

# *Finch & C<sup>o</sup>*



## **A RARE EARLY ENGLISH EATING KNIFE**

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OAK, IVORY AND STEEL – A CUTLERS MARK STILL VISIBLE

EARLY 16TH CENTURY

SIZE: 19 CM LONG – 7 ½ INS LONG

PROVENANCE: FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE DICK MOY, GREENWICH, LONDON

REPUTED TO HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE MUD OF THE RIVER THAMES, LONDON

## **LITERATURE**

THE EATING UTENSIL MOST COMMONLY USED ACROSS EUROPE WAS THE FINGERS AND THIS CUSTOM PERSISTED AT BOTH PEASANT TABLES AND AT THE BOARD OF PERSONS OF RANK AND NOBILITY UNTIL THE LATE 17TH CENTURY. HOWEVER, KNIVES WERE INDISPENSABLE FOR SLICING MEAT AND SO WERE CONSIDERED A HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIAL.

MOST EARLY KNIVES COME FROM THE GROUND, OR THE SLUDGE OF RIVERS AS DOES THIS EXAMPLE, AND THEIR PROVENANCE IS REVEALED BY THE CORROSION OF THE BLADE. REPRESENTATIONS OF EARLY KNIVES CAN BE FOUND IN PAINTINGS AND WOODCUTS OF THE PERIOD. THE ACORN KNOP CARVED IN OAK TO THE FINIAL ON THIS EXAMPLE SUGGESTS AN ENGLISH ORIGIN AND THE IVORY INSERT TO THE HANDLE, THAT IT BELONGED TO A PERSON OF WEALTH.