

Is this biggest spoon?

COULD this be the largest hand forged solid silver spoon ever made?

The monster basting spoon has been hand-forged by craftsmen at Sheffield silversmiths C W Fletcher for a mystery buyer.... no-one knows if it is destined for some Arab sheik's palace to be used for basting roasting sheep or whether it is for a collector and will be kept as a show-piece.

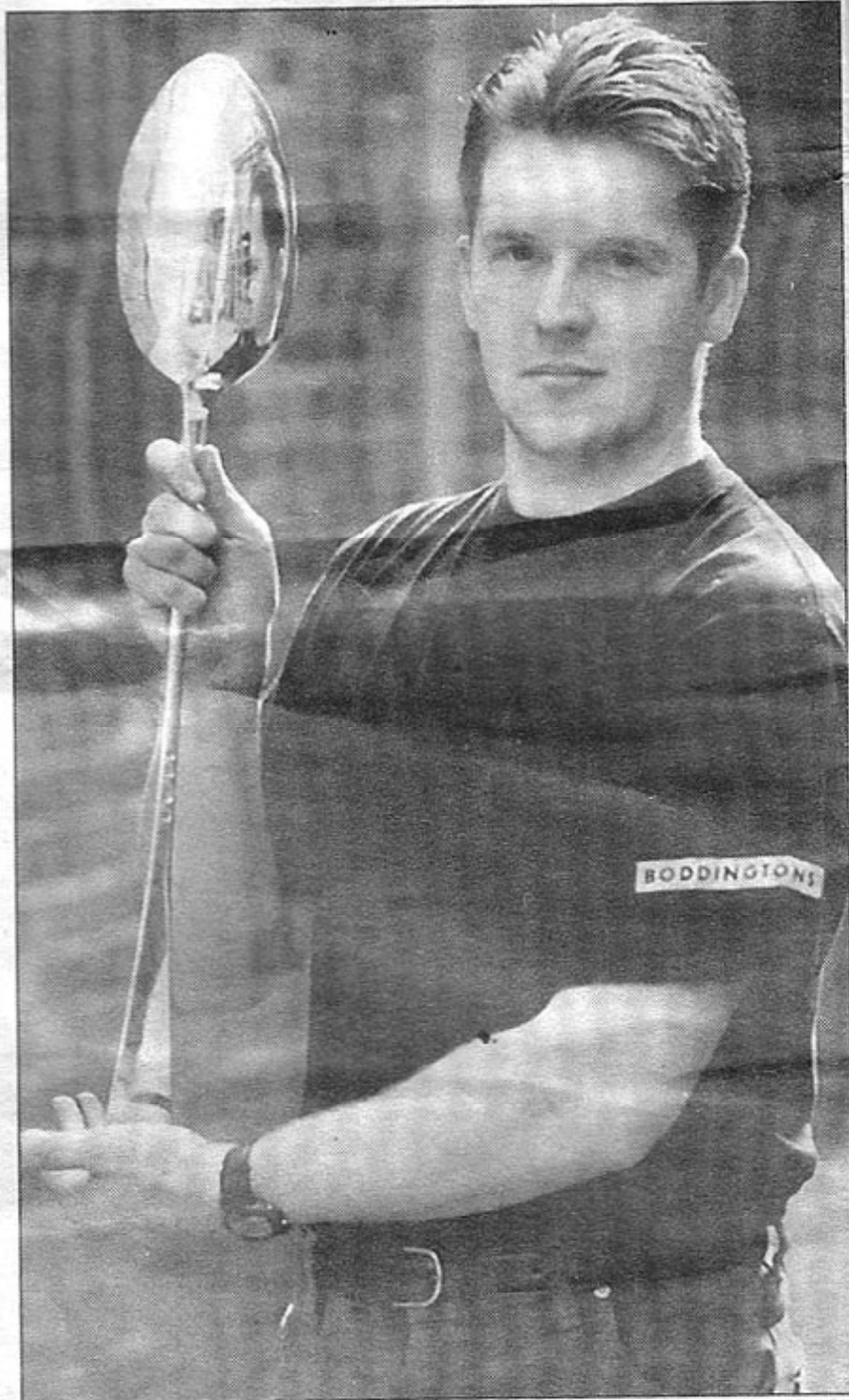
It took 25-year-old silversmith David Baggaley (pictured with the spoon right) a total of 21 hours to forge the 29 inches long spoon from a bar of Britannia Silver (98.5% pure) weighing 49 troy ounces. A normal dessert spoon would take about 15 minutes to forge.

C W Fletcher, which has its workshops in Arundel Street close to Sheffield city centre, is the only firm left in the British cutlery trade to hand forge its products - that is, they are beaten into shape by hand from bars of silver. Over 90% of its usual production is bought by wealthy Americans.

First David, who served a five year apprenticeship straight from school, forged the basic flat spoon shape from a bar of silver about 10 inches long. The decorative tail on the spoon bowl was made in a traditional metal stamping process, the spoon bowl was formed from the flat metal, its edges levelled and then the handle was forged and its top rounded.

"On a normal size spoon we have no difficulties, but for a spoon this size handling it to carry out all the various forging processes proved extremely awkward," said David.

He passed the spoon to David Caley for filing and shaping, Richard Clark buffed



it and Gary Walker added the final polish.

The hallmarked spoon, worth well over £1,000, is now on its way to the London silver retailer who placed the order on behalf of the buyer.

Michael Rosewarne, manager of C W Fletcher said, "The company has been hand forging cutlery for over 100 years and there is no other firm left now in the trade which could have tackled this order. A spoon this size has never been forged before to our knowledge. It holds exactly a pint, but what it will be used for or where it is going is a well guarded secret."

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