



YORKSHIRE RELISH

Advertising wares of the 19th and early 20th centuries have been neglected by collectors until relatively recently. Yet the transfer-printed pieces in particular are of considerable interest.

By R. K. 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 rapidly and in a small way they have now 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 infrequently, has the added phrase "Thick or Thin" (figure 2), and the third, possibly the rarest, features the maker's name "Goodall's" (figure 3).

Despite the fact that these little plates are so well known, few dealers or collectors seem to know much about the product itself. It was, in fact, 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 invented by Robert Goodall's wife and he developed a process for manufacturing it. By 1893 the annual output was running at some six million

bottles. The firm had a reputation for lavish advertising and a typical poster describing their Yorkshire Relish as "the most delicious sauce in the world" is shown here (figure 4).

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 would be earlier than this, possibly as early as 1900. Virtually all the



plates are unmarked but the example illustrated here with Goodall's name bears an impressed monogram mark for George Jones & Sons of Stoke, which dates it to the period 1874-1924. The existence of this one marked example is, however, of little help in attributing the others. They were made in fairly large quantities and vary so much in body, colour and quality that it is difficult to believe that they all come from the same factory.

These "Yorkshire Relish" pieces and some more recent plates made for the famous Schweppes soft drinks firm are fairly common, but other miniature advertising pieces are quite rare. Another blue-printed example shows a scene of elephants drinking from bottles, and bears the registered trademark "Mangoena" (figure 5). This presumably is the name of some form of 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 difficult to trace single names, and this particular mark has defied identification. The plate probably dates from the end of the nineteenth century.

While the examples promoting products are interesting, it is perhaps those made for firms which hold the most fascination. It is not surprising that china retailers would be attracted to these little plates as an excellent and particularly appropriate form of advertising. One case in point is the major London retailing firm of John Mortlock. They had tiny plates made with a small scroll containing the firm's name and address superimposed on the standard Willow pattern (figure 6). The inscription reads:

Above left, fig. 1. Miniature plate advertising "Yorkshire Relish". Unmarked, diameter 10.7cm.
Above centre, fig. 2. Miniature plate advertising "Yorkshire Relish, Thick or Thin". Unmarked, diameter 10.5cm.

Above right, fig. 3. Miniature plate advertising "Goodall's Yorkshire Relish". Impressed monogram mark of George Jones & Sons of Stoke, diameter 10.4cm.

Left, fig. 4. Poster issued by Goodall, Backhouse & Co. of Leeds to promote their famous "Yorkshire Relish". Courtesy: Abbey House Museum, Kirkstall.

ESTD. 1746.
 JOHN MORTLOCK
 THE POTTERY GALLERIES,
 OXFORD ST. & ORCHARD ST.
 PORTMAN SQUARE, W.

Another similar example, illustrated by W. L. Little in *Staffordshire Blue* (Batsford, 1969) is particularly interesting since the name "Mr. Narracott" is printed on the reverse, possibly one of the firm's salesmen.

There has been some speculation about the purpose of these little plates, amongst them one suggestion that they were used as ceramic business cards. This example with the name on the reverse certainly tends to support this theory and exciting confirmation has now turned up in the United States. One of the plates has survived with its original box containing also 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, no evidence has yet emerged to support this attribution. As with all other wares of this type dating is also a problem, and although it seems very obvious, it must be emphasized that the date of 1746 in the inscription is purely the year that the firm claimed to have been established. However, the presence of the letter "W" indicating the London postal district does at least mean that the plate must post-date 1856 when this system was first introduced. Unfortunately the 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 7). 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

Above left, fig. 5. Miniature plate with the trade mark "Mangoena". Unmarked, diameter 6.2cm.

Above right, fig. 6. Miniature plate made for the important London china retailing firm of John Mortlock. Unmarked, diameter 7cm.

Centre left, fig. 7. Miniature plate made for Thomas Gibson, china retailers of Southport. Unmarked, diameter 7.8cm.

Centre right, fig. 8. Miniature plate made for Callard & Callard, bakers and confectioners of St John's Wood. Unmarked, diameter 7.2cm.

Right, fig. 9. Miniature plate made for Richard Stanway, a gentlemen's clothier of Newcastle in Staffordshire. Inscription on reverse dated 1879. No maker's mark, diameter 7.3cm.



Gibson ordered some similar items from W. T. Copeland & Sons of Stoke, an entry in their record book (now in the Spode factory 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, also with the address 35 Chapel Street, appeared in the *Southport Trades Director* for 1894.

While these miniature advertising wares were particularly appropriate for china retailers, other firms also made use of them

and two more examples are shown here. The first (figure 8) is another Willow pattern plate with a superimposed scroll inscribed:

CALLARD & CALLARD
 QUEEN'S TERRACE
 ST JOHN'S WOOD

Callard & Callard 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 Carr Callard who traded as a baker at 4 Blenheim Terrace, 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.

The final example shown here (figure 9) is very similar, but in the case of the superimposed scroll is inscribed:

RICHARD STANWAY
 NEWCASTLE STAFFS



and on the reverse (figure 10) is the further inscription:

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

One of the interesting aspects of this particular piece is the small hole at the top, and although it is pure speculation, it may be that it was intended to be attached to garments made by the tailor as a novel form of label. This is the only example yet known to the author which can be dated with confidence.

Although all the examples shown here are printed in blue, other colours such as pink and brown have been noted. So far, however, all the examples recorded have been based in some way on the standard Willow pattern. We know that Copeland's made some such pieces since several prints similar to the Thomas Gibson example appear in their record book, and one of the Yorkshire Relish pieces shown here is marked George Jones & Sons, but apart from these the others are all unmarked and unattributed. The plates made for John Mortlock, Callard & Callard, and Richard Stanway are very similar in design, and it may be that all three were made at the same pottery. Some unidentified potter may have specialised in these tiny and fascinating advertising wares ▲

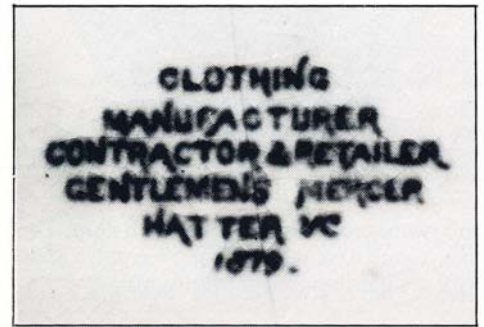


Fig. 10. Inscription on the reverse of the Richard Stanway plate.

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