

SHARDS

A Newsletter of the
Volume 9, Issue 3 China Students' Club of Boston April 2006

A Message from Our President

Dear Members and Friends,

It is hard to believe that my two-year term as President of the China Students' Club is almost over! It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve in this capacity. Over the past two years we have successfully shifted to a new meeting location, enjoyed the excellent programs that are a hallmark of the club, watched *Shards* as it has continued to evolve and improve, and welcomed a number of new members whose diverse interests contribute a great deal to our group. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunity to have lunch at the College Club whenever possible before the meetings. It is a good way to get to know your fellow club members and get caught up on what is happening in the ceramics world.

I especially want to thank all of the Board members who bring us the programs and publicize them, write and produce *Shards*, send out the mailings, and keep track of our membership and finances—all on a strictly volunteer basis. Each and every individual has a very full life but manages to make time for China Students.' I thoroughly appreciate the time and hard work that has been invested in the club over the past two years by everyone. It has made my job a pleasure. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Parsons Roy
President

The Goldweitz Collection Sale By Bob Barth

Friday, January 20th, was the day of the sale of the finest collection of 17th and 18th century English pottery to come on the market in many years. Harriet Carlton Goldweitz, longtime member of the China Students' Club, has been known to many of you for decades. I got to know Harriet and her collection only relatively recently and am thankful for it. My interest in ceramic archaeological finds coincides with Harriet's collecting focus. Her collection included the ceramic types of all our 17th and 18th century finds in Portsmouth, NH. Harriet has always been most generous in sharing her collection and knowledge with others—indeed such sharing is part of her expressed philosophy. I never failed to learn something new on any given visit.

In spite of the beauty of the objects the collection was never meant just for show, but was rather considered a study collection. All pieces were on view on her third floor, along with design and other research information, many on the famous pool table on which her niece says that as a child she continued to play pool

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The Goldweitz collection's logo:
Staffordshire slipware dish by Ralph Toft, 1662
(lot 16)



The Goldweitz Collection Sale

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even with increasing numbers of pots in place—all unbeknownst to Harriet. The presence of the pots apparently made the game much more challenging; perhaps a chip and crack in two of the pieces I purchased might have been collateral damage.

I arrived in NYC on Monday, January 16 and after checking into my hotel went straight to Sotheby's to preview the sale. The presentation was spectacular and the staff extremely obliging. Many dealers, collectors and curators took advantage of examining the great material throughout the week.

I returned the next morning to an even larger crowd—several China Students' Club members and what appeared to be half of ACC.

Though confined to a wheelchair Harriet made a brief visit with daughter Julie and appeared in good spirits in spite of the impending loss of her labor of love. Along with a good crowd that afternoon she attended a series of four excellent lectures at Sotheby's focused around her collection. Speakers were Leslie Grigsby, John Austin, Pat Halfpenny, and Letitia Roberts. Tuesday evening Harriet had attended the preview party for the Ceramics Fair where she met old friends including dealers Garry Atkins and Jonathan Horne.

Wednesday and Thursday Maria and I went to the Metropolitan Museum, highlighted by the Fra Angelico exhibition, and then to the American Antiques show. We never did get to the Winter Antiques show—there was just too much going on. Thursday night we attended a fine dinner at Sotheby's in Harriet's honor and had the pleasure of meeting many of her family including children and delightful grandchildren.

Friday morning the auction was well attended and the bidding spirited. Harriet's treasures were widely distributed to appreciative new owners who will hopefully

care for and share the objects as well and as generously as Harriet.

A well-attended cocktail party at Julie's west-side apartment Friday evening was a fine wrap-up to the week.

Finally a note in praise of Sotheby's catalogue for the Goldweitz sale. It is the finest sale catalogue I have ever seen. Christina Prescott-Walker, Suzanne Harrison, and Letitia Roberts are to be highly commended, along with others who contributed to its compilation. The photography is exquisite and the catalog contains numerous references and details of Harriet's original research. I encourage you to obtain a copy if you have not. I am sure it will become a valued classic, and it is a fitting tribute to a great collection and to a focused scholarly collector and teacher.

Editor's note: The results of the sale were good. About 72% of the lots sold, which compares well with other sales. Most of the lots were snapped up by a small number of well-known dealers. The top grossing lot at \$168,000 (including buyer's premium) was the delftware plate with portrait of Charles II, while a similarly decorated cup fetched \$102,000. The Staffordshire Ralph Toft plate (see picture on page 1), though carrying the highest estimate, was second at \$114,000; the piece had served as the collection's logo. The only other lot to break the hundred grand barrier was the delftware dish with picture of Burleigh House, at \$108,000. At the other extreme, several lots sold for under \$1,000, so there was good stuff to be had by even the less affluent. Most prominent among unsold lots was the wonderful pair of delftware shoes, which Harriet had fortuitously obtained from two different sources and reunited after they had been separated from each other for many years.

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Greg Lovell on English Porcelain Factories Report by Jeff Brown

The New Year opened for the CSC at the College Club with a full house to hear fellow member Greg Lovell speak on “English Porcelain Factories and Their Products that Interest Me and That I Have Collected.” Program Director Anne Lanning introduced Greg by saying that it is always a pleasure to hear fellow members speak of their own interests and that it was a special treat as Greg did not only present a slide lecture but brought in a whole table of objects to show from his own collection.

Greg’s interest in English porcelain began while he was renovating an old Queen Anne-style Victorian house in Boston. While researching sources in order to restore the house properly he became interested in related fields such as antique furniture and decorative arts. He happened upon a reference book on the chronology of early English porcelain factories and spent the next several months virtually memorizing it—a passion was born! With the acquisition of more reference books he became fascinated not only with the objects themselves but with what they were evidence of—such as the development of technology and decoration and the evolution of design and fashion. Greg’s talk touched on several of his favorite English factories.

He first spoke of the Chelsea factory which he believes to be the finest of the early manufacturers. It was established in the 1740s and continued until 1770 producing very well-modeled soft paste porcelain. Its wares have a soft glaze and gilding which, unfortunately, wears easily, and an unglazed foot rim in imitation of Chinese export. Early Chelsea pieces (1745-60) when held up to the light show little light spots (“mooning”) in the composition of the paste.

A second factory of interest to Greg is Bow which started around 1748 with a very heavy style of potting and continued to around 1776. Like many early factories it imitated Chinese export styles such as the powder-blue ground, and some pieces even go to the length of having faux-Chinese characters painted on the reverse. Bow made a lot of blue and white but they also produced some nice enameled wares, the “quail” pattern being one of their most famous. They catered mainly to the “middling sorts” making practical wares, whereas

Chelsea specialized in high-end goods for the luxury market.

Another great favorite of Greg’s is the famous Worcester factory started by Dr. John Wall in 1751 which produced a soft paste porcelain using soapstone. Again, a lot of early designs mimicked Chinese export. The pieces can bear any of a variety of workmen’s marks which may be anything from incised scratches and X’s to a complete signature. Around 1760 the well-known crescent mark began to be used. Other marks used at Worcester were a square, a painted “W” (1770s), and a printed “W” (1780s). The factory produced a lot of useful objects such as tea wares. The earlier teapots are usually quite small due to the enormous price of tea (there was 119% tax on tea until 1784). After 1784 the tax was lowered to 12%, trade with China increased, tea was more widely available, and teapots at all factories became larger. Worcester also made finer pieces enameled and gilded in imitation of continental wares. The gilding is “honey gilding:” honey is mixed with gold and then very skillfully applied, fired, and burnished. In 1776 Dr. Wall died and a partner by name of William Davis took over the company. Being neither potter nor scientist, he let the company run on auto-pilot, and quality suffered. A gentleman by the name of Thomas Flight then bought the company outright for 3000 pounds and in 1788 his son John returned from Paris with samples of the latest styles for Worcester to “knock off.” In 1792 Martin Barr became part owner, and there now appeared an incised “B” on pieces during this Flight/Barr period. By 1795 the soapstone formula had been improved and the factory was once again producing high quality wares. Also by this time a taste for sparse elegant decoration came into vogue and you could have little or no enameling with just simple, refined sprigs adorning tea wares. Greg thinks these simple pieces with just gilded decoration not only are a great value in today’s market, but best show off the quality of the body and glaze of the piece. He reminded us that, just to complicate matters, there were also two other factories in town—Chamberlain’s and Grainger’s.

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Greg Lovell on English Poecelain Factories

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One also cannot discuss Worcester without briefly mentioning the Caughley factory started in 1775 by Thomas Turner who worked at Worcester, stole some of their workers and even pirated some of their designs. It is often very difficult to tell the difference between Worcester and Caughley pieces. In 1796 Caughley switched to a hybrid hard paste formula and then in 1799 sold out to Coalport.

Another factory discussed was the Derby factory which started around 1756 and imitated Chelsea's whimsical, high-end wares. The bottoms of early Derby pieces sometimes have bare or patch marks where the piece sat on something to keep it from sticking to the floor of the furnace during firing. From 1770 until 1782 the pieces were marked with a crown and the letter "D." After 1782, there was the baton mark which has crossed batons over a "D" surmounted by a crown in puce. This mark was used up until at least 1800. From about 1805 until 1825 this mark was done in red.

Greg concluded with a few remarks about Spode

which he admires because it was a very technologically cutting edge sort of factory. In the 1780s it introduced transfer printing blue and white patterns on pearlware. In 1799 they pioneered the formula for bone china and also helped develop batt printing as an alternative to transfer printing, creating a much softer, more detailed image. In 1805 Spode also developed the use of luster decoration. We tend to think of luster decoration as an inexpensive substitute for gilding, but when Spode brought it out it was a very expensive sophisticated embellishment. And finally, in the 1820s the factory pioneered the development of underglaze colors other than blue, which, up until this point, was the only color that could withstand the high initial firing temperatures. In 1824 Spode came out with an underglaze green.

In conclusion, Greg wanted to impart what he thought was the most important thing that he has learned on his collecting odyssey: "You are your own best expert!" There is no substitute for research, for when you are buying you can only truly rely on yourself.



Clockwise from top left:
Derby puce marked lozenge shaped dessert dish, c1790;
Caughley fisherman pattern shell dish, c1785;
Worcester shell shaped dessert dish, c1775;
Bow powder blue ground platter, c1765;
Worcester blue and white three-ladies pattern teapot c1780





Jeffery Stamen on Kangxi Porcelain Report by Jeff Brown

Our March meeting convened at the College Club to hear local collector Jeffery Stamen speak on “Kangxi Porcelain: A Culture Revealed.” The talk was illustrated by the speaker’s truly world class collection of Chinese porcelain, and spoke to two basic themes. The first, that the Kangxi period (circa 1662-1722) was truly a golden age in porcelain production, for both China and the world, in almost every aspect—aesthetically, technically, in quantity and in quality. The second point was that this period’s ceramics went on to influence Western porcelain development more than any other time or country’s.

In the 17th century this porcelain was collected by all the royal personages of the period from Augustus the Strong in Dresden to Queen Mary at Kensington Palace, setting a vogue and creating a craze for the stuff. It was a prized novelty and imported into Europe in great quantities, but recent scholarship has shown that the Chinese have had porcelain since the 8th century and in fact do not even have a special word for it. To them, it is simply a more highly fired refined earthenware.

The 17th century saw great changes in China. Civil wars saw the overthrow of the Ming Dynasty. Kilns were closed down due to the lack of imperial patronage. During this transitional period, small local kilns sprang up producing wares for consumption by the literati and civil servants. This created a change in style from the more formal imperial taste to more literary and religious themes for this new scholarly market. By 1640 the Manchurians from the north, having taken advantage of this civil unrest, moved in and established themselves as the new ruling Qing Dynasty. As outsiders they wanted to assimilate themselves as quickly as possible to legitimize their rule. Jeff said they became “more Chinese than the Chinese.” Taxes were lifted, the kilns re-opened, artisans flocked to Jingdezhen which reached a population of about half a million people, nearly all associated in some way with porcelain manufacture.

Jeff first pointed out that, as far as his research shows, there is no accidental or meaningless design on a piece of Chinese porcelain. Everything has a meaning. As for the glazes of this period, all are natural metallic oxides. When applied they are all a shade of grey so the

decorator has to envision in his mind’s eye what the finished product will look like. Underglaze blue was fairly standard, but during the Kangxi period the palette was expanded to include the *famille verte* colors: green, iron red, black, and yellow. Mirror black was popular, a very high fired glaze that was usually over-gilded. The gold didn’t adhere well and most period pieces are now worn and lacking it. Sometimes more intricate pieces (reticulated or in relief) were decorated right on the biscuit so none of the sculptural detail would be lost, as it would be under an initial overall glaze. Another group, called *blanc de chine*, was left totally white without any overglaze decoration. Design motifs included the “Sacred Objects” such as vases, brush holders, books, scrolls, and beads—all objects revered since antiquity for their scholarly or religious symbolism. Design motifs from nature were popular, such as landscapes, flowers, birds on rockwork, faux bamboo, or tree-branch-shaped handles.

With the arrival of the Europeans and their rapacious demand for porcelain, styles slowly changed to accommodate Western tastes. Along with pieces with strictly Chinese style decoration are pieces incorporating Western images taken from contemporary prints. And soon, European forms appear, but with strictly Chinese designs. The blending of these two cultures’ motifs, forms, and designs is one of the most fascinating aspects of this period. As the 18th century progressed tastes shifted more in favor of Western decoration and away from purely Chinese motifs. But keep in mind that while all this was going on, the entrepreneurial Chinese also had an on-going trade with the Islamic world, creating an entire body of work with Islamic themes and forms.

On pieces for their domestic market a recurring motif is, of course, the dragon and the phoenix, representing the emperor and the empress respectively. When combined they form an image bearing great auspicious meaning. An old rule of thumb says that if a piece has a five-clawed dragon it was intended for the emperor, four claws for an aristocrat or high court official, and three claws for someone of less social importance. Some

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Jeffery Stamen on Kangxi Porcelain

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domestic pieces are rather abstractly painted with splashes of color freely applied, while many others reflect the great Chinese love of landscape painting. These are not literal depictions, but imaginary ones showing man's insignificant relationship to nature.

Jeff concluded by showing scenes from pieces in

his extensive collection, all derived from popular legends, novels, or plays. While most of these scenes and stories are lost to the casual viewer, Jeffrey emphasized that no design was arbitrary and that porcelain decoration from this golden age is full of symbolism and meaning... It is truly a culture revealed!



Clockwise from top left:

Dish with scene of *the man who tried to seduce his wife* in famille verte palette; c. 1710

Teapot in the shape of a peach with a bat spout and bat feet; c. 1680

Large Islamic form ewer in famille verte palette from the Rockefeller collection; c.1700

Large bowl in abstract "egg and spinach" glaze. Kangxi mark and period; c. 1680

(Additional picture on page 10)



American Ceramics Circle Annual Meeting, 11/4-5/2005 Report on some of the sessions by Louise Richardson

William Sargent, “...it is proposed to make a cabinet:” *Building the Asian export collections at the Peabody Essex Museum.* Bill provided an overview of the history of the museum’s collections, beginning with its inception in 1799 as a repository for items brought home to Salem by its merchants and ship captains, and continuing to the present.

Andrew Maske, *Debates on the authentic and beautiful: Japanese ceramics in the Victorian era.* Andrew focused on the fashion for Japanese ceramics in the 19th century, comparing two men: Edward Morse, whose collection is now at the MFA, and James Lord Bowes. Bowes concentrated on marks and seals, collecting pieces he thought to be antique examples, while Morse formed a more spectacular assemblage by seeking out examples from as many areas and potters as possible.

David Conradsen, *Gourds and glazes: Taxile Doat’s absorption of Asian ceramic arts.* Taxile Doat, after a long career at Sèvres, was recruited for the faculty at the fledgling University City pottery and art school, St. Louis, in 1909. When the venture failed after two

years, he and other faculty members took over the pottery and continued to produce art pottery until 1914. His work during this period was greatly influenced by Asian forms and glazes.

Edmund de Waal, *Shoji Hamada in the West.* Shoji Hamada spent some time in the 1920s in England, where he embraced the culture of Leach and Ruskin. Retaining some Asian influences, he made English-style slipware but decorated with Asian motifs. When he returned to Japan, he crafted furniture and designed houses in the English manner, leading to the Minge movement, which combined English, Japanese, and Chinese folk art in living spaces.

William Mackenzie, *My journey as a working potter.* William was apprenticed to Bernard Leach, influenced by Hamada, and, with his wife, established a pottery in Minnesota to make useful pieces for everyday life. He was skilled at potting, while she excelled at decorating. After her death, he was forced to compensate for his lack of decorating skill by depending on the clay body and shaping to create interest and beauty, utilizing common utensils like a cheese slicer.

Bits and Pieces

On 2/23 the group gathered around the table on which members had placed their treasures. The discussion was led by Louise Richardson and Tracy Wiggins.

Below and in the following pages we show a sampling of the pieces that were examined.

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Globulat teapot, Worcester (probably) or Liverpool, 1770s or 80s



Pearlware teapot; decoration copied from porcelain models; Thomas Harley? Herculean pottery? Early 19th c



Bits and Pieces

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Worcester plate, replacement for a Chinese export plate from an armorial service



Coffee cup and saucer; cup marked "CLEWS" after 1813



Blue & white delftware bowl; 1740-60



Blue & white bowl, probably for Islamic market; perhaps Vietnamese; 19th c.



Blue & white reticulated bowl with embossed floral decoration and transfer-printed interior; Lowestoft or Liverpool; ca. 1770



Black basalt beaker, marked FGW; James Robertson?

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Upcoming Ceramics Events

CSC Meetings

Meetings are at The College Club, 44 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, at 1:00 PM on Thursdays.

4/27: Fit for an American empress: Betsy Patterson Bonaparte's French china; Jennifer F. Goldsborough, adjunct professor at Parsons School of Design and at the Corcoran College of Art

5/25: Annual meeting and tea. Red teapots-Yixing to Bradwell Wood and beyond; Robert L. Barth, CSC member.

Connecticut Ceramic Study Circle Meetings

5/3, 10:30 AM: Luncheon; Welsh porcelain; Jonathan Gray

For more information, contact Phyllis Simmons at 203-324-7742.

Providence Pottery and Porcelain Club Meetings

4/26, 2:00 p.m. Iznik: Turkish ceramics and Ottoman artistic tradition; Walter Denny

5/4, 2:00 p.m. Welsh ceramics; Jonathan Gray.

For more information contact Mrs. William Viall (401-861-3216).

Auctions

Asian:

4/29: Skinner's Boston

5/22, Sotheby's Amsterdam

5/23, Christie's Amsterdam

5/30: Christie's Hong Kong (Chinese)

6/21, Christie's London (Chinese Export)

7/11, 14, Christie's London (Chinese)

7/12, Christie's London (Japanese)

9/19: Christie's New York (Chinese)

9/20: Christie's New York (Japanese & Korean)

European:

5/2, Christie's Amsterdam (incl. Dutch Delft)

5/24: Sotheby's London

6/14, Sotheby's Paris (incl. Tournai porcelain)

7/6, 14: Christie's London

9/7: Christie's London

Miscellaneous:

4/20: Christie's New York

5/11: Christie's London (19th c.)

6/20: Sotheby's Milan.

Exhibitions

At Home in Holland: Dutch Decorative Arts from the Historic Deerfield Collection. Historic Deerfield, until 12/31

Intersections: Native American Art in a New Light.

This exhibition will feature approximately 90 works by Native American artists ranging in date from the 1700's to the present. Featured are exceptional historic and contemporary works, including ceramics. Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, starting 6/24.

Bits and Pieces

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Worcester:

left:
cream jug, ca.
1760

right:
plate, perhaps
decorated in
the James
Giles studio,
ca. 1770





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Crouching boy with his pet dog in famille verte palette; Chinese, c. 1700
The Chinese rarely depicted girls in their art, but they didn't mind grown-up women...