



## BLUE VIEWS

*Dick Henrywood looks at British scenes on blue-printed pottery*

I wonder if John Sadler and Guy Green of Liverpool could have been remotely aware of the effect they were to have on our lives. Their development of transfer printing on tiles may have been somewhat limited back in 1756 but the technique was soon adapted for use on other wares. Printed decoration on creamware became a stock product for Wedgwood and other potters in the remaining years of the 18th century.

These early wares had the print applied on top of the glaze, and utilitarian items, particularly heavily-used dinner plates, soon started to show signs of wear. The simple solution was to apply the print beneath the glaze but this required inks capable of withstanding the relatively high heat necessary to fuse the glaze on to the pottery. The solution proved to be inks based on cobalt oxide, which produced a blue colour. It is strange to think that such a technical quirk could result in a fashion for a particular colour which has survived for over 200 years.

Most of the early patterns were based on Chinese porcelain of the period, but views of real places started to appear by about 1810. The potters copied prints from travel books of the time, starting with overseas scenes from India, Italy, America and so on, but British views followed. By 1820, several manufacturers were producing them and the following decade saw them dominate the market.

The potters would either decorate an entire dinner service with the same view, or engrave different views for each shape, all within a standard border. A typical service could contain as many as 200 pieces, comprising four dozen dinner plates, two dozen soup plates and dessert plates, various graduated dishes, four sauce tureens, two soup tureens, vegetable dishes, drainers, etc. Thus the potters had plenty of scope to use different views although most restricted themselves to about fifteen

or twenty to decorate a service. These multi-view wares are very collectable, and named views of country houses, ruined castles, abbeys, monasteries and cathedrals are all eagerly sought.

One prolific maker was the firm of Enoch Wood & Sons of Burslem. Wood's Grapevine Border series is by far the most extensive ever made, with at least 58 different views recorded to date. Unlike other makers, Wood engraved more than one view to fit each size of plate, and he also made some less common items such as a bidet and a water cistern. Many of the views were copied from John Preston Neale's *Views of the Seats of the Noblemen and Gentlemen in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland*, published in eleven volumes between 1818 and 1829. Six typical scenes are illustrated here (**figure 1**), including Luscombe in Devon and Shirley House in Surrey on tea plates, Gunton Hall in Norfolk and Cashiobury in Hertfordshire on dessert plates, Harewood House in Yorkshire on a medium-sized dish, and Lambton Hall in Durham on a larger meat dish.

Wood made several other series, particularly for export to America.

*Above. Figure 1. A group of six plates and dishes from the Grapevine Border series by Enoch Wood & Sons. All are titled but four also bear the maker's impressed American eagle mark. The largest dish measures 20½in.*





Figure 2. Three plates from the 'London Views' series by Enoch Wood & Sons. Again, all three are titled but only two have the impressed mark 'Wood'. The gadrooned plate measures 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

One series of views features London buildings, printed in very dark blue and titled 'London Views'. The twenty recorded scenes were copied from Thomas Shepherd's *Metropolitan Improvements or London in the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1827. Three illustrated here (figure

2) show Hanover Lodge in Regent's Park on a dessert plate, St Philip's Chapel in Regent Street on a dinner plate, and The Holme, again in Regent's Park, on another dinner plate with a gadrooned rim.

Wood was not the only potter to copy Shepherd's drawings. The meat



Figure 3. A dish showing 'Sussex Place, Regent's Park, London' from the Flower Medallion Border series by an unknown maker. 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long.

dish showing Sussex Place in Regent's Park (figure 3) is one of two London views in a dark blue series by an unknown maker. Only nine views are known, and the other seven range from Dorset to Northumberland. Shepherd's London scenes were also used by William Adams & Sons, another important manufacturer of blue and white. His Regent's Park series features twenty different views, again printed in the dark blue popular for export to America.

Enoch Wood and William Adams were perhaps the most prolific makers of named views, but others included Thomas & John Carey, Ralph & James Clews, Goodwins & Harris, Ralph Hall, Henshall & Co, the Herculanum Pottery of Liverpool, John Meir & Son, John & William Ridgway, John & Richard Riley, and the Stevensons. There are also a number of series by unknown makers and several by makers who chose not to title the various views they used. These include Elkins & Co, John Rogers & Son and the Wedgwood firm.

Two meat dishes with maker's marks are shown here (figures 4 and 5). One features a view from Andrew Stevenson's Rose Border series which is intriguingly titled 'Tunbridge Castle, Surry' [*sic*] but is thought to show Tonbridge Castle in Kent. The other is a fine view of Oxford on a large meat dish made by the Herculanum Pottery of Liverpool in a series of views of cities and castles known as the Cherub Medallion Border series.

Some unmarked series have been attributed with varying degrees of certainty, and two more dishes shown here fall into this category. The first depicts Lowther Castle in Westmorland (figure 6). Two potters used versions of this border with oak leaves and acorns but with different designs for their title marks. This dish is from the series attributed to John Meir of Tunstall; the other series was made by Ralph Stevenson. The smaller dish with a view titled 'Plas-Newydd, Wales, Marquess of Anglesey's Seat' (figure 7) is from a service known as the Titled Seats series. It is generally attributed to Carey & Sons, on the basis of statements by Sam Laidacker in his *Anglo-American China*, published back in 1951, although the current author has never encountered a marked example. The series is rarely found.

Several series are encountered for which no maker has yet been traced and three examples are shown here.





Figure 4. A dish by Andrew Stevenson from his Rose Border series titled 'Tunbridge Castle, Surry' [sic], impressed maker's circular crown mark. 14 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. long.



Figure 5. A fine large meat dish with a view of 'Oxford' from the Herculaneum Pottery's Cherub Medallion Border series, impressed maker's mark. 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long.



Figure 6. Another large dish titled 'Lowther Castle, Westmorland' from a Crown Acorn and Oak Leaf Border series attributed to John Meir. 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. long.



Figure 7. A dish showing 'Plas-Newydd, Wales, Marquess of Anglesey's Seat' from a Titled Seats series traditionally associated with Carey & Sons. 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. long.

The first is a series of views of castles, abbeys and similar old buildings issued with the series title 'Antique Scenery' (figure 9). The views illustrated include Kirkstall Abbey, Yorkshire on the smaller dish and a fine North East View of Lancaster on the large meat dish. The two small tea plates are both titled 'Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire' although neither seems correct, and neither view appears to be illustrated elsewhere.

The second unattributed series is known as the Pineapple Border series. Again these are mostly of ruined abbeys or castles, the example shown depicting Barnard Castle in Durham (figure 8). Note

Figure 8. A large dish showing 'Barnard Castle, Durham' from an unknown maker's Pineapple Border series. Note the name in the top of the border. 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. long.







Figure 9. Two small tea plates and two dishes from an unknown maker's 'Antique Scenery' series. Largest dish 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long.



Figure 10. Three typical items from another unknown maker's Passionflower Border series. Note the variation in the shades of blue. Larger dish 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long.





Figure 11. A group of wares with the same Blue Rose Border. One plate and two dishes are by Wedgwood, one dish is by Rörstrand, and the other plate is by an unknown maker. Two largest dishes, 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. long.

the name 'A. Emmerson' let into the border. This would have been part of a special order and presumably relates to the owner of the dinner service. This is only the second piece to be recorded with this name, the other being a soup tureen stand with a view of Valle Crucis Abbey in Wales (see *The Dictionary of Blue and White Printed Pottery*, volume 2, colour plate XIII).

The third unattributed series is called the Passionflower Border series. It is represented here (**figure 10**) by a dinner plate showing Belvoir Castle, a dish with Hare Hall in Yorkshire (actually Harewood House) and a larger dish with a view of 'Rippon' [*sic*], also in Yorkshire. Items from this series can vary quite noticeably in quality and colour. The middle-sized dish is in a fine medium to dark shade of blue whereas the plate is much lighter in colour. It has been suggested that the series was made over a long period and the colour was lightened to follow

fashion, although it may also be that the copper plates were used by two different manufacturers.

The above views were all titled by the manufacturers, but several potters issued services without titles. A good example is the Blue Rose Border (or Landscape) series made by Wedgwood. The Wedgwood firm was under pressure from their retailers to produce views to compete with other potters, but it was not until 1824 that they entered the fray with views surrounded by an attractive border of roses. The border was copied by other potters and a mixed group of wares is shown here (**figure 11**). These include a dinner plate and two dishes by Wedgwood (one view identifiable as *The Rookery* in Surrey), another dish by the Swedish Rörstrand firm, and a plate in a lighter blue with a view titled 'Tedesley Hall'. The latter is from a small and uncommon series by an unknown maker known as the Light Blue Rose Border series. Only

six views have been recorded, all showing country seats.

Very many blue-printed views were produced in the classic period between about 1815 and 1830. They form a significant part of our ceramic heritage, both socially and in the places they depict. They are eagerly sought but the price range is so wide that most collectors can find pieces to suit their pocket. More common plates can be found for around £50, some of the rarer large dishes can sail well into four figures.

*Dick Henrywood is the specialist responsible for blue-printed wares and collectors' items at the auctioneers Dreweatt Neate of Newbury; he is also co-author of The Dictionary of Blue and White Printed Pottery 1780-1880. Illustrations are courtesy of Dreweatt Neate and all the items shown are due to be auctioned in their next sale of blue-printed pottery on 14th February (phone 01635 553553 for details).*

