

~ Ralph and James Clews ~

Potters Extraordinaire - Part I

by
Norman Wolfe

Perhaps I should start by explaining why Ralph's name is placed before James's in the title of this article. Very simply, that is the way it should be. Ralph was the eldest and therefore his name would be first, even if James were the founder of the business and more active in it's workings. This is the way things were, and probably still are done in England. In the book 'English Pottery and Porcelain, an Historical Survey' Edited by Paul Atterbury, p 202, there is an article on Clews by Frank Stefano Jr., dated February, 1974, which shows a handbill on Tippling. The potters names listed at the bottom include 'R. and J. Clews'. This handbill is dated November 1815. Nearly all marks by the Clews brothers, impressed or underglaze printed, omit any first initials. The 'Chinese Landscape' and Moral Maxims' mark both clearly read 'R & J Clews'. I have no idea who put James first.

The earliest examples I have found by the Clews brothers are ironstone or stone china and were probably produced for the domestic market in Great Britain and possibly for export on a limited basis. First I have a soup plate appropriately named 'Chrysanthemums & Bamboo' by Mr. Laurie Fuller in Friends of Blue bulletin #19, winter 1977. It is medium blue, clobbered in pink, orange, yellow, green and dark blue, ochre rim, 9 5/8" D, ironstone, smooth blue glaze, double undercut footrim, impressed 'CLEWS WARRANTED STAFFORDSHIRE' around a crown, underglaze blue 'CLEWS' over a seal type box, 'WARRANTED' across the middle, 'IRONSTONE CHINA' curved on a banner below, c 1815. This piece is heavily potted, similar to Masons ironstone China of the same period. This was purchased in England.



This view is illustrated in P. Williams 'Staffordshire Romantic Transfer Patterns' p. 119 where it is named 'Clews Oriental'. I prefer the name



given to the earlier Davenport version of this same pattern 'Crane & Peony' which is more descriptive. The dessert plate is medium blue, clobbered in orange, purple, pink, yellow and dark blue, gilded, 8" D, stone china, smooth pale blue glaze, double undercut footrim, impressed 'CLEWS STONE CHINA WARRANTED' around a crown, c 1815-20. This was purchased in England.

This pattern is known by several names, I prefer 'Ruins & Mule'. The dinner plate is medium blue, 10" D, pearlware, slightly rippled pale blue glaze, double undercut footrim, standard impressed mark, underglaze blue 'CLEWS' on a square seal, 'Stone China' below, c 1815-25. Examples of this pattern are known in England, so it was probably produced for the domestic market as well as for export.

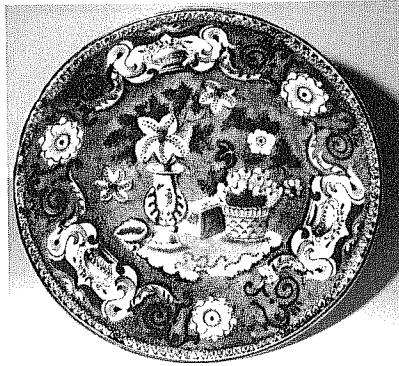


Once again I have changed P. Williams' pattern name, this time from 'Hunting Dog' to 'Pointer & Rabbit'. With so many hunting series out there this makes more sense. The saucer is medium-dark blue, 5 3/4" D, pearlware, slightly rippled pale blue glaze, single rounded footrim, 2 raised bands next to

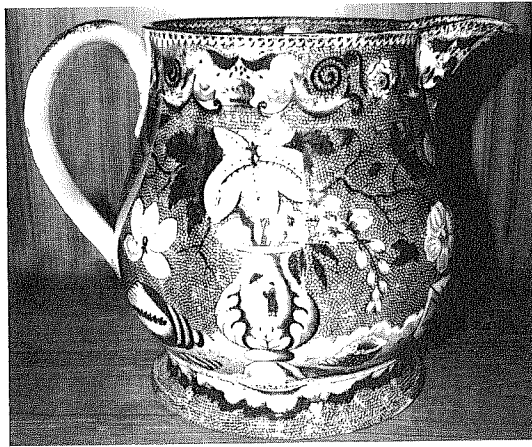
the footrim, standard impressed mark, underglaze blue 'Stone China' on a seal type mark, c 1815-25.

The 'Basket & Vase' pattern shown here was used by both Clews and Adams. I have saucers by both potters and although the body style is different the design is identical, right down to the stringing around the edge. The Adams version is darker and appears to have been made from a worn copper plate. This would tend to go along with the popular belief

that Adams took copper plates etc. as payment for debts. The Clews brothers rented a potworks at Cobridge from Adams in 1817. It is possible that Adams took the plates at their first bankruptcy in 1827 when creditors forced them to relinquish their entire stock of 'Glass, China and Earthenware'. No mention is made of materials being taken at this time, so the copper plates were probably sold off at auction in 1834 when the Clews' final bankruptcy took place. The Clews saucer is medium blue, 6 3/4" D, pearlware, smooth pale blue glaze, single rounded footrim, standard impressed mark, u/g 'Stone China' on a seal type mark, c 1815-25. The Adams saucer is dark blue, 5 7/8" D, pearlware, smooth pale blue glaze, single rounded footrim, impressed 'ADAMS WARRANTED STAFFORDSHIRE' around an American Eagle, c 1830-40.



This pattern is once again 'Basket & Vase'. The pitcher is medium blue, 6 1/2" H. pearlware, smooth blue-green glaze, u/g blue



'CLEWS' over a seal type box, 'WARRANTED' across the middle, 'IRONSTONE CHINA' curved on a banner below, c 1815-25. This was easily

adapted to different shapes because of its stippled sheet pattern type background.

How about Clews's Willow and on a child's plate no less. This is known as 'Two Temples' and shows the left half of the pattern in reverse with an extra bit at the bottom to fill in. The tiny plate is medium-light blue, 3" D, pearlware, smooth pale blue glaze, double undercut footrim, impressed 'CLEWS'S WARRANTED' around a crown, c 1815-20. It is possible that this is not a child's plate, but what else could it be? (It could be a cup plate....ed). The English were hooked on chinoiserie, this along with the light



color lead me to believe this pattern was produced for the domestic market (in Britain).

The next 2 photos are from the 'Indian Sporting Series' originally produced by Spode. Frankly none of these views look very sporting from the animal's point of view. Side by side comparison shows that Clews faithfully copied the Spode version with one improvement, it is slightly darker.

This view is 'Driving a Bear out of Sugar Canes'. The original engraving and Spode version are illustrated in S.



B. Williams 'Antique Blue and White Spode', p 42 & 43. Note the man in the tree to the right with a gun trained on the bear. The platter is medium blue, 17" x 13", pearlware, smooth pale blue glaze, no footrim, impressed 'CLEWS WARRANTED STAFFORDSHIRE' curved under a Crown, 'G' & 'R' on either side, also impressed 'JOHN GREENFIELD, IMPORTER OF CHINA & EARTHENWARE' in a circle around 'No 77, PEARL STREET, NEW YORK' on 3 lines, c 1820. It is uncommon for an importers mark to be impressed. This shows that a rather large order was placed by John Greenfield, for the potter to go to the trouble of impressing each piece. A similar mark is u/g printed on my 'Doctor Syntax and the Dairy Maid' plate.

This view is 'Death of the Bear', also not very sporting, is it? The dinner plate is medium blue, 10" D, pearlware, smooth pale blue glaze, double undercut footrim, impressed makers and importers marks as listed



above, c 1820. The views and sizes used correspond exactly to the original Spode versions so I assume that Clews made an entire dinner service in this series.

Next I would like to cover one of my favorite series, 'Select Scenery'. According to Sam Laidacker this series is 'fairly scarce and popular'. He is right on both counts. The depth and color are quite impressive. The source of these views is still unknown.

The first view is 'Cheddar in Somersetshire'. The plate is medium-dark blue, 8 3/4" D, standard impressed mark, u/g blue 'SELECT SCENERY' in a heart-shaped wreath of leaves, 'CHEDDAR' on a ribbon at the bottom with 'In Somersetshire'



above inside the loop of the ribbon, c 1820-30. I suppose this is where cheddar cheese comes from.



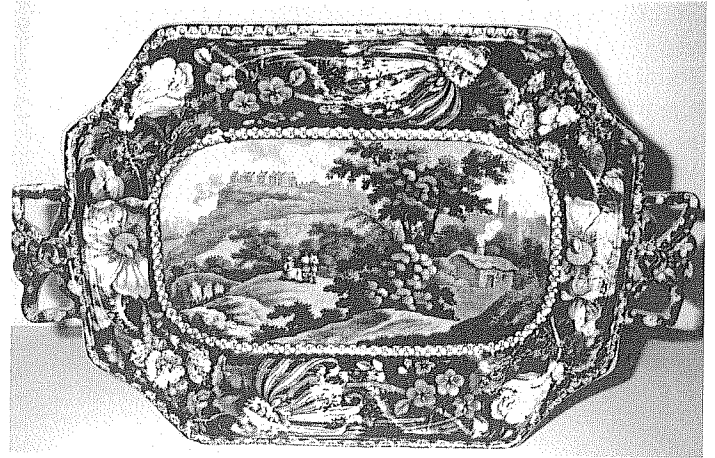
Next we have 'Kilcolman Castle'. The soup plate is medium-dark blue, 9 3/4" D, standard impressed mark, u/g blue mark as above with 'Kilcolman Castle' on the ribbon, c 1820-30. Can you imagine

eating clam chowder out of this?

This view is illustrated in Laidacker II p 32. Everyone seems to leave the 's' off when writing about this view of 'Fountains Abbey'. The dinner plate is medium dark blue, 10" D, standard impressed mark, u/g blue mark as above with 'Fountains Abbey' on the ribbon, c 1820-30.

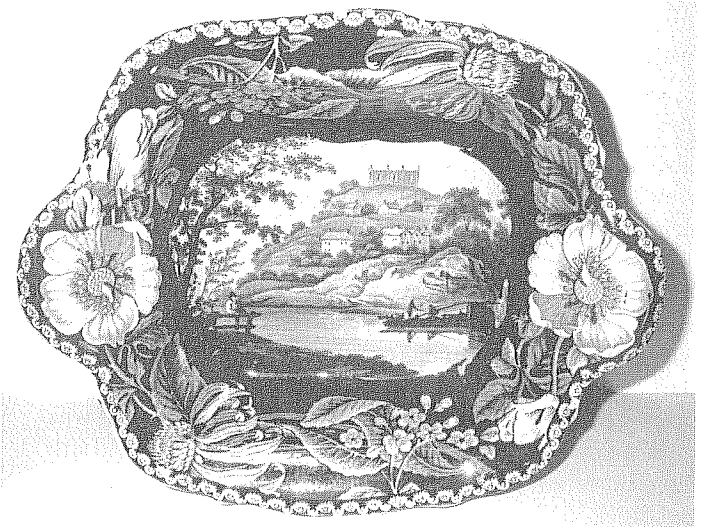


It would appear that I have the undertray to the footed entree dish with cover that Sam Laidacker lists in Anglo-American China, part II, p 33.. This view is 'Aysgill Force in Wensleydale'. The undertray is medium-dark blue, embossed rim and bow knot handles, 11 1/4" x 7 1/4", standard impressed mark, u/g blue mark as above with 'Aysgill Force' on



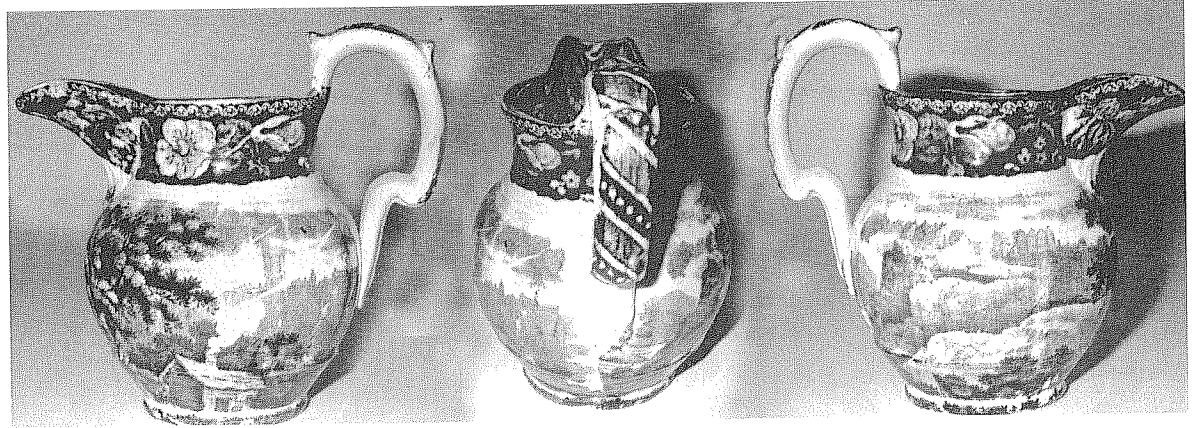
the ribbon, 'In Wensleydale' inside the loop, c 1820-30. The embossing on the rim tends to distort the border pattern somewhat on this piece.

Have you seen my lid? This view is of course 'St. Catherine's Hill Near Guildford' normally found in the Foliage & Scroll Border series. Note that the fishermen in the foreground have been omitted. The uncovered covered vegetable dish is medium-dark blue, 12" x 10", 2 3/4" H. standard impressed mark, u/g blue mark as above with 'St. Catherine's Hill' on the ribbon, 'Near Guildford' inside the loop, c 1820-30.

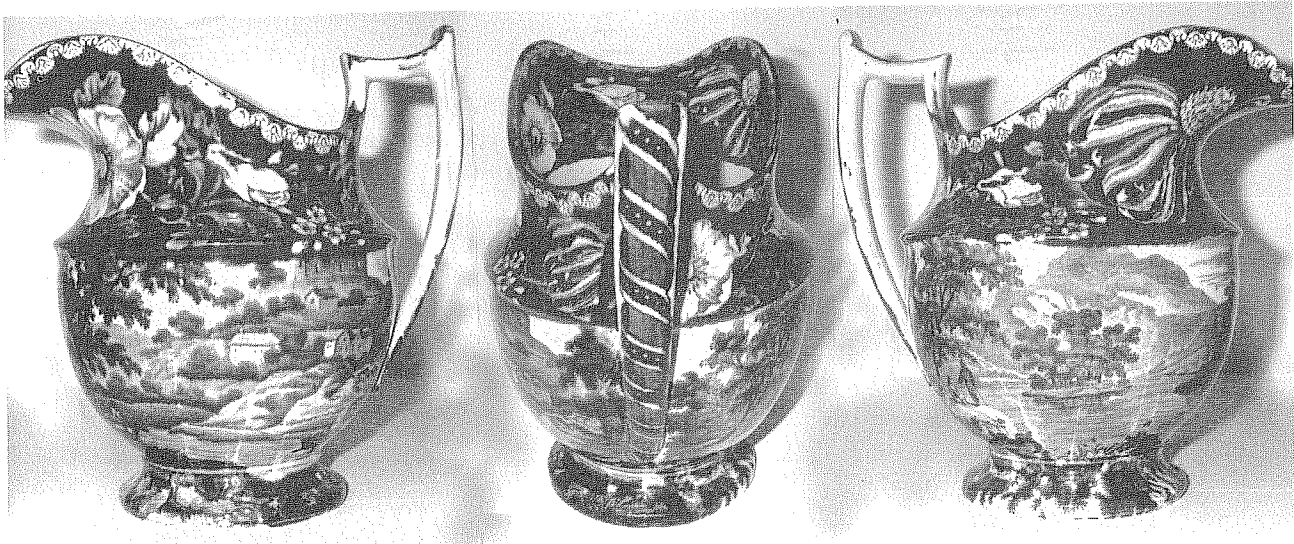


This creamer is of a size and shape I have not seen before. The view is once again Aysgill Force in Wensleydale' as shown on the undertray with bow knot handles. The right view shows the left half of the pattern with a village high on a hill, the left view shows the right half with a thatched cottage in the foreground and in the center, we have a shot of the handle design of diagonal stripes and dots. The creamer is medium-dark blue, 4 1/2" H. unmarked, c 1820-30.

Have you seen my wash basin? This is 'St. Catherine's Hill Near Guildford' again but with an added bonus. The view on the far right shows a wooded Island in a lake with 2 men on the shore to the left. At first I thought this to be another unidentified view, but upon close inspection, I found that it is one panoramic view around to the other side. Although applied in sections this is definitely one view. The wash pitcher is medium-dark blue, 8 1 /



'St. Catherine's Hill Near Guildford' done in a double transfer. The soup ladle is medium dark blue, 12" L, bowl 4" d unmarked, circa 1820-30.



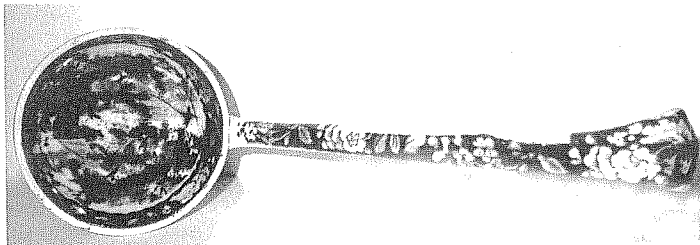
Sam Laidacker lists several other views from this series, which I have not yet come across. They are 'Donemark Mill' on a 7 3/4"

2" H. u/g blue mark as above with 'St Catherine's Hill' on the ribbon, 'Near Guildford' inside the loop, c 1820-30. The rear view shows off that beautiful handle transfer with diagonal stripes and dots.

When I first purchased this soup ladle, I assumed that it went to the Foliage & Scroll Border Series, but could not figure out why the border design did not match. Duh! It is of course part of the Select Scenery Series and all of the flowers match up perfectly. This ladle has an interesting history as it was once owned by Julia D. S. Snow and later by Nina F. Little. I have saved all of the stickers (which covered the bottom of the bowl), including one from a Sotheby auction. The view is

plate, 'View in Glengyle' on a 6 1/2" Plate, 'Ivy Bridge' on a cup plate, 'Killin, Head of Loch Tay' on a 9" platter, 'Norwich' on a washbowl, pitcher and tray, 'Report, Yorkshire' on a 17" platter, 'Rivax Abbey' on a 6 1/2" pitcher and 'Windsor' on 18" and 21" platters. Should anyone have any of these views or any out of the ordinary shaped pieces from the Select Scenery Series and wish to part with them, please let me know. Write to me or call at:

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Photos courtesy of Norman Wolfe

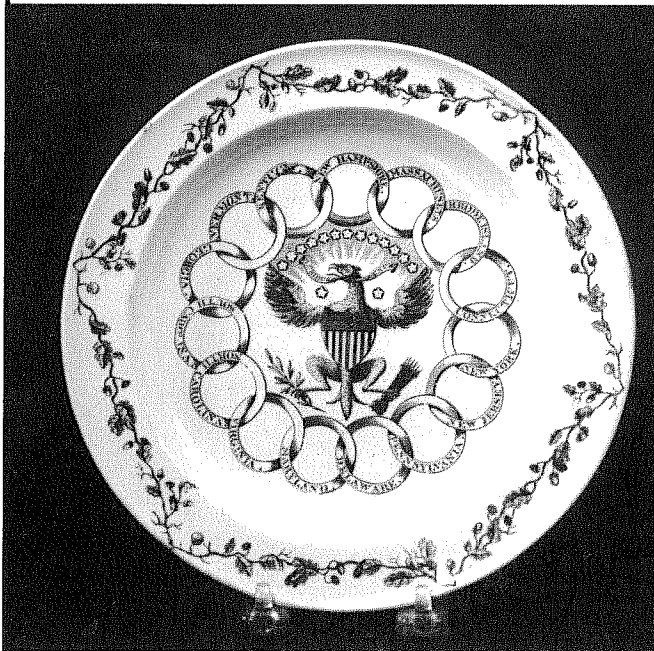
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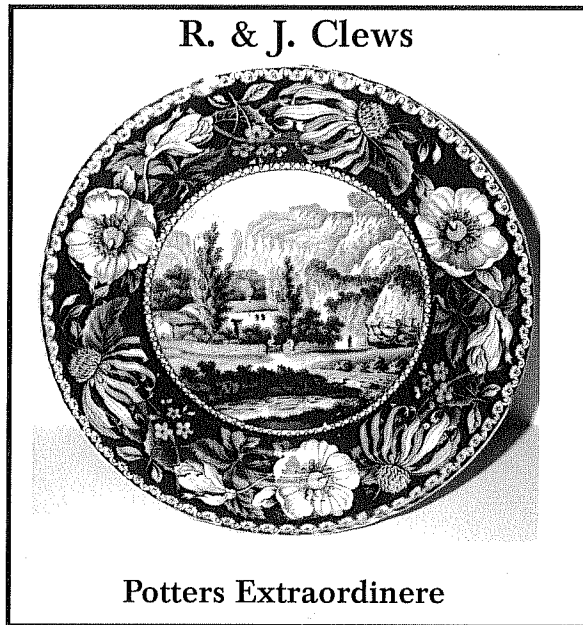
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Species of Eagles



Meet the Collectors

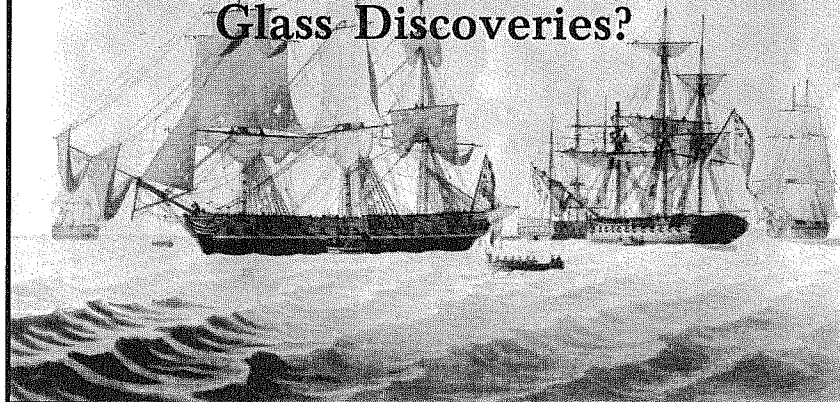
R. & J. Clews



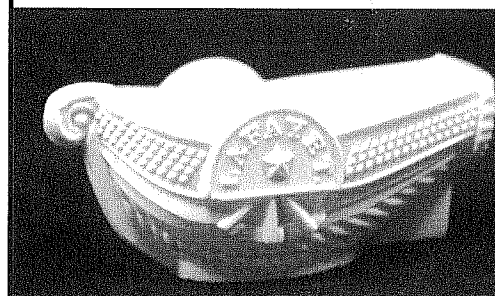
Potters Extraordinaire

What's Inside

What Does the Capture of the Frigate U.S.S. President in the War of 1812 Have to Do with Unpublished Glass Discoveries?



Meet the Collectors



A small choice collection of only 28 colored salts, but seventeen are "unique", "extremely rare" or totally unrecorded.

Plus So Much More.....