

OBSESSION:

THE MYRNA & BENZION SCHKOLNE COLLECTION OF EARLY ENGLISH POTTERY, VOL. 3



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Contents

Volume 1

Introduction.....	2
1. Drink and Drunkenness.....	5
2. King and Country.....	82
3. Sports.....	159
4. Education and Reading.....	229
5. Literature, Theatre, and Science.....	257
6. Music.....	323

Volume 2

7. Gardening.....	409
8. Farming.....	434
9. Trades and Occupations.....	531
10. Menageries.....	564
11. The Circus.....	599
12. Turks.....	619

13. Performing Animals.....	636
14. Wild Animals.....	657
15. Dogs, Cats, and Mice.....	710
16. Birds and Bird Nesting.....	756
17. Dandies and Dandizettes.....	786
18. Family and Friends.....	832

Volume 3

19. The Red Barn Murder.....	922
20. The Death of Munrow.....	939
21. Church and Religion.....	947
22. Classical Subjects.....	1015
23. The Seasons, Elements, and Quarters of the World.....	1130
24. Other Figures and Objects.....	1174
Works Cited.....	1194



CHAPTER 19

The Red Barn Murder

*Extract from "Mr. Saville as William Corder in the Red Barn."
c. 1829.*

THE RED BARN MURDER WAS the crime of the nineteenth century, and it remains one of the most enduring murder mysteries of modern time. The saga has all the elements that appealed most to public tastes: a heinous deed, a disgraced girl who had borne illegitimate children by three men, a dead infant, a wronged wife, the psychic discovery of a grave, and the devious villain's public launch into eternity at the hands of the hangman. Today, doubt remains as to whether William Corder, who was hanged for the murder of Maria Marten, really "did it." Also unexplained is the so-called "psychic dream" that led to the recovery of the victim's body.

On May 18, 1827, Maria Marten met William Corder at the barn on his family farm in Polstead, Suffolk. The barn was known as the "red barn" because it appeared red in certain light. Marten, a woman with a sullied reputation, was a mole-catcher's daughter and was about twenty-six years old; Corder, the son of a prosperous farmer, was two years younger. Marten had recently secretly given birth to Corder's child, but the baby had died suspiciously in infancy. Now the couple was supposed to go to Ipswich to marry, but Marten was never seen again.

In October, Corder wrote to Thomas Marten, Maria Marten's father, telling that the couple was happily married and living on the Isle of Wight. But in November, Corder ran two news-

paper advertisements in search of a wife, a "female of respectability."¹ He received ninety-nine replies, including one from a Miss Mary Moore. Within weeks they married and moved to Brentford.

Back in Polstead, Maria Marten's stepmother claimed to have dreamed that her stepdaughter's body was buried beneath the Red Barn's floor. At her insistence, in April 1828 Thomas Marten dug the barn floor to unearth his daughter's decomposed body.

Corder was arrested, and his trial commenced in Bury St. Edmunds on August 7, 1828. The prosecution's evidence was damning. Corder testified that he and Marten had quarreled and that he had backed out of their intended marriage. He stated that Marten had then shot herself with one of his pistols and that he had buried her corpse in the Red Barn. The jury quickly returned a guilty verdict. The judge sentenced Corder to death by hanging the next Monday, with the body afterwards to be "dissected and anatomized."² As Sunday night turned into Monday morning, Corder penned a confession, admitting he had accidentally shot Marten during a quarrel. Although a stab wound to the heart had apparently caused her death, William denied stabbing her.

At noon on Monday, August 11, 1828, Corder mounted the

scaffold and declared, “I am guilty—my sentence is just—I deserve my fate—and may God have mercy upon me!”³ With that, the executioner cut the rope. The Rev. Skinner, in distant Somerset, commented on the event in his diary.

*No fewer than 10,000 persons assembled on the plain surrounding the gallows: there well-dressed and delicate females exposed themselves to the rude jostling of the mob, and all the horrid language which generally is uttered by base and unfeeling men on the occasion, in order to witness the death of a fellow creature. These females pressed even to the foot of the gallows to witness his mental pangs and his bodily torments, which in all probability were very violent, for the executioner held by and pulled down the legs of the wretched sufferer for two minutes in order that his convulsive pangs might be shortened. Yet, notwithstanding this, even when ten minutes had elapsed, the limbs were still convulsed.*⁴

Afterwards, Corder’s body was cut down, and the skin of the chest incised and folded back to better display the muscles. Dressed only in trousers and socks, the corpse was laid out for public viewing. In the remaining hours of the day, thousands filed past the body. At day’s end, artists prepared casts of Corder’s head, the executioner claimed his trousers and socks as his “undoubted right,”⁵ and the nude corpse was taken to the county hospital for dissection. The surgeon preserved the scalp with an ear attached and also retained some of the skin for tanning. The rest of Corder’s skin was sold in small pieces to the public, and the skeleton—minus the skull—was to be used for



Maria Marten. From James Curtis’s *The Mysterious Murder of Maria Marten*, 1828.



William Corder standing before the judge. From William Maginn’s *The Red Barn*, 1828.

instructing medical students into the twentieth century.

The Red Barn Murder was a marketable event that was to thrive long after Maria Marten's grave and the Red Barn itself had been carted off piecemeal by souvenir seekers. A tale replete with unanswered questions and salacious details, it inspired melodramas and narratives in its time. In the twentieth century, it provided material for plays, investigative literature, and a movie, and plays telling the saga are still staged in this century.

Staffordshire figures portraying the Red Barn, Corder, and Marten were potted as chilling souvenirs of the crime. Contemporary engravings of Marten and Corder assisted in their modeling. Examples are uncommon, supporting my belief that pre-Victorian earthenware figures were made for respectable, upwardly aspiring households in which the Red Barn Murder was a distasteful subject. ❁



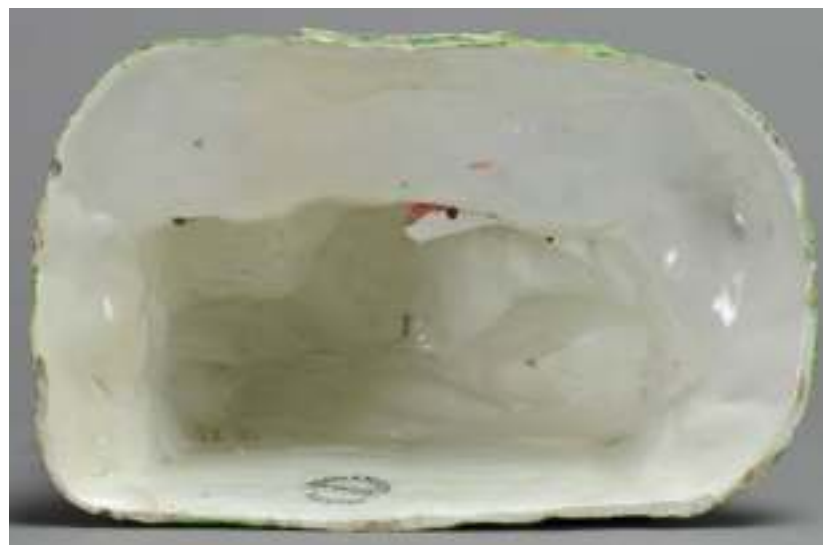
*The Red Barn at Polstead. From James Curtis's *The Mysterious Murder of Maria Marten*, 1828.*

The Red Barn

Impressed and painted "A VIEW OF THE RED BARN AT POULSTON", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1828, L: 7.1 in., H: 6.4 in., MBS-452







Notes

I first encountered a Red Barn like this one in the Brighton and Hove Museums' Willett Collection (HW609) and thought it the prettiest of Red Barn models. I was very taken with it when I photographed it at the museum in 2005 for inclusion in *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*.

Until then and for many years after, I failed to find a Red Barn that appealed to me. The Red Barns I encountered were invariably the "Sherratt" model, and they were ugly things because they sported heavily damaged or restored bocages and restored figures. In my mind, the Willett Red Barn was *the* one, but I had little hope of finding one.

Then early one Saturday, I awoke to an email from the dealer Nick Frost asking if I was interested in this Red Barn. I shot out of bed and bought it immediately. Note that Maria's head differs from that on the Willett example, but my figure of Maria is original. Later, I encountered the same Red Barn in the Hunt Collection, with Maria formed as on my figure group. I suspect the Willett example may have had a new (albeit very pretty) head put on at some point.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 137.2.

For the Red Barn in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 47; also

Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 147.

For a similar Red Barn in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 70. ❀

19.1.2 The Red Barn Murder (3-piece garniture)

Impressed and painted "W. CORDER & M. MARTEN", "THE RED BARN", "W CORDER BEFORE THE JUDGE", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,⁶ Staffordshire, c. 1828, from left H: 8 in., 8.8 in., 7.7 in., MBS-528





Notes

This is the only trio of Red Barn figures recorded, and the figures have apparently been together since manufacture. It and I have a tortured history. The garniture first came up at Bonham's London in April 2010, and I foolishly stood aside for an older collector friend, who underbid them to a good price. They went into an English collection, and in 2015, my friend Nick Burton facilitated my buying them from the collector.

I lack words that do justice to this garniture. Previously, I had not seen a "Sherratt" Red Barn I liked, but that was because there invariably was too much restoration to the figures and bocage.

A similar Red Barn is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.962-1928).

I have traced only three examples of Corder and Marten arm-in-arm: one is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW 608); another was in Jonathan Horne's 1995 Exhibition and is now in a private collection; and Rosalie Wise Sharpe's collection has Corder and Martin, but on a low base. Also noteworthy is a spill vase in the Hunt Collection with the figure of Corder to one side and figures of Corder and Marten together to the other.

As for the Corder figure, I know of no other in a typical "Sherratt" style—but one figure from the same molds on a low base titled *Corder* is recorded.

Literature

For a similar Red Barn in Jonathan Horne's 1995 exhibition see Horne, *English Pottery*, 1995, no 443.

For this Corder-Marten group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 137.17

For the similar Corder-Marten group in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 147; also Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 51.

For the Corder-Marten group shown in Jonathan Horne's 1995 exhibition see Horne, *English Pottery*, 1995, no. 442; also Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*, 114; and Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 51.

For a similar couple on a flat base in the Sharp Collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 245.

For the other titled figure of Corder (probably also "Sherratt") see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 52; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 137.20.

For the Hunt Collection's spill vase with the figure of Corder to one side and the figures of Corder and Marten together to the other see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 71. ❀

19.1.3

The Red Barn

Impressed and painted "THE RED BARN", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,⁷ Staffordshire, c. 1828, L: 4.9 in., H.: 4.5 in., MBS-453





Notes

No other example of this small Red Barn model is known, which is, of course, odd because the molds needed for its manufacture were costly, and one would assume they were used again and again. In all probability, the "Sherratt" pot bank made a fair number, and all but this one have been lost over the centuries.

No sooner had we bought our first Red Barn in 2012 (no. 19.1.1) than this tiny treasure came up at auction in the UK, and I bid for it on the phone in the small hours of the morning, dropping out at a very high bid. As I lay in the dark warmth of my bed licking my wounds, I regretted not bidding even higher. I had lost my chance!

Later that day, David Boyer. "You may be interested in something I have never seen before," he said, and I immediately knew what it was and that he had outbid me for the Red Barn early that morning. Of course, I bought it from him. I have concluded that this tiny and very expensive house must be, on a per square foot basis the most costly home in England...but oh, is it delicious!

Having waited for a good many years before buying a Red Barn of any sort, we bought two in rapid succession! Strangely, that is how collecting seems to go. I have never regretted my patience, and we now own four red barns, each being the finest of its kind.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 137.14 and dust jacket. ❁



19.1.4

The Red Barn

Impressed and painted "THE RED BARN NEAR POLSTEAD BURY ST. EDMUNDS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,⁸ Staffordshire, c. 1828, H: 7.8 in., MBS-565



Notes

In my early collecting years, I had no desire to own a Red Barn. Strangely then, our collection is the only one to hold four Red Barns, one example of each model.

This Red Barn (titled "THE RAD BARN") is one of three known examples from the "Patriotic Group" pot bank, and all were made without figures of Corder and Marten. The first I saw was in the Hope McCormick Collection that sold at Christie's, New York, in January 2003. "Patriotic Group" figures can be very fine, and that Red Barn was almost too fine, with a very high glaze. It did nothing for me, but it did fetch a deservedly good price. The second example that came my way had lost its bocage, and it subsequently moved through the trade with a replaced bocage taken from another figure; to my too-picky eye the bocage sat uncomfortably.

The moment I saw this Red Barn in the summer of 2017, I knew it was perfect. Third time lucky, and it came our way via eBay. The bocage was present but had snapped off and lost a few tips, and Alan Finney reattached it and restored the tips for me. Frankly, I don't know who else can fill in missing bocage tips to such a high standard, but then all Alan's work is remarkable.

This Red Barn model seems to utilize the same molds used for our larger "Sherratt" Red Barn (no. 19.1.2). The other two examples had poorly impressed titles, and the letters were then painted over the impressions to read "THE RED BARN." On

our example, the impression is very crisp, and the barn is without doubt "THE RAD BARN".

Literature

For the Red Barn formerly in the Hope McCormick Collection, see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 137.13. ❀

Endnotes

1. Curtis, *Murder of Maria Marten*, 399.
2. Ibid., 248.
3. Ibid., 301.
4. Skinner, *Journal*, 194–195.
5. Curtis, *Murder of Maria Marten*, 306.
6. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
7. Ibid.
8. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.



CHAPTER 20

The Death of Munrow

Extract from William Darton's engraving of the attack on Lt. Hugh Munro for "The Third Chapter of Accidents and Remarkable Events Containing Caution and Instruction for Children," 1801.

IN DECEMBER 1792, YOUNG LT. Hugh Munro was hunting in the Indian state of Mysore when a tiger attacked and killed him. News of his demise reached England in 1793 in the form of a letter written by a “Gentleman to his Friend at Calcutta,” excerpts from which were reprinted in 1793 issues of the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, *Sporting Magazine*, and *New Wonderful Magazine and Marvellous Chronicle*. “The human mind cannot form an idea of the scene; it turned my very soul within me,” the observer wrote.¹ His riveting account rocked readers to the core, for a tiger attack was the most dreaded of possible colonial mishaps.

Munro was no ordinary man, and the tiger that savaged him was, symbolically at least, a rather special creature. Munro was the son of the British general Sir Hector Munro, who in 1781 had defeated the then-ruler of Mysore, Haidar Ali. At the time of the tiger attack, Haidar Ali’s son, Tipu, ruled Mysore. Tipu believed he had the prowess of a tiger, and he had adopted the tiger as his kindred spirit. Emblems of tigers adorned court clothing, and a huge golden tiger’s head supported the royal throne. Coins, seals, walls, and even the army’s cannon muzzles and sword hilts bore tiger motifs. Tipu loathed the British, and they had dubbed this enemy the Tiger of Mysore because of his ruthlessness and brutality.

Tipu must have relished the news of Munro’s death, and he



The Attack of Mr. Munro by a TYGER in the Island of Saugur.
The Sporting Magazine, July 1793.

probably interpreted the tiger's conquest as portending his dominance of the British. He is thought to have already owned an impressive plaything with which to celebrate his enemy's death.² This took the form of a life-sized mechanical tiger triumphantly holding in its jaws a prostrate Englishman. Cranking a handle in the tiger's side activated a miniature organ within the animal's wooden carcass, causing the tiger to emit the roars of a beast at the kill, while the man shrieked and flailed in a death struggle.

But Tipu's expectation of victory over the British was mistaken. Instead, he fell when British forces stormed his capital, Seringapatam, in 1799. His mechanical tiger, known as Tippoo's Tiger ("Tip-poo" being the contemporary spelling of Tipu's name) was among the war spoils shipped back to the East India Company's museum in London. It went on display in 1808 and quickly became a renowned tourist attraction. Today, it can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

In England, events in Mysore captured the popular imagination, and for decades thereafter the storming of Seringapatam was re-enacted on theatre and circus stages. Accounts of Munro's demise were published as far afield as America, and Staffordshire potters depicted the tiger attack in clay. Interestingly, engravings of the attack do not show Munro wearing epaulettes because these were not yet compulsory for army officers, but earthenware Munrows always wear epaulettes. ❀



Tippoo's Tiger. Engraved by W. Cooke, c. 1800.

Marriages and Deaths of Considerable Person

DEATHS

Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend at Calcutta, dated on board the Ship Shaw Ardafier, off Saugur Island, Dec 23, 1792

To describe the awful, horrid, and lamentable accident I have been an eye-witness of is impossible. Yesterday morning Mr. Downey, of the Company's troops, Lieut. Pyefinch, poor Mr. Munro (son of Sir Hector) and myself, went on Shore on Saugur island to shoot deer. We saw innumerable tracks of tigers and deer, but still we were induced to pursue our sport, and did the whole day. About half past three we sat down on the edge of the jungle to eat some cold meat sent us from the ship, and had just commenced our meal, when Mr. Pyefinch and a black servant told us there was a fine deer within six yards of us. Mr. Downey and myself immediately jumped up to take our guns; mine was the nearest, and I had just laid hold of it when I heard a roar, like thunder, and saw an immense royal tiger spring on the unfortunate Munro, who was sitting down. In a moment, his head was in the beast's mouth, and he rushed into the jungle with him, with as much ease as I could lift a kitten, tearing him through the thickest bushes and trees, every thing yielding to his monstrous strength. The agonies of horror, regret, and, I must say, fear (for there were two tigers, male and female) rushed on me at once. The only effort I could make was to fire at him, though the poor youth was still in his mouth. I relied partly on Providence, partly on my

own aim, and fired a musket. I saw the tiger stagger and agitated, and cried out so immediately. Mr. Downey then fired two shots, and I one more. We retired from the jungle, and, a few minutes after, Mr. Munro came up to us, all over blood, and fell. We took him on our backs to the boat, and got every medical assistance for him from the Valentine East India-man, which lay at anchor near the island, but in vain. He lived 24 hours in the extreme of torture; his head and skull were torn, and broke to pieces, and he was wounded by the claws all over his neck and shoulders; but it was better to take him away, though irrecoverable, than leave him to be devoured limb by limb. We have just read the funeral service over the body and committed it to the deep. He was an amiable and promising youth. I must observe, there was a large fire blazing close to us composed of ten or a dozen whole trees; I made it myself, on purpose to keep the tigers off, as I had always heard it would. There were eight or ten of the natives about us; many shots had been fired at the place, and much noise and laughing at the time; but this ferocious animal disregarded all. The human mind cannot form an idea of the scene; it turned my very soul within me. The beast was about four and a half feet high, and nine long. His head appeared as large as an ox's, his eyes darting fire, and his roar, when he first seized his prey, will never be out of my recollection. We had scarcely pushed our boats from the cursed shore when the tigress made her appearance, raging mad almost, and remained on the land as long as the distance would allow me to see her.

From *The Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1793

20.1.1

The Death of Munrow

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,³ Staffordshire, c. 1820, L: 14 in., MBS-110

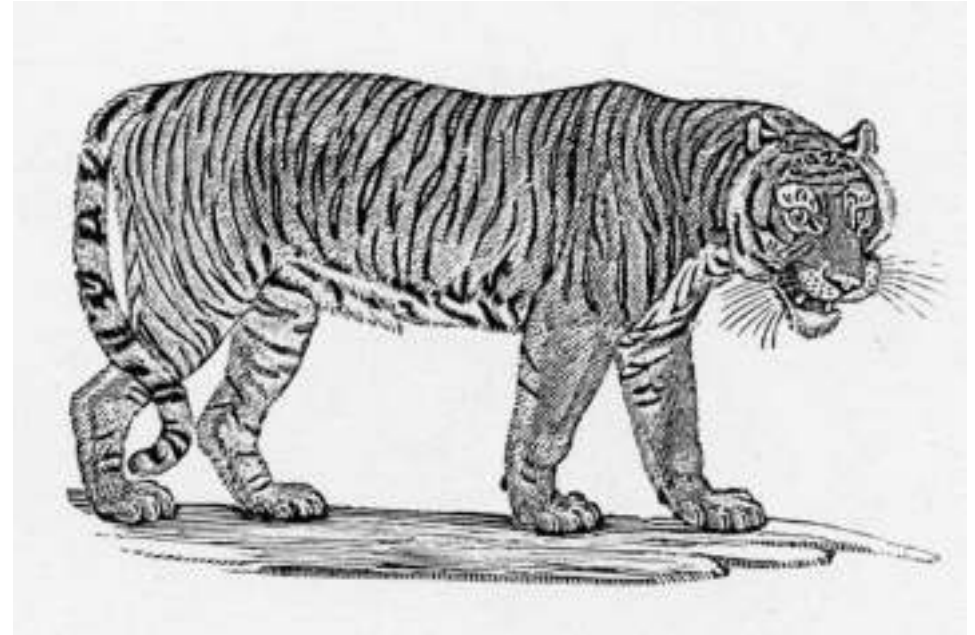


Notes

We bought our Munrow at auction at Sotheby's, London. Ray and Diane Ginns executed a commission bid for us, and I arranged to collect the figure group from them on an upcoming visit to the UK that summer.

On that visit, Andrea, who was fifteen, was with me. As we boarded the plane for our return journey, she sat with her eyes glued to the luggage loading into the plane, worried that her Doc Marten boots might be lost in transit. I clutched a too-large parcel containing Munrow and fretted the entire trip because we were connecting in Washington, D.C., where we might have to board a tiny regional jet with inadequate overhead storage for this large parcel. In those circumstances, hand luggage had to be stowed beneath the plane, and I was not parting with my precious package. If that were necessary, I would have to rent a car and drive the last leg. But the Pottery God, in whom I believe, smiled upon us, and Munrow and the Doc Martens reached home uneventfully.

The Death of Munrow was our biggest purchase to date, and we bought it on March 16, 1999, within days of the Dow Jones Industrial Average breaking through the once-unthinkable level of 10,000 for the first time. A little more than a month later, the Dow smashed through 11,000, and as it continued its upward ascent and analysts posited that it was within striking distance of even loftier levels, I wondered whether my purchase of Munrow had been folly. If I had only invested that money, would it not have multiplied again and again? Surely, I should have been more cautious, more patient? But how wrong I was! Admittedly, the stock market climbed higher for some years, before reversing to hit a low



The tiger that Thomas Bewick drew when Pidcock's menagerie visited Newcastle in 1788 and included in his *A History of Quadrupeds*, first published in 1790. It possibly guided modeling of the tiger mauling Munro.⁴

of 6,443 in March 2009. By then, we had had ten years of pleasure from our Munrow.

This figure group lit the flame that started my research. I read accounts of Munro's death in books on Staffordshire pottery, but they varied. In some, the young officer was eating when the tiger attacked, and in others he had gone into the woods for "a necessary moment." In none was his first name mentioned. So I started doing my own digging. In the public library in Philadelphia, I accessed the *Sporting Magazine* of July 1793 in which the letter recounting Munro's demise had been printed along with a beautiful engraving of the attack. That library is notable for its early children's books, and when I visited that collection I discovered *The Third Chapter of Accidents and Remarkable Events*, published by William Darton in London in 1801. This little gem, a copy of which I later acquired, includes an extract from the letter along with a delightful illustration of the tiger pouncing on Munro, and the tale was published to warn children of the inherent dangers of tigers and other such things.

As my research progressed, I was frustrated at being unable to discover Lt. Munro's first name. To contemporary writers, it seemed irrelevant. My search led me to correspond with the chief of Clan Munro. I learned that the youth's name was Hugh; that he was one of General Sir Hector Munro's three illegitimate children, all of whom were raised, educated, and treated as if born in wedlock; and that Hugh's brother, Alexander, had been devoured by a shark off the coast of India. I received a photo of a painting that hangs in Foulis Castle, the clan home, portraying Hugh and Alexander. Both are perhaps around twenty years of age, but today nobody knows

which young man is Hugh and which is Alexander.

As for the figure group, the automaton known as Tippoo's Tiger, which I have admired many times in the Victoria and Albert Museum, may have inspired it. Potters probably modeled the tiger after the tiger Thomas Bewick engraved for his popular *General History of Quadrupeds*, first published in 1790. Bewick noted that this tiger was modeled from a beast displayed in Newcastle, adding that it "was generally allowed to be one of the finest creatures of its kind ever seen in England."⁵

Our *Death of Munrow* was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, Nov. 2006–April 2007. Other Munrow groups are in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1155), Victoria and Albert Museum (c.1-2007), and the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.967-1928).

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 35; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 135.4.

For a Munrow group on a titled base in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 67; for another in the Sharp Collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 241.

For a Munrow group on a low green base in the Brighton and Hove Museum, see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 38; also Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 241. ❀

Endnotes

1. *Gentleman's Magazine*, "Deaths," 671.
2. Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 37–38; Archer, *Tippoo's Tiger*, 11.
3. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
4. This date is given in *A History of Quadrupeds* as 1787, but see Robinson, *Thomas Bewick*, 90, for correspondence of January 1788 referencing the pending arrival of a menagerie belonging to Gilbert Pidcock.
5. Bewick, *History of Quadrupeds*, 189.



CHAPTER 21

The Church and Religion

*Extract from "A Sleepy Congregation." Thomas Rowlandson, 1811.
© The Trustees of the British Museum.*

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, OR Anglican Church, has been England's official church—also called “the established church”—since the sixteenth century. Its archbishops and bishops are the country's spiritual rulers and sit in the House of Lords alongside England's aristocrats. Notably, by the eighteenth century the Anglican Church was also the church of established members of society. Only Anglicans could hold public offices, serve commissions in the armed services, and attend select schools.

For centuries, most Englishmen believed that to be really English you had to be an Anglican. The doctrine of separation between church and state never found a foothold in England. Instead, Anglicans held that the church and the state were akin to the nation's body and soul and were inseparable facets of its being. Because church and state were so intimately united, parishes, which were originally structured as ecclesiastical units, assumed many local government responsibilities. In this way, the church's power trickled down to the remotest corners of England's approximately eleven thousand parishes, where, as caretaker of men's souls and, by extension, their bodies, the church held sway over people of all faiths. Jews, Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, and Catholics maintained their own places of worship, while also supporting the Anglican Church through compulsory tithes and property taxes.

The Old Testament established a tithe, a payment of one-tenth of income or produce, as an appropriate charitable payment, and in Norman times, England's churches were given the legal right to collect tithes in the form of one-tenth of annual produce to support clerics and fund pastoral care. In the sixteenth century, King Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and bestowed their rights to appoint parish priests on select institutions and individuals. These rights were known as advowsons, and with them came the parish's tithe income.

Advowsons were lucrative, so, inevitably, a market in them developed. The owner of an advowson might never set foot in his parish. Instead he could employ a cleric to serve the parish and remit the tithes to him. These clergy frequently received insufficient income to support themselves, so some became pluralists, drawing livings from several parishes and performing inadequately in all. Being a pluralist could be lucrative, so greedy pluralists lived affluent lifestyles and appointed lowly paid curates to perform in their stead. Increasingly, parishes served by dedicated clergy were the exception, and by 1812 about 60% of parishes lacked resident clerics.¹ Crumbling places of worship and pervasive poverty did not reflect well on a church that continued collecting tithes.

Exacerbating parishioners' anger, tithe payments were inequitable and contentious, and they pitted parsons against their

resentful flock. If a sow had ten piglets, could the runt of the litter be given as tithe? And if there were only six in the litter, what did the church get? How did you tithe cow's milk? Who must milk the cow? Must the milk be delivered? Tithes were unfair in that they taxed total yield rather than net profit, thus reaping the full benefit of any improvement without bearing any cost. Also, because tithes were primarily an agricultural tax, the economic output of city dwellers (including merchants, manufacturers, and bankers) escaped taxation. And centuries-old exemptions reduced the tithe payments of some of the landed aristocracy to just a few pounds.

In the early nineteenth century, the radical press forcefully attacked the concept of tithing. The Reform Act of 1832 resulted in a Parliament more representative of the nation and more receptive to tithe reform. The Great Tithe Act of 1836 replaced all remaining tithes with a tithe rent that remained in place until the Tithe Act of 1936 commuted future tithe rents to annuities payable to the state over sixty years. ❀

21.1.1

Tithe Pig Group

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,² Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8.6 in., MBS-141





Notes

In the eighteenth century, Derby porcelain figure groups depicted a farmer and his wife offering the parson their tithe produce, including a pig and their child. This scene was based on a mid-eighteenth century engraving by Louis Peter Boitard. The design remained pertinent into the nineteenth century, and as the folksy nature of pottery is an ideal medium for capturing the raw humor in this rustic scene, Staffordshire's potters created lively figure groups after Boitard's engraving and Derby groups.

Tithe pig groups are common, so I decided early on that we had to buy a "cracker." This group made the grade, and Ray and Diane Ginns bought it for us at Sotheby's in December 2001. In the many years since, I have come across only one other like it: recently, the dealer Bob Moores shared a picture of a similar group that his wife had acquired for her collection. Somehow the slim sharp profile of this group, the cascading holly bodge leaves, the dress pattern that mirrors the base colors, and the great enamels all come together perfectly.

This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 277; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 108.6 and dust jacket. ❁



La Dime. The Tythe Pig. Louis Peter Boitard after Müller, c. 1750.



Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 3.5 in., MBS-228



Notes

This little vicar is of the same scale as the vicar in our larger New Marriage Act group (no. 18.2.4) and seems to have used many of the same molds.

Tiny figures like this are gems, and I hankered after this one for a while in 2005 and 2006. It was in the stock of a UK dealer who wanted an extortionate price AND he had told me a lie, and the lie more than the price stopped me parting with my money because I loathe liars. Then, the figure changed hands in the trade, and it went to the restorer Alan Finney, and we bought it from him at the NEC (National Exhibition Centre) antiques show in Birmingham in July 2006. I have not seen another aside from an example in the Hunt collection (with losses) impressed "VICAR".

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 109.15.

For the vicar in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 326; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 109.16. ❀

21.1.3

Clerk

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.4 in., MBS-276



Notes

I bought this figure from Malcolm Hodkinson in 2008. It was made to stand as a companion to a small figure of a parson. I know of only one intact example of the parson.³ I once owned an example, but the hands were a figment of a restorer's imagination, and I didn't feel the need to keep it.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 109.13. ❀

21.1.4 Worshiper

Painted "Worshiper", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, impressed "69" and attributed to Ralph Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 7.2 in., MBS-541



Notes

I bought this figure on eBay in June 2016. By that time, the trade in figures was seemingly dead on eBay, probably because buyers were tired of misrepresentations. I paid all of \$115! Note the man's very large hands. Oversized hands are said to be a feature of some Ralph Wood figures, and this figure was indeed made by Ralph Wood. Unlike any other figure I can recall, it is deeper (4.5 inches) than it is wide (2.8 inches).

A similar figure, also impressed "69" is in the Potteries Museum; one impressed "70" is in the Brighton and Hove Museums.

Interestingly this figure is also sometimes found with the man's hat upon the base or resting on the sheep. An example arranged thus, impressed "68" and titled *Peasant Worshipping*, is in the Potteries Museum, and another titled *Worshiper* (without an impressed number) is in a private collection.

Literature

For similar figures in the Potteries Museum and Brighton and Hove Museums see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, figs. 109.34–35.

For another in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 327.

For *Peasant Worshipping* and *Worshiper* with the hat placed differently see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, figs. 109.37–38. ❀

21.2.1 Archangel Gabriel

Impressed and painted "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,⁴ Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 8.6 in., MBS-260



Notes

The words “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” are from *Amos* 4:12 and are interpreted as a reminder of man’s mortality and accountability.

I know of no other example of this unrestored figure, which I bought from John Howard in June 2007. The turquoise-colored base suggests a somewhat earlier date of manufacture within the “Sherratt” period.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 110.3. ❀

THE NEW TESTAMENT'S GOSPEL OF *John* tells of Jesus visiting Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha, four days after Lazarus's death. Moved by their sorrow, Jesus goes to Lazarus's tomb and prays for Lazarus to come out. Lazarus emerges, wrapped with linen burial bandages. The subject has been popular in art for centuries, and a derivative engraving probably inspired the rare earthenware groups . ❁



CHRIST raiseth LAZARUS. Published by Carington Bowles, London, c.1795. © *The Trustees of the British Museum.*

21.3.1 The Raising of Lazarus

Impressed and painted "X1 CHAP OF JOHN 43 VERSE JESUS CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE LAZARUS COME FORTH", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.5 in., MBS-394







Notes

The raising of Lazarus seems the least likely subject for our Jewish home, but I couldn't resist the naive comic appeal of this figure group. Note the women's horrified faces and, as an English friend of mine observed, "Lazarus is shivering in his nightie."

Only a handful of examples of this group have been documented. All are in the same style and all portray the tale dramatically and rather comically. Major losses to important elements are common. The tombstone is almost always frequently missing or restored—in fact, I have not encountered an example other than this one that has both the original tombstone and the original bocage.

This figure group is painted with green enamels beneath, which I have not previously seen. I guess that this was done because the base has large cut-outs and the underneath might have been rather glaringly white and obvious if left unpainted.

Note that the glaze is speckled with blue because the cobalt in it did not fully dissolve. This adds to the group's rather rustic appeal.

I bought this group from Rago Auctions in December 2010. It was formerly with D. M. & P. Manheim, New York, and then in the Rev. Benjamin Lake Collection, which sold at Sotheby's New York on January 29, 1987.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 101.1–2.

For another in the Hunt Collection (bocage replaced) see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 346. ❀

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST Sheep (*Luke 15:3–7* and *Matthew 18:12–14*) is a parable of redemption. It tells of a shepherd who searches for a lost sheep, the sheep representing a lost human being.

Figures portraying the Parable of the Lost Sheep can pair with figures portraying the Parable of the Lost Coin (or Lost Piece), but in all probability they were not necessarily sold in pairs originally, and today, they routinely occur as singles

Although figures portraying the Parable of the Lost Sheep have a religious connotation, many collectors enjoy them simply as lovely portrayals of a protective shepherd. ❁

21.4.1 The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Ralph Wood and impressed "9 Ra. Wood Burslem", Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 8.3 in., MBS-481



Notes

A Ralph Wood figure impressed with both a maker's mark and an impressed number! I was in heaven and remain delighted with this important figure, which I bought from Roger Deville in May 2013.

I will admit to feeling bad about my purchase when my collector friend Bob Carde spotted it just after I bought it and wished he had beaten me to it. Bob, an Englishman who resides in the US, has a broad interest in English pottery and is one of the savviest collectors I know. Sadly, most collectors amass figures for their decorative purposes alone, and, while this approach may have some merit that I don't understand, I wish that more collectors would take an academic interest in their treasures because the nuances of attribution and dating add immense pleasure to the collecting game. Today, there are only a handful of such collectors, and Bob is most definitely one of them. We first "met" on eBay when that site was in its infancy, and he and his wife Eileen visited us in North Carolina back in those early days. While I regretted depriving Bob of the pleasure of owning this figure, I was not sorry enough to let him buy it instead! That is how collecting goes, and he had previously beaten me to the punch on a pair of Neale Neptune and Venus figures that I coveted.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 97.3.

For another similar figure impressed only "9" in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 361. ❀

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, *SAMUEL 16*, God tells Samuel to find a new king to replace Saul. Samuel inspects Jesse's seven sons. He rejects the older six sons, but when David, the youngest, comes before him, he anoints him as the next King of Israel.

Today, the subject of David's anointing seems rather obscure to all but the more devout among us, but in around 1800 religion was much more influential than it is now. If a home had but one book then, that book was the Bible. This tome was both a story book and a reading primer for laboring people, and a Bible print may well have inspired the design of Staffordshire groups portraying this long-ago event. ❀



Samuel anointing David. Published by Hieronymus Cock after Maarten van Heemskerck, c. 1556. © *The Trustees of the British Museum*.

21.5.1

Samuel Anointing David

Impressed and painted "SAMUEL ANOINTING DAVID", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Box Title Group" pot bank⁵, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 7.1 in., MBS-171



Notes

The subject of Samuel anointing David as the new king of Israel, as told in the Old Testament, *Samuel* 16, today seems rather obscure to all but the more devout among us, but in around 1800 religion was more influential than it is now. If a home had but one book then, that book was the Bible. This tome was both a storybook and a reading primer for laboring people, and a Bible print may well have inspired this group's design.

This is a touchingly sweet figure group that is quite uncommon, more so with the bocage in place. It has the distinction of being my very first internet-assisted auction purchase, back in October 2003. That was, I think, before online bidding was commonplace, and I simply left a bid.

By that time, my fifteen-year friendship and business relationship with Ray and Diane Ginns had come to an end, and I knew that I had to find my own collecting path. Hitherto, our purchases had been limited to what they offered us, but the world was changing, and I was able to access more and more figures at auction in the UK via the internet, which allowed me to make my own decisions, and my own mistakes. When this figure group came up at Marilyn Swaim in Grantham, I decided to go for it on my own, tempering my bid to allow for any issues that the condition report might have missed.

This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

Literature

For this group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 267; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 106.1 and dust jacket.

For an example in the Hunt Collection (the bocage is lost) see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 337.

For the example in the Sharp Collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 267. ❀



THE OLD TESTAMENT, *FIRST KINGS*, tells that Elijah, the ninth century B.C.E. prophet, flees Israel and hides by a brook, where a miracle happens and ravens feed him. Then, God sends him to Zarephath, where he asks a widow for food. The widow lacks sufficient food for herself and her son, but Elijah promises that her jar of flour and jug of oil will not run dry, and indeed the miracle is fulfilled.

Staffordshire potters combined these two biblical tales in one figure pair: Elijah is usually portrayed with ravens, representing the miracle of his nourishment; the Widow of Zarephath usually has vessels of food and is portrayed with her son. Both stories were represented in old master paintings, and derivative prints may have influenced the creation of earthenware figures. ❁

21.6.1

Elijah & the Widow of Zarephath

Lead-glazed earthenware with enamel decoration, probably made by Thomas Lakin and John Ellison Poole, Staffordshire, c. 1795, H: 9.7 in. (L), 9 in. (R), MBS-557



Notesv

Figures of Elijah and the Widow are such common objects that, prior to acquiring this pair, I have resisted owning another. But once in a blue moon something extraordinary pops up, and so it was that this unrecorded pair appeared on eBay in March 2017. I immediately recognized their bases as being consistent with Lakin and Poole in both decoration and form. Malcolm Hodgkinson spotted them too and emailed me, confirming my thoughts and excited at seeing what he described as “a fine and unrecorded pair.”

The figures themselves are different from run-of-the-mill Elijah and Widow figures. In their books on their collections, both Frank Falkner and Frank Partridge show a color-glazed Elijah from these molds (perhaps the same figure in both books) that they attribute to Ralph Wood, and perhaps Ralph Wood did make the original model. On the other hand, perhaps Lakin and Poole worked in colored glazes too. I have recorded an example of the Lakin and Poole figure of Father Time decorated in under-glaze colors, and there is every reason to think that Lakin & Poole used varied decorative techniques in the period that they potted.

I don't usually buy religious figures, and, rare as these are, I would not have bid on them had I not really liked them. I think they are as stately and magnificent a pair as I have ever seen. Damage was confined to the loss of one raven's wing and minor damage to the extremities of the ewer. Ben sat next to me as I was about to bid, and I asked him what he would bid.

He came up with a very low number, of course. I divided it in two and said to him “Is that all you would pay for a near perfect and unrecorded figure that is well over two hundred years old?” It bothers me when pottery does not get the respect it deserves. Sad to say, I secured this pair for £106, which included £22 for postage. I think my sorrow at the lack of enthusiasm—or plain ignorance in the market—overcame my pleasure at getting a bargain.

As Lakin and Poole operated for such a short time (1791-1795), their work can be dated with more precision than most, which is particularly satisfying. ❁

The Widow of Zarephath

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 9.2 in., MBS-540



Notes

In late March 2015, we moved from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to Dallas, Texas. That sounds so simple, but moving out of our home of thirty-two years was an enormous task. To prepare our house for sale, I had started packing the pottery right after the Staffordshire Figure Association visited our collection in October 2014. I had been hoarding bubble wrap and peanuts for a good while, and I also stocked up with tissue paper and large, heavy-duty plastic storage boxes, so-called “Tuff Boxes” that stack atop each other. To supplement these, we had an assortment of wooden crates that we had assembled over the years, including two that had come with us from South Africa in 1978. For six very long days, I packed almost without a break, as is my habit when I have a large task. Afterwards, my finger tips were tender from handling all the packing materials! Then, in March 2015, Ben and I rented a truck and hired some help to load the pottery, as well as our antique clocks and an assortment of plants I had dug out our garden. The drive was more than could be accomplished in a day, and we gave much thought to the security of the truck over night because, of course, the internet abounds with horror stories of professional thieves preying on loaded vans. In the end, I decided to sleep in the van. So at the end of our first day of travel, we stopped outside a hotel somewhere in the deep South. Ben checked in for the night, and I had an uneventful night sleeping across the van seats.

While we were in transit, I bought a lot at auction that includ-

ed several Staffordshire figures. Of course, I only wanted one of the figures, but I had to buy the entire lot, which included a pearlware widow. When the box arrived, I left the widow wrapped. I was far from excited with this mandatory purchase. Frankly, I considered it a nuisance, and, almost a year later, I reluctantly unpacked the unwanted widow, thinking I would have to dump her on eBay. A widow is not the most desirable of objects—certainly not from the perspective of someone who has seen as many rare figures as I have. I admit it: I have become arrogant and spoiled. In my mind, a lone widow, particularly one on a square base, was just boring. But when I unwrapped this widow, I was smitten by the beautiful enamels and lovely modeling. She shows all the hallmarks of an early figure, circa 1790. The enamel colors are silky soft, and the brighter greens associated with post-1805 production are absent. Also, that dress pattern is the type I have observed on several other early figures. Add to it all, she has a great footprint, a three-dimensionality. This figure, belatedly, became a keeper and it acquired a collection number.

I haven't been able to find another Widow quite like this, although there are several derivative examples. The closest is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (95-1874). The model is the same but with the right hand placed slightly differently, which could have happened quite easily in assembling the clay parts. The palette too is early, and I think the museum figure and my figure are the earliest versions of this model, which evolved (but deteriorated in quality) over time, with the widow acquiring a large wafer in her hand and an ewer at her side. ❀

21.6.3 The Widow of Zarephath

Impressed "WIDOW", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.1 in., MBS-571



Notes

Always a sucker for a small figure in superb condition, I bought this little widow on eBay in November 2017. I am in good company because the label beneath is that of prestigious dealers of old, D. M. & P. Manheim, New York.

Clearly, this widow once had a companion Elijah, but I have yet to locate him. In any event, she stands delightfully on her own. ❁

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY ARE sometimes called “theological virtues” because Christians believe they are gifts from God. In Christian theology, they trace to the apostle Paul, who believed that Charity was the most important virtue of all.

For many centuries, artists have depicted Charity and her sister virtues in female form, and they occur frequently in this manner in the decorative arts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. ❀



CHARITY. Published by P. Stampa, London, 1802. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

21.7.1 Charity

Lead-glazed earthenware with under-glaze decoration, probably Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 8.8 in., MBS-135



Notes

I am drawn to figures of Charity for the loving maternal presence they exude. Perhaps its because I, like many Charity figures, have three children—although sometimes Charity holds only two children, and I have been there too! I have acquired Charity in different potting styles for their educational value, and I sport an array of them on decorative brackets on my office wall.

Once again, I succumbed to the beauty of a figure lavishly decorated with the color yellow. I bought this Charity from Mr. and Mrs. Nutty, a sweet older couple who stood at our local antiques show twice a year in North Carolina. I admired it on their stand but didn't want to pay the lofty price, and perhaps nobody in that market did because the figure appeared on eBay. This was in the year 2000, in the early days of eBay, and the Nutties started the bidding at one-third of their marked price. I was the only bidder, and I think this was my second eBay purchase.

This figure is the second Charity I acquired. The first, also decorated in under-glaze colors, came from Janice Paull, the Mason's Ironstone dealer, at the very start of my figure-collecting journey, but this lovely example left it looking rather sorry, so I sold it. I no longer buy under-glaze figures, but this Charity stays right where she is. ❀

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 8.5 in., MBS-459



Notes

Wherever I am in the world or however bad a day I am having, I scour eBay daily. Although I usually search in vain—and return many purchases because of major undisclosed condition issues—I can't seem to kick the habit! This Charity was acquired on eBay in 2012.

This figure is a more sophisticated version of a similar example in our collection that is decorated in under-glaze colors (see no. 21.7.1). The potter “upgraded” the modeling by paying careful attention to the mother's outstretched arm and by replacing the rather crude figure of a large child with an “improved” version.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 92.48. ❁

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made by Rathbone, Scotland, c. 1795, H: 8.6 in., MBS-513





Notes

I bought this unrecorded and particularly lovely Charity at Dreweatt Neate in late 2013. The base occurs on other figures that were, I believe, made by the Rathbone pot bank in Scotland. I was pleasantly surprised—almost shocked—at the superb quality of the enamels, which are of the same high quality as those on Neale figures, and suggest an early date of manufacture.

This figure is essentially from the same molds as used, in large part, for two other Charity groups in our collection (see no. 21.7.1 and no. 21.7.2). Seasoned collectors mistakenly overlook figures of Charity, but this is a mistake. They are frequently particularly well executed, both in the modeling and the painting, and the variations in the details make them amazingly interesting. In this case, notice how well modeled the babe is, with even the fingers of its teeny hand picked out. Also, the charming little boy was modeled independently of the rest of the figure and stands upon its own small mound base. ❀

Impressed "CHARITY", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Ralph Wedgwood and impressed "WEDGWOOD", Staffordshire, c. 1795, H: 8.8 in., MBS-348



Notes

I bought this Charity group at auction at Skinner in July 2011 to add to my shelf of Charity figures. In addition to being decorative, my Charity collection serves an academic purpose, and this example has done its duty as a marked Wedgwood example.

Ralph Wedgwood, who made this group, was not a modeler, but he was a plagiarist extraordinaire. This well-detailed model originated with Ralph Wood circa 1790, and I have recorded an enameled example attributable to him⁶. Note the enormous hands, typical of Ralph Wood models.

This figure group was previously in the esteemed Frank Falkner collection. Falkner wrote on his label that Mrs. Landre modeled this group for Josiah Wedgwood in 1769, but we now know otherwise. Another figure group like this one is in the Brighton and Hove Museums, (HW843).

Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, figs. 92.4–5.

For another in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 170.

For another see Meteyard, *Wedgwood Trio*, 195.

For another in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 346. ❁



CHARITY, c. 1800.

21.7.5

Charity

Impressed and painted "CHARITY", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 8.6 in., MBS-423



Notes

I bought this Charity in July 2011 from John Howard for my dual-purpose collection of Charity figures that are both decorative and academically relevant. It lacks any features that support attribution, but I suspect that the Dudson pot bank made it.

This group is from the same molds as the Wedgwood Charity in our collection (see no. 21.7.4) but the mold is not as crisp, and, as I suspect it was made ten or fifteen years later, that is understandable. There are other minor differences: the boy is posed to stand with both feet on the ground and he no longer holds a book; and the girl holds a flower.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 92.29. ❀

Left painted "Charity", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, from left attributed to Ralph Wood, "Gray Base Group" pot bank, perhaps Dudson, "Sherratt" pot bank,⁷ Staffordshire, c. 1790, c. 1815, c. 1815, c. 1830, H: 8.9 in. max., MBS-318, MBS-365, MBS-592, MBS-221



Notes

These four figures were made over a span of almost forty years and, at first glance, they appear to be from the same molds, but that is not so. All stand on bases of varying sizes and the head of the “Sherratt” figure on the far right comes from different molds, as does the head of the child at her side. This is the latest of these four figures, so perhaps the potter felt the need to revamp the heads. She also happens to be the first of the four that I purchased, and she came to us courtesy of eBay in early 2006.

At the other end of the age spectrum is the figure on the left. Aspects of the distinctive decoration support a Ralph Wood attribution. I believe Ralph Wood originated this model in the Potteries,⁸ and other potters emulated it for decades more, just as we see here. I added her to our collection in 2008.

The lady on the gray base was the first Gray Base figures I owned, and handling it raised my awareness of the glaze that is inherent in Gray Base figures. I acquired it on eBay in March 2010 and still kick myself for inadvertently omitting it from *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2.

The last addition to this little group, the lady third from the left, came from eBay in November 2018, and I bought her while in Taos, prior to going to Santa Fe for Thanksgiving. The seller, a collector friend, had owned her for about twenty years but preferred to focus on his Victorian figures. There is no accounting for tastes! I cannot attribute her with certainty, but

I have a very strong gut feeling that Dudson made her.

Literature

For the titled figure on the left see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 92.2.

For the “Sherratt” figure on the right see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 92.14. ❀

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,⁹ Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.2 in., MBS-547



Notes

I bought this small “Sherratt” Charity on eBay in October 2016. I had wanted her for a long time, and my patience was rewarded with a perfect example. I don’t intend trying to match her with a Faith and Hope as I find those rather dreary, but she makes the smallest and sweetest addition to my collection of Charity figures—all, no doubt, to be sold at auction in one lot with a low reserve at the end of my days.

Literature

For a similar figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 92.4. ❀

PLAQUES BEARING MOTTOS OF RELIGIOUS significance were made from the early nineteenth century well into the Victorian era, and most were made in the pot banks situated in Northeast England. Then, they were intended to bring an upright godly presence into homes, but today they are collected for their amusing charm, to which I have succumbed more than once along my collecting path.

The phrase “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” is commonly found on plaques. It from Amos 4:12 and is interpreted as a reminder of man’s mortality and accountability. “Thou God see’st me,” also frequently found, is from Genesis 16:13. These are the words that Hagar, Sarah’s hand maiden, alone and frightened in the dessert, utters when she realizes God is with her. ❀

21.8.1 Religious Plaques (pair)

Printed "THOUGH GOD SEEST ME" and "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and transfer-printed decoration, attributed to Dixon, Austin, & Co.,¹⁰ Northeast England, c. 1825, diameter: 7 in. each, MBS-269



Notes

I bought these plaques from Elinor Penna at the New York Ceramics Fair in January 2008. She had one in stock when she set up, and Joy Hanes brought in its companion and sold it to her.

Although these plaques are attributed to Dixon, Austin, & Co., they differ from the marked pair in our collection (21.2.2). I suspect the differences occur because this pot bank operated over many years, and design changes were made along the way.

For ages, it was believed that Dixon, Austin & Co. operated only from 1820 to 1828, in researching *Staffordshire Figures 1780-1840*, I learned otherwise. This pot bank has a long history. Established in 1753, it was known as the Sunderland Pottery, also called the “Garrison” Pottery because of its proximity to the town’s garrison. By the year 1818, several partners operated it, including Robert Dixon and William Austin, under the name Dixon, Austin, Phillips and Co.

The operating partnership we know as Dixon, Austin & Co. came into being in December 1818, when John Phillips withdrew from the partnership and Robert Dixon, William Austin, and Thomas Henderson combined as Dixon, Austin, & Co. The *London Gazette* of December 24, 1818, announces the partnership’s formation.

Notice is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between us, John Phillips, Robert Dixon,

William Austin, and Thomas Henderson, as Manufacturers of Earthenware, at Sunderland near the Sea, in the County of Durham, under the stile or firm of Dixon, Austin, Phillips and Co, the Sunderland Pottery, is this day dissolved by mutual consent, so far as regards the said John Phillips; and that the business will in future be carried on by us the undersigned, Robert Dixon, William Austin, and Thomas Henderson alone, in Partnership, at Sunderland aforesaid, under the stile or firm of Dixon, Austin, and Co. the Sunderland Pottery. As witness our hands this 17th day of December 1818.

At some stage thereafter, Henderson left the partnership and Alexander Phillips joined, but it continued as Dixon, Austin, & Co. until December 31, 1839. The *London Gazette* of January 7, 1840, announced the dissolution of “the firm of Dixon, Austin, and Company,” effective December 31, 1839. The partners signing the notice were Robert Dixon, William Austin, and Alexander Phillips. All this leads to the conclusion that the “DIXON, AUSTIN, & Co” mark dates to between December 1818 and December 1839. ❀

21.8.2 Religious Plaques (pair)

Printed "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD" and "THOUGH GOD SEEST ME", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and transfer-printed decoration, made by Dixon and Austin and impressed "DIXON AUSTIN & Co", Northeast England, c. 1825, diameter: 7 in. each, MBS-273 (L), MBS-593 (R)



Notes

This pair is impressed with the Dixon, Austin & Co. mark. I really did want to own a marked pair, but it took a long time to happen! I bought the the Prepare plaque on eBay in 2008, and only in 2018 did I acquire its companion, again on eBay. ❀

21.8.3 Religious Plaque

Printed "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD", lead-glazed earthenware with transfer-printed and enameled decoration, probably made by Cornfoot, Colville & Co, later Cornfoot, Carr & Co.,¹ North Shields in Northeast England, c. 1830, diameter: 7 in., MBS-382



Notes

I acquired this plaque on eBay in July 2010. ❀

21.8.4 Religious Plaque

Printed "THOU GOD SEEST MEE Gen XVI 13", lead-glazed earthenware with transfer-printed and enameled decoration, possibly made by the Sheriff Hill pottery,¹² Northeast England, c. 1830, diameter: 6.3 in., MBS-404



Notes

I acquired this plaque on eBay in January 2011. ❁

21.8.5 Religious Plaques (pair)

Both printed “In the O Lord do I put my trust: let me never be confounded: PSA XXXI. Ver. 1.” One also printed “THOU GOD SEE’ST ME”, the other “PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.”, lead-glazed earthenware with transfer-printed and pink luster decoration, attributed to Scott of Southwick,¹³ Northeast England, c. 1830, L: 6.7 in. each, MBS-402 (L), MBS-403 (R)

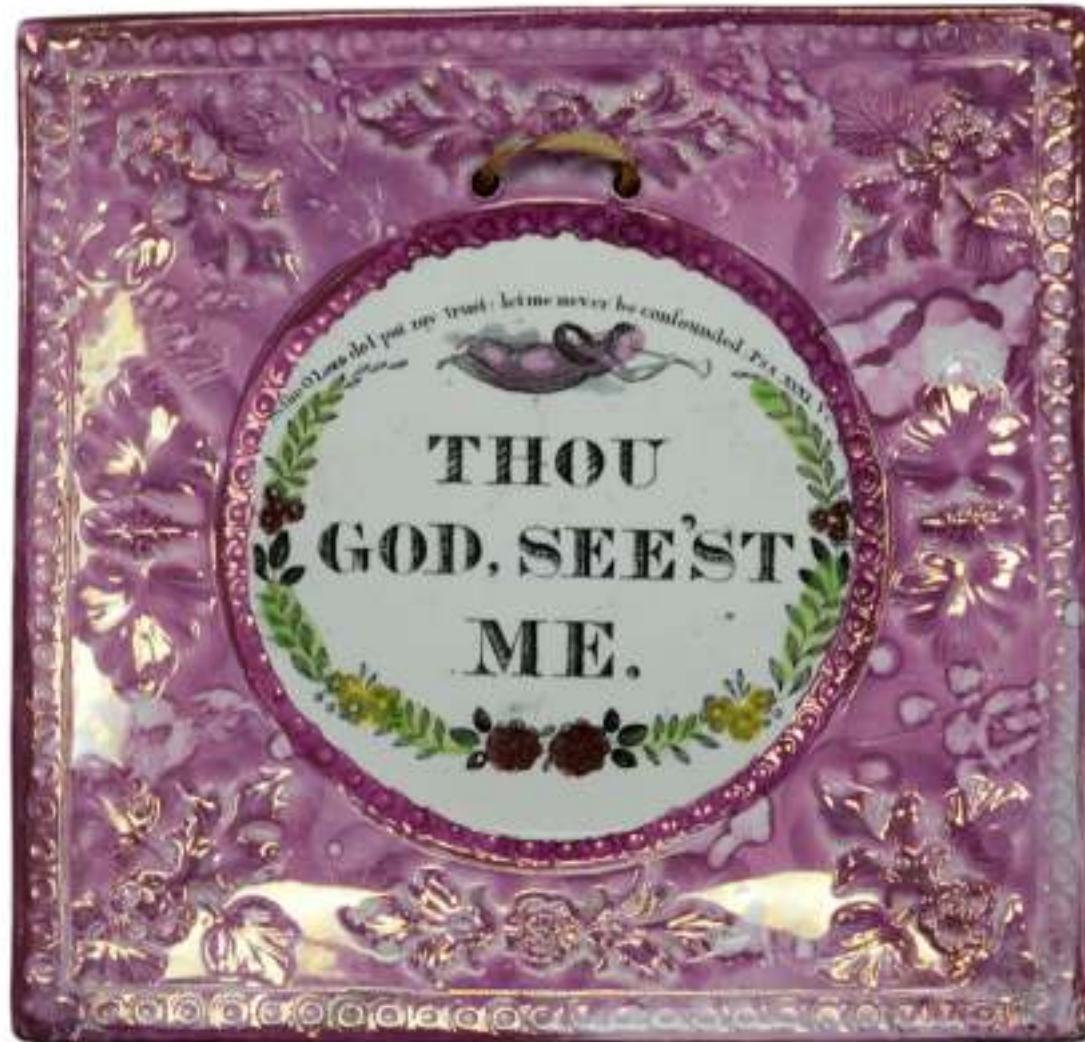


Notes

I acquired these plaques separately, one right after the other. *Prepare* was an eBay purchase in December 2010. I bid knowing that the companion *Thou God* was on the dealer Ian Sharpe's site, and I bought it immediately after my eBay "victory." ❀

21.8.6 Religious Plaque

Printed "In the [sic] O Lord do I put my trust: let me never be confounded: PSA XXX1. Ver. 1. THOU GOD SEE'ST ME", lead-glazed earthenware with transfer-printed, pink luster, and enameled decoration, attributed to Scott of Southwick,¹⁴ H: 8.5 in., MBS-384



Notes

My British friend Stephen Smith is the authority on transfer-printed plaques. I am proud to say that I encouraged him to do a website, and, as a result of his meticulous and erudite work, matesoundthepump.com is both visually pleasing and thoroughly scholarly in attributing such plaques, most of which were made in the northeast of England. All my attributions of my religious plaques relies on Stephen's site and his knowledge.

I acquired this plaque on eBay in 2010. ❀

21.8.7 Religious Plaques (3)

Printed "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD" and "PRAISE YE THE LORD", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and transfer-printed decoration, probably Northeast England, c. 1825, diameter: 6.4 in. each, from left MBS-361, MBS-605, MBS-291



Notes

Each of these three plaques is gorgeous, and it has taken over a decade to acquire them. I bought the first, the yellow PREPARE from the late Bernard Trower in June 2008. It was the first plaque of this sort that I had seen, and I thought it stunning. I was to learn that plaques like these are earlier than most religious plaques and are few and far between.

I stumbled upon the pink version of the PREPARE plaque in November 2009, when I was browsing on Portobello Road on a soggy Saturday morning with my friend, the late Lisa Bouchillon. Lisa and I enjoyed antiquing together, and that trip to the UK was enormous fun. Lisa was a slow, methodical shopper in that she looked at everything carefully, whereas I tend to let my eye scan the offerings in search of pottery and then move on. It was raining that morning, but the wet weather was no impediment to Lisa's due diligence. So it was thanks to her that we found the pink PREPARE plaque along with a plaque portraying Adam Clarke in a box sheltering beneath an outdoor table at the corner of Portobello Road and Westbourne Grove. Lisa wanted the one and I the other, and we bought the pair for a small amount.

The third plaque, PRAISE YE, came our way in April 2019 at Lyme Bay Auctions against fierce competition, but I hung in there! If plaques from this source were available in umpteen colors, I would want to buy them all, but I have yet to see another for sale. ❀



21.8.8 Religious Plaques (pair)

Printed "THOUGH GOD SEES'T ME" and "PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and transfer-printed decoration, attributed to S. Moore & Co., Northeast England, c. 1825, diameter: 7.4 in. each, MBS-594 (L), MBS-600(R).



Notes

Based on the research of the plaque expert Stephen Smith, these large plaques are attributed to S. Moore & Co. at the Wear Pottery in Northeast England.

I bought THOU GOD on eBay in January 2019 against stiff competition. It differs from other plaques that appear to be of similar design (see no. 21.8.7, also alongside) in that it is a full one inch wider. In addition, the cherubs are from different molds, the edge is not crimped, and the back is completely flat rather than slightly dish-shaped. It has the most lovely glaze and is an impressive object, a thing of simple beauty.

I was thrilled with the THOUGH GOD plaque and for a good while left it lying on a table, where I could enjoy the light dancing on its surface. I was very lucky to be get a companion PRE-PRARE, again despite stiff competition, at Anderson Garland a mere two months later. ❀



21.8.9

Religious Plaque

Painted "The silver trumpet warbles forth In most melodious strains" and incised to the verso "If thou a wakes the Lyons with thy horns the tree in Pieces shall be torn.", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1805, L: 9.1 in., MBS-554



Notes

I wanted this fascinating plaque as well as another (no. 22.1.5) when both came to auction at Woolley & Wallis in January 2017, so I booked a phone bid, and, for extra measure, registered to bid online. A morning person I am not, so I dragged myself out of bed just after 4 a.m. that day because the two lots came up early in the sale, and I sat at my computer watching the sale and waiting for the phone to ring. When the auctioneer was but one lot away from this plaque and my phone had not rung, I realized that the auction house had goofed and I should bid online.

Sure enough, no sooner had I finished bidding on both lots than a Woolley & Wallis representative phoned, saying that he had called another number...as if that were an excuse. I was very relieved that I had registered to bid, even though the already-lofty buyer's premium was even higher. Paying extra and receiving even less service...what choice do we buyers have? That is the least of the perils of online bidding, but in Woolley & Wallis's favor is the fact that it is one of only a tiny handful of auction houses that supplies reliable condition reports, and that is worth a lot.

This plaque is molded with a pair of naked male figures blowing their horns. They flank Cybele (I think, because of the mural crown of sorts atop her head) holding a cornucopia and accompanied by two lions. The inscription on the front reads "The silver trumpet warbles forth In most melodious strains." These words are in a hymn that I can only find published in

Barton's Hymns of 1797. An incised inscription to the verso reads, "If thou a wakes the Lyons with thy horns the three in Pieces shall be torn." The origin of this inscription eludes me.

The plaque was previously in the collection of Sir Michael Codron, the acclaimed British theatre producer, and he bought it from the late London dealer Jonathan Horne. ❀

Endnotes

1. Hammond, *Village Labourer*, 197.
2. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34-35.
3. ———, 2: fig. 109.14.
4. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36-37.
5. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:30.
6. ———, *Staffordshire Figures*, 2: fig. 92.3.
7. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36-37.
8. For an example impressed “R. WOOD” see Falkner, *Wood Family*, plate IX, illustration no. 34.
9. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36-37.
10. www.matesoundthepump.com
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.



CHAPTER 22

The Classics

*Extract from "PLENTY Attending the Blessings of PEACE."
Published by W. B. Walker, 1801. © The Trustees of the British
Museum.*

BETWEEN 1760 AND 1840, A revival of the classical styles of antiquity pervaded the visual arts. Roman sculpture in particular was believed to epitomize artistic excellence, and its order and symmetry came to be reflected in everything from architecture to fashion.

In that time, those preparing for positions in the upper echelons of society studied a classical curriculum from an early age. Greek and Latin were at the core of this classical education and were considered of far greater importance than mathematics for developing intellectual reasoning. A wealthy young man traditionally completed his education with the Grand Tour, a lengthy trip around Europe in the company of a guide. Travel of this sort exposed the mind to the legacy of western civilization, and it was thought to instill an appreciation of ancient works of art.

On their journeys, successive generations acquired a taste for antiquities, and they decorated their homes and garden with original and copies of Greek and Roman sculptures. In the same vein, prints, painting, textiles, and a gamut of derivative new objects reflected society's penchant for classical aesthetics and its fascination with ancient objects that preserved the past.

In keeping the neoclassical spirit, Staffordshire potters fashioned a plethora of deities in figural form. The mythical

men and women from bygone times that feature most prominently in Staffordshire clay include the following:

- Apollo was the Greek god who epitomized male beauty. He was leader of the Muses, and, as the patron god of music, he usually holds a lyre. The Romans adopted Apollo and honored him as a major deity.
- Bacchus, the god of wine, was originally a fertility god associated with goat worship. He is typically portrayed in art attended by satyrs and naked, but for a crown of grapes and vine leaves; he may hold a thyrsus (an ivy-entwined staff topped with a pine cone), this being a fertility symbol. He is often portrayed as an infant, and his chariot may be drawn by felines or goats.
- Ceres was the Roman goddess of agriculture who personified the abundance of the earth. She has been depicted for thousands of years with a cornucopia as a symbol of plenty. As the goddess of plenty, she sometime holds a sheaf of wheat.
- Cupid was a mischievous youth who shot arrows that could inflict either desire or aversion. Artists came to portray him as a chubby cherub. Symbolically, he remains part of our modern culture.

- Cybele was the Earth Mother of Ancient Phrygia. Her cult, which spread to Ancient Greece and Rome, was characterized by frenzied worship and was associated with lions. In art, she is often shown with lions.
- Fortitude, like Prudence (below) is one of the cardinal virtues. Symbolizing strength, courage, and perseverance, she is usually portrayed as a warrior. In Renaissance art, she acquired attributes from both mythology and the Bible. The pillar at her side is derived from the Biblical hero Samson.
- Neptune was the Roman god who ruled the sea and the creatures within. He was able to cause great storms that wrecked ships. In classical art, he is usually portrayed as an elderly bearded man, often with a trident and sometimes astride a dolphin.
- Prudence was, according to Plato, one of the most important of characteristics, and Christianity later deemed prudence one of its cardinal virtues. Artists have for centuries depicted Prudence in female form, holding a mirror (implying the wisdom of self-knowledge) and a snake (from *Matthew 10:16*: “be ye wise as serpents,” with the Latin word for “wise” being “prudens”).
- Venus was the Roman goddess of love and the mother of Cupid, the god of desire and attraction. Among her attributes are dolphins, which recall her birth from the sea.



22.1.1 The Dipping of Achilles (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with under-glaze decoration, Scotland, c. 1795, H: 3.4 in., MBS-383



Notes

This classical scene depicts the moment when the sea nymph Thetis, seeking to endow her son, the infant Achilles, with immortality holds him by the ankle and dips him into the River Styx. A maiden, kneeling between a tree and the stylized river, attends Thetis. Of course, the part of Achilles's foot that is not immersed in the river remained his vulnerability.

The small size of the plaque and the naivety with which it is decorated are charming. It is so very tiny, rather like a large postage stamp, but it nestles in the hand as if it were just asking to be held.

We acquired this teeny gem from Haydn Hansell at Juno Antiques in 2010. Before coming into his stock it had passed by descent through the noted Staffordshire Wood family of potters. The reverse of the plaque bears the partial label for D. M. Wood, in whose collection it was number 23. The mold from which this plaque was derived is in the Museum of Edinburgh.✿



Achilles dipped in the Styx. Anton Raphael Mengs, c. 1759. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Galatea Escaping Polyphemus (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with under-glaze decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1790, L: 7 in., MBS-519



Notes

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* tells of the sea nymph Galatea fleeing from the giant cyclops Polyphemus, who loves her. On this plaque, Galatea rides a dolphin-drawn seashell, and Cupid, the god of Love, hovers overhead. This design is drawn from a print by Marco Dente (also known as Marco da Ravenna).

Attracted by the spotted dolphin, I bought this plaque from John Howard in April 2014, and only subsequently had the satisfaction of determining the subject and the source print. The plaque was formerly with Jonathan Horne. ❀



Galatea Escaping Polyphemus, detail. Marco Dente, c. 1510–1527, after an ancient bas relief.
© The Trustees of the British Museum.

22.1.3 Aurora with a Horse (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 6.3 in., MBS-414



Notes

This is one of the prettiest of plaques, with the horse and girl floating dreamily through the heavens. In 2011, I bought it at Northeast Auction, where it was described as Bellerophon upon Pegasus. Not so! Bellerophon is a male, and the subject here is female. Also, Pegasus is a winged horse, but here the wings are on the girl rather than the horse

A little digging revealed that Aurora, the Greek goddess of dawn, is portrayed winged. Each morning, she rode a horse-drawn chariot to lead the sun god, Helios into the heavens.

This plaque was at one point with Earle D. Vandekar (Paul Vandekar). 🌸

22.1.4

Cybele in a Tiger-Drawn Chariot

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to John Dale, Staffordshire, 1825, L: 11.5 in., MBS-533





Notes

Several classical female deities are associated with feline-drawn chariots. In glass prints of around 1800, Flora, Ceres, and Pomona are frequently seen thus. However, this figure is Cybele, who can be identified by her mural crown and veil. In classical art, she is frequently shown in a chariot drawn by lions, but to the potters of the early nineteenth century, a tiger would have been as good.

This Dale chariot group is significantly larger than the more well-known chariot groups¹ that the “Patriotic Group” pot bank made, and it has enormous WOW factor. The only other one that I know of came to auction at Doyle in around 2010. I was in New York that January and viewed it ahead of the sale. A friend had asked me to bid for him to \$17,000, and I had agreed to stand aside to handle his bid. As I held the chariot in my hands at the sale preview, Jonathan Horne arrived to view. Wanting to feel him out, I said that I wouldn’t be adding the chariot to my shelves but expected he would do it justice with his bid. After the auction, Jonathan sent me an email saying he had underbid to \$40,000, adding with his typical wry humor “Was that high enough?”

Two or so years later, that very same chariot showed up in Manhattan with the dealer Jack Seidenburg. He had bought it to enjoy but then added it to his stock at around \$100,000, with the small but necessary restoration done. He told me that as he saw it, this chariot is far rarer than a menagerie and thus worth more. I agree, but, as the market doesn’t value pottery

in that way, I thought he might own it forever. Again, I was wrong, and I heard in 2016 that the chariot sold.

I wrote Jack’s chariot up on my blog at *mystaffordshirefigures.com*, explaining the very distinctive features that support a Dale attribution. In October 2015, I got an email from a Sotheby’s New York expert, Derya Baykal, saying she had a chariot coming up for auction like the one on my blog. Of course, I initially thought she meant the smaller “Patriotic Group” chariot, which is far commoner (and to my mind quite ugly), but to my enormous surprise Sotheby’s really had another Dale chariot. It had come out of a private collection in Atlanta, and in researching it diligently, Derya had found my blog and contacted me.

The condition of the Sotheby’s chariot was even better than that of Jack’s chariot, and the enamel colors were prettier and stronger, so I, of course, was panting to bid. The Sotheby’s catalog did a lovely job of pointing out how special this figure group is.

The present example is distinguished from various other known Staffordshire chariot groups in its sculptural quality, larger size and rarity. Myrna Schkolne illustrates the only other known example in Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840, Volume 4, p. 193, fig. 196.3. She further discusses and attributes this model with confidence to John Dale in her online blog, <http://www.mystaffordshirefigures.com>, specifically in the way the base, the bocage flowers and the tigers are modelled. Although the direct print source for this group

is unknown, it is probably drawn from a contemporary source depicting one of the mythological goddesses, such as Aurora or Cybele, who have historically been similarly represented in chariots drawn by tigers or lions.²

I was thrilled to get the chariot at the low end of the estimate. Two days after the auction, I was in New York for the International Antiques Show at the Armory, and I went with John Howard to Sotheby's, where I glimpsed the chariot, which was awaiting shipping. Its beauty is overwhelming. No photo can do it justice. The woman who managed that particular sale—not a pottery expert at all—told me that the chariot had been her favorite item in the sale, and I can understand why you don't have to be a pottery aficionado to love it.

Lockson's arranged the chariot's shipping but, despite the most explicit instructions, managed to send the shipment to my old address in North Carolina. I lived with my heart in my mouth for several days before it arrived in Dallas safely. A year later, Derya was able to visit it in its new location.

Literature

For the only other recorded Dale chariot see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 196.3. ❀

22.1.5

Triumph of Bacchus, Triumph of Cybele (plaques, pair)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration (R) and enameled and copper luster decoration (L), Staffordshire, c. 1810, L across top: 9.2 in. each, MBS-602 (L), MBS-555 (R)













Notes

The Triumph of Bacchus and the Triumph of Cybele prompt two questions: What triumphs? Why this pairing?

The Roman god Bacchus, known to the Greeks as Dionysus, returned to Greece triumphantly from his travels in India and the East, where he had spread his wine culture. He came to be considered the founder of the triumphal procession, and he has been depicted thus in art from ancient times.

I can find no specific tale of triumph for Cybele, but she too is depicted, at least from the Renaissance, riding triumphantly in a chariot pulled by lions, the beasts traditionally associated with her.

As for this specific pairing, it seems we have the skilled modeler William Hackwood to thank for that. In 1770, working for Josiah Wedgwood, he modeled a jasper plaque depicting the Triumph of Bacchus, and around the same time another depicting the Triumph of Cybele. Hackwood, who was well-versed in the classics, would have been aware of the many parallels between the two deities and their cults. Both were worshiped ecstatically with strong wine and wild dancing bordering on insanity. And both were associated with nature and ferocious animals. Lions typically pull Cybele's chariot, while leopards or panthers usually draw Bacchus's.

Hackwood's Triumph of Bacchus is the direct design source for our plaque, which seems to have been copied directly from a

Wedgwood plaque. The motif shows Bacchus seated in a horse drawn chariot with his older companion and tutor, the satyr Silenus. A putto astride one of the horses carries a two-faced mask, perhaps symbolic of Janus, the god of endings and beginnings, whose presence would have marked the end of a journey and a new start.

Hackwood's design for the Triumph of Cybele was not the design source of our plaque on the same theme, and I have not yet been able to trace a source. This breath-taking plaque shows Cybele wearing a mural crown and holding a cornucopia brimming with fruit and flowers. She and a cherub are seated in a lion-drawn chariot. I never cease to be amazed at the height of the relief and believe that the pot bank that made our high-relief plaques of Charlotte and Leopold (no. 2.3.1) made this plaque, as well as its companion. All have conceptually similar borders, and all appear to have been constructed in the same unusual manner.

The Cybele plaque and I became acquainted when it made a deservedly handsome price at Christie's, South Kensington, lot 316, on December 2, 2009. While mundane objects fast fade from my memory, beautiful ones are indelibly imprinted, so I had never forgotten this plaque and was thrilled to have a shot at buying it when it came up at Woolley & Wallis in January 2017. My Pottery God was with me that day, and I procured it for less than a quarter of what it had fetched seven years previously. Such are the vagaries of an auction!

Our plaque of Cybele was previously in the collection of Sir Michael Codron, the acclaimed British theatre producer, and it was with the London dealer the late Jonathan Horne. I conclude that Jonathan, who was never hesitant to raise his paddle at auction when he perceived quality, probably bought it at Christie's in 2009 and then sold it to Michael Codron.

The Bacchus plaque popped on to John Howard's sight in June 2019, and I would not let myself buy it until I had worked out the subject! The oval Wedgwood plaque in the British Museum bearing Hackwood's design (alongside) put me out of my misery and enabled my purchase! The identical motif is on a rectangular Wedgwood plaque in the Wedgwood Museum (no. 5139) that Wedgwood made at around the same time as the British Museum's medallion.

The copper luster on the Bacchus plaque is unusual for a plaque of this period, and it has been applied lightly and unevenly over green enamels. It is more subtle than it appears under the harsh glare of photographic lighting. Both plaques measure 9.2 inches across the top and appear to be of identical size, but the measurements across the back differ. Only in photographing them did I detect that the edge of the Cybele plaque slopes inward a little, while that of the Bacchus plaque slopes outward. Thus, measured across the back, Bacchus is 9.7 inches and Cybele is only 9 inches.✿



The Triumph of Bacchus. Wedgwood & Bentley, 1776-1780. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

22.1.6

Neptune, Venus with Cupid (pair)

She twice impressed "VENUS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made by James Neale & Co., Staffordshire, c. 1795, H: 11 in. (L), 10.3 in. (R), MBS-470





Notes

Initially, I concluded that Ralph Wedgwood made these figures because *VENUS* is impressed in lettering that I have repeatedly only seen on marked Wedgwood figures. But I was wrong. Firstly, close comparison of the imprinted fonts on Wedgwood figures reveals that the letters are all the same size, whereas here the “V” on this figure is larger than the other letters. Second, the enamels on these figures are superb, and although Wedgwood enamels can be lovely, they are just not in the same league.

So who made this exquisitely beautiful pair? Importantly, the enamels are so remarkable, that they can only be compared to those on figures made by James Neale & Co. Adding my conviction that the figures are Neale, is her face, which is a Neale face. This may sound odd, but when you line up figures of women, in particular, known to have been made by the same pot bank, it sometimes happens that the faces have a strong family resemblance. The similarity is as much in the painting as the modeling. You see it with a line up of figures by Ralph Wood, Lakin and Poole, Dale, and Neale, among others.

Also of note is the blue headband, a feature that occurs repeatedly on several of my female Neale figures. The blue is distinctively bright and unlike that on, for example, my Ralph Wood figures. And then there are the spots on the dress, a decorative feature that is far from exclusive to Neale, but it is one that that pot bank frequently used.

A dealer friend tells me that he has seen the decorative crimping around the plinth (painted a soft green) on a bowl or other useful object of sorts marked Neale. I have yet to verify whether this decoration is was exclusive to Neale.

The metal trident appears to be original. I bought the pair at Bonhams Oxford in January 2013. They arrived home later that month while I was at the New York Ceramics Fair, so Ben unpacked them, and he really liked them.

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 194.4 and dust jacket. ❁



22.1.7 Neptune, Venus with Cupid (pair)

Impressed and painted "NEPTUNE &", "VENUS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,³ Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 9.7 in. (L, without trident), 9.9 in. (R), MBS-242







Notes

Nick Burton has driven many miles to add to our collection. Because English roads are very congested, he would frequently set out in the dark morning hours to avoid traffic and arrive at the auction house in time to view...and then he had to wait many more hours to bid. To say I appreciate all he has done for us—and always without complaint—is an understatement.

In this instance, Nick drove to Taunton in Somerset to bid on this pair at Lawrences. He was not the only one who made the journey, and a dealer whom he outbid was sour and angrily declared that Nick had overpaid. I might too have felt annoyed had I traveled many hours only to return home empty-handed. Admittedly, this pair was not cheap, but it certainly was a lot cheaper than it would have been in the stock of the under-bidder, who declined to speak to me for several years thereafter. This happened in 2007, when dealers were learning that the internet had made their customers potential competitors.

The shells on these figures are so very eye-catching, more so because they are painted with attention to detail. There is a double entendre of sorts in decorating the bases with shells, First, there is the obvious association of seashells with both Neptune (the sea god) and with dolphins (one of Venus's attributes). Second, the Greek poet Hesiod tells that when Uranus was castrated, his genitals were cast on the sea, and Venus was born from the foam they produced, floating ashore in a shell. The Ancients were certainly not lacking in

imagination!

Similar pairs are in the Potteries Museum (298 & 292.P.1949) and the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW229).

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 194.18–19.

For the pair in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 55. ❀

22.1.8 Venus Playing with Cupid

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 4.9 in., MBS-238



Notes

I bought this fine little figure at auction at Bonhams, Edinburgh, in December 2006. At that time, all the auction houses seemed to be coming on line, and there were plenty of buying opportunities. Although I was buying lots of figures then, they were frequently small and relatively inexpensive, and they broadened my knowledge enormously while enhancing our figure display. Now, ten years later the supply of good figures has dried up. Where have they all gone? Recently, knowing Nancy Hunt's penchant for sweet, sentimental little figures, I managed to find another example of this figure to add to the Hunt Collection.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 194.41.

For another in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 304. ❀

22.1.9 Cupid with Doves

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 7.1 in., MBS-323



Notes

Cupid has the arrows with which he is associated on his back, and he holds what probably are the doves associated with Venus, his mother. This figure is traditionally attributed to Neale, but nothing substantiates that claim. The colors are typical of the Neale-Wilson period, but any potter of that era may have made it. A similar figure is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.933-1928).

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 197.20. ❀

22.1.10 Venus and Apollo (pair)

*Painted "VENUS," "APOLLO", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810,
H: 8.9 in. (L), 8.8 in. (R), MBS-595*





Notes

Venus and Apollo are of opposite sex, yet these figures have the very same face! Ah well, there is no explaining the concept of gender in early time. I found the pair on FaceBook. The Australian dealer Barrie Catchart posted them, and I immediately bought them. I was excited because I had not previously recorded Venus from this pot bank, and I only knew of a similar Apollo from a damaged figure in my archive. When they arrived, I was bowled over by their serene beauty and gorgeous enamels--but Ben quickly killed the nasty cockroach that had joined them on their long journey from Australia!

Both figures needed a little restoration. Apollo had lost a very small object from his hand. Unfortunately, the lone Apollo of this model in my archive, as well as another blitzed example that subsequently went through auction, had the same loss, but, after much thought, a flower seemed the logical replacement. As for Venus, the top of the dolphin's tail had been incorrectly restored. In my archive, I found two Venus figures of the same form, but both had restored tails! In restoring the tail, I was guided by the mark the original tail had left on Venus's body, and I also looked at umpteen Venuses to assess how that tail would have looked originally. The result is pleasing to my usually too-picky eye!

Figures on vermicular bases of this sort are consistently of fine quality. There are a good number of them, and together with figures with certain bocage forms, they make a distinct group,

which I have yet to name. Because of certain similarities, I cannot ruled out the possibility that John Walton made them. His career spanned over thirty years, and he produced both marked and identical unmarked figures. It's quite possible that he also produced unmarked figures that have no marked counterparts. I hope time will tell. ❁

22.1.11 Venus Shielding Cupid (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with under-glaze decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 12.5 in., MBS-83





Notes

The scene on this plaque depicts a slumbering Cupid, the young god of desire and love, shielded by his mother, Venus, from the attacks of the virgin goddesses Minerva and Diana, who represent chastity and disapprove of Cupid. Minerva traditionally strikes Cupid, and here her arms are raised, ready to deliver a blow. Diana and her nymphs usually steal and break Cupid's arrows while he sleeps, and here Diana crouches, holding Cupid's quiver of arrows. Venus raises a finger to her lips to silence Minerva and Diana.

We bought this plaque from Leo Kaplan in 1994, on a trip to New York in December for the annual American Society of Anesthesiologists Convention. I am sure there is a print source for it, but I have not found it yet, nor have I seen another plaque like this. ❁

22.1.12 Cupid upon a Dolphin (plaques, pair)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, diameter 5.5 in., MBS-279



Notes

I bought these plaques from the late Aurea Carter in March 2008, and I had the perfect display spot for them on adjoining corner walls beneath a small black lacquer corner cabinet.

The theme of Cupid riding a dolphin occurs in ancient Roman art and again in medieval art. Cupid is the son of Venus, the goddess of Love; dolphins are symbols of love and the messengers of Neptune, the sea god. The subject is open to varying interpretations and perhaps at its simplest the dolphin symbolizes the fleeting nature of love.

A plaque in the Potteries Museum has the same central design as the plaque on the right (456.P.4).

Literature

For the plaque in the Potteries Museum with the same central design as the one on the right see Lewis, *Pratt Ware*, 22. ❀



Cupid riding a dolphin. Adam Fuchs, 1605. © *The Trustees of the British Museum*.

22.1.13 Ceres, Bacchus, Venus, and Cupid (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, diameter: 7.8 in., MBS-359



Notes

This plaque shows Ceres (the goddess of food, center) and Bacchus (the god of wine, left) offering food and wine to Venus (the goddess of Love) and her son Cupid (right). The subject derives from the Roman poet Terence's "Sine Cerere et Baccho, friget Venus;" this proverb of ancient times translates as "without Ceres (food) and Bacchus (wine), Venus (love) grows cold." The theme occurs in medieval paintings and prints. The plaque's design source is the pen and ink wash by the Flemish artist Pieter de Jode the Elder, 1589.

I got lucky in October 2009 at one of those very minor online auctions and this beauty cost me all of \$66, including postage! The National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland has a plaque from the same mold in under-glaze colors and incised on the back "GREENOCK POTTERY 1818."

Literature

A similar under-glaze decorated plaque is in Lewis, *Pratt Ware*, 200.

For the plaque incised "GREENOCK POTTERY 1818" see Lewis, *Pratt Ware*, 111. ❀



Bacchus, Ceres, Venus and Cupid. Pieter de Jode the Elder, 1589.

22.1.14 Neptune (bust)

Incised "G.R." and impressed "1811", lead-glazed earthenware with pink luster and enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1811, H: 13.7 in., MBS-550



Notes

When David Boyer passed through Dallas in July 2016, he had just acquired this bust of Neptune. I have usually found Neptune busts to be rather grim—especially the Ralph Wood model—but this fella was anything but. His ruddy, Santa-Claus cheeks and flesh colors play beautifully against the lustre socle.

David had forewarned me that he had this bust when we talked a few days before his visit, adding that it was marked “GR” and “1811” on the reverse. I immediately recalled a lovely and rather quirky Neptune bust similarly marked. I was instrumental in adding that bust (and its companion Hercules) to Nancy and Herbert Hunt’s collection. I have since seen a reference to another pair with that mark in an old auction catalog, and I have also recorded yet another Neptune (titled and on a quite different socle) with this mark. I have no idea who “G. R.” was, and his mark is not recorded elsewhere. As the mark is integral to the mold, I would think that the busts were made over a period of time, starting in 1811, and probably by more than one pot bank. Perhaps the initials stand for “George Rex,” to indicate manufacture in the reign of King George.

A tragedy befell this beautiful bust in October 2017. I had rinsed it off under the kitchen tap and placed it on a towel on the counter to dry. Our nine-month-old English cocker spaniel Cari (formally knowns as Sweet Caroline as her older brother is Johnny Be Goode) is a “counter surfer,” so I automatically pushed the bust and towel to the back of the counter. Clearly,

I didn’t push it back far enough, for no sooner had I turned my back than I heard a huge crash. I swung around, and the bust lay shattered on the floor. Cari, unperturbed, grabbed a jagged chunk and ran off with her treasure!

I know now what it means to be stunned! I was almost immobilized. I retrieved the stolen chunk, put Cari in her crate, and just stared at the very many pieces, not knowing what to do. I called John Howard and told him I thought I must toss it. As always, he came to my rescue with sage advice and help. “You can’t do that,” he said. He was right! I carefully collected the pieces, boxed them, and sent them to John for restoration. Financially, the exercise seemed one of folly, but at the end of my days this bust, albeit restored, will remain on this earth.

Ben and I remained mystified as to how Cari had reached the towel. Later that evening, I saw her repeat the same maneuver. The towel (black) had been on the counter (also black) just behind the dishwasher. By placing her forepaws on the dish washer handle, Cari could stretch the extra distance.

As I complete this work, the bust of Neptune has returned to us, and I am amazed at what the restorer had achieved. Oddly enough, the head was intact as was the pink luster base (barring a small chip on the corner), and all the damage was confined to the middle section, which was carefully restored.

Literature

For the Neptune bust in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past* , 301. ❀

22.1.15 Infant Bacchus Upon a Goat (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, L: 8.5 in., MBS-396



Notes

The infant Bacchus, attended by a satyr, sits atop a goat. As sometimes seen in art, he holds the ivy-entwined thyrsus that is his fertility symbol.

In 2010, I bought this plaque at auction from Roger Jones, based in the beautiful Welsh coastal town of Colwyn Bay, where we holidayed many years ago. Plas Mawr, the Elizabethan merchant's house in the town, made an indelible impression on me, and, next to Hardwicke Hall in Derbyshire, it is the loveliest historic home we have visited. 🌸

22.1.16 Bacchus in a Chariot (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, incised behind "J. Thompson/ Tamworth/ February 12th 1832", Staffordshire, 1832, L: 5.5 in., MBS-381







Notes

The precise yet hodge-podge decoration on this delicious plaque was entirely done by applying many fine, crisp little molded clay sprigs. I wonder if it was an experimental or learning piece. I bought it from Roger Deville in 2010. The plaque's maker, J. Thompson, is not recorded. Tamworth is in South Staffordshire and was an earthenware-manufacturing center in the nineteenth century. It is close to the site of today's Birmingham's National Exhibition Center and was at one point larger than Birmingham.

Bacchus in his feline-drawn chariot is identifiable by the pine-cone topped staff or thyrsus he holds aloft. Note the little cherubs' heads seemingly suspended near the top of the plaque.

The figure of the girl with her dog is Poor Maria, who derives from Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, first published in 1768. Sterne wrote, "I discovered Poor Maria sitting under a poplar—she was sitting with her elbow in her lap, and her head leaning on one side within her hand... Her goat had been as faithless as her lover; and she had got a little dog in lieu of him, which she had kept tied by a string to her girdle." While Joseph Wright of Derby's portrait *Maria with her Dog Silvio* (1781) is perhaps the best known portrayal of Maria in this pose, and a similar print was probably the design source for Staffordshire figures and the small sprig on this plaque. ❁



Maria. After Edward Francis Burney, 1788. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

22.1.17 Ceres

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Brown Base Group" pot bank,⁴ Staffordshire, c. 1795, H: 8.5 in., MBS-277



Notes

I bought this figure of Ceres from Aurea Carter in 2008. Among the four-or-so similar figures that I have recorded, there are variations in the posy in her hand and the wheat overflowing the cornucopia, the latter indicating that the wheat is a separate sprig that was not integral to the mold used for the cornucopia.

A similar “Brown Base Group” figure is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.918-1928).

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 166.12. ❀

22.1.18 Ceres (candle stick)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Enoch Wood and James Caldwell and impressed "WOOD & CALDWELL", Staffordshire, c. 1805, H: 10.7 in., MBS-455



Notes

I bought this figure of Ceres from Aurea Carter in 2012. It routinely occurs with fruit in the cornucopia, but here the top has instead been fashioned as a candle holder. I am still kicking myself for missing the opportunity to buy the companion candle stick (with the cornucopia held to the other side) at auction.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 166.17. ❀

22.1.19 Ceres

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, L: 7.7 in., MBS-297



Notes

I think this maiden represents Ceres, who, as the goddess of plenty, is sometimes shown with a sheaf of wheat. The figure is flat and unpainted on the reverse, and I remain mystified as to its purpose. Figures formed like this are so easily tipped over and broken that the few survivors are miracles of sorts. I bought this along with two other flat-backed figures (no. 22.1.43, no. 22.1.44) from Elinor Penna in July 2008 and know of only one other flat-backed Ceres, which is in the Hunt Collection.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 195.6.

For a similar figure in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 195.5; also see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 314. ❀

22.1.20 Ceres (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with under-glaze decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1800, H: 12.5 in , MBS-517





Notes

I bought this particularly bright, crisp plaque featuring Ceres from John Howard when I worked for him at the legendary New York Ceramics Fair in 2014.

A similar plaque can be seen in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1364).

Literature

For a similar plaque see Lewis, *Pratt Ware*, 208.

For another in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 277. ❀

22.1.21 Ceres, Apollo (pair)

Impressed CERES" and "APOLLO", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to Neale & Co./Wilson, Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 6 in. each, MBS-230 (L), MBS-477 (R)





Notes

The Neale & Co. pot bank, later operated by the Wilson family, made companion figures of Apollo and Ceres. Perhaps these were originally sold in pairs, but, given that they routinely occur alone, I suspect they were sold singly.

The first Neale figures that I saw in the flesh, so to speak, were those in Wynne Hamilton-Foyn's collection in the summer of 2006 (see 6.1.20 Notes), and I then started watching out for them. To this day, the Neale/Wilson enamels remain my favorites. They are consistently silky soft, lustrous, and of high quality.

I bought Ceres at an online auction at Brightwell's in 2006 and in May 2013 bought Apollo from the dealer Madelena (David and Ben Tulk) to stand with Ceres and make an assembled pair.

Similar figures are in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.929-1928, C.928-1928).

Literature

For this Apollo see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 159.13.

For this Ceres see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 166.5. ❀

22.1.22 Diana (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and lustre decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 7 in., MBS-598



Notes

When we visited the home of the dealer Bill Schaeffer in 2008, I admired this little plaque on his wall. Bill died in 2018, and we bought the plaque when it came to auction at Skinner in February 2019. A photograph does not capture the beauty of the pink luster, which beckons from across a room and transforms an otherwise mediocre object into a thing of great beauty. I love the painter's fingerprint, inadvertently placed in the paint. ❀

22.1.23 Flora, Pomona (pair)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,⁵ Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 7 in. (L), 7.2 in.(R), MBS-275





Notes

Shortly after buying our single Pomona (no. 22.1.24) in February 2008, I visited Malcolm Hodgkinson in London and bought this pair from him. He and I both suspect figures on these bases are from the “Sherratt” pot bank’s earlier years.

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 171.17–19. ❀

22.1.24 Pomona

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,⁶ Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 7.8 in., MBS-274



Notes

I bought this figure of Pomona at auction at David Lay in February 2008 and hope to be able to find her a companion Flora.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 171.21. ❁

22.1.25 Pomona

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by James Neale and impressed "NEALE & Co", Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 4.8 in., MBS-432



Notes

I kicked myself hard for missing this diminutive figure of Pomona at auction in 2011, only to have it appear on eBay shortly thereafter. It is the prettiest of Neale figures.

A similar marked figure in white jasper upon a blue jasper pedestal is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (2497-1901). Another is in the National Museum of American History, Washington, DC; it has resided there since 1901 and is still incorrectly described as Venus!

I know of no other lead-glazed example of this little Pomona and was thrilled to find her. The Neale enamels, as always, are exquisite.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs 171.28–9.

For the similar jasper figure in National Museum of American History see Edwards and Hampson, *English Dry-Bodied Stoneware*, 158. ❀

22.1.26 Flora, Pomona (pair)

widown

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1800, H: 4.9 in. (L), 5 in. (R),
MBS-321 (L), MBS-339 (R)*



Notes

I bought Pomona in November 2008 and Flora in October 2009 on eBay from the same seller, who probably sold them individually because she didn't realize they were a pair!

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 171.3–4. ❀

22.1.27 Farnese Flora

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Ralph Wedgwood and impressed "WEDGWOOD & CO.", Staffordshire, 1788-1800, H: 19.5 in., MBS-562



Notes

I first saw this fabulous lady when she came to auction in the spring of 2011. I wrote about her on my blog then for several reasons. First, she is gorgeous; second, she is unrecorded; third, I had no idea who she was and I hoped one of my readers might have the answer; and fourth, she has a maker's mark rarely seen on figures.

Figures marked WEDGWOOD are thought to have been made by Ralph Wedgwood. He was a nephew of the famous Josiah Wedgwood, and he operated his own manufactory in Burslem from 1788 to 1797. By 1797, Ralph was bankrupt. The next January, he joined the Knottingley Pottery in Ferrybridge, West Yorkshire. The partnership operating the pot bank was renamed Tomlinson, Foster, Wedgwood & Co. to reflect Ralph's involvement. Ralph was to run the pot bank, but the partnership was under capitalized and was dissolved a mere eighteen months later.

Rather than being marked WEDGWOOD in the manner of other marked Wedgwood figures, this figure is marked WEDGWOOD & CO. Perhaps Ralph Wedgwood used this very mark for the brief period that he worked the Knottingley Pottery. I have documented three figures with this mark.⁷ All are large and all stand on the same base as this one. Their consistencies suggest that they were made in the same narrow time period, perhaps the eighteen month life-span of Ralph Wedgwood's Yorkshire endeavor, or perhaps not!



Farnese Flora, John Michael Rysbrack, 1759. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

This beautiful figure sold at auction in 2011, and, although I had no idea who bought it, I did not forget it. In 2017, the figure re-appeared at auction, and I was sorely tempted. We didn't own any figures approaching this in size, but I have always admired large classical figures and consider a big figure of Fortitude marked WEDGWOOD that I added to the Hunt Collection particularly fine—finer than the Enoch Wood counterparts—so I toyed with the idea of going after this very large lady. But where was I to put her in our modestly sized house? Having decided that if all else failed, she would have to sit at the end of my desk or on the marble surround of my bathtub, I was emboldened to give her a try, so I took a deep breath and did it.

Ahead of the auction, my savvy collector friend Bob Carde and I exchanged emails about this figure, and Bob, who is a super-sleuth at for tracking down design sources, correctly suggested she portrays the marble figure known as the Farnese Flora.

The Farnese Flora is a famous ancient Roman marble that is named for the legendary Italian Renaissance collector Cardinal Alessandro Farnese. This colossal statue entered modern history in 1540, when it was found in Rome—or at least the body was, for the head, arms, feet, and plinth are relatively modern additions. It was placed in an unrestored condition in the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, alongside a statue of a female figure holding fruit and flowers. The two ladies were thought to be muses, but the figure with the fruit and flowers was renamed Flora. Then, some time between 1550 and 1561, the

damaged figure was restored to be Flora too—the two Floras were probably intended as companions for a pair of Hercules figures in the palace's courtyard.

Either at that time or at a somewhat later date, restorers retooled one side of the chiton to expose the right breast, creating a sensual affects that enhanced the statue's erotic appeal. Eighteenth-century critics later suggested the restoration as Flora had been incorrect and speculated that the figure should have been one of the Muses or Hours, or perhaps Hope, or Victory, but faced with no convincing evidence, Flora she remained. Today she can be seen in Naples's Museo Nazionale, still known as the Farnese Flora but described as a Roman copy of a Greek marble of Aphrodite.

Over the centuries, the Farnese Flora has been much admired for her proverbial beauty, and in particular the exquisite drapery. At around eleven feet tall, her grace and delicacy contrast sharply with her enormity. She has been drawn and copied at reduced scales in materials as varied as ivory, terracotta, marble, lead, and bronze.

Most famous of the derivative the Farnese Floras is John Michael Rysbrack's life-size marble copy created in the eighteenth century for the Pantheon at Stourhead. Of interest to ceramics collectors are the soft-paste porcelain figures of the Farnese Flora that the Bow factory made in the 1760-65 period, after a reduced plaster that may have derived from the terracotta model Rysbrack created for his Stourhead statue.

Perhaps the Bow figure or a plaster guided and inspired Ralph Wedgwood's work.

Today, Farnese Flora looks quite different. That's because in around 1796, her restored body parts were replaced, and she acquired a new and different head. Also, her left arm and hand holding a garland were replaced; the new hand, positioned differently, now holds a posy, which to my eye looks quite awkward.

The irony of my purchase does not escape me. A perfectionist by nature, I am arguably far too picky about restoration, which, if necessary, must be both ethical and correct. My Wedgwood Farnese Flora is in unrestored condition, but, at heart it is a copy of a statue that was not only restored but also reworked. Add to that, the statue is a Roman copy of a Greek statue. In two thousand years, will collectors want the restored and reworked Asian copies of the Staffordshire figures that currently dot the market? I hope not!

Our Farnese Flora resides happily in our home, and I remain puzzled that she has gone through auction, probably many times, without anyone pinning a name to her. I expected auction house "experts" to have had some awareness of her form, which was so celebrated in its day that umpteen images of Farnese Flora adorn the decorative arts landscape. ❀

22.1.28 Fortitude

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 6 in., MBS-597



Notes

If not Fortitude, who might this charming lady be? The symbolism of the book she holds is a mystery, but, given the broken pillar at her side, she must symbolize Fortitude. The only other example I have encountered was in the stock of the late Aurea Carter, who also thought the figure to be Fortitude. I bought the figure on Ruby Lane in 2019 .

Literature

For another see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 172.8. ❀

22.1.29 Prudence

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by James Neale and impressed "NEALE & Co", Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 7.7 in., MBS-395



Notes

Prudence, as might be expected, holds a mirror (implying the wisdom of self-knowledge) and a snake (from *Matthew* 10:16: “be ye wise as serpents,” with the Latin word for “wise” being “prudentes”).

I bought this figure from a porcelain “expert” in Germany who claimed it was perfect, but clearly the outstretched hand needed restoration, which I had done in the UK by Alan Finney, whose superb work is in a class of his own. In a private collection, I once saw a figure like this, masquerading as Flora, courtesy of a basket of flowers that a restorer had placed in the damaged hand!

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 172.1.

For another figure like this see Edwards, *Neale*, 178. ❀

22.1.30 Justice, Peace (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 8.6 in. each,
MBS-422 (L), MBS-224 (R)*





Notes

Peace is portrayed in classical art as a beautiful woman, crowned with an olive wreath and carrying a laurel branch. Renaissance art depicts Peace burning the weapons of war with her torch, and Staffordshire figure often mirror this symbolism.

Nick Burton bought Peace for us at a Moore Allen and Innocent auction in 2006. That was a sale of a small private collection, and the figure had previously been with Andrew Dando. I remain drawn to her unusual and pretty face, which, combined with the hairstyle, gives her a mid-twentieth century “look.” In 2017 for the first time I saw not one but two other examples, both with issues.

From Roman times, artists have depicted Justice holding scales to denote her impartiality; her blindfold, which was added later, has the same symbolism. She also traditionally holds a sword to signify her power. In 2011, we acquired this figure of Justice through John Howard. I was thrilled to have a companion for our Peace, and I have recorded only one other similar examples.

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 178.2, 188.2. ❀

22.1.31 Peace

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, possibly made by Enoch Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1820,
H: 6 in., MBS-379*



Notes

This putto probably symbolizes Peace. The weapons of war lie at his feet. The object that once rested in the hands may have stretched from hand to hand, touching the torso. I am unsure of the flag's significance.

I bought the figure in a damaged condition because it is the only known example, and my minor touch-ups made it pleasing enough to be saved for future generations. I think that sometime around 1860, Thomas Parr modified this model to fashion his figure of Peace, which he made to pair with a figure of War.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 188.4. ❀

22.1.32 Fortune

Painted "Fortune", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, impressed "W" and attributed to Ralph Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 11 in., MBS-454



Notes

Fortune, as a guardian patron, wears a mural crown symbolizing the walls of her city. She holds a cornucopia symbolizing plenty. Appropriately, this figure is from the same molds as the Ralph Wood figure titled Plenty.⁸

I bought this figure from Aurea Carter in 2012. Interestingly, the base beneath is formed with sharply squared sides and corners, so it is atypical of Ralph Wood bases. However, I have recorded this form of base on two other Ralph Wood figures, including the figure of Old Age in this collection (no. 18.13.1).

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 195.10. ❀

22.1.33 Minerva (bust)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and silver luster decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 12.5 in., MBS-438





Notes

Minerva, the roman goddess of Wisdom has always been my favorite classical deity. After all, who can resist a war goddess who, legend has it, was born from the head of Jupiter, fully armed? Talk about ready for action!

For me, busts have been an acquired taste, and I have only come to appreciate them in recent years. This was the first bust we bought, and I purchased it at auction in the US in 2011, with the full knowledge that the very back tip of the plume was lost. Beky Davis in the UK restored it, going to infinite pains to match the silver luster, which is a difficult task.

Of all busts, that of Minerva is undoubtedly the most beautiful in that her serene face is breathtakingly beautiful. I have little doubt that the model was first made by Ralph Wood, but others used it too, as was the custom in the Potteries then. Here, I find the the combination of red enamels and silver luster especially attractive, and Minerva's garb is generally rather fascinating. Her dress is adorned with Medusa's head because she helped slay that gorgon. She wears a snake-skin garment because Renaissance allegory associated Minerva with snakes. This is because *Matthew* 10:16 ("be ye therefore wise as serpents") associates wisdom with snakes.

Now, in 2017, I am determined to assemble a good collection of busts, but that is easier said than done. The Hunt Collection's assemblage of busts is inspirational, and I intend trying to do as well. Busts have a certain presence, a "thereness," as if the

people portrayed have silently glided through the centuries, bearing silent witness to the evolving world while remaining unchanged themselves.

Literature

For this bust see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 200.107. ❀

22.1.34 Urania (watch stand)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1805, H: 9.7 in., MBS-337



Notes

I bought this figure of Urania, the goddess of Wisdom, at auction at Michaan's in April 2009. I loved it then, and when another turned up several years later, I was happy to be able to add it to the Hunt Collection, which has a particularly fine collection of watch stands, most of which are unique. A similar figure is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.976-1928).

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 193.2 and dust jacket.

For a similar figure in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 145.

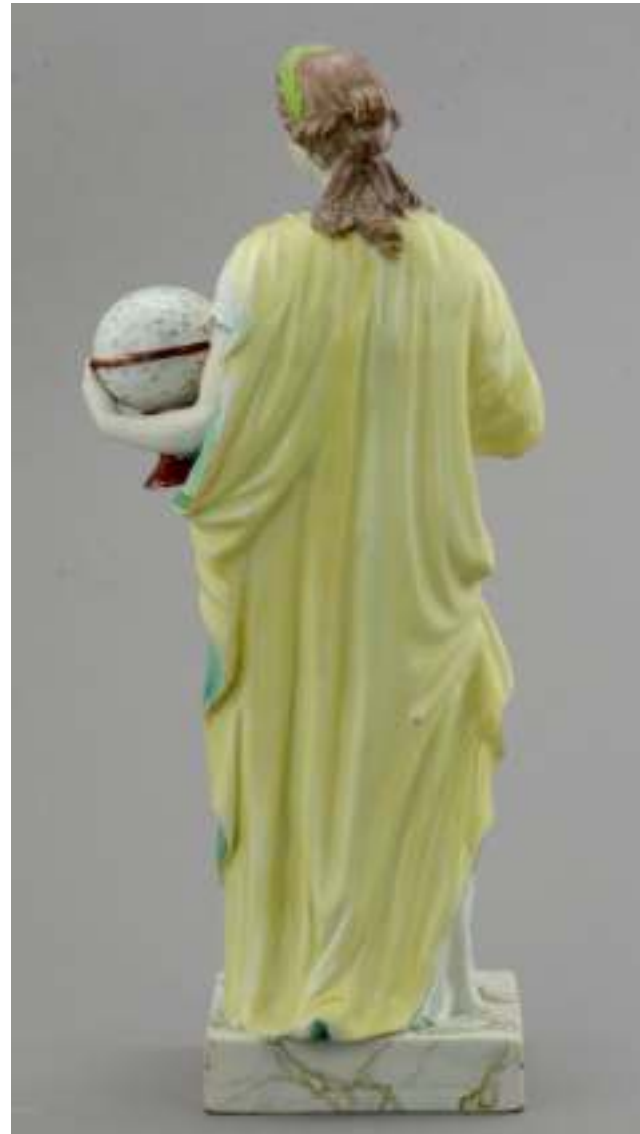
For a similar figure titled *THE GODDESS OF TRUTH* see Earle, *Earle Collection*, 168. ❀



Urania. Crispijn de Passe the Elder (1590–1637). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

22.1.35 Urania

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to Lakin and Poole, Staffordshire, 1791-1795, H: 11.8 in. , MBS-611



Notes

We acquired this figure of Urania in March 2021, and it was one of two purchases we made that year. By then, I only felt the need to own figures that added to my knowledge base or simply blew me away. This serenely beautiful Urania fell into the latter category.

I bought Urania from the Potteries Auctions, and I like to think that she had not left Staffordshire since she was made more than two centuries ago. She can be attributed to the short-lived Lakin & Poole partnership, which operated between 1791 and 1795. Lakin & Poole figures are readily recognizable. They are exceptionally well modeled and share common facial features, including puffy cheeks (an undiagnosed case of mumps?) and protruding eyes (thyroid disease?). Titling, when present, is specific to Lakin & Poole.

To my mind, the Lakin & Poole figures are the most well-modeled and loveliest of all early Staffordshire figures, yet they, like most of the earliest figures, are not particularly popular with collectors, which is a great shame.

I have only seen one other example of this figure, which I spotted on Portobello Road many years back. The enamels were too “chewed” for my taste, but I told a collector friend about her, and he promptly acquired her.

This figure strongly resembles our Ralph Wood figure of Fortune, but then the two were made in the same period of

time, so that is not surprising. She is after a second century Roman marble restored to be Urania that today stands in the Vatican.

Literature

For a similar figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 193.4. ❀



Second-century Roman marble restored as Urania, Vatican Museum.

22.1.36 Muses (2)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and pink luster decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 15.1 in., MBS-534





Notes

Mythology tells that Zeus and Mnemosyne slept together for nine consecutive nights, thus creating the nine muses, who personified knowledge and the arts. Ancient societies venerated them, and they remain part of modern western culture.

These two muses are identical figures rather than a pair, but I believe they have stood together all their lives. I was smitten when I saw them with John Howard in New York as I helped him set up for the 2015 International Antiques Show, and I bought them. The pink luster glowing down their backs is simply glorious, and a picture just cannot do it justice. There is something about the way these two ladies look at each other. Who could separate them? No other example is known.

I remain mystified as to whom these ladies portray. The closest I can come is a statue in the Capitoline Museum, Rome, described as a “statue of a priestess or muse from a Hellenistic original.” It once stood in Hadrian’s villa. The museum notes “the head is ancient but does not belong to the statue, which in reality showed a male Egyptian priest holding a canopic jar.” Seems even in ancient times restorers got it wrong! Did a print or plaster of this statue inspired these luster ladies?

When I purchased these figures, they were the largest we owned. Very large figures had seemed ill-suited to the scale of our home of thirty-two years in North Carolina. Our Dallas home, on the other hand, has very high ceilings, so large ❀



Statue of a priestess or muse from a Hellenistic original. © *Capitoline Museum*.

22.1.37 Neoclassical Woman (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 7 in., MBS-461



Notes

This curious face, presumably that of a muse, reminds me of the two large muses in our collection (no. 22.1.36), but I am not sure if there is any connection. I bought it from Martyn Edgell. He apparently acquired a pair and split them, unfortunately having sold one by the time I bought this one. I hope someday to reunite the two. ❀

22.1.38 Putti and Lion (plaque)

Lead-glazed earthenware with under-glaze decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1800, L: 7.8 in., MBS-143



Notes

I bought this plaque from Paul Vandekar at my first New York Ceramics fair in around 2002. Just this year, 2017, Paul posted his photo of it on Facebook because it is one of his old favorites.

A cupid atop a lion's back occurs in classical imagery dating back to Roman times. I believe it conveys the theme of the power of love, or "love Conquers All" ("omnia vincit amor" from Virgil's *Eclogue*). This same scene appears on a Wedgwood jasper plaque in the Buten Collection, which was modeled in 1776 after a carved gem.^{9*}



Print by Wenceslaus Hollar after Giulio Romano, 1652. *Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum.*

22.1.39 Putto with Basket

Impressed "BASKET BOY", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Blue Group" pot bank,¹⁰ Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.3 in., MBS-457



Notes

I was especially pleased to buy this figure from Andrew Dando in August 2012, not only for its quality but also for its distinctive bocage leaves. The reverse of each leaf has two tiny leaves added to the mid-line of an otherwise conventional seven-leaflet fern frond, a feature that is specific to “Blue Group” figures, as Malcolm Hodgkinson first observed.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs 197.48–49. ❀

22.1.40 Girl Putto

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 3.8 in., MBS-160



Notes

In June 2003, Ben and I were in London and we met with our long-time dealer friends Ray and Diane Ginns at Portobello Road, where they stood each Saturday. Ray and Diane were no longer prepared to mail our purchases to us, so, rather than use a shipper, we collected our “stash” of recent acquisitions from them. Diane had this small figure in stock but had just dropped it and put a fine hairline in the base; understandable annoyed with herself, she wanted to see it gone—and £50 did it!

I always handle this humble figure with sadness, because, to my mind the hairline symbolizes a fracture that, unbeknown to me, had developed in our relationship. This was the last time we all were together.

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 253; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 197.38. ❀

22.1.41 Putto with Spyglass

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,¹ Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.1 in., MBS-249



Notes

This plump putto holds a spyglass in his raised hand and what seems to be a magnifying glass in the other. The significance of these objects remains a mystery.

I was outbid on this figure on eBay in early 2007, only to find it in Andrew Dando's stock shortly thereafter.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 197.57. ❀

22.1.42 Putto with Spyglass

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,¹² Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.3 in., MBS-210



Notes

Like a similar cherub in our collection (no. 22.1.41), this figure holds a spyglass in one hand and a magnifying glass in the other. I was pleased to find this example in the “Sherratt” turquoise palette, and with the bocage associated with that palette. I think the turquoise palette was one of this pot bank’s earlier variations, and it is especially attractive

I bought this putto from Aurea Carter in December 2005. I had first met Aurea at an early New York Ceramics Fair. As I strolled through her booth, she asked me to please mind her stock because she needed to go the ladies room. As she didn’t know me at all, I thought that was very trusting!

Aurea lived in London, and, in time, the internet facilitated seeing her stock. She had very classical English taste and loved porcelain as much as pottery. Over the years, I purchased several things from her, and we had some lovely evenings together in London. Aurea always appeared to be in a perpetual state of disorder, but she was as sharp as a tack. I am not so sure about her driving though, and I well recall careening through London late one night in her little car, Aurea bemoaning that she couldn’t see a thing and recounting inadvertently backing down a bank the previous week. I closed my eyes as we drove over Westminster Bridge!

Aurea died in 2017, after a battle with pancreatic cancer fought with great bravery. She worked to the very end, and all who knew and loved her miss her.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 197.59–60. ❁

22.1.43 Putti Embracing

Lead-glazed earthenware with gilded and enamel decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 3.4 in., MBS-295



Notes

I bought group this along with two other “flat-backed” figures from Elinor Penna in July 2008 (nos. 22.1.19, no. 22.1.44). At that time, I was photographing collections obsessively to help me learn, and I traveled to Long Island to capture images of Elinor’s significant stash.

The same motif of embracing putti appears on the sides of a dovecote in Arnold and Barbara Berlin’s Collection,¹³ as well as on a money box in our collection (no. 24.1.5).

I have found a reference in the literature to this motif representing Harmony, while a similarly styled one in our collection portraying two putti frolicking (no. 22.1.44) is said to represent Strife. I am unconvinced and can find no classical source for these interpretations. However, I have recorded a round plaque with this motif in the center, and the title “LOVE” is impressed beneath. The companion plaque depicting two naked putti (one holding flowers and the other playing a flute) is impressed “MIRTH”.

Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 138.20.

For a similar group see Halfpenny, *English Earthenware Figures*, 211. ❀

22.1.44 Putti Frolicking

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 4.5 in., MBS-296



Notes

This figure group is flat and unpainted on the reverse, and I bought it from Elinor Penna together with two others (no. 22.1.19, no. 22.1.43) in June 2008. I am still mystified as to the purpose of any of these flat-backed objects. They are much too light to support anything, so perhaps they were simply intended to be pretty.

I think a print titled *Infancy sporting with Love*, after Anthony van Dyck, may have suggested this design. I have found a reference that calls this group “Strife” and pairs it with another dubbed “Harmony” (see no. 22.1.43), but I can find no reason for either titling, nor can I find design sources supporting them. Admittedly, the two groups may be intended as companions because they can be found on similarly decorated bases, but so can other small flat-backed putti figures of this type.

Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 197.80. ❀



Infancy sporting with Love. After Anthony van Dyck, 1675–1730. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Endnotes

1. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 4:193–194.
2. Sotheby's New York, October 2015, lot 590.
3. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
4. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:31.
5. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
6. Ibid.
7. The other marked figures portray Cupid with Eros (the Victoria and Albert Museum [3584-1901]) and Fortitude (the Hunt Collection).
8. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 4: fig. 166.9.
9. Meteyard, *Wedgwood Trio*, 224.
10. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:29.
11. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
12. Ibid.
13. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 3: figs. 113.1–2.



Extract from "Neptune Introducing the four Quarters of the World to Commerce." Published by J. Hinton, 1803. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

CHAPTER 23

The Seasons, Elements, and Quarters of the World

FROM ROMAN TIMES, ARTISTS HAVE paid tribute to the seasons of the year in their works. In the classical tradition, the seasons were represented by Flora or Venus (spring), Ceres (summer), Bacchus (autumn), and Vulcan or Boreas (winter).

In the eighteenth century, there was significant artistic interest in the seasons because of James Thomson's "Seasons," four poems each named for a season, which were first published as a complete edition in 1730. Frequently embellished with elegant engravings, these poems became perennially popular. As figures, the Seasons are my particular favorites. ❀

23.1.1 The Four Seasons (set)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Walton and impressed "WALTON", Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 9 in. each, MBS-243









Notes

This is the only recorded set of Walton Seasons. The figures are after the prints below, and our journey to owning them follows a long and twisted path. It started, I guess, in 1991, when we bought a lone Walton figure of Spring in the yellow dress (no. 23.1.2) from Ray and Diane Ginns. Not too long after, Ray told us that he had underbid a complete set of marked Walton Seasons with bocages. The years rolled by, and I did not see another marked Walton Season, aside from a lone bocage figure of Autumn in the Brighton and Hove Museums.

In 2004, when I was working on *People, Passions*, the dealer John Read contacted me. John lived in Ipswich and was, I believe, a teacher of woodworking in the local school. He was also a dealer who did regional and weekend fairs. I visited him in Ipswich one time when I traveled up to see Griselda Lewis in nearby Woodbridge, and I remember going through his photos of old stock and being amazed at what had passed through his hands. Anyway, John wrote to me saying that he knew a collector to whom he had sold something very special that should be in my book. John—or, more accurately, his wife Maureen—then photographed these figures, and sent me the pictures. Imagine my delight at seeing this complete set of Walton Seasons for the first time! As the set of Seasons that Ray Ginns had *not* bought had been at auction in John's neck of the woods, I believe these are one and the same. To this day, I know of no other marked Walton Seasons, aside from those mentioned here.



Autumn, Winter and Spring, Summer. Reverse-painted print applied to glass, c. 1800.

Just before *People, Passions* was published, Michael Dace, the owner of the Seasons, contacted me directly. It must have been in 2005. Michael was an older gentleman who lived in Lichfield, just north of Birmingham. I arranged to go and see his collection and take better photos of the Seasons. My friend Nick Burton came to my rescue with the wheels and extra hands for the visit. Michael lived alone in one of those boring detached houses. He had separated from his wife Audrey many years previously and the house sadly needed a woman's touch. Audrey had at one time dealt in Staffordshire, probably as another of the many part-time dealers that populated England in past decades, but when I first met Michael she lived in France. Michael's collection had a good amount of Victorian, but I was able to admire and take pictures of marked Wedgwood figures, as well as two tiny Walton spill vases, which I included in *People, Passions*. And of course the Seasons! The process was not without drama. As Nick pulled out the extension cord needed for my lights, Greta, Michael's German Shepherd, leaped into action, barking aggressively. "She does that when I want to plug in the vacuum," said Michael.

In Michael's home, the Seasons were displayed the last place you might imagine: one was on each corner of the bathtub surround. As I believe the tub was never used, they were probably quite safe...but not safe enough, given how special they are. Michael said he was going to leave them to the Potteries Museum, and my heart literally sank at the thought of them being stowed at the back of a gloomy cupboard in an even gloomier

room. And at the end of Miranda Goodby's days at the Museum, would anyone even know what they were?

In the next few years, I got to know Michael and became fond of him. We had long phone chats about figures he had seen, and his recall was impressive. One day, I hesitantly broached the subject of the Seasons, saying that if he ever considered selling, I would like to buy. He said that he didn't need the money, but he longed to own a Tee Total group and would trade the Seasons for a Tee Total. It took me six months to find a Tee Total—and that was impressively quick. If I had that quest now, it might well take ten or more years. As luck had it, Jonathan Horne had a fine example at the New York Ceramics Fair in 2007, and he took it back to England, where Nick collected it and exchanged it for the Seasons. It was meant to be. My Pottery God had looked out for me once more.

The Seasons are, of course, not without restoration, but that is to be expected. The most egregious flaw was the lad standing alongside Summer. He was completely made up. It took me till 2014 to find a replacement. I bought a figure group of Summer on a square base in deplorable condition...but the lad was fine! Of course, to get it, I had to buy a lot containing several dismal figures, but that is how these things go. I sent both figure groups to John Howard, who, as always, came to my rescue and had the restoration done. This to my mind is the most ethical form of restoration, and at the end of my days I will have left the set in better shape than I found it.

I marvel at how many dealers have been involved with these figures, just in my time. Sadly, Michael Dace is no longer with us. I sensed his frailty when we met at Birmingham's NEC (National Exhibition Center) antiques show in around 2008, and a little after that he and Audrey reunited. She promptly whisked him out of his house into what sounded like a lovely older house in Shropshire, and every time I called after that I got Audrey rather than Michael. He had memory issues, and I am thankful that he was not alone in his final years.

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 155.3–6; also *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 311. ❀

23.1.2 Spring

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Walton and impressed "WALTON", Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8.8 in., MBS-52



Notes

We bought this figure group of Spring in November 1991 from Ray and Diane Ginns. Although the collection number is 52, we had only a small shelf of figures at that stage, most of the lower numbers being attached to Tobies and to other ceramic objects that we have since sold. The fan-like quasi-bocage behind Spring continues to fascinate me, and I think that for Walton this was a variant of a traditional bocage that he tried early in his career. I have not seen another marked Walton figure like this, although this structure does occur on other unmarked figures of Seasons.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 155.7 and dust jacket; also Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 312. ❁



23.1.3 The Four Seasons (set)

Impressed beneath "WINTER", "SUMMER", "SPRING", "AUTUMN", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by David Wilson and impressed with "G" a crown, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 5.5 in. max., MBS-363







Notes

I first spied this set on Jonathan Horne's stand in New York, but they sold as I dithered over them. In 2010, no more than two years later and shortly before Jonathan died, the set came to auction at Doyle—those were tough financial times and perhaps their owner had to sell—and I bought it for less than half Jonathan's price. I have only seen one other set, an assembled one, with the Wilson mark.

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 155.30-31. ❀

23.1.4 Spring, Winter (pair)

Impressed beneath "SPRING", "WINTER", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by James Neale and impressed "NEALE & Co.", Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 5.5 in. max., MBS-591



Notes

Neale figures are my favorites. The silkiness of the glaze cannot be matched, and identical figures made just a few years later by James Neale's successor, David Wilson, fall a little short. I long to own a full marked set of Neale Seasons but, as I have yet to see one, I have resolved to assemble one on my own. I probably will never achieve this goal, but these little figures, bought on eBay in 2018, give me enormous pleasure just as they are.

A similar marked Winter is in the Potteries Museum and a similar marked Spring is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (414:1191-1885)

Literature

For a marked Winter in the Potteries Museum see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 155.22.

For a marked Spring in the Victoria and Albert Museum see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 155.26. ❁

23.1.5

The Four Seasons (set)

Painted "WINTER", "SUMMER", "SPRING", "AUTUMN", lead-glazed earthenware with pink luster and enameled decoration, made by Dixon and Austin and impressed "DIXON AUSTIN & Co", Northeast England, c. 1825, from left H: 9.4 in., 9.3 in., 8.6 in., 8.7 in., MBS-349





Notes

I bought this set at Northeast Auctions in August 2009, from the collection of Arthur and Mary Louise (Wheezie) Gutman. It was formerly in the James H. MacHarg collection, which sold at Sotheby's London, February 3, 1976. A similar set is in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. All four bases are marked in the same manner

A curious thing about the Dixon, Austin Seasons: if not for the titles, I would have thought Summer and Autumn should be Autumn and Summer respectively. Whereas Summer holds wheat and a scythe in nearly all other versions of the Seasons, here she holds grapes, which are traditionally the attribute of Autumn. On the other hand, Autumn holds wheat and a scythe, the traditional attributes of Summer. All very confusing!

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 155.42–46.

For a similar set in the Dr. Warren Baker collection see John and Baker, *Old English Lustre Pottery*, plates 1, 81;

For a similar set in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art see Taggart, *The Frank P. and Harriet C. Burnap Collection*, 185. ❀

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made by Enoch Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1800, H: 7.4 in., MBS-3



Notes

Whereas our first pottery purchase was a Toby jug in June 1985, our first figure purchase was this small figure of Winter, which came our way a day or two later.

That summer, we took our first trip to the UK, taking with Deborah, Steven, and Andrea. This entailed lugging all the equipment a one-year old needs, but somehow it seemed effortless. For our first week, we based ourselves in Wells, near Bath, and explored the surrounding areas. In those not-so-long-ago days, every village had an antique shop or two, and I was armed with a big, hard-backed guide book that detailed each shop's focus.

Scaramanga Antiques, which specialized in pottery and needle work, was on our Cotswolds itinerary, and Ben sat in the car with the children while I popped in and bought this figure. I recall it being £90, which was quite a lot at the time for what I now know to be a relatively common figure, but back in the 1980s few yet knew the ordinary from the extraordinary. Since then, pottery has become like fine art, and there is a deep divide between rare figures and the rest.

A similar figure is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.899D-1928).

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 312; also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 155.71. ❀

23.1.7 Winter, Spring, Autumn (3)

*Lead-glazed stoneware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1795, from left: H: 7 in., 7.3 in., 7.4 in.,
MBS-405, MBS-255, MBS-374*



Notes

I acquired these figures over several years. Spring came first, bought from Andrew Hartley in Yorkshire in 2007, and the other two figures were eBay “wins.”

At one point, I owned one more figure in this set: a figure of Winter, titled in uppercase script consistent with that found on Ralph Wood figures. I sold it to a collector who has a titled Summer in this series as well as another of Autumn incorrectly titled “SPRING.”

I acquired these figures out of an academic interest: the line bands three sides of the base only, a feature found exclusively and consistently on Ralph Wood figures with lines painted on their bases. All have stoneware bodies, and I suspect they were an experiment by a pot bank that also produced pottery figures from the same molds. Ralph Wood used a range of bodies, so perhaps he made these figures, perhaps not, but I do think that they were potted in the late eighteenth century because the green appears to lack chromium, which was only used in the manufacture of that color after 1805.

The presence of blue lines on the bases of all these figures has piqued my curiosity because I have only encountered blue lines on a small handful of other figures, most of which have similar stoneware bodies. Significantly, I have recorded them on Ralph Wood figures; particularly noteworthy among them is a figure of Neptune with the impressed Ralph Wood number

“79” beneath. In other words, some long-gone painter in Ralph Wood’s pot bank liked to use blue to paint lines on bases now and then!

Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 155.92--96. ❀

23.1.8 Summer, Autumn (pair)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,¹ Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 7.5 in. (L), 7.2 in. (R), MBS-236 (L), MBS-574 (R)



Notes

I discovered this gorgeous figure of Summet at auction at Anderson Garland in November 2006. She is of the caliber of the fabulous “Sherratt” *Land Lord* and *Land Lady* in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1473, 1473A)² and is one of my favorite figures. Note the ties painted on the back of her dress.

At the time, it blew my mind that I had only been able to record this lone “Sherratt” Season. Where were the companion Seasons? It took me until 2018 to find the companion Autumn, with the help of eBay. Like Summer, he is of fine quality, and I live in hope of finding Winter and Spring before my time is done.

Literature

For Summer see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 155.99–100. ❁

23.1.9 The Four Seasons (set)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made by the "Blue Group" pot bank,³ Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 6.8 in. max., MBS-507





Notes

I helped Malcolm Hodkinson complete this set, after spotting the figure of Summer with Elinor Penna in 2008. In the fall of 2013, when Malcolm decided to pare his large collection, I asked him to part with these figures. I have yet to see another set, although I have noted one or two examples of Winter, and a example of Summer is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.948-1928).

Literature

For Spring, Autumn, Summer see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 144.101–103.

For a similar figure of Winter see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 155.104. ❀

23.1.10 Autumn, Summer (pair)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made at Leeds and she impressed "LEEDS POTTERY",³ Leeds, Yorkshire, c. 1795, H: 6.1 in. (L), 5.9 in. (R), MBS-596







Notes

These figures with typical Leeds faces represent the seasons Autumn and Summer. I know of such Leeds figures only from the photograph of a full set of Seasons depicted in black and white in Peter Walton's *Creamware and Other English Pottery at Temple Newsam House, Leeds*. I assume that set is still secluded in obscurity somewhere within Leeds Museum.

These rarest of figures came up in a mixed lot of seven figures at Cheffins in January 2019, and it took a village to acquire them! I recognized them for what they were, but hesitated to incur the cost of shipping five unwanted figures (some quite large) so as to procure these two. Fortunately, a good collector friend came to my rescue. We bought the lot for a negligible price, he kept the extra figures, and he dropped off these two Seasons with David Boyer, who sent them on to me with the help of Mike Smith in Texas!

To my mind, the silky glaze that has melded with the soft enamels make these figures a joy to both behold and touch. Nothing brash, harsh, and glassy here. Rather, the feel is very like that of the Neale figures of the early 1780s, and I suspect that these Leeds figures are also that early.

The detail in the modeling is impressive. The folds in his clothing and the wheat in his hand are crisp and detailed, and those teeny grapes in her outstretched hand are something of a miracle.

Literature

For the set at Temple Newsam House see Walton, *Creamware and Other English Pottery at Temple Newsam*, 224-225. ❁

23.1.11 Summer

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1800, H: 6.9 in., MBS-599



Notes

I loved this lanky lass the minute I spotted her on eBay early in 2019. The appeal was more than those perennially popular yellow enamels. Rather it was her lugubrious expression and that plunging neckline, both of which I had seen once before in a partial set of three female Seasons, all with distinctive Ralph Wood features. I wish I had bought those “sister” Seasons, which were in Andrew Dando’s stock.

This figure does not display a single Ralph Wood attribute, so I suspect another potter made her after Wood’s death using one of his molds. As for which Season she is, that gets sticky and is open to interpretation. The attributes held by the Wood trio are a little confusing, and I suspect this figure is Autumn or perhaps Summer

Literature

For the companion Seasons see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 155.63.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN CESARE RIPA'S *Iconologia* established the personifications of the four classical elements, Water, Fire, Earth, and Air. Water holds fish, Fire holds a flaming torch, Earth has a spade, and Air holds a bird.

Today, the elements in figural form only rarely are found in sets. The figures probably were sold individually in their time, but patient collectors can assemble four matching figures into a set. ❁

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Ralph Salt and impressed "SALT", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 7.1 in., MBS-180



Notes

I don't find figures of the Elements nearly as appealing as figures of the seasons, so I have rather neglected them. Nick Burton bought this graceful lady for me at Gorringes in June 2004, and she is as pretty as can be. Although marked SALT Elements are not that unusual, I have not found other untitled SALT Elements, which is strange. This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 262; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 153.38. ❁

Impressed "AIR", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by David Wilson and impressed with "G" and a crown, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 6.7 in., MBS-523



Notes

How I wish I had been able to include in my books this little figure, the only known example of a Neale/Wilson element. I am sure that this pot bank made all four companion Elements, but this lone survivor is a reminder of how very many figures have been lost over times. I bought her, despite her poor condition on eBay in 2014. Because of its condition a figure like this is quite “uncommercial,” as the trade says, but I felt compelled to own it so as to record its existence. ❀

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, porcelain factories introduced allegorical representations of what were then perceived as the four quarters of the world: Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. Earthenware personifications are among the rarest of figures, and the few others that I have noted have consistently been damaged or extensively restored. ❁

23.3.1 Europe

Painted "EUROP", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 6 in., MBS-372



Notes

Nothing thrills me more than finding unrecorded figures, so I was very excited to buy this rare little figure from Andrew Dando in April 2010. The bocage is not broken. Rather, it was damaged in manufacture and the stump was glazed and painted over at that time.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 154.1. ❀

Endnotes

1. Hodkinson, Sherratt?; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
2. Schkolne, *People, Passions*, 161; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1: fig. 29.22; Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 285.
3. Hodkinson, Sherratt?; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.



CHAPTER 24

Other Figures and Objects

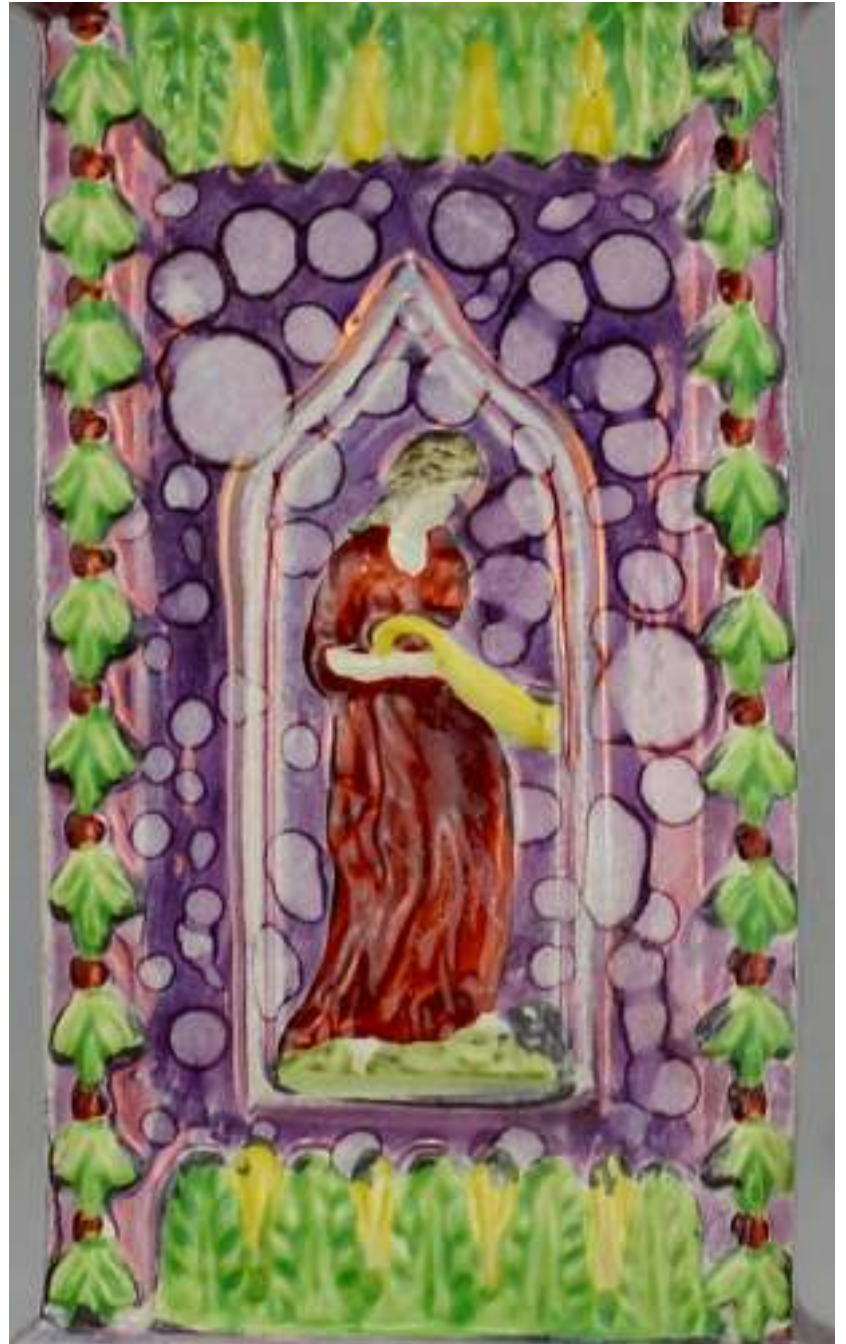
Extract from “A COGNOCENTI contemplating ye Beauties of ye Antique.” James Gillray, 1801. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

24.1.1

Watch Stand

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and luster decoration, made by Dixon & Austin and impressed "DIXON AUSTIN & Co", North East England, c. 1825, H: 10.9 in., MBS-412





Notes

I hunted for a pink luster watch stand for a good while and was frustrated by my difficulty in finding one with an unbroken clock and original finials. Restoration on pink luster is tricky, so it is best avoided. And unrestored luster is just glorious.

We acquired this watch stand at auction from Richard Opfer in Mary 2011. Later, Nancy Hunt wanted one, and I managed to procure another privately for the Hunt Collection.

I am always amused by the childrens' very deep skulls--almost as if each has a head and a half! As is typical of Dixon & Austin watch stands, the factory mark is impressed on the front lip of the base, and two holes on the lip facilitate securing the watch stand to the mantel or table. Placed in this manner, it served as a small clock, allowing the owner to use his costly watch thus when he was at home.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 198.25.

For another in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 145. ❀

24.1.2 Watch Stand

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, L: 8.3 in., MBS-158



Notes

We bought this unique and wacky watch stand from Ray and Diane Ginns in early 2003. They were offered it on Portobello Road, but before committing they called to see if we wanted it at a price that included their commission. I suppose they were afraid that if we passed on it, it would sit unsold in their stock because their customer base was not large.

Watch stands often have design quirks. In this example, a little hole at each end of the top platform accommodates the t-bar normally at the end of the watch chain, thereby securing the watch in place.

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

Literature

For this watch stand see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 176; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 199.44.

For a related watch stand in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 143. ❀

24.1.3

Girl Resting

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,¹ Staffordshire, c. 1825, L: 3.9 in., MBS-413



Notes

This figure, bought on eBay in May 2011, is, despite its great age, as crisp and bright as if it were made yesterday. The garlands of flowers on the base are as sharp as can be and are “Sherratt signatures” in that they are specific to the “Sherratt” pot bank.

The detail in small figures can be amazing. In this case, note the bracelet on her right arm.

I have not discerned the significance of this figure model, but perhaps there was none and it simply appealed to the taste of those times.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 198.3. ❁

Lead-glazed earthenware with enamel and gilt decoration, made at Leeds and impressed "LEEDS POTTERY", Yorkshire, c. 1785, H: 7.2 in., MBS-508



Notes

When my fellow collector Malcolm Hodkinson decided to pare his collection, I asked him to sell this marked Leeds figure to me, which he did in 2013.

The lady has typical Leeds facial features, and the low, leaf-studded support is only found on Leeds figures. The out-stretched hand, is, of course restored. The only other example I know of is in the British Museum (1938.0314.4.CR); the hand on that figure, although damaged, may be original, but it offers no clue as to the figure's identity.

It has been sPomona

Literature

For the similar figure in the British Museum see Towner, *English Cream-coloured Earthenware*, plate 56.

For a similar figure, see Rackham, *English Pottery*, plate CVIII, fig. 196.

For the male falconer in the Leeds Museums & Galleries see Towner, *English Cream-coloured Earthenware*, plate 57.

For the male harvester see Towner, *Creamware*, 221. ❀

24.1.5 Money Box

*Lead-glazed earthenware with transfer-printed and enameled decoration, transfer-printed beneath
"Indian Sports 38", Staffordshire, c. 1835, L: 5.3 in., H: 3.8 in., MBS-307*





Notes

This money box is printed in black with an Indian Sports pattern, and the reverse is decorated in the same manner as the front. Two spaniels and a motif of kissing children are applied atop.

We have in this collection a similar flat-backed figure of kissing children mounted upright on a base (no. 22.1.43), and I bought this money-box because of its connection to that figure and to the dove-cote in the Berlin Collection with the same motif applied.²

We acquired this money box at auction in the fall of 2008, and the listing suggested that Charles Meigh made it. Note that there are two money slots, one larger than the other. This I don't quite understand. Surely the larger slot would have accommodated both large and small coins? Using this money box was a one-way street: there is no way of removing the coins without smashing the box!

I suspect this object was a marriage or betrothal gift, so I contemplated giving it to our daughter Andrea who became engaged at the time we bought it in fall 2008, but she, like our other children, does not particularly enjoy old objects. ❀

24.1.6

Roger Giles (pepper pot or hair pin holder)

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,³ Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.7 in., MBS-237



Notes

Crudely comical figures of a squatting gentleman formed as a pepper pot or hat-pin holder are said to represent Roger Giles, a Devonshire schoolteacher who reportedly advertised on a signboard that he sold fresh eggs “new laid by him every day.” The date of the advertisement is not known, but the existence of pre-Victorian Roger Giles pots places the otherwise-undated Roger Giles yarn into the pre-Victorian era.

Roger Giles figures can be unattractive and rather disgusting, more so as they were made for the cheap end of the market. I wasn't sure I even wanted to own one, but seeing a “Sherratt” example changed my mind because the “Sherratt” pot bank managed to imbue an otherwise-crude figure with humor and charm. I hunted long and hard to find this little man, and I acquired him at auction at Rosebery's in late 2006.

Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 151.1. ❀

Commemorative Jug

Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by T. Locker and impressed beneath "T. LOCKER 1770", possibly Derbyshire, 1770, H: 6.5 in., MBS-420





Notes

In 1912, Frank Falkner published his seminal work, *The Wood Family of Burslem*, which explored one of Staffordshire's most influential family of potters.⁴ Included in the book are photographs of a creamware jug impressed beneath "T. Locker 1770". Although this jug is not the handiwork of any Wood family member, Falkner included it because it was a treasured object that had been passed down from generation to generation in the family—in Falkner's words this was an "heirloom jug"—and in 1912 it was still in the hands of a family member.

The jug's most eye-catching feature may be the first lines of the verse boldly painted on the front:

*No Art
With Potters, Can
Compare, we Make our
Pots of what we Potters
Are*

Today, these oft-repeated words are familiar to pottery collectors. Although the verse's origins are unknown, it was probably quite well established by 1770 because the same inscription is on a scratch blue salt-glaze puzzle jug dated 1766.^{5SWSW}

The inscription on the jug continues in smaller script:

*When this you see
Remember me
Tho many miles
We diftant be*

The phrase forming the first two lines of this ditty, "When this you see remember me," is still in use today⁶ and can be

traced to the anonymous *Love Posies* published circa 1596. It soon came into popular use and was inscribed on tokens of remembrance, ranging from rings intended for sweethearts⁷ to tokens that convicts sentenced to transportation to Australia engraved with messages of affection for loved ones.⁸ By the later eighteenth century, the full ditty painted on the jug was not uncommon on tea wares.⁹

Of particular interest are the initials "R" and "W" painted to either side of the spout. These confirm that this jug's initial owner was indeed a member of the Wood family. But who was the mysterious RW who acquired this jug circa 1770? The Wood's family tree reveals three individuals named Ralph Wood, all of whom lived in the late eighteenth century. So let's speculate as to which of these Ralph Woods might have first owned the jug.

The first-born of the three Ralps, today dubbed Ralph Wood the elder, was a modeler by trade. He was born in 1715, but the year 1772 marked a turning point in his life. That spring he retired, so perhaps this jug was given to him to mark the end of his career. On the other hand, the first two lines of the inscription seem more appropriate for a potter rather than a modeler, and the last two lines seem to have little relevance. Ralph Wood the elder died in December 1772, and, if he did indeed own this jug then, it would have gone to one of his three sons.

Ralph Wood the Elder's oldest son, Josiah, could have inherited the jug, but Josiah died childless so the jug would then have been given to one of the other two sons. If the second

son, John, inherited the jug, it seems that Falkner should have found it in the hands of one of John Wood's descendants, but this was not so. More likely, the jug would have passed to someone else with the very same initials, the youngest son, also named Ralph Wood. Today, for clarity, this man is usually referred to as Ralph Wood II.

Rather than inherit the jug, Ralph Wood II may have acquired it on his own account. The year 1772 was a big one in his life. Around then, he left the employ of his great-uncles, John and Thomas Wedgwood of the Big House in Burslem, to set up a pot bank with his brother John. It is tempting to speculate that the jug was a gift to mark this big step in a young man's life. The first two lines of the inscription certainly seem appropriate for a young potter setting up in business. Unfortunately the Wood brothers' enterprise was short-lived, and by the next year the pot bank had failed and Ralph II moved to Bristol.¹⁰ How fitting the final two lines of the inscription are for someone venturing far from home. Could this jug have been a farewell gift to Ralph II in 1773? I like to think so.

Ralph Wood II died in 1795, aged 47. If he owned the jug then, it may have passed to his son, Ralph Wood III. It seems unlikely that Ralph Wood III was the jug's first owner because he was born circa 1774. He died prematurely in 1801, aged 27, and with his passing the Ralph Wood male line ended.

After 1801, the jug apparently stayed in the Wood family. In 1912, Arthur Herbert Edward Wood,¹¹ the great-grandson of

the potter Enoch Wood, owned it. Enoch, first cousin of Ralph Wood II, meticulously documented details of his town and family history. It requires no great leap of faith to believe that such a man would have had a sentimental attachment to a jug that had passed through the hands of deceased family members.

Today, the jug, purchased from John Howard on my birthday in July 2011, is a hallowed object in our collection. When John got it, the handle had broken off and was in the jug, and he and I speculate that it may have been thus at the time it was photographed for Falkner's publication a century earlier. Thanks to Falkner, this jug's early provenance is well established. I like to think that the Wood heirloom jug was initially Ralph Wood's and that it was a meaningful part of his life. It is a poignant reminder that when you hold an object someone treasured a long time ago, you are holding a piece of his heart, and a small piece of his life.

In 2019, Ralph Wood great- great-great-great-grandson, a descendant of Ralph Wood's daughter, contacted me. I was honored to share this jug with him.

Literature

For this jug see Falkner, *The Wood Family of Burslem*, plate XXII.

For this jug see Schkolne, "If This Pot Could Talk." *Ars Ceramica* 2014, 20-22. ❀

Endnotes

1. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
2. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 3: figs. 113.1–2; Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 260.
3. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
4. Falkner, *Wood Family*, plate v.
5. “Joshua Glass 1766” is on the jug in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (34.165.81)
6. Found on modern wares made by Mottahedeh and Halcyon Days.
7. *Littell’s Living Age*, “Finger Rings,” 396, records that the Rev. Giles Moore wrote in his journal beneath the date 1673–4, “Bought for Ann Brett a gold ring, this being the posy—‘When this you see remember me.’”
8. Convict token in the National Museum of Australia dated 172 (2008.0039.0006).
9. Freeth, “On Early Leeds Pottery,” 72, illustrates two late eighteenth-century creamware teapots with this inscription, which he notes was “much affected” on tea wares.
10. Hamilton-Foyn, “Who Modelled and Made Ralph Wood Figures?” 10.
11. Born in 1870.



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