



COLLECTORS of "grown-up size" blue-printed pottery and porcelain are often inclined to overlook similar wares on a miniature scale, supposing the finish insufficiently refined to merit their attention. This view is quite often mistaken, as this selection of small pieces — the oval meat dish in the top row is little more than 4 inches long — should demonstrate. Not that specialist collectors are complaining: this attitude means that more miniatures are available for them, and at a lower cost.

Not all such pieces were designed as toys. Some were samples which would accompany a salesman, enabling him to carry a large selection of finished products; and some even served as a trade-card gimmick. It is obvious, then, that with such functions to fulfill, quality would have been important.

Even so, the finest pieces here are toys, produced by Spode. These are the first three items in the front row — a plate (diameter 3 inches) with the Tower pattern, unmarked but from a marked set; a Tower pattern sauce-boat (length 2½ inches)

with the printed mark SPODE and "D" (shown courtesy Mr. & Mrs. S.R. Henrywood); and a Filigree pattern toilet tray (length 2¼ inches— with the printed mark SPODE and impressed marks SPODE and "27").

Also in the front row (right) is a soup-plate with the Monastery-on-Hill pattern associated with the Hackwood factory. Its diameter is 3 inches.

Upper row, left to right: Monopteros pattern plate (diameter 3 inches), unmarked but probably from the Rogers factory; dish and soup-plate from a dinner service sporting various transfer views — the former marked in print with "Donington Park" on a flower-surmounted drape, the latter (diameter 3 5/8 inches) similarly labelled "Kenelworth Priory"; Dresden Flowers pattern plate (diameter 3 3/8 inches), printed on the reverse with the mark "Dresden Flowers" in a scroll cartouche with a cursive "M" and OPAQUE CHINA beneath it. Photograph by Adrianus van Helfteren.



Blues in miniature

By Dr. R.K. HENRYWOOD



THE POTTERS of blue-printed earthenware in the first half of the 19th century applied their art to the production of many diverse items. Among these were pieces whose size can only be described as miniature. Many of the examples which survive were originally part of toy dinner services, although there are some notable exceptions. In his book *Blue and White Transfer Ware, 1780-1840*, A.W. Coysh illustrates a miniature plate known to have been used for serving cockles on Swansea market. A plate used as a trade card by a London china retailer is shown by W.L. Little in *Staffordshire Blue*.

The manufacture of miniature items

was by no means restricted to only a few potters. The list is extensive and many of the major manufacturers of the day were involved. The illustrations include marked examples by Hackwood, Minton, Ridgway, Rogers, Spode and Wedgwood, and other famous names such as Adams, Brameld, Clews, Davenport, Dillwyn, Herculanum and Wood have been noted.

Apart from the two books already mentioned and *Blue-Printed Earthenware, 1800-1850* also by A.W. Coysh, very little information may be found. The books which deal with miniature antiques in general give little more than a passing reference to earthenware, tending to concentrate on china and particularly furniture. The controversial subject of American Cup plates - miniature plates said to have been used to hold the cup while the tea was poured into the saucer to cool - has been well covered by R.H. & V.A. Wood in a booklet entitled *Historical China Cup Plates*, but such pieces are virtually unknown here in their country of origin.

Although miniature pieces are by no means common, an attractive collection showing a representative range of patterns can still be put together fairly cheaply. Complete toy dinner services are likely to be expensive as they are eagerly sought by collectors of dolls and toys, but odd plates are not too difficult to find at very reasonable prices. Oddly enough, such pieces are often spurned by collectors of full-size blue-printed wares, despite the fact that they can be of good quality, especially when marked.

A further attraction is the small amount of space needed for display; careful arrangement can make good use of the space in a single wall cabinet.

Marked Items

It would be difficult to find three pieces of finer quality than those shown



Fig 1 - The standard Willow pattern and the Broseley pattern are among the most common in miniature blue-and-white. The plate above (less than 3½ inches across) shows a dark Willow pattern and bears the impressed mark HACKWOOD; it is from a toy dinner service, possibly dating from c. 1830-40. The Broseley pattern is printed in an extremely light blue on a plate measuring 4 inches across, the marks being an impressed ROGERS and a printed "Semi China" within a double-line diamond.

in the lower row of the colour illustration. The reason can be easily stated in one word - Spode. This famous factory produced a wide range of toys in

both china and earthenware, and evidence of their continued success may be found in the large number of toy services which bear the marks of their successors

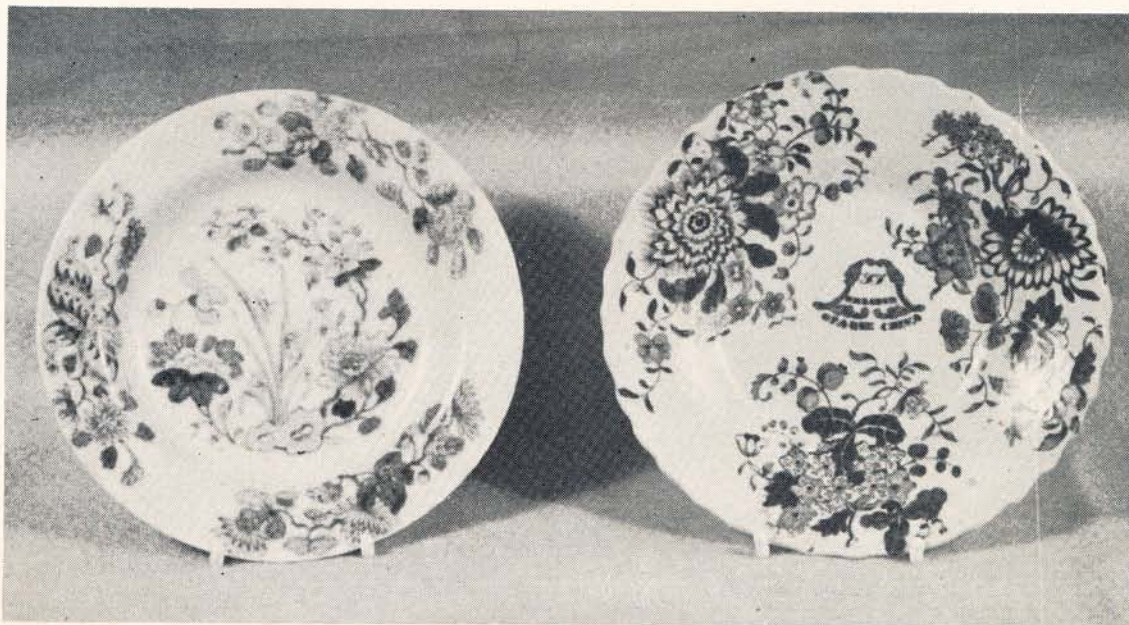


Fig 2 - Many floral patterns were produced in miniature blue-and-white in the 1830s. The plate on the left (diameter 4 1/8 inches) has the impressed mark WEDGWOOD and may be a traveller's sample. The plate on the right, slightly bigger, is decorated with a pattern of African daisies. It is most unusual in having a mark on the front.

Copeland & Garrett, and later Copelands. The toilet tray (third from left) bears both printed and impressed marks, and the sauceboat next to it has a printed mark which nearly covers the small area of its base. It is most unusual, despite the claims of many dealers (and collectors), to be able to attribute an unmarked piece to Spode with safety, but the plate shown on the left side is from a complete dinner service which included three marked pieces. Why only three pieces were marked must remain a mystery.

The plate and sauceboat are decorated with the well-known Tower pattern which depicts the Bridge at Salarno near Rome. The toilet tray bears the extreme border, both inside and out, of the filigree pattern – a floral design which may be seen in several books, including *Spode* by Leonard Whiter. It is rather an odd shape to produce in miniature, as it would seem to be out of place even in a doll's house, and this rare piece was almost certainly made as a sample. Despite the missing lid it makes a most attractive centrepiece for a collection.

Two of the most common patterns to be found are the standard Willow and Broseley patterns, and in Fig. 1 we have

one of each. The dark Willow pattern is marked HACKWOOD and is part of a toy dinner service. The mark could relate to any one of five partnerships between 1807 and 1855, the most likely being William Hackwood, who potted at Eastwood, Hanley, from 1827 to 1843.

The Broseley pattern plate is marked ROGERS and is in quite the lightest blue that I have ever seen. Several of these small plates with wavy edges may be found from the Rogers factory, although no corresponding dishes, tureens or sauceboats have yet been noted. A matching full-size coffee-pot with the same printed mark is known. Indeed, this miniature plate is quite important as the printed mark "Semi China" in a double-line diamond is usually found without the corresponding impressed maker's mark.

In common with their full-size counterparts, many floral patterns were produced in miniature in the 1830s. A typical example is shown in Fig. 2 with the impressed mark WEDGWOOD. Miniature items from the Wedgwood factory are most unusual and it appears likely that this piece was intended as a traveller's sample, because the pattern is

known on full-size dinner services.

Another floral pattern is shown in the colour photograph, top row, right-hand side. In this case the printed mark includes the title "Dresden Flowers", the type of earthenware, "Opaque China", and the maker's initial, a cursive letter "M". This initial mark was used by the Minton factory in Stoke between 1822 and 1836. A similar type of pattern, which includes a distinctive butterfly, is shown in Fig. 4. This is one of the later pieces from the Rogers factory which was in production until 1842 – not 1836 as given in several books. No other pieces with this pattern are known, and it is possible that this plate was a trial piece and that the design was not taken beyond the experimental stage.

To complete the marked examples, we have in Fig. 5 a plate with a moulded border decorated with a scene from Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*. The printed mark includes the initials "W.R.S. & Co." and also the title *Humphrey's Clock*, which was the name of a magazine in which *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* first appeared in serial form. The uninitiated collector would no doubt think that the plate was



Fig 3 (left) – Above is a plate (4 1/8 inches) in the Children at Play series, made c. 1840. The smaller piece (3 1/4 inches) is decorated with the Chinese Bells pattern, having the printed mark "Chinese Bells" in an oval frame of bells. It is of similar age.

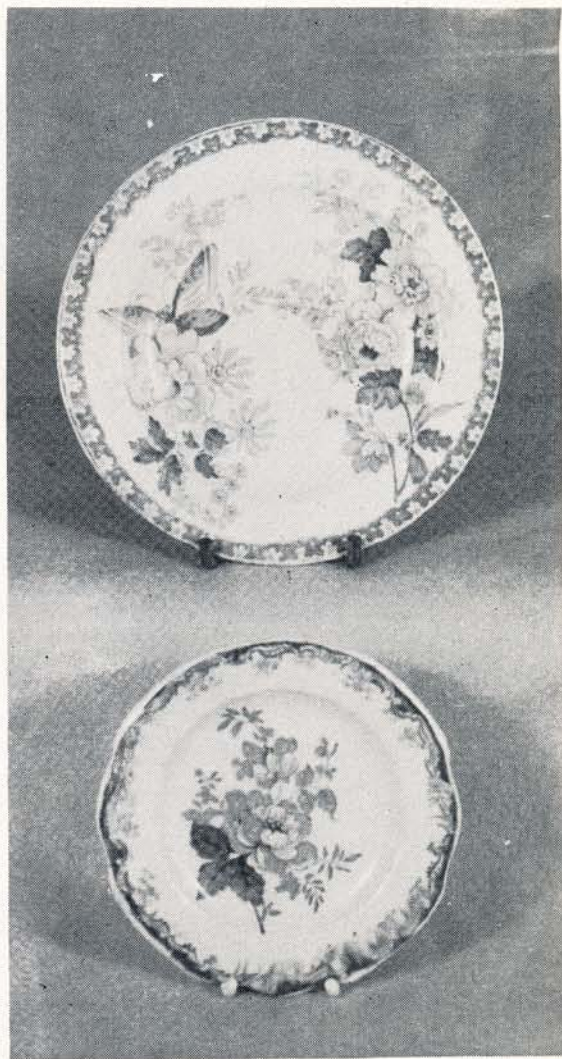


Fig 4 – Butterfly floral-pattern plate (diameter 4 5/8 inches) with the impressed mark ROGERS and the number 9; it is apparently a unique specimen, suggesting that it was a trial piece. The floral spray pattern plate (3 3/8 inches) is unmarked but dates from c. 1840.

Fig 5 — On the right is a plate in the "Humphrey's Clock" series, that being the name of the magazine in which Dickens' "The Old Curiosity Shop" was serialised. It has the printed mark of an ornate clock with "W.R.S. & Co" on its base and HUMPHREY'S CLOCK on a ribbon below. It may well be a Ridgway's re-issue from the late-19th century. The plate is just less than 4½ inches. The other piece (left) is a Souvenir pattern soup-plate in brown (diameter 3 5/8 inches) with no mark.



made by William Ridgway, Son & Co., in Hanley, between 1838 and 1848, but it appears to be of much later date and was probably made by their successors Ridgways, who are known to have reissued some of the earlier marks in the late-19th century. Several toy dinner services may be found, many of which have the post-1891 addition of the word England to the mark. The Original *Humphrey's Clock* designs have an attractive printed border of scrolls and geometrical motifs.

Unmarked Items

It has been written that few blue-printed wares bear the name of the maker. Unfortunately this statement is even more true of miniature pieces, and the collector must be prepared to accept that the lack of a mark does not necessarily mean poor quality. Some of the unmarked patterns can be attributed with a fair degree of safety, and others are of interest even without a mark.

Two plates in the colour photograph fall into the first category (top row, left, and lower row, right). The pattern in the example in the upper row is known as "Monopteros" and A.W. Coysh has identified the view as the "Remains of an Ancient Building near Firoz Shah's Cotilla, Delhi". Full-size versions were produced by Rogers and also at Swansea, and the relatively common miniature dinner services correspond to the Rogers design. Although no marked miniatures have yet turned up, there is no reason to suspect that they were not made as toys by the Rogers factory. I have in my possession one plate in this pattern just 5 cms in diameter; surely the smallest ever blue-printed plate!

The second pattern, the plate on the

right of the lower row, is also commonly found on miniature dinner services, about equal numbers of which are marked and unmarked. All the marked examples bear the name HACKWOOD, and once again, it seems likely that the unmarked pieces were produced at the same factory.

Marks on earthenware are not always in conventional positions, but the plate in Fig. 2 with its mark on the front is most unusual. This printed mark does not unfortunately include either the maker's name or initials; but a similar example, with the mark correctly placed on the back, is known impressed DIXON AUSTIN & CO. This partnership worked the Garrison Pottery, Sunderland, c.1820-26, where the same printed mark was probably used for a number of years.

The plate marked "Chinese Bells" in Fig. 3 yields absolutely no clues to its maker. The same is true of the other plate in the same illustration, which is one of a series showing children at play. Both these pieces were made around 1840, about the same date as the floral-spray plate in Fig. 4. It has been suggested that this last pattern was produced by the Davenport factory but there does not seem to be any evidence to support this theory.

The collector of named views need not despair of owning miniature pieces. A soup plate and a dish shown in the colour photograph, top row, centre, are marked with the titles Kenelworth Priory and Donington Park. They are part of a most attractive dinner service in which all pieces, except the sauceboat and ladle, bear titles including Abbey Mill, De Gaunt Castle, Entrance to Blaize Castle, Tewkesbury Church, Embdon Castle, Corf Castle and Bysham Monastery. Obviously the transferer was not very

careful, as several of the pieces have the wrong title on the back.

Although the series is quite commonly found it was not until recently that two marked dishes turned up, impressed MINTONS, with the pattern Lanercost Priory. Both pieces bore early 20th century date-marks, but there can be little doubt that the series was produced over many years by the Minton factory, probably starting around 1830. Examples would grace any collection of miniature blue-printed earthenware.

Colours Other Than Blue

In common with full-size wares, the domination of blue is less noticeable after about 1830. By this date the potters had discovered ways of printing under the glaze in other colours, which initially could not withstand the very high temperatures necessary to fire the glaze. The Hackwood Willow pattern plate shown in Fig. 1 may sometimes be found in purple, and patterns in other colours, including pink, brown, green and black, are frequently encountered.

The quality of these later pieces does not usually bear comparison with those in the earlier blue, but the toy soup dish in Fig. 5 is an exception. A collector has recently reported a black-printed saucer with the same pattern bearing the title "Souvenir" and the initials "W.R." for William Ridgway. The design depicts children with a globe beside them on one side of the vase, reading a book and watching a sailing ship.

On the other side are two slave children with irons at their feet. It is tempting to suggest that it was made to commemorate the abolition of slavery in 1833, but this must remain pure speculation □