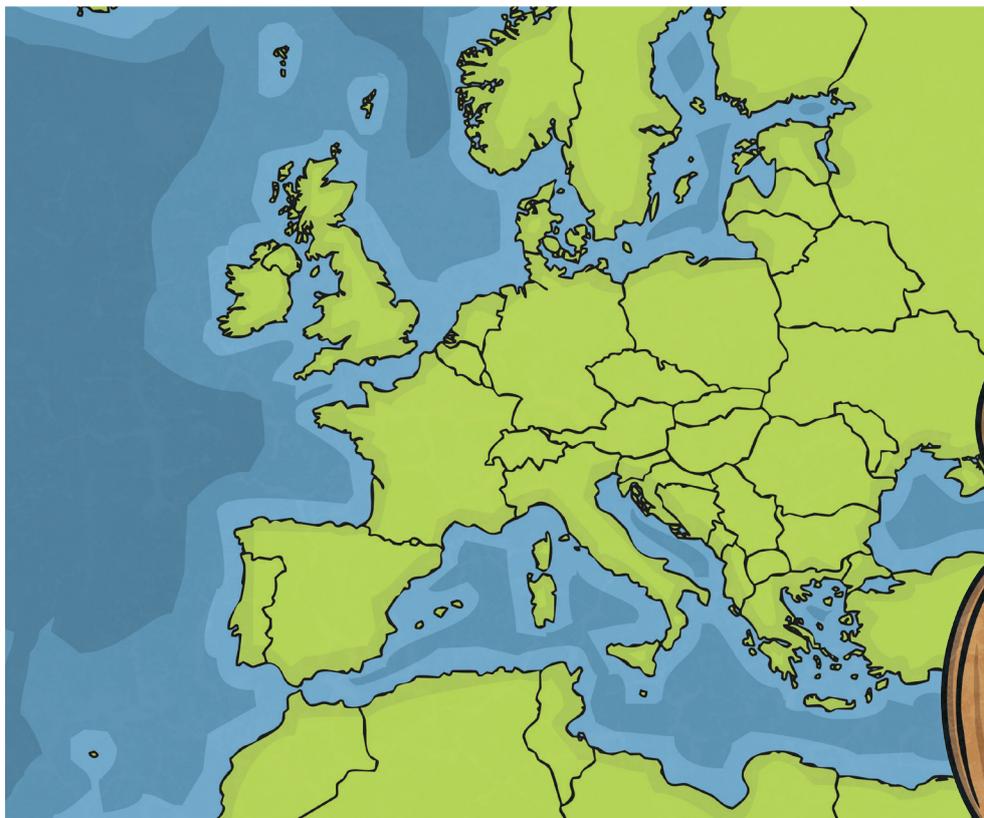


During the 1800s, when the Victorians invented greetings cards, people began to give Welsh love-spoons to family and friends to mark different occasions, such as a new baby or home.

Generally, love-spoons measure between three and ten inches long. However, in 2007, a man called Ed Harrison carved the world's largest love-spoon by hand outside of Cardiff Castle. It took ten days to carve the record-breaking spoon and Ed used red cedar wood grown locally in Caerphilly to make it. When the love-spoon was finished, it measured a staggering 44 feet!

Did You Know...?

The oldest recorded love-spoon, which is on display at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, dates back to 1667. However, love-spoons dating back as far as 1664 have been found in places like Germany, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Despite this, Welsh love-spoons are still considered to be the most famous and most beautiful in the world.



Love-Spoons

The act of giving a Welsh love-spoon to someone is a beautiful tradition which dates back to the 16th century in Wales.

During these times, people didn't have numerous personal possessions. The things in their homes belonged to the family or to the community rather than to one particular person. The only items people considered to be their own were the clothes that they wore and the utensils they used to eat with. They looked after these items very carefully. The Welsh 'cawl spoon' was considered to be so important that it helped to create the tradition of giving love-spoons in Wales; a tradition which still exists today.



In 16th and 17th century Wales, people didn't get engaged and married like we might do today. Instead of proposing with a ring, people would give someone they liked a love-spoon that they had carved themselves.

A love-spoon is carved from a single piece of wood using a special tool that Welsh craftsmen created, called the 'twca cam' (the curved dagger). It is a unique tool, with a long handle and a hooked blade; it is used to carve the bowl and neck of the spoon from a block of wood. Love-spoons were often carved from the wood of a sycamore tree but young men could use whichever type of wood was readily available to them.

The earliest love-spoons were fairly simple and looked very much like a normal 'cawl spoon', sometimes with a heart carved into the neck of the spoon. At the time, most people were illiterate and couldn't write love letters to their sweethearts. Instead, they developed a system of symbols, each one with its own meaning, and they used these to decorate their love-spoons.

When a love-spoon had been carved and finished, it would be given to the father of the person receiving the love-spoon to inspect. He would make sure that the spoon and the carver were good enough. If the person the spoon was given to and their father liked the spoon, the couple were allowed to be together.

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As time went on, the designs on the love-spoons became more and more intricate. Some love-spoons had two bowls, or had two spoons linked together with a wooden chain. The handles gradually became longer and wider and the curves and rounded edges of the bowls became more elaborate. It wasn't practical to use these spoons for eating anymore, so instead, they were kept as treasured gifts and were usually the only personal item. A love-spoon would be hung on the wall of the couples' home, in the same way as a wedding photograph may be hung in a house today.

During the 1800s, when the Victorians invented greetings cards, people began to give Welsh love-spoons to family and friends to mark different occasions such as a new baby or home.

Generally, love-spoons measure between three and ten inches long. However, in 2007, a man called Ed Harrison carved the world's largest love-spoon, by hand outside of Cardiff Castle. He braved the elements for ten full days to carve the record breaking spoon, and used red cedar wood grown locally in Caerphilly to complete the task. When it was finished the love-spoon measured a staggering 44 feet!

Did You Know...?

The oldest recorded love-spoon, which is on display at the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, dates back to 1667! However, historians believe the tradition is much older than this, with examples of love-spoons dating back as far as 1664 being found in places like Germany, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Despite this, Welsh love-spoons are still considered to be the most famous and most beautiful in the world.

