

SHARDS

A Newsletter of the

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China Students' Club of Boston

January 2003

Daniel Nadler on Polychrome Export Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty Report By Jeff Brown

The CSC Fall season was inaugurated by a talk by Daniel Nadler, collector and author, on Chinese export porcelain of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1906). Mr. Nadler's special interest is 19th c. Chinese export, and as he collected it over the years he was frustrated by the dearth of information about this period. His research into his unanswered questions led to the writing of his book *China to Order* (Vilo International, 2001).

Starting with the collapse of the Ming Dynasty, Mr. Nadler illustrated how porcelain developments went hand in hand with political and social changes. The first great Qing emperor Kangxi (1622-1722) was a boon to porcelain making. Anxious to legitimize his claim to the throne and enrich his empire through the arts, he patronized three important and soon to be connected industries: glass-making, enameling on copper, and porcelain making. Before Kangxi, the Mings produced fine porcelains but their color palette consisted of the underglaze blue and overglaze red, yellow, green, aubergine and black. Kangxi's kilns at Jingdezhen continued in this palette. But, thanks to technological advances introduced by the Jesuits at the enameling studios, the end of Kangxi's reign saw the development of the famille rose palette of overglaze enamels which was to remain popular throughout the dynasty.

In addition to the introduction of famille rose colors, the early 18th c. saw a shift in taste. Europeans (or the "Barbarians" as the Chinese referred to them) were no longer content with Chinese porcelain with Chinese decoration, but wanted pieces especially made to Western tastes. We see requests for great armorial services and decidedly European subject matter copied from contemporary print

sources. The early 18th c. also sees a change in production methods. Always produced 500 miles north of its place of export, Canton, the porcelain was traditionally decorated at the Jingdezhen site. With the introduction of new overglaze enamels and special requests from the "barbarians" in Canton, it was deemed more practical to decorate and gild pieces in Canton, closer to those placing the orders. How much enameling was done at Jingdezhen and how much at Canton remains a matter of speculation.

By the third quarter of the 18th c. the China trade was beginning to feel the pinch of competition from the growing European ceramics industry. The British East India Company ceased in the 1780s to import porcelain for direct sale, but they continued to deal in it through special orders. There are three groups who step into the market at this time and, in Mr. Nadler's estimation, save the export China trade: the Americans, the Indians, and the Persians.

The lecture concluded with examples of the major patterns of Mr. Nadler's beloved 19th c. export. The early part of the century saw the development of the Mandarin pattern, richly bordered and

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**"Mandarin"
pattern
platter
(1825-50)
17x14in.
*China to
Order*
Fig. 121**



Polychrome Export Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty

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decorated with elegant and courtly scenes, continuing the use of the famille rose colors with a distinctive brilliant yellow. The Canton and Fitzhugh patterns were produced in great number for the new American republic. Production was interrupted during the 1850s by the Taiping Rebellion. Trade was disrupted and no wares were reaching Canton. Countless artisans were left without pieces to decorate. Mr. Nadler speculates that provincial kilns provided celadon wares for the decorators of Canton

and there is an infusion of these wares on the market about mid-century. After the rebellion was put down and the insurgents brutally punished, porcelain production resumed with the Rose Medallion, Cabbage Leaf, and Thousand Butterfly patterns of the late 19th c. that we all know so well.

Finally, Mr. Nadler showed various wares made for the Indian and Persian markets (see illustration on back page). These are of great interest as they often bear Arabic inscriptions and dates, helping to pinpoint specific patterns to certain points in time.



Large "Fitzhugh" pattern serving platter
20"x18" (1790-1840)
China to Order plate 101



"Tobacco Leaf" pattern dinner plate
8" diameter (1820-50)
China to Order plate 104

The 2002 Vivian Hawes Memorial Lecture

Report By Jeff Brown, Amanda Lange, and Caroline Parsons Roy

In October the CSC, in collaboration with Strawberry Banke, sponsored the second annual Vivian Hawes Memorial Lecture in Portsmouth, NH. First, **Jonathan Horne**, well known dealer and scholar from London, spoke on *English Brown Stoneware of the 17th and 18th Centuries*.

Stoneware, which is fired at high temperatures and is impervious to liquids, was made in Germany as early as the 13th and 14th centuries. A thin salt glaze produces a translucent, slightly pitted surface. The Germans dominated the stoneware market, and

so indispensable were these wares that they have been found in shipwrecks as far afield as Japan and Australia. German jugs and mugs were called "bellarmine," bearing a little bearded face after the portly cardinal who had persecuted Protestants in the Low Countries.

Given its popularity, there were English attempts to manufacture stoneware from early on in the 17th century. There was in the 1640s a kiln site, discovered in 1972, down river from London at

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The 2002 Vivian Hawes Memorial Lecture

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Woolrich. Stylistically copying the German wares, the products were inferior and the venture was short-lived. In 1671 William Killebrew set up a pottery in Southampton and in 1674 moved to London. Unfortunately, one John Dwight had applied for a patent thirteen days earlier than Killebrew, and poor Killebrew was forced out of business. Dwight was a gentleman scientist and a technical driving force in the stoneware industry. He experimented with making porcelain bottles, he attempted a red stoneware in imitation of Yixing wares, and he tried producing blue/grey wares in the Westerwald tradition. In 1675, he entered the commercial market producing Rhenish-style utilitarian wares embellished with fine decorative medallions or personalized initials. In 1676, the Glass Sellers Company agreed to purchase the output of brown stoneware bottles from Dwight's factory, Dwight's initials and monogram appearing on the product. Production techniques were refined, with increased use of saggars, making a finer pot. Dwight built his factory away from the prying eyes of the Southwark and Lambeth potters as industrial espionage was not uncommon.

As for stoneware discoveries at Strawberry Banke, Jonathan observed that the archaeological sites and their yields are remarkable, and evidence points to Portsmouth as part of an international market. The population was stable with a network of extended kinships. Households expanded and contracted but objects often had a long life—some pieces were mended more than once or had multiple uses. Even broken they were made use of as drainage fill. On top of the archaeological evidence we have probate inventories (which didn't go into much detail) and numerous retail newspaper ads for ceramics—the earliest being 1727.

Examples of the wide variety of ceramics found at Portsmouth sites include:

- Slipware from Wrotham. Little is known about these, as it has traditionally been the more stylish and “glamorous” wares that attracted research.
- The omnipresent blue-grey Westerwald stonewares from Germany and their later English

counterparts—often marked WR, AR or GR.

- Brown stonewares and various London wares that were dipped in white slip.

- Staffordshire tavern mugs which had a purer all white body, not dipped in slip.

- Salt-glazed tankards with incised decoration and fine brown wash.

- Nottingham wares that have a fine metallic sheen which distinguishes them from Staffordshire. By 1770 the Nottingham factory relocated to Derbyshire. Chesterfield became the center of stoneware production in the 19th century, the wares becoming darker and more heavily potted.

- Blue and white stonewares with scratch blue decoration which seems most popular between 1740 and 1770. Not all wares were made in Staffordshire, some were made in Bovey Tracy, Devon, and some in Swansea, Wales.

- Drabwares, evidence of which is found in great abundance at the Town Road site of Humphrey Palmer.

- Salt-glazed stonewares appear in the early 1740s mostly in the form of teawares, mugs and jugs. Tablewares became more popular as the molding process was perfected. There were seed and barleycorn patterns as well as basketweave and gadrooned borders based on a silver form. Floral borders were much rarer. Enamel decoration of these wares seems to have appeared in the 1750s—originally done by independent decorators, this function was later brought in-house by the manufacturers.

The Vivian Hawes Memorial Lecture continued with a talk by **Diana Edwards**, ceramics historian, author, and CSC member, who spoke to the group on *English White Salt-Glazed Stoneware for the American Market*. Excerpts from her talk included:

Since the early 17th century, veins of pipe or ball clay in Dorset and Devon have been worked by a legion of potters trying to compete with imported wares from China, Germany, and the Low Countries. By 1700, there is a profusion of potteries at work. Mortlake on the south side of Fulham continued un-

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The 2002 Vivian Hawes Memorial Lecture

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til 1710, bolstered by the inventive mind of gentleman scientist John Dwight mentioned by Johnathan Horne. Upon closing, the Talbot and Garner pottery in Southwark showed an estate inventory listing 17,000 pieces of stoneware and 79,000 pieces of delftware which illustrates the quantities being produced in the 18th century. Vauxhall, another London pottery at Fulham, produced storage vessels that held curative waters for the gout at 12p a gallon! It also produced mugs and sprigged tankards, probably made as presentation pieces. Despite their impracticality, some survived.

At Bristol, the earliest stoneware production is 1732 and continues throughout the 18th century. Bristol was the only area to use the GR marks.

Another center of production was Nottingham

which produced vast numbers of mugs during the mid 18th century with a distinctive cross-hatched band—this sort of product was the bread and butter of the industry. Nottingham pieces are often attributed to other factories: Crich, Derby, or Chesterfield.

By 1800 the stoneware industry was all but dead due to changes in fashion and lack of efficient canal transportation. The 1820s saw an influx of cheap gin marketed in figural stoneware bottles that remained in fashion throughout the mid-19th century.

These wares were of course sold in great numbers to an eager public here in the colonies and ample evidence suggests our heavy consumption of brown, blue and white, and scratch-blue stonewares. Throughout the colonies the stonewares co-existed in America's homes with delftwares and salt-glazed stonewares.

Jim Messineo on American Art Pottery Report By Jeff Brown

The CSC in November heard from Jim Messineo, co-owner of JMW Gallery in Boston, who spoke to the group on a very popular topic in the ceramics world today: American Art Pottery.

Jim said that in order to understand American Art Pottery one must first study the Arts and Crafts movement which began in mid 19th century England with the artist and socialist William Morris and philosopher John Ruskin. They felt that an increasingly mechanized world produced shabby products of bad design that polluted the environment and caused the degradation of workers. People looked to arts and crafts as a way of reconnecting the worker to his work and creating a product with integrity. It was thought one shouldn't have anything in one's life one didn't find useful or thought to be beautiful. This philosophy was embraced by Boston's conservative elite who helped found The Society for Arts and Crafts.

The Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition was a turning point for American ceramics because it exposed people to ceramics from all over the world. Hugh Robertson of Boston, whose brother Alexander had founded the Chelsea Keramics Art Works, saw

oriental ceramics that entirely changed the direction of his pottery. Mary Louise McLaughlin returned home from the Exhibition to found the Pottery Club of Cincinnati. She developed a technique called Cincinnati Limoges, imitating the style of work from the Haviland factory in France. Damp wares were decorated with colored slip, fired and then glazed with a clear slip and fired again. Many people were taught this technique at the pottery. In the meantime, another Cincinnati socialite, Maria Longworth Nichols, having felt snubbed by the Pottery Club, founded her own pottery in 1880—the famous Rookwood Pottery. These wares are characterized by the application of various clear and tinted glazes over fine slip decoration on a delicate air-brushed background. Rookwood even employed a master Japanese decorator, Kataro Shirayamadani, who worked there for over fifty years. In 1904 vellum glaze was introduced—a clear matte glaze over slip decoration that proved enormously popular. In 1901, colored matte glazes were used with no overglazes, butted against each other. They often ran together and the process was shortly discontinued; these

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Jim Messineo on American Art Pottery

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pieces are therefore rare and expensive. Another process produced carved colored matte pieces, where the piece was carved when wet, bisque-fired, and then color matte overglazed. Shortly after the turn of the century Rookwood introduced production wares to cut down on the cost of expensive hand made pieces (rather defeats the original purpose of the Arts and Crafts philosophy, doesn't it?) There's no hand work, no artists' marks—simply molded pieces with applied glazes. Rookwood also produced architectural tiles which were used all over the country. The factory continued until 1950.

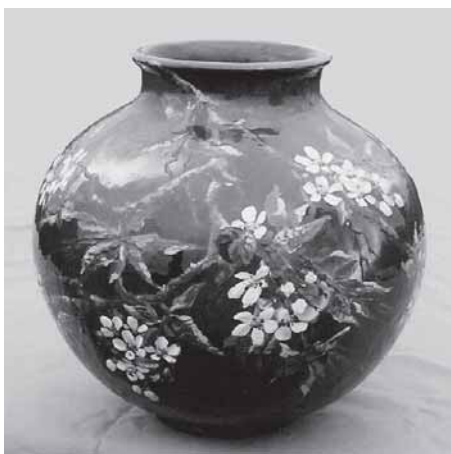
Back in in Massachusetts, Hugh Robertson in Chelsea became fascinated with glazes and was the first American potter who considered the glaze as the only decoration essential to a piece. The oriental influence was paramount. By the mid 1880s, although Robertson was well regarded as a major ceramic artist, his pieces couldn't support the pottery. In 1889 the company was reopened with plans to produce marketable tablewares, whence the Dedham Pottery that we are all familiar with. The earlier wares are marked "CPUS". The pottery continued until 1945.

In nearby Boston, William Grueby was becoming one of the most influential and imitated artists of the Arts and Crafts movement. In the early 1890s

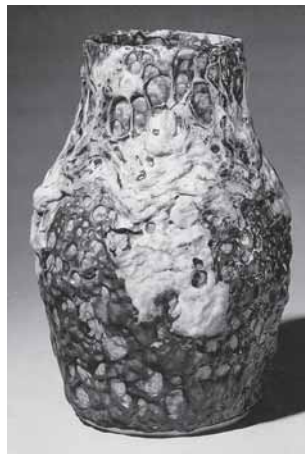
he founded the Grueby Faience Company in South Boston, creating wares with a matte green glaze that was to become all the rage. Hand-turned pieces were tooled by students from the North Bennet Street School and Mass Normal (later Mass Art) following strict patterns. Architectural tiles were produced in vast numbers in a variety of patterns. The tiles could form fireplace surrounds, wall friezes, framed pictures, or just be used as trivets (The trivets had glazed edges, the other tiles did not). Grueby tiles were deemed so attractive that they were even incorporated into pieces of Stickley furniture. The matte glazes used won gold metals at international expositions and all the glossy glazes that had preceded them virtually died out. There were countless imitations, but Grueby single-handedly managed to turn the market taste around from handmade glossy pieces to matte glazed wares that emphasized simple organic forms. In 1913, the pottery was sold to another company in New Jersey that continued to produce tiles and to mark the famous product "Grueby."

Other local potteries working in the style of Grueby at the turn of the century were William Walley of Sterling, MA, the Hampshire Pottery in Keene, NH, the Merrimac Pottery of Newburyport, MA, and probably the best-known—the Marblehead Pottery that pioneered the use of pottery and other crafts as

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Rookwood Pottery vase, slip decorated glaze with cherry blossoms, 14" h, c. 1885



Hugh C. Robertson at the Dedham Pottery, volcanic vase, 7 1/8" h, 1896-1908



Grueby Pottery, pine tree tile, 6" x 6", c. 1905



Jim Messineo on American Art Pottery

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a therapy for nervous and mental disorders. Marblehead was only one of many founded out of the social reform movement, other well known ones being The Paul Revere Pottery and The Saturday Evening Girls. Designs were produced by children's book illustrator Edith Brown.

Women played an important role in art pottery as illustrated by the Newcomb College Pottery in New Orleans. It was founded to provide employment for women at a time when there weren't that many options open to them. Decoration was most often inspired by the southern landscape, flora, and fauna. It was carved in relief and then painted. Starting out with glossy glazes, they switched over to matte-glazed wares and continued in production until 1948.

No overview of art pottery would be complete without mentioning the "potter-savant" George Ohr of Biloxi, Mississippi. Working alone and considering himself the "world's greatest potter," he manipulated and tortured the clay into fantastical forms. Halfway through his career, he dropped the glaze and made only pieces in the bisque. By 1910 he stopped working and stored everything in a garage attic where it wasn't discovered until 1972!

West of the Mississippi, a former Rookwood

artist Artus Van Briggles moved to Colorado Springs and founded the Van Briggles Pottery which is still in production today, but their prized pieces are from the short 1900-1904 period when Van Briggles himself was director. In California there was Frederick Rhead, a prolific potter and designer who worked at several potteries. He worked in a squeeze-bag technique using a pastry bag-like tool to squeeze a line of slip onto an object.

Roseville, founded in 1892 in Zanesville, Ohio, was another prolific pottery, introducing a new line with various sizes and shapes every year or so throughout its existence. Other potteries of note are Wheatley of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Teco Pottery of Chicago. Teco pieces are always molded, often architect designed, reflecting their origins as architectural façade tiles. Teco holds the record for the largest amount paid for a piece of American Art Pottery—a quarter of a million dollars.

Two recommendations for those wanting to study American Art Pottery: the Everson Museum in Syracuse, NY, and the New Orleans Museum of Art both have outstanding collections to view.

Editor's note: All the illustrations for this report were provided by Mr. Messineo, except for the Roseville vase which is from a private collection.



Newcomb College, vase, floral design under highgloss glaze, approx. 6" h, c. 1905



George Ohr, teapot, pinched form with blistered glaze, 7" h, 1900-1906



Roseville "Ming" vase, modeled by Frank Ferrell, 12" h., ca. 1950



Upcoming Ceramics Events

CSC Meetings:

1/30: Betsy Douglas on 'In the Pink: Collecting Lusterware.' 1PM, Secomb Hall. 356 Boylston Street, Boston

2/27: Maurice Hillis on 'Blue and White Derby Porcelain.' 1PM, Secomb Hall

3/23: Bits and Pieces. 2PM, Dedham Historical Society, 612 High Street, Dedham

4/24: Linda Foss Nichols on 'Images in Clay: Continuity and Change in Indian Pottery from the American Southwest.' 1PM, Secomb Hall

5/22: Amanda Lange on 'Basins, Bottles, and Brushes: Ceramics for the Bedchamber,' plus Annual Meeting and Tea. 1PM, Secomb Hall.

Pottery and Porcelain Club of Providence Meetings:

1/22: Elaine Loeffler on 'The Impact of Classical Art on Pottery and Porcelain.' 11AM, Laurelmead, 355 Blackstone Boulevard, Providence

2/26: Maurice Hillis on 'Blue and White Derby Porcelain.' 2PM, Providence Art Club, 11 Thomas Street, Providence

3/27: Linda Shulsky on 'Queen Mary's Collection of Porcelain and Delft at Kensington Palace.' 2PM, The Hope Club, 8 Benevolet Street, Providence

4/23: Robert Mowry on 'Chinese Tomb Sculptures; Han & Tang Dynasties.' 2PM, Museum of Art, RISD.

Auctions:

Christie's, New York, 1/21: British ceramics and Chinese Export

Christie's, New York, 1/22: Benjamin Edwards collection of Chinese Export, part II

Sotheby's, London, 2/19: Japanese and Chinese works of art

Christie's, London, 2/24: European ceramics and glass

Christie's, New York, 3/26: Chinese works of art

Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 4/1: European ceramics, delftware and glass

Sotheby's, London, 4/2: English and continental ceramics

Christie's, London, 4/17: British ceramics

Sotheby's, Hong Kong, 4/27: Fine Chinese ceramics and works of art

Christie's, Hong Kong, 4/28: Fine Chinese ceramics and works of art

Christie's, Amsterdam, 5/6: European ceramics, Dutch delftware and glass

Christie's, London, 5/14: English furniture, ceramics and silver.

Exhibitions:

European ceramics donated by Harold S. Keller, at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY.

Lectures and Seminars:

Honoring Traditions and New Visions: Contemporary Japanese Ceramics, given by Dr James Watt. Sponsored by Friends of Asian, Oceanic, and African Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 3/19. Call 617-369-3222 for information.

Tours:

China Trade and the Yangzi River Gorges, April 9-29. Partial itinerary: Shanghai, Guilin, Yixing, Yangzi River Gorges, Canton, Beijing, and The Great Wall. Of special interest to ceramics enthusiasts will be several visits to kiln sites. The plan has not been finalized yet, and input from prospective travelers will be considered. The Tour's expert leader is Newman Lee, who will be visiting Boston in early February. For more information please call him at 415-921-8989, email NewmanLee@aol.com, or (for minimal questions) call Nancy A. Smith at 617-734-5264 early in the morning, 6:30 on. Nancy has dubbed this "China in China for 'China Students'!"

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Punch Bowl, c 1865; diameter : 16"; height : 7.5"

"Rose Medallion" presentation bowl with medallions of Nasr el-Din Shah of Persia and his two sons. The inscription on the opposite side reads : "Nasr el-Din Shah Qajar, Sultan, Son of the Sultan."

China to Order plate 209