

## ***Expanding the Mystery***

By Margie Williams

Royce Walters' "Two Transferware Mystery Plates" (Winter 2004-05 *TCC Bulletin* page 7), illustrates two plates with the same view but very different borders. The view features an island-bound, church-like building in the Gothic style which looks more like an elaborate old American power plant than a graceful English residence.

This view, but neither border he shows, is an exact match for that of the *Festoon Border* pattern by Enoch Wood & Sons, shown here. (Petra Williams illustrates the design in *Staffordshire II* (1986), page 176, with the mark on page 177.) A marked plate in the pattern, from this author's collection, has this same unique border – one of flowers, vines and suspension bridges, quite different from the two shown in the Royce article. (Another detail: The cup plate on page 177 of Williams' book has a modified version of the border design, *without* the festoon.)



***Festoon Border***, 5 7/8 inch unmarked plate attributed to Enoch Wood & Sons, Fountain Place Works, Burslem (1818-1845). Note the suspension bridges in the border.

According to Kowalskys' *Encyclopedia of Marks* (1999, page 486), the firm of Enoch Wood & Sons is the only manufacturer known to have potted the *Festoon Border* design. Could it be possible that this view was used for other patterns by other potters? It does seem interesting that the EW&S pattern name refers to the border and not the view. In this case, marked by the pottery, it is definitely not a collector-assigned title. It appears, nonetheless, to be a clue to a practice used by the Wood firm – and perhaps others – to add some mystery and a little whimsy to their wares.



***Festoon Border***, a two-color plate in the same pattern, this one marked. Note also that Suspension bridges appear in this border, too. Photo from [www.merlinantiques.com](http://www.merlinantiques.com), courtesy of Judie Siddall.

This is not the first time an EW&S border has mystified English transferware fans. In his book, *Romantic Staffordshire Ceramics* (1997), page 175, Jeffrey Snyder pictures a two-color *Railway* supper plate by Enoch Wood & Sons with a very attractive border of flower faces in concentric circles set against a stippled field. (In Petra Williams' *Staffordshire I* (1978), page 424, the same border appears again,



this time on a view of *Suspension Bridges*, also by Enoch Wood & Sons.) A plate, from the author's collection, unmarked but assumed to have been produced by Enoch Wood & Sons, has neither bridge nor train – not even a track. (First image this page.)

For still one more diversion regarding the illusive *Suspension Bridges* pattern by Enoch Wood and Sons, we look at yet another mysterious unmarked plate. (See first image next page.) Although the border appears to be the same rim design used on the *Suspension Bridges* plate pictured by Petra Williams *Staffordshire II* (1986) page 247, the view features a Roman-type arched bridge — definitely not a suspension bridge.

To add to the confusion, this border appears on another piece in this author's collection: a marked piece of *Railway*, also by Enoch Wood & Sons. (Second image next page.) In addition, a seven-inch, two-colored plate with still another version of



**Unnamed**, 9 ¼ inch plate, probably made by Enoch Wood & Sons, Fountain Place Works, Burslem (1818-1845). The view on this unmarked plate is pastoral, quite typical for a romantic piece, yet gives no clues to its title. The border, symmetrical blossoms, is confusing.

the *Suspension Bridges* border, this one “resembling fabric” (Judie’s description), has been offered for purchase on the Merlin Antiques website ([www.merlinantiques.com](http://www.merlinantiques.com)). (Final image next page.)

It was not uncommon for a manufactory to repeat a signature border on more than one pattern as these examples show. Apparently, although they surely didn’t intend to mislead us, Enoch Wood & Sons had several favorite borders and used them rather randomly, sometimes thoroughly befuddling collectors. ‘Suppose they anticipated our interest and would be amused by our confusion?’

Alas, none of this answers the original Royce Walters’ mystery; nor does it explain the piece he mentions – *Village Church* marked “D.” Our musings merely expand the mystery...



**Railway**, 9 ½ inch plate, with the floral-face border, by Enoch Wood & Sons, Fountain Place Works, Burslem (1818-1845). Photo [www.merlinantiques.com](http://www.merlinantiques.com), courtesy of Judie Siddall. This border on *Suspension Bridge* by EW&S.





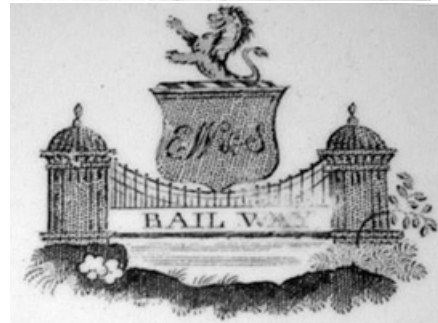
**Unnamed**, unmarked plate, just under 6 inches in diameter, with one of the borders used on *Railway* by Enoch Wood & Sons. This piece is also gently scalloped while the design is circular.



**Railway**, 9 ½ inch plate, pink with a brown rim, marked EW & S (Enoch Wood & Sons), Fountain Place Works, Burslem (1818-1845). Although the rim design is circular, the piece is gently scalloped, thus the outer border's edge appears uneven.



**Suspension Bridges**, 10 ½ inch plate by Enoch Wood & Sons. This plate sports a border that Judie Siddall says "resembles fabric." This pattern also noted by P. Williams (1978, page 424) with a chintz-like border.



All backstamps, courtesy Judie Siddall.