

SHARDS

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Betsy Douglas on 'In the Pink: Collecting Lustreware' Report By Jeff Brown

It is always a pleasure to hear fellow members talk about their collecting interests, and so the CSC was treated in January to a lecture from Betsy Douglas on her passion: English Lustreware.

Betsy chose not to address the early Islamic origins of lustreware or its later application on the wares of the English Arts and Crafts movement, but to concentrate on what she knows best, the period that she collects—roughly 1790-1840. Betsy said she first got interested in lustreware because she was attracted to its sheer prettiness and charm. And so, about twelve years ago, the first piece was purchased, the addiction set in and the hunt was on!

Lustreware can be described as any ceramic object that has a special compound applied over the initial glaze to achieve a bright metallic decoration.

There are three kinds of lustre—silver, copper and pink. Platinum is dissolved into the compound to create silver lustre, gold is used for copper and pink. Other ingredients include nitric acid, balsam, turpentine and linseed oil. The platinum mixture can be applied solidly over a white ceramic body to achieve a look resembling silver, or a resist technique can be used to achieve silver and white patterns. The gold mixture over a redware body produces the look of copper and over a white body produces pink.

Needless to say, as in most ceramic categories, the variations of form and decoration seem endless. There are numerous floral and berry patterns as well as cottage designs, many done by children before there were any child labor laws. There was a mottled

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**Betsy's first lustreware tea service
English, c1800**



**Enoch Wood lustreware tea service,
c1836**



In the Pink: Collecting Lustreware

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effect that could be achieved by blowing oil through a gauze-tipped tube onto the lustre. And there were transfer and bat printed decoration. Transfer printing involved printing an image onto a tissue and applying the tissue to the surface of the object. Bat printing involved printing the image in oil onto a gelatinous pad that was then applied to the surface of the piece. Powdered enamel was then blown over the piece and adhered to the oil. A transfer print usually shows the crisp lines of the engraving from which it was made. The bat print, applied over the glaze, produces a soft “fuzzy” image. Some of the images were then overpainted—not always with the greatest care, resulting in an oftentimes crude product. But these were all wares intended for the “middling sorts” and not the sophisticated buyer.

In the early 19th century there were about 250 local potteries working on lustrewares in the Stoke-

on-Trent area. This includes well-known potteries as well as small cottage concerns. In addition, there were potteries in Newcastle and Sunderland in the northeast, Leeds, Swinton, Bristol, Liverpool, and Swansea. Some of these factories were well placed not only to produce but to export—Liverpool, for example, produced very little for domestic consumption, and Newcastle and Sunderland shipped large quantities to Scandinavia. Wares were produced in great varieties of both form and pattern. Mugs, jugs, goblets, tumblers, wall plaques, bough pots, watch stands, and teawares were all made. And it was with the teawares that Betsy concluded her talk, showing both slides and a large sampling of objects from her collection.

For further information on the subject, Betsy suggested two very good books: *Collecting Lustreware* by Geoffrey Gauden and Michael Gibson, and *An Anthology of British Teapots* by Phillip Miller.

Avalon, Newfoundland By Louise Richardson

Avalon was a settlement founded by George Calvert in Newfoundland. Although Newfoundland was the unofficial home of French and English fishermen in the 16th century, it was not until 1610 that the first land grant was issued in England, and Calvert was one of the first investors in this new land. In 1621 he established the colony of Avalon on the eastern shore, and in 1628 he and his family took up residence there. Except for a brief period following a French raid in 1696, the settlement has been continuously occupied, and today is known as Ferryland.

With the loss of its traditional fishing and sealing occupations, Newfoundland is now actively promoting tourism. When archaeological excavations at Ferryland in the 1980s located structures from the original Avalon, the government provided funding for an ongoing project that began in 1991. The site now has an attractive visitor center and archaeology lab, guided tours of the area with archaeology in progress, a planter’s garden, and a gift shop.

Artifacts from Avalon reflect the wealth of the

Calverts and their successors, the Kirkes. Gold rings, silver pins and thimbles, glass beads, and monogrammed tobacco pipes accompany a variety of ceramics. Many vessels were well preserved and have been reconstructed. A tin-glazed Portuguese plate, a white tin-glazed puzzle jug from Holland, North Devon butter pots, German stoneware jugs, Spanish lustre dishes, Portuguese terra sigillata ware, and English slipwares are on display. The laboratory staff is ready to discuss artifacts with visitors.

Strawbery Banke Museum is exploring the possibility of sponsoring a trip to Newfoundland archaeological sites in 2004. Contact Louise Richardson (603-436-5125, louiseprichardson@yahoo.com}, Martha Pinello (603-422-7521), or Carolyn Parsons Roy (603-422-7526, croy@strawberybanke.org) if you are interested. Ferryland has a website, www.heritage.nf.ca/avalon, and an annual publication, *Avalon Chronicles*, which can be ordered by calling 709-432-3200 or emailing info.colony@thezone.net.



Maurice Hillis on Blue and White Derby Porcelain Report By Jeff Brown

The CSC convened for its February meeting to welcome back from the UK much respected ceramic researcher and scholar Maurice Hillis. As you may recall, the group hosted Maurice and his wife Lynn two years ago to hear about his recent findings from the William Reid factory excavations in Liverpool. This time around we were treated to a talk on Derby blue and white porcelain.

Porcelain production began in England in the second quarter of the 18th century, but there are only two factories that can claim a continuous history of production to this day: Worcester and Derby. Dated pieces prove that Derby, though, is older by several years than Worcester. Derby started out making mostly non-utilitarian wares such as figurines, elaborate centerpieces, sweetmeat dishes, chestnut baskets and potpourris. It wasn't until 1758 that they started producing blue and white wares. But why blue and white? Maurice gave us a brief historical overview to show why blue and white decoration has such an enduring place in the history of ceramics.

Although it is often assumed that blue and white decoration was developed in China, it was actually the Middle East where this combination of colors first emerged in the 9th century. The Chinese during the T'ang period exported their white wares in hard paste to the Middle East. Local potters developed tin glazed wares in imitation of the Chinese

pieces and added cobalt decoration which proved very popular. The cobalt was mined in the Middle East shipped to China where it was used to decorate items to be exported back to the Middle East. For their domestic use the Chinese preferred simple white wares with molded or incised decoration. It wasn't until the 14th century that they actually developed a taste for blue and white. And only in the 16th and 17th centuries did blue and white start making its way to Europe, first through the Portuguese in 1557, then the Dutch in 1604 and the English by about 1680. The early arrivals were treated as great rarities and were often mounted in silver gilt. Dutch and English potters went to great lengths to imitate Chinese porcelains in tin-glazed earthenwares. The Dutch tended to be more meticulous in their copying of Chinese patterns and designs, whereas the English tended to use the authentic pieces as a starting point and created more of a true "chinoiserie" style of decoration. Either way, the craze for blue and white, both Chinese and its imitations, was well in place by the beginning of the 18th century.

The first English porcelain factory that made blue and white was a short-lived concern at Limehouse (1745-1748) and much of their decoration was Chinese inspired. Also founded in 1745 was the Chelsea porcelain factory, but they concen

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Early Derby blue and white porcelain sauceboat
c1758, painted with a Chinoiserie landscape



Rare Derby porcelain dessert dish formed as a leaf
over basketwork, painted in underglaze blue, c1760



Blue and White Derby Porcelain

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trated on elaborate decorative forms. The Chelsea porcelain body wasn't suitable for everyday use as it contained a lot of glass and was brittle. There were early factories producing blue and white, though: Bow, which added bone ash to stabilize its body, Worcester which added soapstone to strengthen its body, as well as Liverpool and Lowestoft, all produced blue and white in quantity.

By about 1750 creamwares were introduced and began to supplant cruder earthenwares in popularity. Blue decoration on creamware's yellowish glaze though wasn't as attractive as on a white ground and only small amounts with blue decoration were produced. Pearlware's introduction in the 1780s, on the other hand, did give blue and white porcelain competition well into the 19th century.

Derby's early production did not concentrate on popular tea and coffee wares due to the physical weakness of the Derby body to thermal and mechanical shock. Decorative pieces were produced with a body that like Chelsea contained a lot of glass, and had a white ground on which the blue showed brilliantly. The increase in production of more utilitarian wares coincided with the arrival of William Duesbury at Derby in 1756. The first written record of blue and white production at Derby dates from 1763.

The bases of Derby pieces are usually distinguished by the presence of marks from the little pads of clay used to keep the pieces from sticking to the saggars in the kiln. In 1764, Richard Oldship, a former partner at the Worcester factory, agreed to supply soapstone to Derby as well as the soapstone formula. In addition he agreed to teach them the process of transfer-printing in underglaze blue and overglaze black. Characteristic of some transfer decorated pieces is a sanding of the glaze, a reaction to the process. Two popular transfer printed patterns on Derby are the "Boy on a Buffalo" and the "Fisherman" designs. In 1770, Derby took over the failing Chelsea factory and adopted their more versatile bone ash body formula. With this body, more tea and coffee wares could be produced. Rare forms are the spoon tray and the covered sugar bowl. Both, Maurice speculates, did not come with an average tea set and had to be special ordered. Maurice believes that another interesting form known as 'wine taster' was actually used to serve oysters. Another form up for reinterpretation is what is most commonly referred to today as a butter tub. These small covered pieces Maurice believes were also used for storing and serving potted meats.

As for collecting blue and white, Maurice noted that when people started collecting early English

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Three-compartment Derby porcelain sweetmeat or pickle dish, encrusted with shells and with underglaze blue decoration c1760



Elaborate Derby blue and white porcelain "chestnut basket", cover and stand c1760



Blue and White Derby Porcelain

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wares at the very end of the 19th century, it was the polychrome pieces that were most sought after. Today, thanks to Bernard Watney's influential book on blue and white published in the early 1960s, blue and white pieces are just as highly valued as the polychrome ones. The blue and white collector today is something of a purist and the addition of gilding or polychrome over-decoration devalues a piece. An-

other aspect of today's collector is that there is a greater emphasis attached to knowing the factory of origin and date of production of a piece. And lastly, Derby blue and white has recently undergone a re-appraisal due to shards uncovered from the Thames that prove the existence of a pottery at Islesworth. Previously, any blue and white of unknown origin was just assumed to be Derby. Now a lot of these pieces are being firmly attributed to Islesworth.

Bits and Pieces

Report By Yon Bard

This year's Bits and Pieces session was held on the premises of the Dedham Historical Society (DHS), which provided an apt setting with showcases full of Dedham pottery as well as much historic memorabilia. Our panel, consisting of Joyce Hanes, Louise Richardson, and Jeff Brown, was challenged not only by objects brought by CSC members, but also by treasures from the DHS collection. These have been donated by eminent Dedhamites over the past century and more, and many have never been properly classified and catalogued. Our panel members rose to the occasion and were able to shed much light on the identity of these objects.

We won't attempt to list all the 'bits and pieces' shown. Instead, we'll print photographs of selected items, both from the DHS and from CSC members, on pages 5, 6, and 8, along with summaries of the

panel's comments.

We thank the panel members for their erudite and enlightening discussion, and our DHS hosts—Jim Kaufman (president) and Ron Frazier (executive director).



Panel members Jeff Brown, Joyce Hanes, and Louise Richardson are enjoying themselves!



Liverpool transfer printed jug, made for the American market. Lustre decoration on pearlware, with portrait labeled "James Monroe." Since the potters had no actual likenesses of President Monroe available they used the portrait of some unknown person. A similar jug labeled "James Madison" was also shown.



Bits and Pieces (continued)



Staffordshire luteware jug with portrait of "Fisher Ames," a prominent citizen of Dedham, c1810



Pearlware teapot with 'artichoke' spout, beautifully decorated



Chinese export, c. 1780. Not a typical teapot, so what's it for? Someone suggested a hot water pot



Sugarbowl, part of Newhall porcelain tea set



Mason porcelain blue and white "temple" pattern teapot with gilding applied regardless of pattern



Creamware coffee pot, 1780-1800



Upcoming Ceramics Events

CSC Meetings:

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

5/22: Amanda Lange on 'Basins, Bottles, and Brushes: Ceramics for the Bedchamber,' plus annual meeting and tea. 1 PM, Seccomb Hall.

Pottery and Porcelain Club of Providence Meetings:

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

Auctions:

Christie's, London, 4/17: British ceramics, incl. Staffordshire figures

Christie's, New York, 4/24: 19th c. ceramics (incl)

Skinner, Boston, 4/26: European ceramics (incl)

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, Paris, 4/29: European ceramics (incl)

Sotheby's, London, 4/30-5/3: Celebration of the British country house; porcelain (incl)

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

Christie's, Amsterdam, 5/20-21: Asian ceramics (incl)

Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 5/21: Chinese ceramics (incl)

Christie's, London, 5/22: 19th c. British and continental ceramics and glass

Sotheby's, Paris, 5/23: ceramics (incl)

Christie's, London, 6/12: British and continental ceramics

Sotheby's, Millan, 6/18: ceramics (incl)

Christie's, London, 6/19: Chinese ceramics (incl)

Sotheby's, London, British and continental ceramics

Christie's, London, 7/7: European ceramics and glass
Sotheby's, London, 7/8: Japanese and Chinese works of art.

Exhibitions:

Teapots, Tygs, and Toasts, ceramics from the Historic Deerfield Collection, originally put together by Amanda Lange for the New York Ceramics fair this past January, is now on display in the Lobby of the Flynt Center of Early New England Life in Deerfield.. The exhibition is included with a ticket just to the Flynt Center for \$6 or in an "All of Deerfield" ticket for \$12 (these are adult prices). Open until April 14th. For more information and a free brochure, contact Amanda at (413) 775-7206 or lange@historic-deerfield.org

Workshops:

British Earthenwares—1650-1850: The Commemoration of People, Places, and Events, Eastfield Village, Nassau, NY, 6/27-29. This three-day workshop deals with the decorations applied to earthenwares, and features many lecturers, several of whom are CSC members including Carl Crossman and Amanda Lange. It will include a demonstration of copper engraving and transfer printing. Attendees may stay in early 19th century accommodations in the village at no extra charge. The Historic Workshops at Eastfield give students the opportunity of meeting with the speakers, as well as the collectors and dealers who attend, in an informal setting, which leads to a free exchange of information and ideas. For information call 518-766-2422. **There will be a \$100 reduction of the \$435 fee for CSC members!**

Chinese Export Porcelain. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, until 7/13. Eighty pieces from the Museum's collection, from the early 16th to the late 19th c, made for export to Europe and America.

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Bits and Pieces (continued)



Toby jug decorated in underglaze enamels, probably Staffordshire, in remarkably good condition. Cap can be used as drinking cup. 1810-30



Garniture vase in superb condition that fooled the panel—thought to be early 18th c Dutch Delft; later identified as a 19th c Samson copy