

MINIATURE ADVERTISING PLATES

by Dick Henrywood

Any collector of transfer-printed pottery who has spent time browsing through the run-of-the-mill wares found at antiques fairs and markets up and down the country will be familiar with small plates advertising 'Yorkshire Relish'. Printed in blue with the standard Willow pattern, these little plates are quite common and until relatively recently they were virtually discounted as being of little value. However, interest in advertising wares has grown and, although no more valuable, they have become quite collectable. There are actually three variants, the commonest of which has just the product name let into panels in the top and bottom of the border (figure 1). The second variant, which turns up less frequently, has the added phrase 'Thick or Thin' (figure 2), and the third, least

common, features the maker's name 'Goodall's' (figure 3).

Despite the plates being well known, few dealers or collectors seem to know much about the product itself which was quite famous in its day and heavily promoted by its makers. The firm was started at Leeds in 1853 by Robert Goodall, a retail chemist, and became Goodall, Backhouse & Co in 1858. They developed a vast drug and patent medicine business. According to legend, their Yorkshire Relish sauce was originally concocted by Robert Goodall's wife and he developed a process for manufacturing it. By 1893 annual output was running at some six million bottles. The firm had a reputation for lavish advertising and a typical poster describes Yorkshire Relish as 'The most delicious sauce in the world' (figure 4). Also illustrated (figure 6) are the covers of a small stapled circular leaflet, the front printed with the Willow pattern, the interior pages featuring a poem about the Willow pattern written by Minnie Child together with various Goodall adverts (promoting Yorkshire Relish, Jelly Squares, Pure Fruit Crystals, Custard Powder, Egg Powder, Blanc Mange Powder and a cookery book).

Originally a thin sauce, rather like Worcestershire sauce, a thick version was also developed, apparently in the 1930s. This would help to date the less common plates with the inscription 'Thick or Thin' although the original examples must



Left. Figure 1. Miniature plate advertising 'Yorkshire Relish', unmarked, 4in. diameter.

Below left. Figure 2. Miniature plate advertising 'Yorkshire Relish, Thick or Thin', unmarked, 4in. diameter.

Below right. Figure 3. Miniature plate advertising 'Goodall's Yorkshire Relish', impressed monogram mark of George Jones & Sons of Stoke, 4in. diameter.





Figure 4. Poster issued by Goodall, Backhouse & Co of Leeds to promote their famous 'Yorkshire Relish - the most Delicious Sauce in the World'.

predate this, possibly as early as 1900. Virtually all the plates are unmarked but the illustrated example with Goodall's name bears an impressed monogram mark for George Jones & Sons of Stoke, dating it to the period 1874-1924. This marked example is, however, of little help in attributing the others. They were clearly made in large quantities and vary



Figure 5. Miniature plate with the trademark 'Mangoena', unmarked, 2½ in. diameter.

so much in body, colour and quality that it is difficult to believe that they all came from the same factory.

These Yorkshire Relish pieces and other more recent plates made for the famous Schweppes soft drinks firm are common, but other miniature advertising pieces less so. Another blue-printed example shows a scene of elephants drinking from bottles with the registered trademark 'Mangoena' (figure 5), presumably the name of a beverage. The system for registering such marks was set up by the Trade-Mark Act of 1862, but despite the survival of official records, the system of indexing makes it extremely difficult to trace single names, and this particular mark has defied identification. The plate probably dates from the end of the 19th century.

While the examples promoting products are interesting, it is perhaps those made for companies which hold the most fascination. China retailers were inevitably attracted to these little plates as a particularly appropriate form of advertising. One case in point is the major London retailing firm of John Mortlock. Their plates have a scroll containing the firm's name and address superimposed on the standard Willow pattern (figure 7). They are often unmarked but the example shown here has the name 'Mr. Spencer' printed on the reverse. Another similar example, illustrated by W.L. Little in *Staffordshire Blue* (Batsford, 1969) has a different name, 'Mr. Narracott'.

The plates were almost certainly intended as ceramic business cards and confirmation of this has been found in the form of a plate complete with its original box containing six cardboard samples showing different blue-printed patterns. A note inside the lid of the box reads in part 'Messrs. Mortlock beg to enclose a few patterns of luncheon services, and also one of their business cards. Each one of these services is specially manufactured from their new earthenware. Prices on application.' Certainly a novel and presumably effective form of advertising.

While Little suggests that his example may have been made by the Cambrian Pottery at Swansea, there is no evidence to support this attribution. As with all other wares of this type dating is also a problem, and although it might seem obvious, the date of 1746 in the inscription is purely the year that the firm claimed to have been established. The presence of the letter 'W' indicating the London postal district does, however, mean that the plate must post-date 1856 when this system was introduced. Unfortunately, the



Figure 6. Front and back covers of a small booklet containing a Willow Pattern poem and assorted adverts for Goodall, Backhouse & Co of Leeds.



Figure 7. Miniature plate made for the important London china retailing firm of John Mortlock, representative's name 'Mr. Spencer' on the reverse but no maker's mark, 2¾ in. diameter.



Figure 8. Miniature plate made for Thomas Gibson, china retailers of Southport, unmarked, 3¼ in. diameter.

little presentation box is not dated, but the plates probably date from the 1880s.

Other china retailers had similar pieces made and another example illustrated here was made for Thomas Gibson of Southport (figure 8). In this case the border is again taken from the Willow pattern but the entire central design has been replaced by an inscription:

THOMAS GIBSON
WHOLESALE & RETAIL GLASS CHINA
AND
EARTHENWARE MERCHANT
WAREHOUSE & SHOW ROOM
49 CHAPEL STREET
SOUTHPORT

The maker of this plate is unknown but Gibson ordered similar items from W.T. Copeland & Sons of Stoke, an entry in their record book (in the Spode Museum) noting that the design was engraved on 24th February 1882. The wording on the Copeland design is very similar except that the address appears as 35 Chapel Street. An advertisement for Thomas Gibson with wording almost identical to these plates but again with the address 35 Chapel Street, appeared in the *Southport Trades Director* for 1894 (figure 9).

The same basic design can be seen on a plate made for Hudson's 'Pottery Gallery' in Southsea, Hampshire (figure 10). It has not yet proved possible to trace any information about this firm, but the plate must have been made around the same time as the Gibson example.

While these miniature advertising wares were particularly appropriate for china retailers, other firms also made use of them and three more examples are shown here. The first (figure 11) is another Willow pattern plate with a super-imposed scroll inscribed for Callard & Callard. They were a firm of bakers and confectioners, one of several related companies formed by the Callard family in Victorian times. Their London empire appears to have been started by Thomas Karr Callard who traded as a baker at 4 Blenheim Terrace,

THOMAS GIBSON,
WHOLESALE AND RETAIL
GLASS, CHINA, & EARTHENWARE DEALER,
Show Rooms:—35 Chapel Street,
SOUTHPORT.

AGENT FOR DOULTON'S FINE ART POTTERY.
7 S-1a

Figure 9. Advertisement for Thomas Gibson from the Southport Trades Director for 1894.



Figure 10. Miniature plate made for Hudson's Pottery Gallery at Southsea, Hampshire, unmarked, 3¼ in. diameter.



Figure 11. Miniature plate made for Callard & Callard, bakers and confectioners of St John's Wood, unmarked, 2¼ in. diameter.

St John's Wood, from 1847 to 1886. In 1856 Callard & Bowser was established as a separate business at 1 Queen's Terrace, also St John's Wood. Both firms were described as 'bakers and manufacturers of the prepared farinaceous food for infants'. In 1872 Callard & Bowser moved to Finchley Road where they later became famous for their butterscotch, apparently introduced about 1877. The Queen's Terrace address was continued by Callard & Callard, who traded there and from other addresses as bread and biscuit bakers, cooks and confectioners until 1904 when they were succeeded by Stewart & Co.

Another very similar example is shown here but with the superimposed scroll inscribed for Richard Stanway (figure 12). The reverse is printed with a very informative inscription:

CLOTHING
MANUFACTURER
CONTRACTOR & RETAILER
GENTLEMEN'S MERCER
HATTER &c
1879.

A variant exists with the date 1879 on the front but no inscription on the back. These are the only examples yet known to the author which are clearly dated and it is likely that the other examples were all made at about the same time, i.e. the late 19th century.

Yet another similar piece was again made for a tailoring firm (figure 13) and the reverse has another inscription. The Manchester Tailoring Depot had other branches and an identical plate has been noted made for their branch at Bolton so there could be others to be found. One of the interesting aspects of these pieces made for the two menswear firms is the small hole at the top; although it is pure speculation, it may be that it was intended to be attached to garments made by the tailors as a novel form of label.

Two final plates shown here were made for china retailers in America. Abram French & Co were china and glass importers and retailers in Boston, Massachusetts (figure 14). Abram French is believed to have been involved in the



Figure 12. Miniature plate made for Richard Stanway, a gentlemen's clothier of Newcastle in Staffordshire, inscription on reverse dated 1879 but no maker's mark, 2¼ in. diameter.

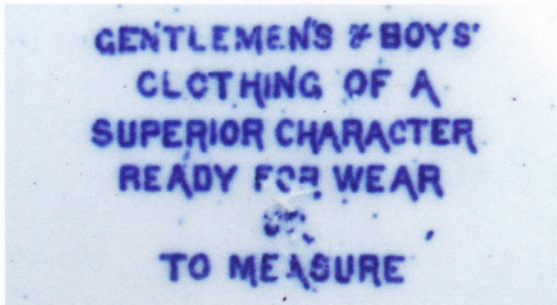


Figure 13. Miniature plate made for the Manchester Tailoring Depot in Wigan, a Lancashire menswear firm which also had a branch in Bolton, inscription on reverse but no maker's mark, 2¾ in. diameter.

pottery trade from as early as 1822, but the style 'Abram French & Co' dates from 1869. French himself died in 1884 but his son continued in business under the same name until the firm eventually failed due to bankruptcy in 1902.

As yet I have not been able to unearth any information about Hughes & Manchester of Providence, Rhode Island (figure 15) but they were almost certainly china importers and retailers like French. The design of their advertising plate matches the French example and would probably have been made by the same pottery and a Staffordshire origin seems likely. As for most of the plates illustrated here, both the American examples would date from the late 19th century, confirmed by the failure date of 1902 for the Boston firm. Both these American plates, along with several of the British examples, feature in the online database of the Transferware Collectors Club.

Although all except one of the examples shown here are printed in blue, other colours such as brown and pink are known although they are much less common. Nearly all the examples recorded to date have been based in some way on the standard Willow pattern or its border, the only exception being figure 5, which has no border design anyway. We know that the Copeland firm made some pieces and George Jones & Sons are known to have made at least some of the Yorkshire Relish examples, but apart from these they are all unattributed. The plates made for John



Figure 14. Miniature plate printed in brown made for Abram French & Co, china importers and retailers of Boston, Massachusetts, unmarked, 2¾ in. diameter.



Figure 15. Miniature plate made for Hughes & Manchester, china retailers of Providence, Rhode Island, unmarked, 2¾ in. diameter.

Mortlock, Callard & Callard, Richard Stanway and the Manchester Tailoring Depot are very similar in design, and all four may well have been made at the same pottery. Some unidentified potter could have specialised in these tiny and fascinating advertising wares.

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Dick Henrywood is a writer, lecturer and co-author of the Dictionary of Blue & White Printed Pottery 1780-1880.

