

Porcelain and The Potteries: Early Chetham & Woolley Porcelain: Part 2

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Part 1 of this paper (Newsletter 56 June 2023) emphasised that the manufacture of porcelain accounted for only a very small fraction of the overall output of the Staffordshire Potteries during the 18C. There had been a very early unsuccessful attempt with soft paste porcelains at Pomona and a precarious decade-long run at Longton Hall, but following the demise of the short-lived Littler/Badderley porcelain venture in 1761 there was a generational gap of some twenty years before porcelain reappeared in the Potteries. In the interim many Staffordshire potters had prospered brilliantly with the manufacture of salt-glazed and other stonewares and in the closing decades of the century they benefitted from the hugely successful cream coloured earthenwares and china glaze pearlwares.

The porcelain reintroduced to the Potteries in 1781 was a different product from the soft-pastes that had failed in earlier times. The dramatic mid-century growth of the Potteries had given rise to a larger number of hard-headed entrepreneurs each with their own substantial pottery factories. It was a consortium of some of these that decided a profitable opportunity might exist by adopting the hard-paste porcelain of Richard Champion, who wished to sell his patent rights. They established the New Hall factory but, conscious of the fact that Champion had lost money, they altered his formula to produce a different type of hard-paste porcelain generally known as hybrid hard paste. Further experiment in various factories with porcelain formulations eventually resulted in the discovery of bone china, which stimulated a rapid increase in the number of porcelain manufacturers from fifteen in 1805 to forty-seven in 1828. By the second half of the 19C the Staffordshire Potteries had become the largest manufacturing centre of porcelain in the western world.

Although the early porcelain wares of New Hall and other prominent makers have been examined in detail, there has been relatively little research into wider porcelain production in The Potteries in the formative growth period 1805–30. The published studies of some more successful manufacturers who emerged as the porcelain industry grew, such as *Ridgway Porcelains* by Godden in 1972, *Davenport* by Lockett & Godden in 1989, *Minton* by Atterbury & Batkin in 1990, *Masons* by Blake-Roberts in 1996, *Spode-Copeland-Spode* by Wilkinson in 2002 and *New Hall Porcelains* by Godden in 2004, may also indicate the types of porcelain wares being



1. New Hall white sprig-decorated jugs on lilac ground



2. Close-up of left-hand jug in (1) showing the New Hall factory mark

made by many other unidentified makers in the first period of the 19C.

Analysis of the published studies reveals that from about 1810 several factories were producing porcelain jugs and mugs sprig-decorated in white against a delicate lilac ground. The two jugs in (1) are examples of this type of porcelain made by New Hall. The jug on the left has a printed New Hall mark (2) which places it post 1814 and into the factory's bone china period¹.



3. Davenport jug



4. Ridgway jug

The porcelain jug marked Davenport in (3) also shows the combination of white sprigs against a lilac ground. The marked Ridgway jug in (4) is of the same type.

The limited marked examples of this type of porcelain represent only a fraction of the output of the forty-seven porcelain makers active in the Potteries in 1828. Given that the unknown earlier makers contemporary with New Hall were producing the same types of wares, it is not unreasonable to conclude that some of the later unknown makers were doing the same thing.



5.

Figure (5) shows the smaller New Hall jug in (1) beside a jug on the right of similar size and style but from an unknown maker. This latter jug, shown again on the left in (6), shares many common characteristics both in body and decoration with a mug of the same period which appears to have been made by the same factory (6 right). Certain design features of both the jug and mug in (6) appear to be in common with a range of wares made by a known factory, Chetham & Woolley of Commerce Street, Lane End².



6.

Chetham & Woolley were the inventors in c1795 of a semi-translucent feldspathic stoneware body known at the time as 'pearl' body'. The formula for 'pearl' survives in the Riley notebook³. It shows that three-quarters of the formulation was Cornish stone (then called 'composition') which is one of the essential ingredients of hard-paste porcelain. The other quarter was not made up with kaolin, which might indeed have created a hard-paste porcelain, but with 'blue clay'. Perhaps this different formulation was devised to avoid any possible risk of infringing the New Hall patent rights for porcelain. But when fired to high temperatures the Chetham & Woolley formula produced a feldspathic stoneware body that acquired the attractive advantage of translucency, though not to the same degree as porcelain. (The term 'porcellaneous stoneware' often used to identify the

material perhaps more accurately depicts its character since, although semi-translucent in most forms, when thinly slip-moulded its translucency becomes virtually indistinguishable from porcelain.)

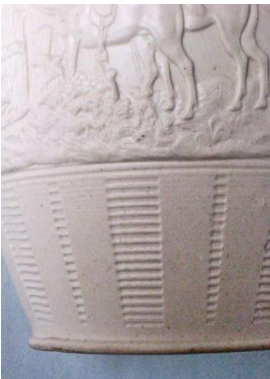
A factory already capable of successfully making high-fired porcellaneous stoneware would have been little deterred by the technicalities of entering the market for hard-paste porcelain after the New Hall patent protection expired in 1799. Confirmation that the Commerce Street concern had done so at least by 1828 is provided by the factory's name, then trading under the title of Chetham & Robinson, being entered as a 'China Manufacturer' in *Pigot's National Commercial Directory* for that year⁴.



7.



8.



9.

Figure (7) shows the porcelain mug shown in (6) side by side with a Chetham & Woolley feldspathic stoneware mug of the same size. They share certain common features. The handle, a known characteristic feature on an extensive range of Chetham & Woolley MIST-type mugs, is found here in a very similar form on the porcelain mug⁵. Also they both share at the base the very fine horizontal machine turning which again is a characteristic Chetham & Woolley feature. It is shown on the porcelain mug in (8). The configuration of fine machine turning on the porcelain mug lacks the vertical dividing lines which are usually found on MIST-type pieces but this form is not unknown, as shown on the base of a non-MIST-type Chetham & Woolley hunting jug in (9).

A Chetham and Woolley MIST-type feldspathic stoneware spill vase c1805–10 is shown in (10). The decorative design running around the top of the spill vase appears again on both the porcelain jug and mug in (6). Figure (11) shows the top of the spill vase against the corresponding feature on the porcelain jug.

This design probably originated with the Turner factory, which was also in Commerce Street adjacent to the Chetham & Woolley works⁶. In 1809 Richard Woolley left the Chetham & Woolley partnership to take over the lease of the Turner factory that had become bankrupt in 1806. His independent business venture failed after little more than a year and he never returned to his original business. It is quite possible that the Turner sprig moulds were dispersed during this time, if not before.



10.



11.



12.

The porcelain mug and jug shown in (6) are not the only examples. See (12 left) for a smaller mug alongside the mug shown in (6). The two mugs in (12) are exactly the same design. Similarly a pair of porcelain jugs of the same type is shown in (13).



13.

The probability that Chetham & Woolley made porcelains of the white sprig against lilac ground combination is enhanced by Figures (14) and (15). Figure (14) shows a fireplace with a mantel piece. The photograph (14) was provided by a direct descendant of James Chetham, one of the two original partners of the Chetham & Woolley partnership. The fireplace is believed to have been in the house of his great-granddaughter.

Closer examination of the mantelshelf in (15) shows on the right two jugs which are typical of Chetham & Woolley MIST-type production. On the left is shown a white sprig-decorated lilac ground porcelain jug of precisely the type discussed here.



14.



15.

In the absence of makers' marks, attempts to identify the early 19C porcelain of The Potteries rests on comparison with other wares of which the origin is known. That has been the procedure adopted here. This will not provide the certainty of a mark and new research may well reveal evidence that demands a change of attribution. Equally any past research that may compromise a suggested identification must be carefully assessed.

In the case of the pieces examined above there are past findings in relation to pad marked wares which must be taken into account. In a short paper in 2001, the late Margaret Ironside proposed a link between the Angel & Banner pad mark and the factory of Hicks & Meigh⁷. Roger Pomfret also contributed to this attribution⁸, as did Stephen Bressey⁹ and David Beaton¹⁰. As an aid to this work in 2004 Dick Henrywood had categorised and listed all the pad mark reference pieces known to him¹¹. In 2019 Ian Harvey reviewed all the previous papers and presented a comprehensive listing of pad marks in which the Hicks & Meigh (Hicks, Meigh & Johnson post-1822) attribution by the Angel & Banner mark was given as 'definite'¹². David Beaton's paper of 2009 illustrates a series of wares, each of which is said to have the Angel & Banner mark on the base. Among these are the jug and mug shown in (16).

These have exactly matching characteristics with the wares examined above. If the Angel & Banner attribution of maker is indeed definite, it means that the jugs and mugs in (5–13,16) were all made by Hicks & Meigh. However, Philip Miller's paper on the factory provides a wide-



Figure 5

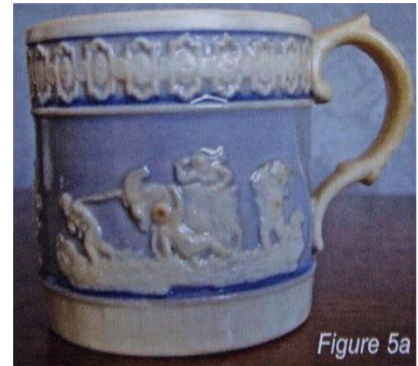


Figure 5a

16.

ranging review of the wares made by Hicks & Meigh but illustrates no wares comparable with those in (16)¹³. Indeed, of all the pad mark papers published in recent years, other than the pieces in (16), there is only one which shows a lilac background jug, but that has an oval pad mark and is of a considerably later style¹⁴. Whatever the pad marks may denote it is difficult to accept that for the jug and mug in (16) the presence of an Angel & Banner pad mark identifies their maker as Hicks & Meigh. This conclusion justifies an attribution by reference to other ware of which the maker is known.

On the evidence presently available and reviewed above, it is suggested that the jugs and mugs examined above, including those in (16), were porcelains, probably of a bone china formulation, which was made at the Commerce Street factory originally of Chetham & Woolley during the period 1810–25. Almost certainly there are many other extant porcelain pieces made by the factory in this period yet to be subjected to a similar examination.

Many unattributed examples are known of other light blue or lilac background porcelains of the genre examined above, which form a wide grouping illustrative of some of the bone china items manufactured in Staffordshire in the early decades of the 19C. Illustrated in (17) are two jugs of this type that do not share the detailed characteristics of those examined above and are from a different factory.



17.



18.

Although the ground tone of these two jugs in (17) is a darker blue than the lilac shade seen in (5–13), a comparison in (18) of the smaller jug shown in (17) with another of clearly of the same maker shows that the tone may vary and the lilac shade was produced. These porcelain jugs are not marked but they all share a very distinctive set of sprigs which are shown in (19) on the larger jug shown in (17).



19.

An exactly similar sequence of sprigs but with two additional figures is found on the light brown stoneware jug shown in (20). The jug (20) has the impressed mark 'CLEWS'. Another CLEWS marked stoneware jug with a grey body is shown in (21). The sprigs on this CLEWS (21) jug do not have the additional figures and thus match exactly those on the porcelain jugs in (17) and (18).



20.

The Clews factory was established at Cobridge in 1813 by the brothers Ralph and James Clews¹⁵. The factory originally manufactured earthenware and stoneware but porcelain was added to the range for the limited period 1821–1825¹⁶. R&J Clews appear as china manufacturers



21.

in Allbut's 1822 Directory but are not listed in Pigot's Directory of 1828¹⁷. The enterprise encountered financial difficulties in 1829 and was declared bankrupt in 1834.

A brown stoneware jug similar in shape to the CLEWS marked piece (21) and with exactly matching sprigs but unmarked is shown in (22). Though unmarked the identical correspondence of the sprig decoration with the marked CLEWS jugs might suggest that this was also made by the Clews factory. However, two very similar apparently unmarked jugs to the (22) piece, one with a grey body with white sprigs and the other with a straw-coloured body and brown sprigs, are attributed by Henrywood to Ridgway¹⁸. It is not explained how this attribution is achieved but if it is accepted, then the lilac ground porcelain jugs as shown in (17) and (18) may well have been made by Ridgway. Such an

attribution would suggest a considerable extension of the known marked lilac ground Ridgway porcelains of this period as illustrated in (4) above, with sprigs which echo classical ornamentation derived from Charles Tatham¹⁹. An equally persuasive attribution would be to R&J Clews in their brief period of china making 1821–5.

It seems clear from the number of surviving pieces that the range of lilac ground porcelain of the type discussed here was an important element of the early growth period of Staffordshire bone china production from c1805 to 1825. Further research will be needed to provide plausible attributions for these wares, which made a notable contribution to the opening phases of what was to become Staffordshire's leading role in the manufacture of bone china.



22.



23.

Postscript

Since writing this paper a porcelain jug has been found in the Victoria & Albert Museum²⁰. This jug has the characteristics of the items attributed above to the Chetham factory and thereby may be included in that category (23).

Notes

1. Godden, Geoffrey 'Staffordshire's Pioneer Bone China' *NCS Journal* no 3 (1978/79) p131
2. Wyman, Colin *Chetham & Woolley Stonewares 1793–1821* Antique Collectors Club (2011)
3. Pomfret, Roger 'John & Richard Riley China & Earthenware Manufacturers' City Museum & Art Gallery Stoke-on-Trent *Journal of Ceramic History* vol13 Notebook transcript p45
4. Henrywood, Richard *Staffordshire Potters 1781–1900* Antique Collectors Club (2002) p279
5. James Mist was a major London retailer of Staffordshire wares from 1810-1815. Many manufacturers marked their wares sold by James Mist with his name, either impressed or painted.

6. Hillier, Bevis *Pottery and Porcelain 1700–1914* Weidenfeld & Nicholson (1968) Fig26b
7. Ironside, Margaret 'Angel & Banner Mark – Attribution' *NCS Newsletter* no 122 (June 2001) p18
8. Pomfret, Roger 'A Documentary Angel & Banner Jug' *NCS Newsletter* no 124 (December2001) p43
9. Bressey, Stephen 'Attribution of the Angel & Banner Mark to Hicks & Meigh' *NCS Newsletter* no 126 (June 2002) p25
10. Beaton, David 'Progress on Pad Marks – The Angel & Banner Group' *NCS Newsletter* no 156 (December 2009) p53
11. Henrywood, Richard 'Pad Marks' *NCS Newsletter* no 134 (June 2004) p21
12. Harvey, Ian 'Progress on Pad Marks – Update Summary' *NCS Newsletter* no 195 (September 2019) p46
13. Miller, Phillip 'Hicks Meigh and their Contemporaries' *ECC Transactions* vol14 pt3 1992 p263
14. Beaton, David 'Progress on Pad Marks – Imperial Stone & Oval Pad Groups' *NCS Newsletter* no 155 (September 2009) p27
15. Chaffers, William *Marks & Monograms* 15th Revised Edition, William Reeves (1965) p60
16. Henrywood, Richard *Staffordshire Potters 1781–1900* Antique Collectors Club (2002) p267
17. Godden, Geoffrey *An Encyclopaedia of British Pottery & Porcelain Marks* Herbert Jenkins (1964) pp151,152
18. Henrywood, Richard *An Illustrated Guide to British Jugs* Swan Hill Press (1997) plates 265,271
19. Tatham, Charles *Etchings of Ancient Ornamental Architecture in Rome* Gardner, T London (1799)
20. <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O340907/jug-unknown/> AccNo1093-1869