

SHARDS

A Newsletter of the China Students' Club of Boston

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A Message from Our President

Dear Members,

Late August usually brings the waning of summer fun and the anxiety/anticipation (take your pick) of a new academic year. I have been out of school for over 20 years now, but I still feel that same rush of excitement when I see ads for "back to school" clothes and "Welcome Back Students" signs in my college town. Well, our "school" year starts on Saturday, September 27th with a program at Historic Deerfield. I welcome you all to attend a portion of the "Hot Beverages!" forum, a program designed to educate you on the history of tea, coffee, and chocolate in early America. You will hear lectures on these stimulating beverages and their equipment from Jennifer Goldsborough, Gerry Ward, and myself, as well as enjoy a relaxed lunch at the Deerfield Inn. In the afternoon you will be on your own to visit the ceramics collection at the Flynt Center, take a tour, walk the Street, or observe a silversmithing demonstration. Jo Ann Brown has already emailed or snail mailed you a flyer describing the outing and detailing the cost. If you did not receive one, please contact me.

Anne Lanning, our Program Chair, has filled out the year's curriculum with lectures by Rob Hunter, Jody Wilkie, Walter Denny, Jim Kaufman, Rose Kerr, and Karina Corrigan. I can't wait to learn more about pearlware or "china glaze," Chinese blue and white porcelains, fakes and forgeries, and Dedham pottery. Many thanks to CSC members Jim and Karina for agree-

ing to give lectures. We often look to our membership to share their passion, expertise, and knowledge as well as mixology tips. Karina will be recounting our fantastic American Ceramic Circle trip to China in her May lecture, "Learn to Mix a Jingdezhen Sling."

I also want to thank Louise Richardson, Cheryl Robertson, Carolyn Roy, and Jim Kaufman for their continuing efforts in organizing the 75th Anniversary exhibition. We have been hard at work this summer sorting through a fantastic array of ceramics related to New England. We will have more to tell you at our October 23 meeting in Boston.

And finally, a hearty welcome to Debbie Bassett, who has agreed to become our Recording Secretary. Debbie is a relatively new CSC member who developed a passion for ceramics by working at Polly Latham's antique shop and at the Lexington Historical Society. Debbie's job will be to keep the minutes for our Board meetings—never an easy task!

As we approach our 75th year as a club (2009), I encourage all of you to bring new members and friends to a meeting. We are a fascinating group of collectors, dealers, historians, archaeologists, designers, and curators—if I say so myself. I want the next 75 years to be as great as the first, so please extend an invitation to a new person! I look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Amanda Lange

Diana Edwards on

"Influence of Salt-glazed Stoneware on English Ceramic Design"

Reviewed by Jeff Brown

The April meeting of the CSC convened at The College Club to welcome back a former Club president and independent ceramics scholar, Diana Edwards, and to hear her speak to us on "The Influence of Salt-Glazed Stoneware on English Creamware Design."

Fine white salt-glaze is purely British. No other

country produced this lovely stoneware. From approximately 1685 to 1770 it was the most popular fine ceramic produced in the British Isles. It was exported abroad from at least 1700, and remains, along with creamware, the staple British fine ceramic in American

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Diana Edwards on Salt-glazed Stoneware

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colonial sites as well as at European sites.

Fine white salt-glaze was descended from more substantial white salt-glazed stonewares of the Rhineland produced in the Westerwald areas, but this was a far cry from the English manifestation of the same technology. Salt-glazed stoneware is made from highly refractory clays found in the upper 3% of coal seams which tend to lack impurities such as iron and can also withstand high firing temperatures. The high firing fuses the body, making it impervious to liquids. In and of itself this can be the end of the stoneware process. To add luster or sheen, salt is added to the kiln when it reaches at least 1150 degrees centigrade. The sodium is introduced for at least six hours; it volatilizes and condenses onto the pot. This is followed by a clear fire when the hydrochloric acid gas, a noxious and harmful by-product, is emitted into the air spewed out of the kiln vents.

Clays for making both salt-glazed stoneware and creamware were available in small deposits all over England, but the three major deposits were located in Dorset and North and South Devon. Staffordshire potters principally used clay from North Devon. The salt-glazed stoneware and creamware bodies are essentially the same, composed of ball clay and flint; the differences are in the firing temperatures and the glazing process. Creamware is fired at 1000 degrees centigrade and stoneware between 1150-1300 degrees. Salt-glaze has a single-firing glazing process; creamware requires two firings.

Diana and her co-author Rodney Hampson have identified 122 manufacturers of white salt-glazed stoneware in Britain, but only 13 have extant whole pots or shards which can definitely be attributed to them. The top names include Thomas Whieldon, Humphrey Palmer, William Greatbatch and, of course, John Dwight. Surprisingly, one can find no evidence that Josiah Wedgwood ever manufactured salt-glaze, although he did fire some for his cousins Thomas and John Wedgwood of the Big House.

Because salt-glazed stoneware had been produced for nearly sixty years before creamware, one would expect many similarities in shapes and decoration, especially in the early years of creamware production. In

some cases there are strongly obvious correlations between salt-glaze and creamware. Flowers and other decorations in salt-glaze could be either scratched in blue or applied, whereas in early creamware there was no scratch decoration. Some salt-glaze forms do not seem to have analogs in creamware. But, absolute similarities don't usually occur until potters started molding and casting wares using salt-glaze molds in early creamware production. The first decade of creamware production, the 1740s, is an enigma. There is a lack of identifiable potters, and determining if a shape is from the 1740s or early 1750s presents a challenge. The one potter who has been associated with a number of creamware pots decorated like delftware is Enoch Booth. Enoch's cousin, George Booth, was an enameller on salt-glaze, and it is possible the Booths were also manufacturing salt-glazed stoneware.

Thomas Whieldon was the first potter for whom there is an extant document indicating he was making salt-glaze, tortoiseshell, and creamware. He began potting at Fenton Vivian sometime before 1747. The advent of slip-casting and press-molding threw open the range of possibilities for making hollow wares in elaborate and imaginative shapes. Decoration covered the surface of the pot in relief, often emulating silver models. Identification of design sources can be useful in providing a range of dates, as is the case with a group of teawares, both salt-glaze and creamware, decorated with designs taken from George Edwards and Matthias Darly's publication, "New Book of Chinese Designs". The book came out in 1754, and the teawares could not pre-date the source of their inspiration.

By the mid 1760s salt-glazed stoneware was waning in popularity. Creamware of this period is often a hybrid between the two worlds. Decoration on salt-glaze and on creamware generally followed the fashion of the times, as both in-house and independent decorators would have been decorating both types of ware simultaneously during the 1750s and 1760s. But scratch-blue decoration, by far the most popular embellishment on salt-glaze for over three decades, was rarely utilized on creamware and pearlware.

So, salt-glazed stoneware which had been pro-

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Diana Edwards on Salt-glazed Stoneware

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duced since 1685 had slowly lost its popularity by the 1770s, being replaced by the lustrous creamwares. White salt-glazed stoneware was thrust into the limelight in the 1740s with the advent of molding and casting which resulted, among other innovations, in the charming ‘curious teapots’ which crossed all social barriers adorning tea tables that hitherto had utilized silver or Chinese porcelain teapots. The molding and casting process made

it possible to manufacture similar or identical wares in both creamware and salt-glaze. By the mid 1760s creamware and salt-glaze were interchanging both decorative techniques, and from time to time the old salt-glaze forms were being produced in the new creamware bodies and vice versa. Although it is sad to see the demise of a beautiful body such as salt-glazed stoneware, it couldn’t have been replaced by a more sensuous and lovely one.



Salt-glaze camel teapot, ca. 1747-55
Temple Newsam House, Leeds



Slip cast spoon trays from same mold, ca. 1745-1755
Salt-glaze (above), creamware (below)



Salt glaze (left) and creamware (right) jugs
ca. 1745



Near right: Master mold for “lanskip teapots”
Wedgwood Museum
Far right: Salt-glaze “lanskip teapot”
Chellis collection





**Sandra Rux on
“Survey of Fireplace Tiles in Early Portsmouth, NH, Houses
Reviewed by Jeff Brown**

A brilliant and varied program year concluded at our annual meeting and tea with a talk by one of our own members, Sandra Rux, who spoke to us on a “Survey of Fireplace Tiles in Early Portsmouth, NH, Houses.”

Sandra introduced the subject with a map of the Netherlands and pointed out the four major tile-making cities of the 17th and 18th centuries which were Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Delft, and Frisia-Harlingen. These tiles were made of tin-glazed earthenware and were produced by taking slabs of clay and storing them, usually in a cellar to prevent them from freezing, for about a year and then putting the clay through a mill to knead it. The clay was then pressed or rolled into a mold to form the square tiles. There would be a bisque firing, the tin glaze was added and then the image would be painted, commonly in blue, and the piece fired. Polychrome pieces required multiple firings. The English produced tiles as well, and it was in many cases Dutch potters who started London tile works in the early 18th century at places such as Lambeth and Southwark. These works spread eventually to Bristol and Liverpool. English tiles had better and finer clay, but Dutch tiles were more easily cut and, with their undercut edges, better for close setting. Before 1700 each city had an identifiable style, but after 1700, due to the increased circulation of pattern books, there was widespread use of common popular designs in both England and the Netherlands. Anyone who has made even a casual study of these tiles cannot help but be impressed by the diversity, creativity and spontaneity of the designs, despite the tiles having been mass-produced items.

In the colonial American context, evidence of tiles has been found at many archaeological sites from the Governor Yeardley house in Jamestown to the Governor’s Palace in Williamsburg; many homes of the elite had tile fireplace surrounds. In the Portsmouth, NH, Warner house parlor the fireplace is set with Dutch tiles called “sandybacks” because of the sand used in the clay. They have a somewhat lumpy glaze, a glaze thinner than on English tiles and with a lower lead content. All are neatly painted due to the use of a transfer

for basic outlines. There is a group of sea-themed tiles, most likely made in the first quarter of the 18th century in Rotterdam, featuring fish, ships, whales, and Tritons and Fortune with a globe. There is another group with landscape designs sharing the same corner motifs, called “spider heads,” with the sea-themed group—pointing back to their common source in Rotterdam. These designs are all typical of ones found in a Harlingen pattern book that influenced many Dutch as well as English makers.

The forces of the marketplace eventually appeared in the form of transfer printed tiles. An Irish engraver, John Brooks, and an Englishman, John Sadler, both claim to have invented the process, but evidence does not favor one over the other. Sadler claimed in 1756 that he had printed 1200 tiles in six hours. At the time, a man could paint about two tiles an hour, and with transfer printing two men could decorate 200. Sadler did not make his own tiles, but rather acquired blanks from Liverpool and even from the Netherlands, ready to decorate. The process entailed printing the image on a special type of thin paper using an enamel mixed with white lead and linseed oil. The paper was placed face down on a blank tile and rubbed, probably with a tightly wrapped roll of felt, to transfer the design. The paper was removed by soaking it, and a special pounce was sprinkled on the tile for added depth of color. The piece was fired at a low temperature for about 50 minutes. It is not clear why some of them are signed and others not, and it is also not known if the tiles were printed in pairs, singly or in groups. All designs derive from printed sources, largely drawing books of the period—the “Ladies Amusement” and books by John Bowles chief amongst them. In Portsmouth, Jonathan Warner installed such tiles in the same room where he had hung Hogarth’s “The Rake’s Progress,” thus echoing the room’s theme.

Sandra concluded the lecture with illustrations of tiles from various 18th century Portsmouth properties such as the Jonathan Warner, Moffatt-Ladd, Wentworth-Gardiner, and John Paul Jones houses. The scenes are endlessly varied from Biblical to classical, chinoiserie,

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Upcoming Ceramics Events

CSC Meetings

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings at 1 PM at the College Club, 44 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

9/27, 9:30AM-2:15PM, Hot Beverages!: All about Tea, Coffee, and Chocolate in 18th-century America, Historic Deerfield, Deerfield, MA

10/23, The Vivian Hawes Memorial Lecture: What's In A Name? China Glaze versus Wedgwood's Pearl White, Robert R. Hunter, Jr., Editor, *Ceramics in America*

11/24, When is Imitation no longer the Sincerest Form of Flattery?—Fakes vs. Legitimate Production and Reproduction in the Ceramics Arts, Jody Wilkie, Head, European Ceramics, Christie's

1/22, European Copies of Turkish Ceramics: The Sincerest Form of Flattery, Walter B. Denny, Professor of Art History, University of Massachusetts at Amherst; Senior Consultant, Department of Islamic Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art

2/26, Bits and Pieces: Members are invited to bring an object or two for discussion

3/26, The Ceramics of Hugh C. Robertson, before and beyond: Dedham crackle-ware, James D. Kaufman, C.S.C. Member

4/23, Chinese Blue and White from Tang to Ming, Rose Kerr, Keeper Emeritus, Far Eastern Department, Victoria & Albert Museum; Honorary Research Fellow, Needham Institute, Cambridge, UK; Honorary Fellow, University of Glasgow

5/28, Annual Meeting and Tea; Learning to Mix a Jingdezhen Sling: Highlights of the American Ceramic Circle's 2008 tour to China, Karina Corrigan, Associate Curator, Asian Export Art, Peabody Essex Museum; C.S.C. Member.

Connecticut Ceramics Study Circle Meetings

For information call 203-622-1128

10/13, English Pottery, Jonathan Horne

11/5, Meissen Large Animals, Samuel Wittwer

12/8, Antiques Road Show; appraisals, Nicholas Dawes

1/12/09, Traditions and Transformations: South-east Asian Ceramics, Denise Leidy

2/9, Majolica for the Crystal Palace Exhibition, 1851, Melissa Bennie

3/9, Japanese Tradition in Ceramics: How is it expressed Today? Joan Mirviss

4/20, Topics in Chinese Ceramics, Rose Kerr

5/21, Secrets of the Potter's Art, Robert Hunter

6/15, to be announced.

Auctions

Asian:

9/16, Sotheby's, NY (Chinese)

9/17, Christie's, NY (Chinese)

9/18, Christie's, NY (Japanese & Korean)

10/7, Sotheby's, Hong Kong (Chinese)

10/18, Skinner, Boston

11/4, 11/7, Christie's's, London (Chinese)

12/3, Christie's, Hong Kong (Chinese)

11/6, 11/11, Christie's, London (Japanese)

European:

9/24, Christie's, London (19th century)

10/3, Sotheby's, NY

10/22, Sotheby's, NY (19th century)

11/18, Christie's, London

11/21, Christie's, NY.

Exhibitions

Alistair Sampson Collection of English Creamware, ongoing at the Flynt Center, Historic Deerfield

Ceramics from the Pflueger Collection, ongoing at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; includes several oversized animal figurines from Augustus the Strong's Meissen menagerie

At the Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC:

Taking Shape: Ceramics in Southeast Asia

Korean Ceramics

Contemporary Japanese Ceramics

Arts of the Islamic World (including ceramics)

Royal Porcelain from the Twynight Collection, 1800-1850, 9/16/08-4/19/09, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Mandarin and Menagerie: Chinese Export Ceramic Figures from the James E. Sowell Collection, Sotheby's, 10/15-21.



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Sandra Rux on Portsmouth Fireplace Tiles

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Watteau-style courting couples, and Teniers-style danc-

ing peasants—all the whimsy, wit and style of the 18th century captured on 5 inch squares of clay.



Dutch tile, ca.1760
Wentworth-Gardner house, in situ



English Printed Sadler tile, ca. 1760
Warner house



Bible tiles with same scene, from John Paul Jones house
Left: mid 19th century, probably Utrecht, in situ
Right: mid 18th century, found in cupboard