

Swansea's Printed Wares

A Re-assessment

By
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The following paper is based on two talks presented to the TCC meeting in Baltimore in October 2011. The views expressed are those of the author.

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The Swansea Pottery

Founded in 1764, the Swansea (later to be renamed Cambrian) Pottery was in production for more than 100 years before closing in 1870. For the majority of this period, certainly the eighty years after 1790, printed wares were to be an important feature of the factory's output. Certainly after the production and decoration of Swansea porcelain had ceased in 1824/6, printed wares were the main, and at times, the only output of the firm.

There is no evidence of any printed wares prior to 1790 – the factory had been originally established as a creamware and saltglaze manufacturer, very much in the Staffordshire tradition. Indeed, between c1770 and 1782, Ralph Ridgway probably acted as works manager – his two sons, George and Job were apprentices there.

There are few primary sources to help us understand what Swansea was making in these early years – and arguably fewer pots – but an important insight is provided by a series of receipts for purchases by the Rev. John Collins of Oxwich, who had the living of Oxwich. The first receipt, dated 4th July 1782, shows that the Pottery was making jugs, half pint mugs and milk pans¹, most likely in unmarked creamware that is very difficult to identify today.

The American Revolution (or War of Independence depending on your perspective) had clearly disrupted trade – indeed, following the death of William Coles who established the factory in 1764, his sons offered the factory for sale in 1783. Published in the *Morning Herald and Advertiser* of 1st February 1783, this advert shows that the Pottery's Wharf could cope with sizeable trading vessels of up to 300 tons and highlights the local and European trading links already available from Swansea: the West of England, Ireland, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Norway.

North America unsurprisingly, given the state of hostilities by 1783, is conspicuous by its absence.

Happily for Swansea Pottery collectors, the factory was not sold (or converted to another use which was an option according to the 1783 advert) and, based



1 - A Swansea pearlware plate, c1790, decorated in underglaze blue

¹ See Jonathan Gray (Ed.) *Welsh Ceramics In Context, Part I*, RISW 2003, plate 2.13. The receipt is in the City & County of Swansea Collection.

on surviving examples, there is evidence to suggest that production increased through this decade; by 1788 a broad range of blue painted creamwares and pearlwares are known [1]. Swansea, with direct access to the Bristol Channel and overseas and American markets together with close access to Coal, was (by 1788) well established as an attractive centre for china manufactory. It is possible the factory was re-advertised for sale around this time – John Flight records in his diary that he longed “long to try a scheme of China Manufactory about Swansea”². 1788 or perhaps 1789, is also around the time George Haynes buys a share of the works, using money from Philadelphia.

By 1790, George Haynes’s was selling wares through family and other business contacts in Philadelphia. One of the earlier letters from him to his Son in law dated 1st March 1790 states in relation to pottery sales “I flatter myself that you will be able to do some good business with me. No situation I know of is so eligible as this for furnishing the United States with our wares”. The following year, in similar correspondence, Haynes states “I do not know whose Queensware can be had on better terms than from here”.³

Evidence from various United States archives shows significant shipments of Swansea pottery to Philadelphia from this date, but no fragments of pre 1810 Swansea printed wares have been found by the author in the shard records that exist in some quantity in Philadelphia.⁴ Perhaps this can be explained by the cost of the wares – printed items were more expensive than painted wares, copper plates were themselves expensive as was the paper used to transfer the wares. It remains likely that the key American market was focusing on other earthenware from Swansea (polychrome painted creamware, mocha, basalts etc) and that our consideration of the factory’s output has been skewed by wares made for the local Welsh and British mainland trade.

² Extract from John Flight’s diary, published by Henry Sandon, *Flight and Barr Worcester Porcelain 1783-1840*, Antique Collectors Club. The Swansea Scheme was considered between 12th April and 14th September 1788 – see Appendix III, pages 217-232.

³ Kindly reproduced by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Contained within the Physick family papers dating from 1680-1899, where the major correspondent is George Haynes, Henry White Physick’s father in law. The papers were the gift of W.H. Nobel in 1950.

⁴ See *American Ceramic Circle Journal*, Volume XVI (2007), for Jonathan Gray “An American and American Trader in Wales: Fresh insights into the Cambrian Pottery, Swansea 1789-1810” for more detailed references. The main archive source is the National Records & Archives Administration (NARA), Philadelphia, National Archives Records Group 36, references 565068 and 572811.

Rothwell – the birth of printing at the Swansea Pottery

Norman Stretton, writing in the *Transactions*, English Ceramic Circle (ECC) in 1967⁵, provides the best assessment of Rothwell's work as an engraver. Here, Stretton states that Thomas Rothwell was born in Liverpool on 19 May 1740. On 2nd December 1760 he marries – and states in the marriage register that he was an 'Enamel Painter', the contemporary term for someone working in printed enamels. Simeon Shaw in his *History of Staffordshire Pottery* states, for 1767, "about this time Thomas Rothwell possessed of great skill as an enameller, engraver and printer, was employed by Mr Palmer, at Hanley, and specimens yet remaining evince considerable ability...". Stretton states that it has not been possible to trace how long Rothwell remained in Staffordshire, but in May 1773 an entry in the Birmingham rate-books shows he was living in Church Street.

By 1790, Rothwell was in Swansea in the same house in the Strand as Charles Stevens, one of the 'throwers' employed at the Cambrian Pottery. Rothwell was still in Swansea in 1792 having moved to a property in the Burrows.

1790 remains the most likely date for the introduction of printed wares at Swansea. A receipt of a purchase from the Rev. Mr. Collins dated 7th April 1790⁶ includes the purchase of "A set Blue printed teacups and saucers" which cost 2 shillings.⁷ A note at the end of the same receipt states "the fluted and gilt ware she ordered were finished at the time Mr. Collins called", proving that gilding was also available at this date.

Most writers and collectors attribute much of the 1790's printed wares to Rothwell. E Morton Nance, writing in *The Pottery & Porcelain of Swansea & Nantgarw* (Batsford 1942) considered that Rothwell was the only engraver employed at Swansea at that time. As a result, most 1790's (and indeed some of the products that would be better dated to the first decade of the nineteenth century) are attributed to him.

Stretton, however, was more cautious. In his conclusion to his 1967 ECC paper he states "It is likely that Rothwell for a few years only, as from 1794 onwards he engraved plates to illustrate books published in London and he was probably living there [2]. The Biographical Magazine published by Harrison & Co... features twenty-nine engraved by Rothwell dated 1794, 1795 and 1796."

⁵ See *Transactions*, English Ceramic Circle, Volume 6 part 3, 1967, pages 249 – 253.

⁶ Jonathan Gray (Ed.), *Welsh Ceramics In Context, Part II* (RISW, 2005) plate 3.5 for an illustration of this receipt. Some care should be taken as conceivably the receipt is dated 1796 – the last number is not that clear, although comparison with other figures on the same receipt suggest that 1790 is the most likely date.

⁷ 10p in current British money, or 16 US cents (based on early 2012 exchange rates).

Writing in *Welsh Ceramics in Context, Part II*, I reached the same conclusion. Using the printed plaques either published by Coles & Haynes in 1791 or those in Rothwell's own name (all dated 1792), I suggested that perhaps Rothwell had left the Pottery in late 1791. Here, I discussed Clark's tour which included the comment that "little business was going forward" given the uncertainty created by the French Revolution.

Irrespective of the exact date (and it's possible that Rothwell stayed in Swansea in 1792 on a freelance basis still engraving plates for the Cambrian Pottery), printed earthenware's were available in n1792. A

further receipt for purchases from the Rev. Mr. Collins dated 2nd August 1792 includes one reference to printed wares "I printed pudding dish" suggesting that the majority of these purchases were painted or plain creamware. If this one receipt reflects the average purchase, then it would suggest that printed wares were a small part of the production of the factory at this date.⁸

New evidence from the Philadelphia archives does, however, provide an end date for Rothwell's work in Swansea – or at least at the Pottery. George Haynes, writing to his son-in-law Henry White Physick on 29th April 1793 states, "We have not worked in enamel since I wrote to you concerning it for want of an enameller, but we expect one soon we are now in treaty with; should he not come must procure your order to be sent from London".⁹

As highlighted by Robin Emmerson in his introductory paper to *Success to America*¹⁰, the term enameller relates to anyone engaged in over or underglaze printing. For Haynes to say that "we have not worked in enamel..." means that they were not printing in April 1793. It could even suggest that Rothwell removed the plates!



2 - A plate from Gay's Fables, undated but c1795, with a plate engraved by Thomas Rothwell (and signed by him)

⁸ Being a Vicar in the eighteenth century, was the highest paid profession, earning an average of £250 per year (£50 per annum is used as a good middle class wage). If a local (and prominent) Vicar only bought one piece of printed ware, it suggests that this was not that popular or too expensive.

⁹ Frustratingly, the earlier letter is not in the same run in the Physick papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Other letters from this same correspondence are in other American collections. If it has survived it is likely to shed real light into Rothwell's engagement in Swansea.

¹⁰ *Success To America, Creamware for the American Market*, by Halfpenny, Teitelman and Fuchs, Antique Collectors Club, 2010

The letter means that we need to fundamentally revisit the attribution of all the designs currently given to Rothwell. The earliest pieces of dated Swansea earthenware are a small number of plates inscribed “Miss Isabella Rowlands 1794” together with the printed Elephant and Howdah pattern [3]. However, based on the new Haynes letter, Rothwell was not at the Pottery at that date.



3 A Swansea pearlware teapot of large size, printed with the Elephant & Howdah pattern in black. After 1796

Simply, we do not know who engraved the plates on the 1794 dated plates. There are three options:

- A new printer (as yet unnamed) started in 1793 and it was he who was responsible for these (and other) patterns; or,
- Rothwell engraved the copper plates whilst at the factory, but had left before the dated Rowlands 1794 plates were made; or,
- The copper plates were engraved in (or the pots were printed in) London

The most likely option is that these relate to a new printer – the majority of the Elephant & Howdah designs date to later in the 1790s.

With regards to Rothwell, the obvious conclusion is that, outside the plaques that he signed as engraver, we cannot attribute any of Swansea’s printed wares to him with certainty.

Swansea’s Ship Plates

One group that has also been attributed to Rothwell is the range of printed ship plates made at the Pottery. These have been dated as early as 1790 when Rothwell was at the firm. This early date of attribution appears partly to be based on one 1792 dated jug in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich in London. Made for James Patey, Salcombe it includes the added wording “Born 1792”. However, the inclusion of the term “Born” in an inscription typically relates to a later birthday, typically reaching majority at 21. On this basis, the National Maritime Museum jug is more likely to date to 1813 – the potting style and shape is more consistent with such a date – it does not relate to any of the dated pieces before 1794.

Also, if you stack the ship plates (put them on another plate of the period) they fit well on wares made for Swansea's London Warehouse in 1806-1808. They not stack on any of the plates made by Swansea in the 1790s. Stacking, a trick suggested to me by a collector of Bow porcelain, is another way of checking date and attribution – if it does not stack on a known Swansea plate, it is probably not Swansea, and if it does not stack on a certain Swansea 1790s plate, it is not 1790s!

The earliest piece of dated ship printed wares from Swansea, where the date is contemporary with the date of manufacture, is the 1803 bowl in the collection of the National Museum in Liverpool – there is no evidence as yet from dated pieces to suggest that they were made before this date. Indeed, the known dated pieces are between all 1803 and 1811.¹¹

The Betsey plate, when illustrated by the author on the front of *Welsh Ceramics in Context Part I*, 2003, was dated by me at 1795. Based on the other dated pieces of similar decoration since found, and the existence of the same writing style on the 1808 dated jug, it is much more likely to date between 1805 and 1810.

Some readers may feel that this dating is too late, not least because these wares have been previously attributed to the 1790's. An intriguing letter from Sid in Minnie Holdaway's papers is supportive of a later date. Here, he records a letter (source unknown) to Mr John Wakefield, Earthenware Manufactory, Swansea, South Wales written from Staffordshire¹²:

I have been with many Colour Makers for if they appear to be slightly in parting with it. I thought it was by reason of being not enough money for it. I have made a purchase of it from one of the old established Colour Makers in the pottery.

I flatter myself with saying that I have done all that lies in my power to accommodate you and your masters, it is an exact copy such as now in practice at most of the places in the potteries that make that kind of wares.

Brother when you come to fire that ware you must observe the planning of your oven. I mean put it in places as you will not over-fire it – the Mulbury Colour for printed mixed and made as follows:

3lbs of Litharge	
2lbs of antimony	Calcined at the top of the Glofs Oven
1½lbs of Magonees	
2 ounces of Blue Calks	

¹¹ See <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/4178.html>

¹² Taken from the papers of Minnie Holdaway. Source and accuracy unknown.

The Mulbery colour being referred to is most likely what collectors have called Manganese Purple [4]. As there are few reasons to doubt the letter, then this colour should postdate 1810. Such a date for the Manganese ship plates does appear consistent with the dating of the related wares. It is also possible, however, that this was a reintroduction of Manganese Purple at Swansea. The colour is also found on Bell Toy pieces, which fit better into the 1790's.

Taken together, the chronology of the shipping series makes more sense starting c1803, through the Dillwyn and Dillwyn & Co period, concluding after 1850 with the wares marked Evans & Glasson [5]. It is possible that these prints predate 1803, but we should only extend the date range based on known, contemporary dated examples. It is not unusual for collectors and dealers to date wares at least a decade too early – it is common to date an item based on the earliest rather than the latest design feature, and we all have a inbuilt bias to prefer things to have been made as early as possible.



4 A Swansea pearlware ship plate, printed in Mulbery. Marked SWANSEA impressed, after 1810



5 Two Swansea whiteware ship plates, the first Bevington & Co, c1817, the other Dillwyn & Co posy 1836. The second plate can also be found with the Evans & Glasson mark, post 1850

Handle Prints – Their Use for Attribution and Dating

Many years ago when working for Geoffrey Godden in Worthing, I saw him photograph the decorated handles of Newhall and related teapots (handle on). This was a slightly strange sight... so I asked Geoffrey what he was looking to achieve! Geoffrey explained that the handle was the most important part of the decoration - the painters responsible tended to use one house style, unconnected to the overall design. He explained that often based on the decoration of the handle alone and using this, he could classify the teapot as either Newhall, or one of the related manufactories (then X, Y or Z).

I have over the last decade or more tried to apply the same theory to Swansea's printed wares – and it does apply to an extent. Take two (an Elephant and Howdah teapot and a Precarious Chinaman puzzle jug) very different surface patterns – but both have the same basic handle print. It is likely that the different plates held the main pattern, and a separate plate (or plates) was used to do the handles [6].



6 A Swansea Precarious Chinaman puzzle jug together with the Elephant & Howdah teapot illustrated in figure 3. Whilst they have very different patterns, they share the same handle print, which based on current known examples, was used 1796-1804

The main handle print found on the larger wares of this period comprises a flower like structure, supporting an elongated oval, some intertwined loops and further floral designs. Based on the author's observations, this handle print can be seen on a range of pieces with dates between 1796 and 1804. The pattern may have been

used for longer, but we need to have earlier and/or later dated pieces before extending this range. Equally, we need to have caution before attributing any of these patterns to Rothwell – they are most likely to have been engraved by (as yet) an unknown hand.

A different handle print is used on smaller Swansea wares [7]. For example, a simple row of flowers and leaves was used on Elephant and Howdah teacups, Chinoiserie Figures and the most common form of the Puzzle of Portraits mugs. None of these patterns are known with a Swansea mark – indeed, they predate it – but are linked by the handle print in terms of both manufacture and date.

It is difficult to be precise on dating or to assess how long this pattern was used on smaller handle forms.

The Puzzle of Portraits mugs must date to 1794 or later, the former being the year the source print was first published in London.

It is very unlikely that Rothwell was involved in that print, given that he had left the employment of Coles and Haynes by mid-1793. This perhaps casts further doubt on his involvement with those that are linked.



7 Three pieces of Swansea pearlware, 1795-1800, comprising an Elephant & Howdah pattern in black, Chinoiserie Figures in brown and the Puzzle of Portraits, also in black, together with their printed handles, which are all the same

Handle prints can also help with attribution and dating at Swansea some twenty years later. From my observations, the handle print on the Curling Palm pieces are generally the same - a rather cheap block of engraving. This could suggest that the handle print was part of the plate for this pattern. Dated pieces [8] are most commonly found between 1810 and 1814, suggesting that this pattern was used after the closure of the Cambrian Company, Swansea's London Warehouse in Fleet Street in 1808 and the introduction of porcelain under William Billingsley in 1814¹³.



More work is required to understand what was made at Swansea and to consider the correct chronology. Handle prints may provide the most reliable route into this maze. If you go back to first principles – start with the premise that patterns are not Swansea, and then based on evidence decide whether they belong to a known or probable groups, handle prints are



8 A Swansea pearlware printed blue and white mug, inscribed Margaret Cadwallader 1813, together with a Swansea small jug, c1813, printed in Mulbery

¹³ A Unity printed mug sold on eBay around December 2011. It had the Curling Palm print and the same handle print as on the 1813 dated mug illustrated here. It was dated c1800 on eBay – the evidence of the dated pieces and handle prints suggests that the Unity pattern was used after 1810.

key. Pip marks and turning characteristics are unreliable factors when deciding attribution - other factories, notably Herculaneum, used similar pip (hearts, spades etc) as small impressed workers marks; turners' marks on the base of pots appear on other marked Staffordshire wares (e.g. Spode) and workmen moved between factories (we know for example that a Swansea turner left and moved to Staffordshire in 1806).

Swansea Attributions

The Duke of Rutland, who toured the Pottery in Swansea in 1797, states in his published tour that “copper plates used for the occasion cost nearly £2,000”. This is a substantial amount, so much so that Robert Copeland mentioned to me that this must have been misheard; he suggested that they were talking about the weight rather than the monetary value. Either way, the reference suggests that printed wares were a stable output of the factory from the late eighteenth century (and, perhaps, more so after Rothwell had left the firm).

However, some caution is required. In the view of the author, the SWANSEA impressed mark was introduced after 1805, in line with the firm opening their London Warehouse in 1806. There is no evidence that the mark was used before this date.

Also, much of what is attributed to Swansea is based on unmarked items of the type made by many factories. There are very few patterns that are found with a SWANSEA impressed mark, including quantities of Longbridge, Elephant Rock (copying a late eighteenth century Chinese design) [9] and a Fisherman pattern derivative.

All other Swansea attributions are based on connoisseurship and a few shards picked up on or near the site. We need to be cautious about attribution based on glazed shards – not all pottery used in Swansea was made in the factory. We must also be careful to avoid both commercial and collector bias – it is a fact that “Swansea” sells quicker than the printed works of some other factories and for a higher price. Taken together, there is a risk that too much has been attributed to Swansea, especially when



9 A Chinese export porcelain dish, painted with what Swansea collectors' call Elephant Rock. Second half of eighteenth century

copper plates moved between works and were sold on bankruptcy. We need to be very careful and adopt higher standards for our attributions, if we are to suggest that something is definitely of Swansea manufacture.

The Hollin's Shepherd pattern [10] is perhaps the best example of optimistic Swansea attribution. A number of marked Hollin's examples are known, but collectors of Swansea still try to attribute this (and related) patterns to the Welsh firm. The existence of a Swansea impressed mark is taken as a firm attribution – but the mark of a rival firm is dismissed.

The most logical conclusion is that this pattern is Hollin's and, together with related patterns thought to have been made in Swansea, were made elsewhere. This may not mean that Swansea did not make something similar. We do not know whether they had their own engravers at this point or whether they were buying pre-engraved copper plates from independent engravers. If they did buy plates from independents, then they could have sold very similar plates to other manufacturers.

The other question we need to ask is around the certainty of our attributions. A number of authors are willing to confirm definite Swansea attributions based on what I would consider (at best) circumstantial evidence. Pat Halfpenny, a retired museum curator – in general a group who require more evidence to confirm an attribution when compared to collectors or dealers – tends to use a five point scale for attributions:

- Proven
- Probably
- Possibly
- Potentially
- Plausible



10 A Hollin blue printed plate, with Prince of Wales border, often attributed to Swansea, showing the impressed HOLLIN mark to the reverse

Take the Swan print [11] found near the Potworks in Swansea when various developments took place 10 to 15 years ago. This has been published as “definitely Swansea”. I find the specimen (now in the Swansea Museum) fascinating, but where does it fit against the five point scale above? If it were



11 A pearlware bowl, printed with a Swan, of the type found near the Swansea Pottery factory site

unglazed, a real waster, I would say this was proven. However, this example was glazed, and the only example of the print found. As such, it may not be a factory disposal – it could have been general household waste. The shape, a bowl, does not give much to go on and the existence of a turning mark (or circle) underneath is not enough, in my view, to drive attribution. In my judgment, the highest rating is “possible”, although “potentially” would also be acceptable. Based on this level of evidence, it is not

possible to say that this pattern is of Swansea manufacture.

If we assume that a good number of the wares currently attributed to Swansea were made elsewhere – certainly the Hollin’s pieces remove quite a body of production - what were the Swansea Potters making around 1800-1805? The one area that requires further study is a group which has various Swansea characteristics – certainly there are close similarities in terms of mug handles [12].

If this group is Swansea, it brings in a range of different patterns, which again share a limited number of handle prints. Other writers have attributed this group to Swansea, again I would recommend some caution,



12 A Swansea pearlware mug (right) painted by William Weston Young between 1803-1806 together with another blue printed example of similar form, possibly Swansea

but it would fill a gap. From the mug shapes, it would suggest a date range in the first five years of the nineteenth century.

James Brindley & Thomas Baxter

The period after 1808 was problematic for the Swansea Pottery – the London Warehouse had closed; the economy was poor (mainly as a result of continued war with Napoleon in Europe and, in 1808 itself, the impact of Jefferson’s Embargo Act). George Haynes leaves the firm in 1809 or 1810; Thomas Pardoe (the main free hand painter and gilder) leaves for Bristol, and their long standing modeller, George Bentley dies. In other work, I have described the years 1809-1813 as the “Dark Ages” of Swansea Pottery, where they retract to a simpler (and less expensive) product range.¹⁴

By 1813, however, there is renewed investment and interest, perhaps spurred by competition from the newly established Glamorgan Pottery opening next door. Part of this renewed enthusiasm sees James Brindley arrive in Swansea. Some of his work was around repairing some of the older copper plates, which is probably why the Prince of Wales feathers starts to reappear on yellow glazed earthenware. However, another part of his role was to introduce new patterns to the works.

Brindley is perhaps best known for his commemoratives relating to the end of the war against Napoleon, and his first capture in 1814. These engaging pieces are dated 1st April 1814, and would have been made and sold shortly after this date [13].

Brindley is also likely to have been responsible for a range of printed patterns used on Billingsley’s porcelain in Swansea. For example, a simple shell pattern can be found on both Swansea Porcelain and also Dillwyn & Co marked pearlware, both c1815 [14].



13 A Swansea pearlware jug, entitled Bonaparte dethroned and 1st April 1814, signed James Brindley within the print

¹⁴ See Jonathan Gray, *The Cambrian Company, Swansea Pottery in London 1806-1808*, 2012



14 A Swansea porcelain London shape up and saucer, printed with shells by James Brindley. Also found on pottery marked Dillwyn & Co (1811-1817)

The other dynamic for Brindley is the arrival of Thomas Baxter in Swansea c1816. Baxter, one of (if not) the best painter on early nineteenth century Porcelain in Britain arrived in Swansea from Worcester we believe, on the recommendation of his doctors – Swansea was a seaside town, referred to as the Brighton of Wales, and sea bathing was considered beneficial for medicinal purposes. Whilst Baxter is not considered as a printer in Swansea, he did issue a series of printed views of the locality, so was undertaking some engraving. The Cherub bat prints on a Swansea cabaret tray recently sold by Bonham's in London are more likely to be the work of Thomas Baxter than James Brindley, so perhaps the former displaced the latter at the works on his arrival or, which is perhaps more likely, at the change of partnership to Bevington & Co in 1817. Whatever happened, James Brindley was in Whitehaven in Cumbria in 1819, as his signature appears on at least one print used at that pottery.

Cambria Clay

The Cambrian mark appears on a range Swansea products, notably during the factory's establishment of a London Warehouse in Fleet Street between 1806 and 1808. However, the term Cambrian also appears on a range of impressed marks during the Bevington & Co period (1817-1824).

However, the majority of wares impressed marked Cambria (or Cambrian) or bearing a printed mark for either variety were not made in Swansea. Rather than a

place of manufacture, which is what would typically be expected, the term relates to the source of the clay used in the body.

The answer to this conundrum is provided by a small leather notebook in the Potteries Museum, Hanley. As published in the 2007 Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle (and Evans in the Northern Ceramic Society Newsletter for September 1974), in 1816 a Mr. Hooson obtained a lease and formed the “Welsh Company” at Nant-y-Mock near Holywell. The white cherty sandstone was ground down and employed under the name “Rock Cambria” in the composition of china and earthenware.

Quoting Evans, Josiah Wedgwood II stated that “a new material called by getters “Cambria” were first bought into the potteries in 1818, which promises to be of great advantage to the China makers and to introduce a new species of E’ware without any Flint”.

There were many purchasers of the Cambria clay, including Masons, Heathcote, Clews and the Bevington’s in Swansea amongst others. Pottery made with the clay sometimes bears and impressed or printed Cambria or Cambrian mark. This is not the pattern name, rather a reference to the clay type used.¹⁵

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¹⁵ See Jonathan Gray, The English Ceramic Circle *Transactions*, 2007 for Cambria or Cambrian, Two Aspects of the Welsh Ceramic Industry