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Alison Adburgham

For nearly 120 years Punch writers and artists have recorded the life of the British people—their fashions, customs and pastimes, their enthusiasm and affectations, the vogue words, social types and social attitudes of each generation.

In this book, the history of British domesticity can be followed from the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign to the Second World War. Every innovation has had its effect on manners and modes: hansom cabs, croquet, auction bridge, telephone, roadhouses, women's suffrage, the Moustache Movement, Bloomerism, Aestheticism and Bohemianism.

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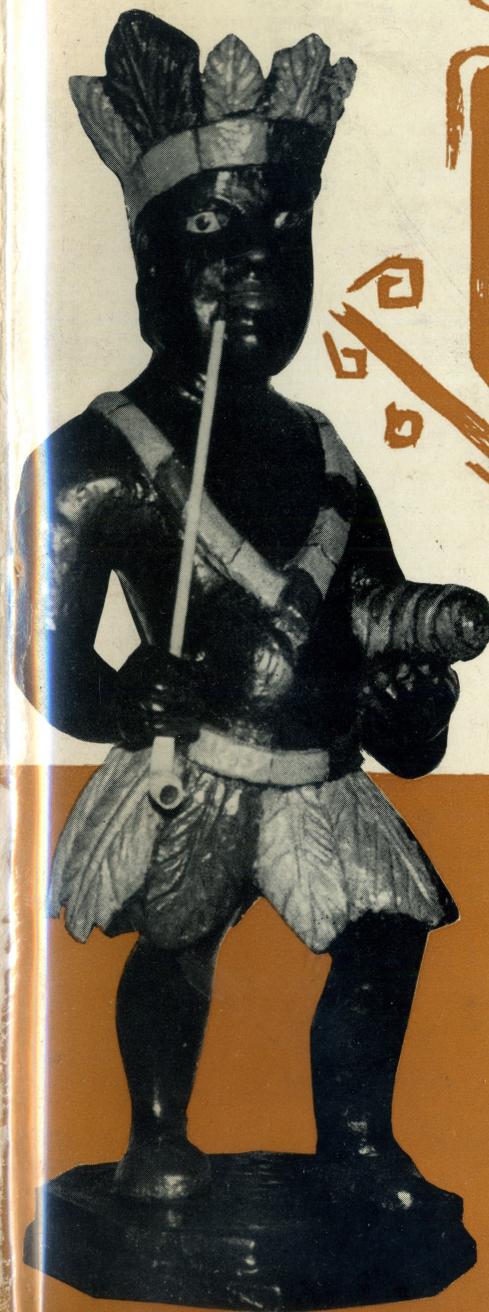
HUTCHINSON OF LONDON

Wooden Bygones of Smoking and Snuff Taking

Edward
H. Pinto



Hutchinson



Wooden Bygones of Smoking and Snuff Taking

EDWARD H.
PINTO

THE Pinto Collection at Oxhey Woods House attracts visitors from all over the world. Edward Pinto has acquired a unique collection of 'wooden bygones' and his account of these elegant objects in **WOODEN BYGONES OF SMOKING AND SNUFF TAKING** will both fascinate the collector and excite the curious. In his book he does not merely regard them as objects, now out of use, but shows them to be clues to our social history. **WOODEN BYGONES** is not only a collector's book, but is also a source book for those interested in our forefathers' social activities.

In the first part of his book Mr. Pinto describes the pipes, tobacco jars, tobacco stoppers, smoker's companions of a more gracious age. The second part of his book is concerned with snuff taking. He introduces the reader to the remarkable series of snuff boxes of which he has a superb collection. Both smoking and snuff taking in these earlier, more spacious days were social pleasures and not the nervous distractions of today. Mr. Pinto leaves us eternally grateful for his introduction, in word and picture, to a world which has gone beyond recall.

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TO FIT MAXIMUM BOOK

02'6

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EDWARD HENRY PINTO was born in London in 1901. For 40 years he has been in the building, decorating and furnishing trades. He has written several books on woodwork and has contributed over 400 articles to various well-known journals and periodicals. Mr. Pinto has both broadcast and appeared on television on several occasions and has lectured on antiques and modern furniture and the different aspects of wood design and construction.

As well as his interest in modern design, Mr. Pinto has made a specialised study of the history of period furniture and decoration and has formed his famous collection of **Wooden Bygones**, which is seen by thousands of visitors from all over the world every year.

HUTCHINSON & CO. (*Publishers*) LTD
178-202 Great Portland Street, London, W.1

London Melbourne Sydney
Auckland Bombay Toronto
Johannesburg New York

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First published 1961

To

MY MOTHER

who, in discovering how to grow old
gracefully, remains young at
eighty-three years of age, and will, I hope,
enjoy this book as much as
she does her daily smoke



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*This book has been set in Scotch Roman type face. It has
been printed in Great Britain by The Anchor Press,
Ltd., in Tiptree, Essex, on Antique Wove paper and
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Watford, Herts*

pipe, of a type which was fully documented by Hone. These extremely heavy and ill-balanced pipes were used by working men in Clonmel and Dublin between 1820 and 1830; their owners must have had good teeth! Originally they cost 6*d.* each; in 1956 this well-worn specimen was bought for £2. What a pity it is that our possessions do not attain antique value in our own lifetimes!

The standing-figure pipes, in this same photograph, are mostly Swiss and Tyrolean novelties of the 1870's. They generally represent celebrities and caricatures; note Mr. Gladstone. The bowls are in the heads and the stems go down into the bodies; one is shown in front, taken apart. The bust of the negress is much more sophisticated and carefully finished than the usual production; it may be French or from French Morocco.

*Little tube of mighty pow'r,
Charmer of an idle hour,
Object of my warm desire,
Lip of wax, and eye of fire;
And thy snowy taper waist
With my finger gently brac'd;
And thy pretty swelling crest
With my little stopper prest.*

A Pipe of Tobacco. Isaac Hawkins Browne (1706–1760)

CHAPTER TWO

TOBACCO STOPPERS

AS EVERY pipe smoker knows, to obtain the maximum enjoyment from his smoke he must have something hard to press down the tobacco in his pipe at intervals and correct 'the draw'. Admittedly some smokers manage quite well by using a finger or thumb as a stopper, but it hardly improves the appearance of the digit so used.

It is curious that tobacco stoppers have gone out of fashion, for, averaging a mere 2½ in. in length, they take up little room in the pocket, are pleasant to look at and handle, and their lack causes all sorts of odd objects to be used as substitutes: pens and pencils seem to be the most popular, but even umbrella ferrules are seen serving the purpose at times, with considerable danger to the eyes of anyone in the vicinity. Most tobacco stoppers which have survived are in the form of small costume figures or busts, cast in metal. Some of these are pleasing and ingenious, but the majority obtainable today, particularly those made of brass, are modern reproductions, some deliberately faked to look old. Usually they represent great ones of days gone by, particularly popular being Cromwell, Charles I and Nelson; as they cost pence to produce but often sell for shillings or even a pound or two, they must be profitable productions.

The most interesting to collect, but difficult and expensive to obtain, are those of individuality, carved from wood, bone or ivory. There are numerous references to tobacco stoppers in literature of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and they show that silver, pewter, bronze, brass, ivory, bone, mother-of-pearl and wooden tobacco stoppers were formerly made in large quantities and that the last four provided an outlet for the imagination and artistry of anyone handy with knife or chisel; probably many of the most original and skilfully carved examples were the work of amateurs. Will Wimble, one of Sir Roger de Coverley's circle in the 18th century *Spectator*, is related by Addison to have made great quantities of tobacco stoppers during the winter, 'and that he made a present of one to every gentleman in the country who has good principles and smokes'. In Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Wemmick's collection of curios, in his house at Walworth, contained several tobacco stoppers carved by the 'Aged Parent'.

Sir Roger de Coverley on another occasion, when viewing the Coronation Chairs in Westminster Abbey, remarked that 'if Will Wimble were with us and saw those two chairs, it would go hard but he would get a tobacco stopper out of one or t'other of them'.

Taylor, the 'Water Poet', in 1649, referring to the famous Glastonbury Thorn, said: 'I did take a dead sprigge from it, wherewith I made two or three tobacco stoppers, which I brought to London.' Many tobacco stoppers were, in fact, carved from famous wood, such as the Thorn, the Boscobel Oak or Shakespeare's mulberry tree. Others were caricatures of the famous, such as the Duke of Wellington, a rabid anti-smoker, who aroused much resentment among soldiers by forbidding smoking in barracks. Carved tobacco stoppers, mostly sold by street vendors, seem to have died out in the first half of the 19th century. Mayhew in *London Labour and the London Poor*, published in 1851, records an interview with a street seller who said:

'At that time—well, really, then, I can't say how long it's since—I sold little bone "tobacco-stoppers"—they're seldom asked for now, stoppers is quite out of fashion—

and one of them was a figure of "Old Nosey", the Duke [of Wellington] you know—it was intended as a joke you see, sir; a tobacco stopper.'

As a broad generality, stoppers with small bases are early, to fit into the small-bowled early pipes. But whilst all the 17th century stoppers probably had small bases, some of the 18th century specimens, which show figures in costume of the period, or have dates carved on them, also have small bases.

All kinds of hardwoods were used, sometimes protected by silver or pewter mounts, but more often unmounted and left to protect themselves with a coat of char. For the finest carvings—and some really are works of art—dense, close-grained boxwood was almost invariably preferred.

Arms and legs seem to have been the most popular themes, but in the 18th century the coursing greyhound and the squirrel holding a nut both enjoyed quite a vogue and were the subjects of some very spirited carving.

Three versions of the greyhound theme, all in boxwood, one silver mounted and with silver tail, are shown in Plate 11. The outsize specimen, also silver mounted, on a plateau above leaf branches, carved and pierced in the style of mediaeval ecclesiastical work, is quite outstanding in its quality. On the right in the same row is a grotesquely carved and silver-mounted vine-stem stopper, engraved J W 1773. Below are a delightful carved boxwood figure of a boy dated 1720; a fine, silver-mounted, boxwood *memento mori* stopper, carved with a skull, hour-glass, cross-bones, mattock, coffin and dated 1715; a superb Flemish early 19th century stopper, of intricately carved and pierced boxwood. It depicts David with the head of Goliath around an open 'lantern', supported on a tapering, leaf-carved pedestal, encircled by a free-revolving ring, above a lozenge-carved base; and, finally, a silver-mounted boxwood figure of Shakespeare, above a fluted column. This last was the speciality of an old man named Salsbee; the standing figure of Shakespeare, with right elbow leaning on the volumes of his comedies, tragedies and histories, placed on a pedestal supported on the busts of Henry V, Richard III and Elizabeth I,

is based on the statues by Peter Scheemakers (1691–1770) in Westminster Abbey and at Wilton.

In spite of their being copies, Salsbee's Shakespeare stoppers, of which I have recorded four or five dating between 1765 and 1773, all have some quaint variations and individuality imparted by their carver. Salsbee always carved his name, age and date of carving. His memory was evidently confused and sometimes there are slight contradictions in his age compared with the date. Some Salsbee stoppers are silver mounted, others are not and they vary in quality. The one illustrated is a good early specimen, dated 1765, and Salsbee gives his age as sixty-three. The mount is engraved Thomas Stevens, Bermondsey Street.

Most of these stoppers, as is fairly general with 18th and early 19th century specimens, have end diameters varying between $\frac{9}{16}$ in. and $\frac{5}{8}$ in.

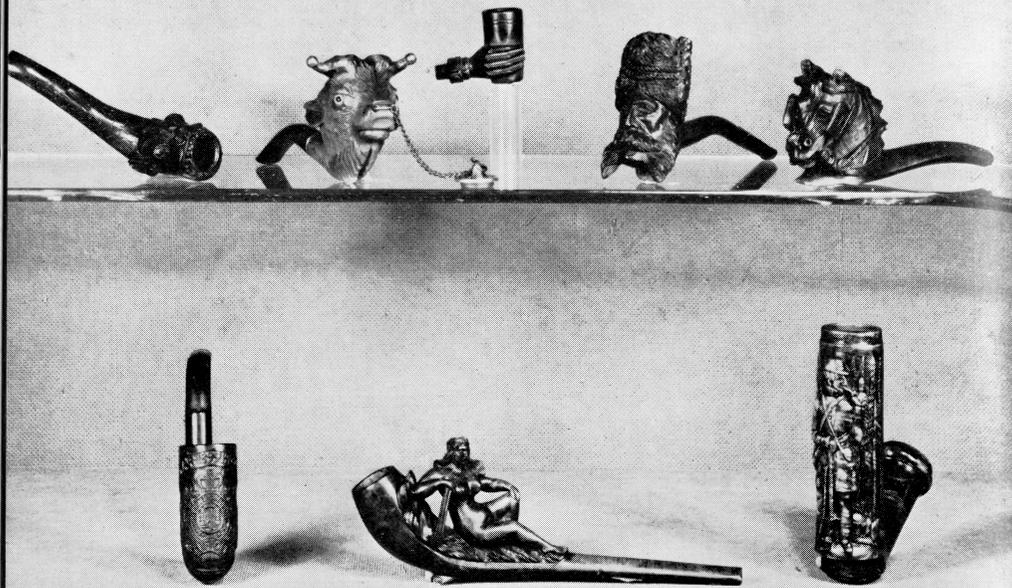
The stoppers in the top row of Plate 12 are 17th century specimens and, as such, naturally very worn. The burry-root stopper, on the left, is mounted in pewter and the diameter of the stopper end is only $\frac{7}{16}$ in., the same as on the carved figure of a kneeling man in 17th century costume, also mounted in pewter, the dog, and the finely modelled lion rampant, with paws resting on a crown. The flower girl in Stuart costume, one from left, carved from boxwood, probably commenced life as a statuette, but the charring of the base shows that it has been used as a stopper.

In silver and gold, finger-ring stoppers exist. Some are made all in one piece; others have the stopper part made to unscrew from the ring, which in its turn may include a signet. One which I have seen of silver was a Jacobite relic of the '45. The dog stopper is the only example of the ring type in wood which I know, and is a particularly interesting survival. The ball-and-lantern stopper at the end of the row, with chained signet, all cut from the solid, is probably Welsh, dating from about 1700.

In the bottom row, the first two stoppers, rather crudely carved as heads of Shakespeare, are said to have been made from the famous mulberry tree at New Place, Stratford-on-

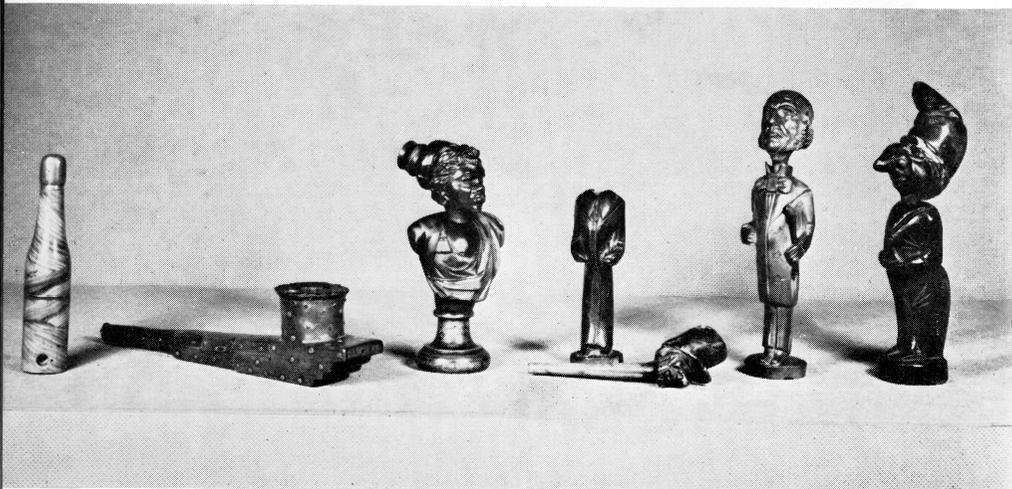
Avon, and as such would date from the second half of the 18th century. The attractive Flemish stopper, carved with low-relief dancers, the miniature soldier, the figure with the masonic symbols and the silver-mounted bulldog head are all of the same period and of carved boxwood.

Prickers, for preventing tobacco caking in the pipe and for helping the 'draw', also rank among smokers' requisites; several of these are included in Plate 13. In the front of the picture the clenched-fist pricker is made of thornwood. Top row, on the left, is a simply turned stopper which contains a brass pricker. The negro in the same row, made of horn, also contains a brass pricker attached to the bone screw cap which forms the stopper. In the lower row the silver-mounted boxwood hand grasps a detachable miniature pipe of steel, which is also a pricker. These and the other stoppers in this picture are probably all English, 18th century, though the two bellows and the ivory 'crowned mace' stopper may be 17th century. The last is a dainty piece of work, and is shown with its original *lignum vitae* protective case behind it.



Carved briar pipes, made between 1850 and 1900

PLATE 9



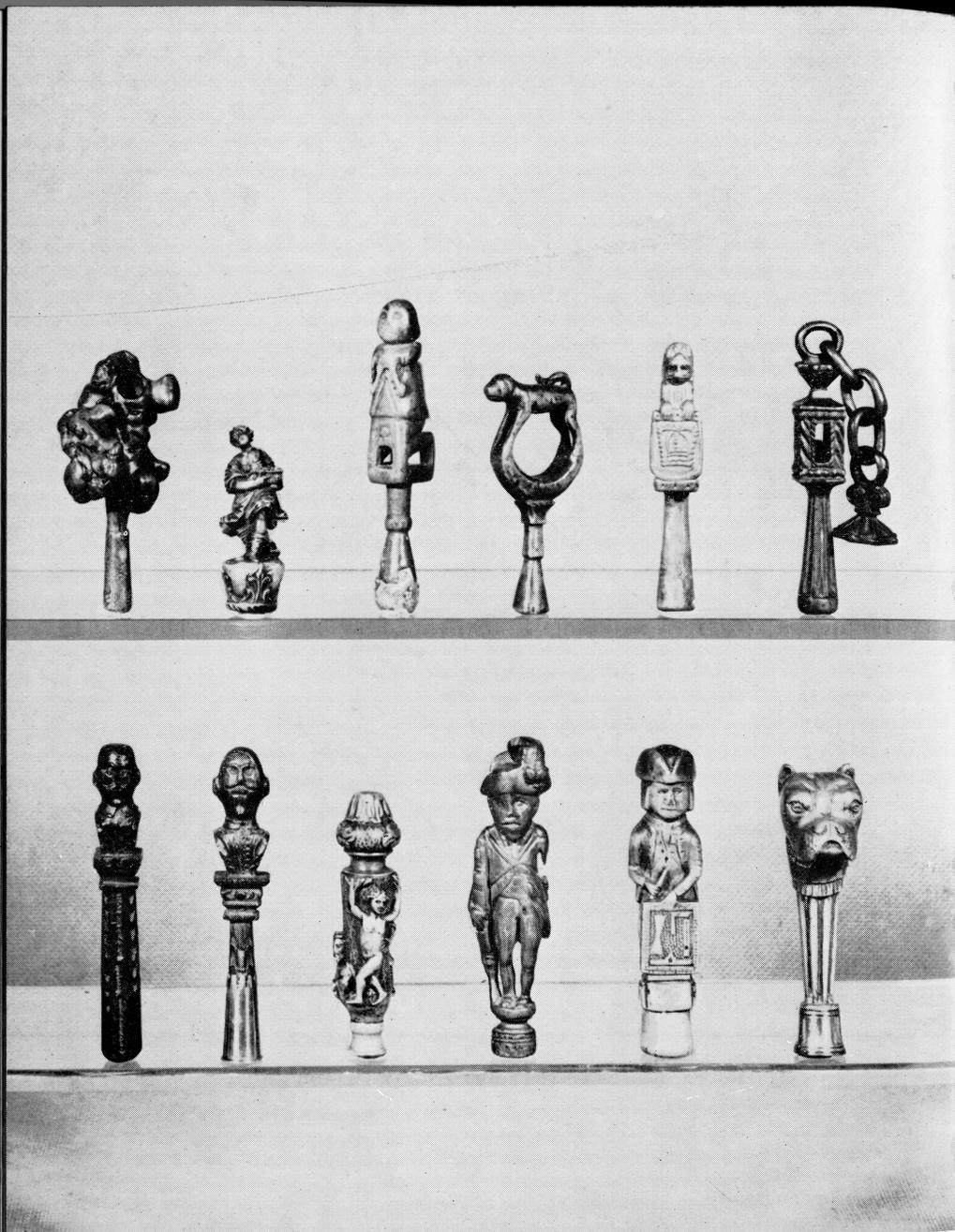
German novelty 'bottle pipe', *circa* 1895. Irish labourer's pipe, *circa* 1825, and a selection of 'figure' pipes, popular in the 1870's

PLATE 10



Carved boxwood tobacco stoppers of the 18th century are highly ornamental, as well as useful

PLATE 11



The tobacco stoppers in the top row have the very small bases which were used for the small 17th century pipe bowls. The dog 'finger ring' type stopper is very rare in wood. Many of these stoppers, by reason of their subjects, are quite documentaries



Arms and legs were particularly popular motifs. Prickers, for preventing tobacco 'caking' in the pipe, were sometimes incorporated in tobacco stoppers; some are shown here