

Ice Cream Cone Server

Until the late nineteenth century, only the wealthy could enjoy ice cream. Commercial refrigerators were invented but none were made for the domestic market. Ice was salvaged from lakes and rivers and kept in ice houses. There used to be an ice house on the left hand side of the drive leading to Chiddingstone Castle, although its remains are no longer visible. Once the ice trade was established between Norway and Britain, ice cream soon became accessible to ordinary people. In London, ice vendors sold ice cream in little glasses called 'penny licks'. The practice was all rather unsavoury as empty glasses only received a quick swish in a bucket between servings. Fear of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases soon gave rise to a ban of penny licks and by the 1930s, ice cream was more widely served on wafer cones.



Orlwite china biscuit cone server, c.1930s advertising 'Crawford's Biscuits are Good Biscuits'. Gifted to the museum by a local resident whose paternal grandmother sold ice cream from a corner shop in Henley-on-Thames.

Cones were a British phenomenon. A recipe for edible cones, using ground almonds and orange-flower water, first appeared in Mrs Agnes Marshall's cookery book of 1894, *Fancy Ices*. In corner shops and ice cream parlours, cones were stacked on counter tops in china biscuit cone servers, such as this one.

The narrower end of the holder held cones and the wider end held wafer cups. The letters BCM stood for British Commercial Monomarks and were used on goods along with an identifying name to uniquely identify the manufacturer and provide a method of correspondence. It was introduced in 1925 and was similar to the post codes system we currently use. Only a small number of pottery companies used it. **Crawford's, a Scottish biscuit manufacturer whose advertisement appears on the server, was renowned for shortbread.** Apart from cone servers, Orlwite also produced a china gadget for making wafers. Ice cream was either hand or machine-churned and was all the rage in the 1930s. A well-known jazz song of the time, 'I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream' attests to its popularity. The British also enjoyed a frozen dessert called gelato which was brought to England by the Europeans. Soft serve ice cream became available too during this time. It was made by a special machine which whipped and froze the mixture before ejecting it onto a cone. In 1930, Cadbury's produced their mini chocolate 99 flake especially for soft serve, a treat which is still available today.