



British Shipping Company China
Database Discoveries – Contribution # 7
Transferware Collectors Club

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The database is made much richer with the patterns and information sent to us by TCC members. Aside from a willow pattern platter that I found many years ago with its mark of the Allan Line, I was not aware of the many types and styles of transferware produced in the U. K. for individual ships and shipping companies. Thanks to Frank Davenport we are building a very interesting array of patterns in the database on this subject. Frank has written two very well-documented articles for the TCC Bulletin on "The Ceramics from CSS Alabama" in the 2011 Fall Issue, Vol. XII No. 3 and "Confederate Navy Ironstone" in 2012 Vol. XIII No. 2. In addition, he has sent me dozens of photos of other transfer printed patterns used on British ships related to several different shipping companies. The purpose of this article is to provide a look at some of the different types of patterns and urge others to add to the category by sending me more photos and information.

The simplest type of pattern used on ships consists of a narrow border and small emblem in the center on a plain ironstone body such as the crew plate illustrated in "Ceramics from CSS Alabama" as noted above. It is **Figure 1** below. The plates from that article are all found in the database. Another simple form used is designated as "Marine". Pieces so marked were no doubt used on vessels, but there is no specific information regarding the name of the ships or the shipping line. A plate marked Davenport is seen in **Figure 2**. It is dated c. 1874. A pattern marked Mintons is exactly like "Marine" by Davenport although the printing is not as crisp. The copper plates were probably acquired at the Davenport bankruptcy sale in 1887. Therefore it must have been made sometime after 1887. Several examples of these ironstone plates with simple decoration are found in the database. Search Ship China, using the General Search.

Transfer printed patterns for specific shipping companies are generally more ornate than those seen so far. The British and American Steam Navigation Company was the first line to begin steamer service across the north Atlantic. Three ships made voyages from March 1838 to March of 1841 between Liverpool and New York. **Figures 3A and 3B** show an interesting shape in a platter with the global center crest and simple floral border made by Davenport.

E. F. Bodley produced a "Maltese" pattern that has the earliest use of the Cunard Lion as the center crest. It is the familiar symbol used by the Cunard Steam Ship Company, founded in 1878. The border is made up of alternating groups of shells. A plate from the service is seen in **Figure 4**. A large platter in the database has big spaces between the shell groups because they are the same size as on the plate.

Figures 5A and 5B show another plate by Davenport. It has a simple rope border and the crest of the Mississippi & Dominion Steamship Company Limited. The company is also known as the Dominion Line. The plate has an ornate crest with 4 different flags, symbols from the sea, and the symbol of British Union at the top -- the rose, thistle and shamrock. I think it is one of the most impressive center crests used on British Shipping Company China.

The last type of shipping company china featured in this article utilizes a border of a known transferware pattern and substitutes the crest of the shipping company for the center pattern normally found. A plate is seen in **Figure 6** with the Caledonian pattern border, normally produced by Ridgway, Morley & Wear. It is a Scottish tartan pattern found in several different color combinations in the database featuring a floral center medallion with ribbons and scrolls. However, the Copeland factory took over the pattern and used the border for the P & O Shipping Line. The center sunburst pattern contains a ribbon with the Latin phrase "Quis separabit" that means "Who will separate us?" It is a popular motto for many different firms and organizations. The company was known originally as the Peninsular Steam Navigation Co. Much more information can be found in the database on this and other patterns mentioned here.

Minton produced a pattern called "Lace Border" c. 1830, that has a center round medallion surrounded by a wreath of natural flowers and finished off with the lace border on the rim. The City of Glasgow Steam Packet Company used Minton's Lace Border with an image of the steamer over the composite picture of the Nelson monument, Glasgow Coat of Arms, and Glasgow Cathedral. See **Figure 7** for an image of the platter as seen in the Scottish Pottery Bulletin #39, July 1, 2004. The City of Glasgow Steam Packet Co. was founded in 1831. The purpose was to carry goods, merchandise and passengers between Glasgow and Liverpool. The Dundee, Perth & London Shipping Company also used Minton's Lace Border in the 1830s.

Figure 8 is our final image from this interesting series of patterns on ship's china. It also has a known transferware pattern although the entire pattern is seen on the cup and saucer shown. The only indication that it was used by a shipping company is on the mark that also indicates the maker: "Dunn Bennett & Co. Ltd at Royal Victoria Pottery, Burslem, England 'Nelson Line'." Near the end of the 19th century, the willow pattern china may have been produced for use by the passengers.

I hope you enjoy looking at these patterns. Search Shipping Company using the General Search to find more patterns of this type.

Bibliography reference: *Mariner's Memorabilia* A guide to British Shipping Company China of the 19th & 20th Centuries, Volume 1 and 2 by Peter Laister.

Figures on following pages



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Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3A



Figure 3B



Figure 4



Figure 5A



Figure 5B



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8