

THOMAS ROTHWELL
1740 - 1807
COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVER

**A SURVEY OF HIS LIFE AND WORK WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO HIS WORK AT SWANSEA POTTERY**



BY

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THOMAS ROTHWELL 1740-1807

Engraver, enameller, printer and artist:

His life and work with a section on his engravings on Swansea transfer-printed ware.

Thomas Rothwell was born on 19th May, 1740, one of six children and was christened on 7th June, 1740 at St Nicholas Church in Liverpool. When he was 20 he married Esther Johnson on 2nd December 1760. We first find out his occupation here because he is described as an enamel painter in the marriage register. Thomas and Esther had two children: Lucy, born 17th December, 1761 and Peter, born 13th November 1762. The former was baptised 13th January 1762 and the latter on 13th December 1762, both at St Nicholas and the baptism register records Thomas as an 'enamel painter' living in Frog Lane, Liverpool. It is possible that about this period and following he was being trained by Sadler and Green of Liverpool. The Liverpool connection is suggested by Norman Stretton in '*Liverpool Engravers and their Sources*' in The Connoisseur published in August of 1976, He discusses The Drawing Book published by John Bowles

"Printed for Jno Bowles & Sons at the Black Horse in Cornhill 24th November, 1756",

and illustrates an image on page 37 in the Drawing Book of 'The Singing Lesson' engraved by Thomas Rothwell with the comment:

"Thos Rothwell, an engraver who was working in Liverpool during the early part of his career."

We can find no record of Thomas Rothwell from 1762-1767. It is possible therefore during this period like many itinerant artisans he moved where there was work. Simeon Shaw writes:

"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"

Unfortunately Shaw is occasionally ambiguous in his information but it seems possible that he was there as Shaw continues by comparing his work with that of Sadler and Green:

“but like all other attempts they do not equal the productions of S&G for Mr Wedgwood,” the implication being that Thomas Rothwell was being employed as an engraver.

There are some examples of engravings for transfer printing signed by Rothwell c1763-1767. Stretton is unsure whether these engravings were done at Liverpool or Hanley. At the time Stretton's work was published (1966) there was in his collection a creamware bowl with a black print of a shepherd and shepherdess in a rural landscape signed 'Rothwell Sculpt'. Also extant were two teapots of this period in Liverpool Museum one with a black transfer print of Minerva surrounded by clouds and symbols of Wisdom and the legend 'Let Wisdom Unite Us' signed 'T Rothwell Sculpt.' Also in the City of Liverpool Museum is an unmarked mug ornamented with a Scene of 'The Death of Wolfe' printed in black. This print was signed 'Rothwell sculpt'. Elizabeth Collard in *The Potters View of Canada* postulates that Rothwell worked for one of the early creamware potters of Liverpool. A tea caddy currently on the Internet with Cathcart Antiques of Australia has the identical print which is attributed to Rothwell and the caddy being attributed to Neale, the point here being that if this attribution is correct then it confirms that Rothwell was at H.Palmer at Hanley, bearing in mind that Palmer's dates were 1760 –1788 and Palmer and Neale were in partnership from 1769-1776 at the Church Works, Hanley. It is now generally accepted that Rothwell was with Humphrey Palmer during this period.

The second teapot in Liverpool Museum again has a black print of 'The Haymakers' signed 'T.Rothwell Delin Et Sculpt'. This 'The Haymakers' print also occurs on the reverse of a teapot in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. This print is signed 'T.R.S.'. The other side of that teapot has a black print of a man and a woman sitting at a table on which stands a coffee pot and cup and saucer, the man smokes a long stemmed clay pipe, the whole print is surrounded by a framework of rococo scrolls and flowers. Incidentally 'The Haymakers' print on the Cambridge teapot is taken from the same copper plate used on the Liverpool Museum teapot.

After completing our research we are still unable to ascertain with certainty whether Shaw is right and that Rothwell was employed by Palmer at Hanley or whether he was still at Liverpool perhaps being employed by Sadler and Green. According to E Stanley Price, in addition to five named engravers employed by Sadler and Green (John Evans,

Thomas Billinge, Richard Abbey, Thomas Lawrenson and Thomas Johnson):

“he employed three engravers in London and two in his own office”,

“while he was busy preparing plates for Wedgwood” from September 1761 to January 1766. It is possible that one of these two engravers could be Rothwell although there is no evidence to prove it.

The next time we are able to trace Thomas Rothwell is in 1773 when he was living in Church Street, Birmingham, and in 1774 a firm of Rothwell and Hicks, engravers is recorded. An edition of *Pilgrim’s Progress* was published in 1769 with copper plates by Rothwell and printed by Thomas Smith in Wolverhampton. Lawley commented on the “copper plate etchings of exceptional beauty.” In 1770 ‘*The Genuine Works of Josephus*’ was published in Birmingham which has nine copper plates, a number by Rothwell from designs by James Millar. We know he was still living in Church Street, Birmingham and in 1774 the firm of Rothwell and Hicks, engravers are in the Local Trade Directory as still working in Church Street, Birmingham.

There is no information on Thomas Rothwell now until two references in 1785. The first is of:

“a counterpart lease for 101 years between Sir Thomas Gooch of Benacre Hall in Suffolk and Thomas Rothwell, engraver 10th May, 1785 on a property in Bartholomew Street in Birmingham”

There is also a record of Thomas Rothwell still working in Loveday Street, Birmingham until 1788. In that year a new edition of the Bible appeared published by Pearson and Rollanson with three plates by Rothwell. We believe that about this time Thomas Rothwell moved to Swansea c. 1788. Turner in *The Ceramics of Swansea and Nantgarw*, page 13 says:

“He (Thomas Rothwell) was probably there (i.e. in Swansea) a year or so before that event”

(The event cited is a reference to the Charles Stevens’ application to the Derby works already mentioned). Morton Nance concurs also with this statement.

The first reference to his residence in Swansea is in 1790. As Jewitt says:

“In 1790 one of the ‘throwers;’ was Charles Stevens, who had been an apprentice (at the same time as William Taylor) at the Worcester China Works. In that year he applied to be employed at the Derby China works sending his address as ‘The Pot Works, Swansea’ and next at Mr Rothwells, engraver at The Strand, Swansea.”

Morton Nance was of the opinion that Rothwell had been in Swansea for some time before 1790 although no earlier reference to his presence has been found. He was still in Swansea in 1792 provable not only because of his dated topographical engravings but also because of the announcement in The Gloucester (sic) Journal of the auction of a dwelling with garden and stable in Somerset Buildings situated in the borough near to the Pottery, then rented by Thomas Rothwell. It is not known whether the new landlord would have retained Rothwell as a tenant or whether Rothwell then sought residency elsewhere in Swansea. Rothwell’s house was only one of 17 houses which were put up for auction. Rothwell’s house was at a yearly rent of fourteen guineas, a considerable amount at the time. This is an indication both of his financial state and his status within the Pottery hierarchy. The fact that Thomas Rothwell is mentioned by name in the newspaper is an indication of the esteem in which he was held, otherwise why mention his name?

As principal engraver he would have been responsible for producing the patterns for the copper plate engravings for most, if not all, of the early transfer printed ware of the Cambrian Pottery. The policy at the Cambrian Pottery seems to have been that copper plates weren’t signed because so far none in this early period have been found signed. It is possible, to identify some of his engravings for ceramics by comparing them with known and signed Rothwell engravings. He certainly signed his engravings in Liverpool and Staffordshire. Although we know Rothwell was also an enameller it is not possible to identify any of his work as no records exist.

That the first three engravings were published by Coles and Haynes but not the others is easily explained, as Gibbs and Morris state that:

“he retained a measure of independence from the pottery in his work as an engraver because of his personal friendship with Haynes”.

There seem to be no original drawings of Rothwell’s topographical engravings but two oil paintings of Oxwich which are reputed to be by

Rothwell, both unsigned, are in Swansea Museum Collection.

As for his engravings on Swansea pottery, none, of course, are signed however by comparison with known and signed engravings it is difficult but possible to attribute. We would agree with Grant-Davidson that some of the early transfer printed patterns can be attributed to Rothwell. These will be discussed in Section 2.

Most experts agree that Rothwell left Swansea in early 1794. He engraved copper plates in London later in 1794 for 'The Biographical Magazine' published by Harrison & Co. which contained 'Portraits and Characters of Eminent and Ingenious Persons of Every Age and Nation'. This contains 139 portrait medallions of famous people some 29 of them engraved by Thomas Rothwell including The Earl of Halifax, Sir Francis Drake, Lord Anson and Erasmus all dated to 1794, 1795 and 1796. It is probable that Thomas Rothwell had moved to London during this period. In 1799 'The Cabinet of the Arts' was published in London with plates engraved by Rothwell and contains a series of engravings by different artists including Rothwell. There are views of Swansea, Worcester, Guildford and Windsor after paintings by J.M.W. Turner. He also engraved for Harrison and the Pocket Magazine There are engravings extant of the 'Haymarket Theatre' and 'Ranelagh' for that magazine on the Internet (see later for more details including illustrations).

By 1803 Rothwell was back in Birmingham. According to Chapman's Birmingham Directory Thomas Rothwell was working as an engraver living in Coleshill Street, Birmingham. He was still there in 1805. Holden's Triennial Directory lists him as an engraver and copper plate printer. In 1807 Aris' Birmingham Gazette on 26th January 1807 records the death of Thomas Rothwell on the 16th January of that year and lists him as an engraver living in Church Street, Birmingham. His age was given as 65 whereas he was in fact 67 years of age. The Liverpool Chronicle of 4th February 1807 wrote an obituary to him although he had left Liverpool some 40 years before, indicative of his continuing personal reputation and contact with his old home town.

Rothwell is mentioned in *The Guide and Handbook to Swansea and District* by S.C. Gamwell published by the Cambrian Newspaper Office in 1880:

Thomas Rothwell was "the chief engraver at the Cambrian Pottery in

1792” when he published a series of local views when he was at Swansea’ Grant-Davidson believed that Rothwell would have trained apprentices and it is likely there may have been engravers working for such a large pottery as Swansea before Rothwell’s arrival. What is apparent with regards to large dinner service pieces such as the ‘Longbridge’ patterned ones is that Rothwell could not have engraved all the shapes and sizes of engravings required; it is much more probable that he engraved a few of the larger coppers to set as templates and also to set his own engraving style to be copied by others employed by the Cambrian; Rothwell’s apprentices would, of course, have been trained in his ‘style’ of engraving. Some experts refer to the transfer printing style of a pottery’s output, and this would have applied not just to Swansea but to other potteries also. It seems a style was set by leader engravers and others were instructed to follow—much as a master painter in his studio set the style that his students followed even on occasions finishing off parts of the painting left incomplete by the master himself.

Rothwell’s plates would have been used over and over with a very large number of pulls taken from each copper. Even when the plate showed wear it would be reworked and used again and again to its ultimate demise. These coppers were extremely expensive to create and it was therefore essential to put them to full use especially the ‘Rothwell’ master examples. It should be remembered the expense involved in producing a copper plate. As E. Stanley Price states in *‘John Saddler: A Liverpool Pottery Printer’*:

“Upon their skill the success of the entire operations dependedTheir fees were high, for a set of jugs probably two quart, three pint, quart, pint and half pint the charge was £30.00.” The cost was high because as Price says:

“It took at least five days to engrave a single portrait.”

Of course with a more complicated and larger pattern the time taken would have been much longer. E. Stanley Price comments further that in the eighteenth century:

“The plates were etched first and touched with the graver and “bitten” with Aqua Regia.”

Although acid etching continues to this day copper plate engravings in the late 18th and early 19th century were soon being done by the ‘hand push’

method using a burin or graver on its own.

The importance of the engraver was recognised by the employer; the huge difference in wages between the engraver and the other pottery workers indicates this. As Shaw in his *History of the Staffordshire Potteries* points out; in 1819: “the common workman will use six moulds and finish sixteen or eighteen soup tureens a day” and be paid ten to fifteen shillings per week. Throwers were slightly better paid. Shaw states:

“Mr Myott’s thrower, the late Mr Bridgwood of Lane End was expected to average fifteen score dozens daily” for a wage of “fifteen shillings a week, a rent free house, fire and keep of a cow”.

In 1784 “E.Wood hired the best mould maker and tureen maker, John Proudlove for three years at twelve shillings per week.” (op.cit.)

Even these were highly paid compared to ordinary workers such as the women and children transferers. The Ironbridge Gorge Museum tells us that these workers were normally paid seven shillings and sixpence for a fifty-one hour week under very poor working conditions.

Whilst it is expected that all employed in engraving would conform to source pattern and style there are bound to be differences shown in detail and borders. This is an inevitable fact as patterns and borders were done by hand-eye co-ordination and interpretation of the source itself. Anyone studying pieces of a ‘Longbridge’ dinner service can trace the details to which we refer even when the pieces involved are all impressed ‘SWANSEA’. Naturally at first glance they all look the same but, look a little closer.

The only other recent reference to Thomas Rothwell is from Welsh Ceramics in Context. Made by Minnie Holdaway regarding the pattern ‘Rural Lovers’, she writes:

“Is it possible Rothwell engraved the somewhat different version of ‘Rural Lovers’ for S.Hollins in Staffordshire and then another copper for this mug which might be Swansea?”

It is a fact that ‘Rural Lovers’ is found on Birmingham enamels and on engravings made by Sadler and Green (Liverpool) for Wedgwood creamware. Both Liverpool the home and training ground of Rothwell

bear obvious links to him and additionally he had worked in Birmingham. Minnie Holdaway goes on to suggest

“that he (Rothwell) first engraved the ‘Rural Lovers’ on Birmingham enamels and then on S. Hollins* ware in Staffordshire either before or after he engraved the pattern for Cambrian earthenware.....this is all, of course, conjecture...”. Since the consensus of opinion is that Rothwell moved from Swansea to London in 1794 her latter thought is untenable. Her suggestion that Rothwell’s engravings were done by William Smith of Baddeley or Thomas Davis of Worcester is equally untenable.

To return to our subject, in our opinion Thomas Rothwell was and remains an artist whose productions have done much to ensure that the printed decoration on early Swansea pottery is some of the finest produced in this country.

**Since the publication of the S.Hollins booklet in 2001 we have searched assiduously and exhaustively through archival records and primary source material for Hollins. Our research was made much more difficult because we found nowhere that Samuel Hollins produced transfer printed earthenware, he is always listed as a redware and stoneware potter. Indeed Simeon Shaw’s only reference to Samuel Hollins is as a red china potter in spite of the fact that Shaw does give us names of contemporary potters who produced transfer printed ware. Chaffers and Shaw both inform us that Samuel Hollins from 1781 was a major partner in the group who purchased the patent for hard paste porcelain from Champion of Bristol who had acquired it from Cookworthy of Plymouth. He remained a full partner for decades though other partners left or died. Indeed in 1810 he, with Warburton, Clowes and Daniel, paid £6,800 for all the New Hall buildings at a time when there was economic depression. This therefore was a courageous and dedicated action. It seems obvious to us that Samuel Hollins, for at least thirty years, channelled his energies and finance into the New Hall porcelain manufactory not transferware.*

ROTHWELL'S TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGRAVINGS

There are ten of these Rothwell engravings of the Swansea district all made between 1791 and 1792 while he was living in Swansea:--

The Cambrian Pottery

'Publish'd according to Act of Parliament. Augt. 31 1791. by Coles and Haynes. SWANSEA'

The Forest Copper Works, Morriston

'Publish'd according to Act of Parliament By Coles and Haynes Swansea 29th Oct 1791

Mount Pleasant

'Publish'd according to Act of Parliament 28th July 1791 By Coles and Haynes. Swansea 1791

The Bathing House

'Publish'd according to Act of Parliament By Coles and Haynes Sept 12 1791

The 1792 engravings are as follows:

Penrice Castle

Penrice Castle Glamorganshire a SEAT of T.M.TALBOT, Esqr'

'Drawn and Engraved by T.Rothwell Swansea'

'Publish'd as the Act directs Janry 10 1792'

Briton Ferry and Vernon House

'Briton Ferry near Neath a seat of Lord Vernon'

'Drawn and Engraved by Thos. Rothwell Jany 1792

Swansea Port and Bay

'Port and Bay of Swansea Glamorganshire'

'Drawn and Engraved by Thos. Rothwell'

'Publish'd as the Act directs, March 25th 1792 by T. Rothwell Swansea.'

Swansea from the North East

'North-East view of the Town of Swansea'

'Publish'd according to Act of Parliament by Rothwell Swansea 1792'

Sketty Hall

'Sketty Hall A seat of R.Sheldon Esqr'

'Publish'd according to Act of Parliament by T. Rothwell Swansea March 26 1792

Clasemont

'South-East view of Clasemont, the seat of J.Morris, Esqr

'Drawn and Engraved by T.Rothwell Swansea 1792'

'Publish'd as the Act Directs July 25 1792 by T. Rothwell Swansea

Thomas Rothwell engravings appear in the following publications after leaving Swansea.

The Biographical Magazine (1794-1797); The Pocket Magazine (1794-1797); The Cabinet of the Arts (1795); The Ladies Pocket Magazine (1795-96) and England Relineated (1804).

After he left Swansea c. 1794 his engravings can be divided roughly into four groups as follows:

Portraits, Topographical, Interiors and Architectural, Others.

Portraits

The following is a list of engraved portraits by or attributed to Thomas Rothwell post 1794 in alphabetical sequence:

Lord Anson, Lord Francis Bacon, Sir Richard Blackmore, Herman Boerhaave, Nicholas Boileau, Rev Dr. William Broome, Duke of Buckingham, Samuel Butler, Hannibal Caracci, Geoffrey Chaucer, Pope Clement XIV, Christopher Columbus, Arcangelo Corelli, Daniel Defoe (**Fig.2**), Sir John Denham, Sir Francis Drake, John Dyer, Desiderius Erasmus, Francois Fenelon, Frederick II, King of Prussia (**Fig. 1**), John Gay, Marquis of Granby, Earl of Halifax, Dr. William King, Sir Godfrey Kneller, Jean de LaFontaine, Lord Landsdowne, Michaelangelo, Moliere (Jean Baptiste Poquelin), Thomas Parnell, Peter the Great, Christopher Pitt, Nicholas Poussin, Dr Nicholas Saunderson, Torquato Tasso, Paul Whitehead. Most of these were published by Harrison & Co. of London.



Fig.1



Fig.2

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From Patrimony to Paternity

Opposite page 202 of *The Vicar of Wakefield* by Dr Goldsmith is another Rothwell engraving after a drawing by Richard Corbould. The edition was published by T Cadell in 1800.

Topographical

Prints (after Turner) of Guildford, Swansea (**Fig.3**), Windsor (**Fig.4**) and Worcester.

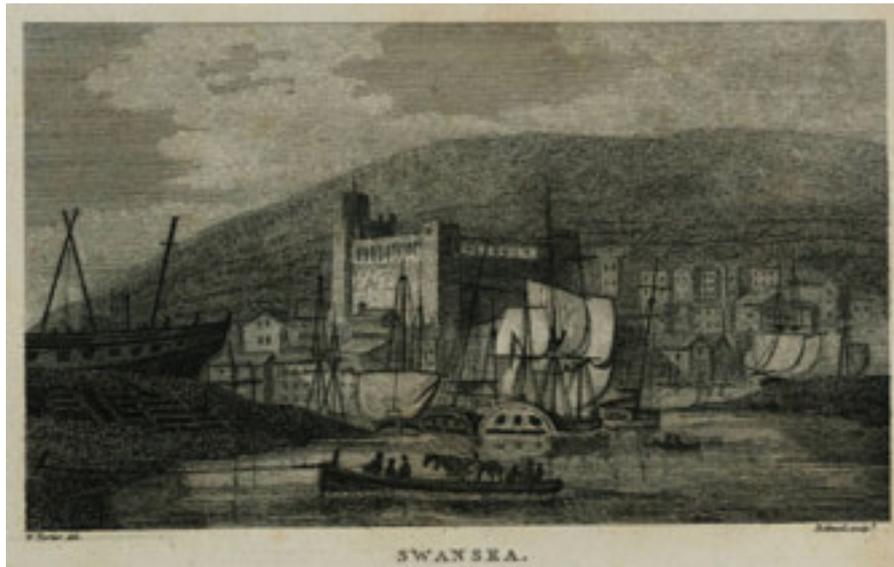


Fig. 3

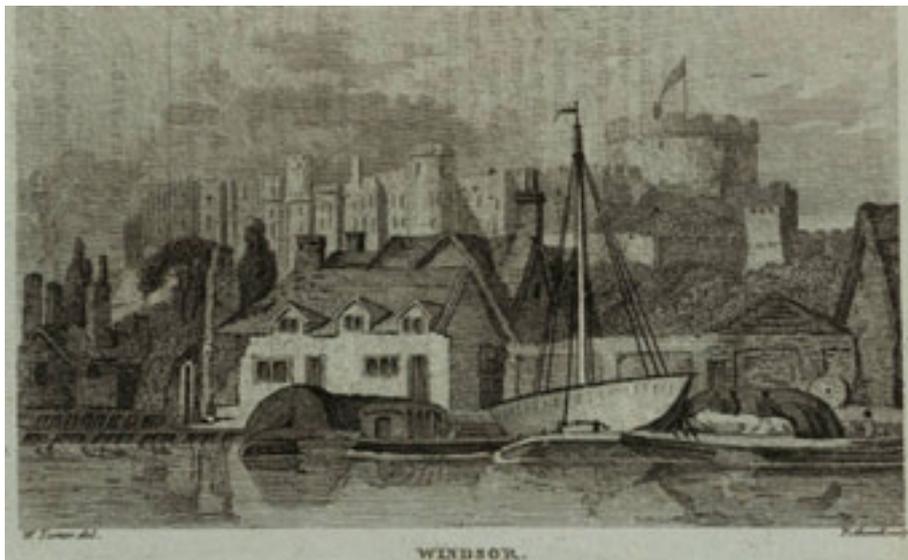


Fig. 4

© The Trustees of the British Museum

Interiors and Architectural

The Admiralty (the exterior of a neo-classical building { **Fig.5** });
The Parade (St James' Park) { **Fig.6** };

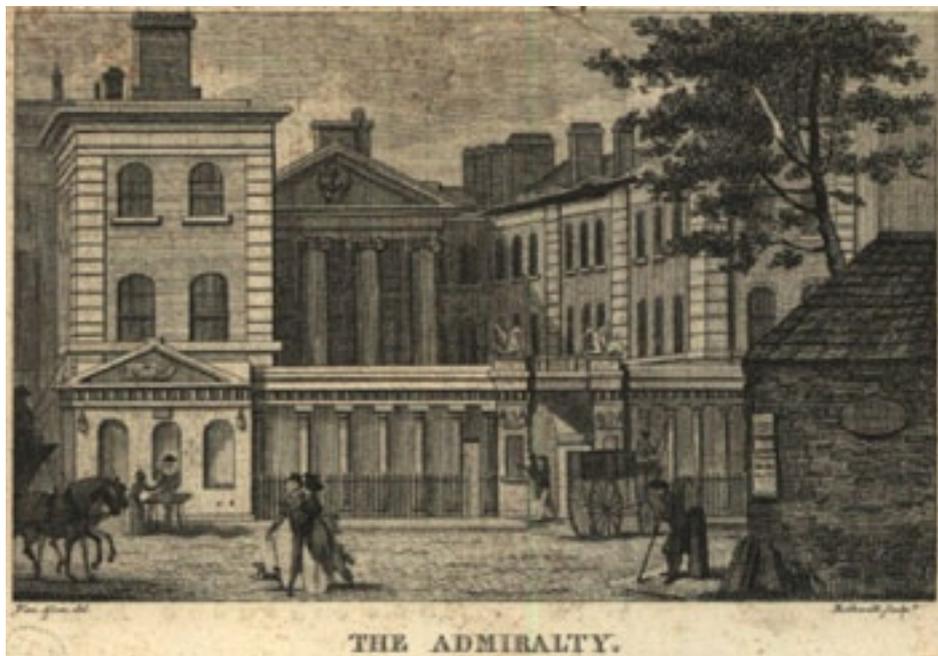


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

©The Trustees of the British Museum

Drury Lane Theatre, London (the interior { **Fig.7**}); The Haymarket Theatre (the interior { **Fig.8**});



Fig.7



Fig.8

© The Trustees of the British Museum

The Bank (a view of the main façade of the Bank of England on Threadneedle Street;

Ranelagh (interior of the Rotonda(sic.);

The Royal Circus (interior of the Circus on Great Surrey Street)

Sans Souci (interior of a Palace).

Others

Illustrations from Williams Robertson's 'History of the Reign of Emperor Charles the Fifth

(Published by Cadell and Davies, London 1799)

Volume II page 208—The Death of Montezuma . The captive emperor stands on a castle tower being attacked by Aztecs throwing stones and firing arrows.

Volume IV page 186--Charles resigns his Crown to his Son Philip. The Emperor stands supported by a nobleman, looking down at his son who kneels on his left, pressing his father's hand against his forehead to the acclaim of the crowds.

Volume IV page 209 –Charles V at St Justus. Charles V stands in a garden, leaning on a stick, holding a piece of fruit, talking to a gardener, who kneels holding a potted plant.

Illustrations from an ecclesiastical publication by W. Button (c.1797)

Scene from Exodus—Man runs forward from the left to break up a fight between two others, landscape with pyramids in the background.

Calvin taking leave of the Senate—Calvin sits in a sedan chair on the left, addressing the Senate grouped in rows to the right.

Conversion of Justin Martyr—Two men on the seashore, one pointing up to heaven; the other sitting on rocks to the left.

Luther before the Diet of Worms—Luther stands on the left, gesturing as he addresses the Dukes and Bishops.

Conversion of Hindoo Devotee by a Danish missionary—The missionary stands to the right surrounded by Indians, one sits at the foot of a tree on the left and throws up his hands.

A woman sits with four children at her knee, an angel stands in a doorway looking back at them.

Illustration to the Frontispiece of William Okely's An Enquiry concerning the Origin of Christianity

A female holds a crown and a banner with letters 'New Testa/-/Ment. Crowns to the right figures representing the four continents. The engraving was after Thomas Stothard.

The book was published by T. Heptinstall in 1797.

Illustration to Milton's Paradise Lost, Book XII page 638—Adam and Eve being expelled from Paradise. The engraving was after Edward Francesco Burney. The book was published by T. Heptinstall of 304 Holborn on June 4th 1800.

Illustration entitled The Genius of Shakespeare corrected by Revelation

Although after Burney, Burney himself used Sheermaecker's memorial statue in Westminster Abbey as the image. The British Museum estimates that it was published 1775-1807 (**Fig.9**).



Fig.9

© The Trustees of the British Museum

'Infant Vision of Shakespeare'

Although not a portrait Harrison also published this engraving again after Burney engraved by Rothwell as a frontispiece to Volume IV of The Pocket Magazine in 1796.

Illustration(s) from Early blossoms of genius and virtue.....moral poesy embellished with engravings.

(A children's poetry book) published by T. Heptinstall of Fleet Street, London on October 7th, 1797.

Illustrations from Fables: with the Life of the Author

by John Gay published in London 1796, which contained 66 engravings some by Thomas Rothwell.

In order to illustrate the nature of Rothwell's engraving style we have illustrated some examples of his later engravings made for magazines and other publications as opposed to pottery.

This is not an exhaustive summary of Thomas Rothwell's engravings but it does reveal the extent of his work and, of course, the style of his work, which, in turn allows us to look at his engravings on pottery in a much more informed manner.

In order to confirm the attribution of the early engravings on Swansea Pottery to Thomas Rothwell there are a number of issues which need to be examined. Obviously one of these is whether the style of engraving on Swansea Pottery can be compared favourably with his work previously to his advent at Swansea and after leaving the Pottery.

In order to ascertain whether this be accurate it is first necessary to examine what Rothwell's engraving style was, bearing in mind that as engraving was then a hand craft, style will develop and change both with experience and with the ultimate destination of the final engraving, i.e. pottery or paper; after all Pottery and paper are two entirely different media. Much more detail can be utilised on an engraving destined for paper whereas with pottery less is more and there is also the problem of curved and rounded surfaces. This can be seen by examining the large amount of fine detail on the Swansea topographical prints which could never be done on pottery of the time.

Much of Rothwell's work at Liverpool and Birmingham was of decorative figures in arcadian landscapes with shepherds and shepherdesses. All one has to do to confirm this is to see the creamware bowl which was in the Stretton Collection* This bowl has a black print of Shepherd and a shepherdess in a rural landscape and again typical of the period is the black print of Minerva surrounded by clouds and symbols on a teapot in Liverpool Museum. Another teapot in Liverpool Museum with a scene of 'The Haymakers' is typical of the period. These engravings all engraved by Thomas Rothwell.

That Thomas Rothwell was conversant with current artistic trends is shown by the mug again in Liverpool Museum signed '*Rothwell sculpt.*' which bears a black transfer print taken from Benjamin West's '*Death of Wolfe at Quebec*' –a painting which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1771. Interestingly Rothwell continued this practice at Swansea. In the **English Ceramic Circle Transactions Vol.6 part 3 Plate 150*

foreground of Mount Pleasant the foreground grouping of figures is clearly influenced by the foreground figures in George Stubb's painting 'The Reapers' exhibited I Liverpool in 1787.

There is in Rothwell's style before and during his Swansea period an affectionate depiction of human activity especially in his topographical Swansea prints when none was really required, for example the groupings of Pottery workers in the Cambrian Pottery, Swansea engraving and the barge being towed up the river,* the copper workers in The Forest Copper works, Morriston* etc..

Rothwell's response to humanity is seen on early Swansea pottery see the 'Smartly Dressed Shepherd', 'Herdsman, Cattle, Farmhouse and Barn', 'Period Gentleman and Shepherdess' and 'Rural Lovers' patterns for a few examples. In these patterns and others there are evocations of the arcadian scenes found on his early work in Liverpool. In his work at Swansea on the topographical engravings there is much fine detail which can be enlarged without loss of definition. This could never be done on pottery as Rothwell understood. His 30 odd years as an engraver has obviously equipped him to deal with the different challenges involved in engraving for printing on paper and pottery. His development of this understanding is clearly evidenced in his work done for pottery whilst at Swansea.

There are obvious similarities between the Swansea topographical engravings and those on Swansea pottery. To take just one example, Rothwell must have enjoyed engraving brickwork (or perhaps it was less stressful and quicker to engrave); examine the brickwork background to his topographical engravings of 'Briton Ferry and Vernon House', 'Swansea Port and Bay', 'Swansea from the North East', 'Sketty Hall', 'Clasemont' and 'Penrice Castle' with the brickwork on 'The Forest Copper Works. Morriston' and more importantly for the present article the brickwork in the 'Brick and Garland' border on the 'Precarious Chinaman', and the brick background to the 'Elephant and Howdah' pattern.

*Gibbs and Morris Thomas Rothwell: *Views of Swansea in the 1790's Plate 1*

**ibid.* Plate 2.

THOMAS ROTHWELL AT SWANSEA



© City & County of Swansea: Swansea Museum Collection.

This view of the Cambrian Pottery, Swansea was engraved by Thomas Rothwell 1791. The view is taken from the East bank of the Rive Tawe.

“The steep-sided background hill is the eastern part of Mayhill, Bryn y Don”.

The image was:

“Publish’d according to the Act of Parliament Augt. 31 1791 by Coles and Haynes SWANSEA”

The image was produced on plaster of Paris and also printed on paper.

THE WORK OF THOMAS ROTHWELL

INTRODUCTION

With the arrival of Thomas Rothwell at the Swansea Pottery, the patterns, borders and handle prints became distinctive and of excellent quality. He is believed by a group of major Rothwell experts to have stayed in Swansea from c. 1788-1793 / early 1794. He then moved to London where his engravings are to be found on printed material such as magazines, broadsheets and books, but not on ceramics.

We believe that the early Swansea commemorative pieces were executed by Rothwell, as the style of the distinctive patterns, borders and handle prints which link pieces together show. There are too many of Rothwell's engravings on Swansea printed ware to show them all, but we endeavour to illustrate a small cross section of his work.

Some of the earliest engravings made by Rothwell reveal how he still incorporates the style used on copper plates for printing on paper. The mug commemorating George III's recovery from illness is one such example as is the Shakespeare commemorative mug. This engraving style is still present in the 'King and Constitution' mug. These engravings are all done using closely incised bites into the copper plates which result in a rather dark and dense view of the subject which would have been more suitable for printing in books and magazines. In the 'King and Constitution' mug Rothwell does allow more space to be involved and, in so doing, makes it more easily viewed and appealing on pottery. Clearly as far as ceramic printing is concerned the better choice would be that less is more in terms of clarity and appeal for the pot's owners.

Rothwell's engraving style at Swansea does not remain constant but develops and adjusts to the needs and format of his designs. This had to occur for the appeal of the pots and of their subject matter also.

HOW DOES ONE DEFINE STYLE?

Perhaps the easier parallel to consider would be to examine the 'style' of painters and their work. Here the brushwork or palette knife working are more easily recognised by the way they are used. Painters can use impasto to create in a physical way the sense of depth and even shadow. This can be seen in the work of Van Gogh; one has only to view his later 'Crows

over a Cornfield' to see how mood and interpretive depth can be achieved. Van Gogh is, of course, unique and very few would be unable to recognise at least his later works of art. Artists working in pastels or water colour have to rely on tonal depth mixing or blending of colours, but, even here, how they achieve their results is their style. No-one utilises pastels better than Edward Degas—his ballet dancers are unmistakably his as would be his handwriting. There is also to be taken into consideration the time and age when such work is being executed; for example religious and triptych work would never in style be attributed to the 19th, 20th or 21st centuries in the same way that the Cubism of Braque and Picasso or the earlier work of Cezanne could never be attributed to the 16th, 17th or 18th centuries.

Style changes with the times and contemporary events for example photography meant that Art was never going to be of the same format again, except for the very rare example or perhaps the Pre Raphaelites who sought to retreat by way of escape into the centuries of rural romanticism and chivalry. So how then do we define the style in printing and the style of an individual engraver? With great difficulty!

Today engraving is mechanical and uniform. We are not engravers and certainly not 18th century engravers, so all we are able to address is the visual impact of the prints as found on pottery. We have some knowledge of style in painting and how it develops in the individual artist as seemingly it did with Rothwell. He adjusted his engravings both for printing on pottery and with the need for the style change required with Chinoiserie, commemorative or idyllic romantic type images. We have endeavoured to assess his work as best we can but do please bear in mind we do not set ourselves up as expert engravers.

In transferware pottery the fashionable and well-to-do of the 18th century were desirous of the views in the Chinoiserie style, oriental and the appealing and attractive romantic and idealistic view of rural life and landscape on pottery. Important contemporaneous historic events including the lives of the Royal family were also of intense patriotic interest and Thomas Rothwell provided all of the above.

We endeavour to illustrate with examples some of the patterns that not only relate to each other in date but also how the engravings were achieved. It seems to us that to show small groups of patterns and borders linked by their style is an effective way of doing this and so we will begin with some of the earliest Rothwell must have executed on his arrival at Swansea.

COMMEMORATIVES

‘GEORGE III RECOVERY FROM ILLNESS’ (Fig 1)

This mug is extremely rare although P.D.Pryce illustrates another example in his *Welsh Commemorative Pottery*. He is of the opinion that it dates to 1789 thus coinciding with what is believed to be the earliest date of Swansea transferware production. The mug is printed in greenish-black. The plain loop handle carries a border that is also used as its handle print and also found with other Swansea patterns.

The vertical oval cartouche Rothwell used later when engraving for Harrison & Co. in *The Biographical Magazine*. One should note the use of a three-quarter portrait on this mug and, for example on the Marquis of Granby portrait in *The Biographical Magazine*, also the background line shading is very similar on both portraits. Interestingly Rothwell used the horizontal oval for his topographical engravings done at Swansea.



Fig.1

'SHAKESPEARE COMMEMORATIVE' (Fig. 2)

This mug is printed in greenish-black and shows a style more suitable for printing on paper. The handle print is one found also on other Swansea commemorative pieces. The interior has a 'Neat Geometric' border printed in underglaze blue. Item 105 in the Swansea Pottery Bicentenary Catalogue is printed also in greenish-black and shows scenes from A Midsummer Night's Dream. Theatre had become popular with fashionable society and Shakespeare especially was promoted by famous actors such as the Kembles and Sarah Siddons who made their fortunes appearing in leading roles in Shakespeare's plays. Later in London Rothwell did engravings of London theatres such as Drury Lane and the Haymarket, and, of course, further engravings of Shakespeare such as 'The Genius of Shakespeare' and the 'Infant Vision of Shakespeare'.



Fig. 2

‘KING AND CONSTITUTION’ (Fig.3).

This mug shows the King George III and Queen Charlotte again in an oval cartouche decorated with a surround of wreaths of leaves and emblems in rococo style. The interior has a squared flower border. The engraving of the portraiture itself is executed in the 18th century manner used by Rothwell. The close-knit lines which form the background are again typical of his work but one may see quite readily that the heavily close-knit engraving found on the other areas of ‘George III Recovery’ mug have been developed to provide a more open and clear image much more suited to a print for ceramics.



Fig. 3

'DUKE OF YORK' (Fig.4)

This pattern reveals an engraving that has been quite deeply cut providing a strong image whilst the engraving accommodates also the textures, shadows and rounded form used by Rothwell on most of his commemorative examples. The exterior border is 'Fan and Lattice' whilst the interior border is 'Honeycomb'.

(The handle print on this mug is identical to the handle print on the 'St Michael's Mount' mug).



Fig. 4

'LEVI GASCOING' (Figs. 5.and 6)

The engraving style here is the same as for the 'Duke of York'. This jug has both a public commemorative Royal/National image and also a private written dedication to Levi Gascoing.

The left-hand soldier has a name scroll 'Prince Adolphus' whilst the right-hand soldier has a scroll inscribed the 'Duke of York'.

The reverse side of the jug shows the King and Queen with their titles: 'George III Rex' and 'Charlotte Regina'. Prince Adolphus was the tenth child and seventh son of George III, the Duke of York the second oldest child and second son. The correct title for Adolphus was HRH the Prince Adolphus, 1st Duke of Cambridge.



Fig. 5

The jug commemorates the first participation of both sons in the Flanders Campaign where the Duke of York became a General and Adolphus, on Field Marshal von Freytag's staff first tasted military action. Both these sons like their father were Hanoverians as was the Field Marshal. The bestowing of Royal titles enables us to give a close date for the jug. Adolphus did not become Duke of Cambridge until 17th November 1801. Previously he was known only as HRH Prince Adolphus thus revealing the jug's date to be 1793 when he was Prince Adolphus and Rothwell was still in Swansea.

There is a deep, complex exterior border; the interior border being of a line of geometric type daisies. An example of this jug with an interior squared flower border is illustrated in Welsh Ceramics in Context Part 2 page 99, item 5.15.



Fig. 6

'LA GUILLOTINE' (Figs.7 and 8)

We illustrate both pieces to show the ovaloid shape of the jug and its tall straight neck and to show the same 'Fan' border on each although reduced for the mug.



Fig. 7

The engraving style is again as described for the 'Duke of York' with quite deeply incised lines for the main features and lighter lines for shadows and shape.



Fig. 8

'ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT' (Fig. 9).

Morton Nance believes that the source pattern here was an old topographical print. Plate VII.D in his book has the same Cornish motto 'ONE AND ALL' and Cornish toast 'FISH, TIN and Copper'. A mug in Truro Museum with the same pattern is in size and shape similar to the 'A New Puzzle of Portraits' mug in Morton Nance Plate IX.A.

The style of Rothwell's engraving of the piece is evident although by today's standards providing a rather quaint result. Its production was probably based on the shipping links between Swansea Pottery and Cornwall. i.e. the Pottery importing Cornish clay and then exporting Swansea pottery to Cornwall and the South West. The mug has a 'Twisted Rope' border perhaps symbolising the maritime element involved.



Fig. 9

‘A NEW PUZZLE OF PORTRAITS’ (Fig. 10.)

This mug is printed in greenish-black with an ochre-painted rim. The portraits are of two pairs of silhouettes seen on either side of the mug. On one side is a silhouette of the English King and Queen; on the reverse of the late French King and Queen. This design was first used by Orme in January 18th, 1794 on a Broadsheet which is now in the Banks Collection at the British Museum.

If the consensus opinion within the Swansea experts already referred to is correct that Rothwell left Swansea early in 1794 this engraving was one of the very last that he produced. It is possible also that the copper plate could have been used after Rothwell left for London.

What is noticeable is that after this engraving there was something of a gap in Swansea’s production of public commemorative pieces that coincided with the departure of Rothwell from Swansea.



Fig. 10

IDYLLIC RUSTIC LIFE AND LANDSCAPE

The concept of an idyllic Rural Life and Landscape became popular with the well-to-do and the engravings of Rothwell were tuned into the need for such subjects to be placed on ceramic pots thereby increasing sales.

Norman Stretton, writing in 1966, refers to a creamware bowl black-printed with a shepherd and shepherdess in a rural landscape signed 'Rothwell Sculpt' in his Collection; this clearly suggests that Rothwell was already well-versed in the style of rural idylls before his arrival at Swansea.

'SMARTLY DRESSED SHEPHERD' (Fig. 11 and Fig. 12.)

Writing in his paper on 'Early Swansea Pottery, 1764-1810' Grant-Davidson gives the 'Smartly Dressed Shepherd' pattern found on the side of a punchbowl to Thomas Rothwell. The interior of the same bowl had the pattern we refer to as 'Herdsman with Cattle, Farmhouse and Barn'* (again part of the rural genre). This same bowl had also a deep 'Corn and Husk' border on both its interior and exterior. In addition its patterns match Fig. 11 and Fig. 12.



Fig. 11



Fig. 12

**A later version of Fig.12 is known to have been produced at Swansea, and a punchbowl carrying this later pattern was shown in the preview of and listed in Sotheby's Catalogue of the Sir Leslie Joseph Collection 15th/16th May, 1992,Item 880. (This bowl is post Rothwell and would date c.1796.)*

SMARTLY DRESSED SHEPHERD (Fig. 13)

Grant-Davidson also refers to the ‘Smartly Dressed Shepherd’ as being reminiscent of Sadler. The 1968 Swansea Pottery Bicentenary Catalogue lists a punchbowl as shown in Fig. 11 and Fig. 12. A fluted tea bowl and saucer printed in greenish-black shows what is possibly an earlier version of the ‘Smartly Dressed Shepherd’. We say earlier because it is a tea bowl and not a cup and also because the style is nearer to that of Liverpool.



Fig. 13

'RURAL LOVERS' (Fig. 14)

The mug shown is printed in greenish-black with one of the Cambrian 'Corn and Husk' borders. The pattern was attributed to Rothwell by Grant-Davidson, and P. D. Pryce and S. H. Williams.

A jug in Cardiff Museum was donated by E. Morton Nance; this jug had two incised circle marks and the under-glaze blue painted 'X' mark. Nance writes in his book that Plate X.B. ('Rural Lovers') also bears the same in side border identical to the inside border on the smaller black printed jug illustrated in Plate IX.B.; this is the 'Betsey Berriman' jug which had three under-glaze blue dots in a triangular form. The borders on both jugs were the 'Corn and Husk', a very early border, although the 'Betsey Berriman' jug is dated 1804.

We believe the border engravings and first coppers of 'Rural Lovers' were made by Thomas Rothwell much earlier than 1804 so perhaps the popularity of the pattern resulted in it being remade by another engraver in the style of Thomas Rothwell and used in 1804 and perhaps even later.



Fig. 14

PERIOD GENTLEMAN AND SHEPHERDESS (Fig. 15)

This pattern shows a typical example of the Rural Idyll. It shows a gentleman in late 18th century dress and a lady of similar high quality dress. She carries a pole or crook. Neither is convincing as shepherd and shepherdess, indeed they are far more likely to be well-to-do individuals playing out the roles. The reverse pattern on the tea bowl shows sheep and a horned cow lying down under a tree. The 'Twisted Rope' border used is rare and more famously known on 'St Michael's Mount' examples. The base of the bowl is convex, a feature noted on a number of early Cambrian tea bowls and cups.



Fig. 15

'RIVERSIDE RURAL LOVERS' (Fig. 16)

The saucer shows another idyllic scene of man and a woman seated under a tree and near a river. The reverse side of the cup again shows reclining cattle under a tree as does the reverse side of the 'Period Gentleman and Shepherdess' teabowl. The same source for the 'Riverside Rural Lovers' pattern was used in Liverpool by Philip Christian. The Castleford Pottery also used the same source for its pattern with minor differences; its borders both inner and outer are very different from the Cambrian borders.* The illustrated cup is one shown in the Bicentenary Catalogue, and formerly owned by Grant-Davidson.* Additionally two cups E64 and E65 in Swansea Museum donated by Pryce and Williams and recognised as Swansea have the same shape and pattern to this illustrated cup. The cup shape matches sherds in biscuit form housed in Swansea Museum.* The quality of the engraving on the saucer with its clear cut and fairly deeply incised lines suggests the hand of Rothwell but now allowing space and an airiness into the idyllic rural landscape pattern.



Fig. 16

*N.C.S. Journal Vol. 20, 2003-2004, page 31, Fig. 51.

*information provided by Bernice Cardy. (Swansea Museum).

*N..C.S. Newsletter 136, page 14.

'TWO KILNS' (Figs. 17, 18 and 19.)

This pattern is included with the Idyllic Romantic Rural section because, despite the Pottery itself, the overall impression is of a rural idyllic landscape. The Pottery itself nestles at the foot of a small mountain, there are birds in the sky, a man sits fishing in the foreground and, to the right of the scene there is even a thatched cottage. The rural scene itself is also positioned in a maritime setting with a fishing boat and crew; the picture is then framed attractively by trees. Even in this engraving we see Rothwell's predilection for including scenes of humanity in his engravings. Compare this engraving with his topographical engraving of the Cambrian Pottery done in 1791 where again we see vignettes of pottery workers and the towing of a barge up the river. In the engraving of the forest Copper Works at Morrision we see vignettes of copper workers and bystanders even though the engraving is manifestly architectural in nature.



Fig. 17

The pattern is illustrated on a greenish-black printed, fluted teabowl and saucer, **See Fig. 17**, a blue-printed jug that carries the same border as the teabowl and saucer **See Fig.18**. One example of this border is held in Swansea Museum. A third example is a punchbowl which has a distinctive border showing the 'Two Kilns' in oval cartouches on the sides of the bowl **See Fig.19** whilst the interior of the punchbowl shows Rothwell's 'Herdsman with Cattle, Farmhouse and Barn' pattern **See Fig.20**.

The identical distinctive border on the punchbowl and its 'Herdsman, Cattle, Farmhouse and Barn' pattern are also known on a jug that is dedicated to 'George Sutton 1791'.* That the jug is dated 1791 is rather significant because Rothwell's engravings of the Cambrian Pottery (done on paper and plaster of Paris) is dated 'Augt.1791' when he was in Swansea. This indicates that both the border and the 'Herdsman, Cattle, Farmhouse and Barn' pattern on the jug are contemporary with that date (1791), and that suggests that the punchbowl would be likely to be c. 1792. As mentioned previously, engraving done for paper is adapted and transposed into a simpler form for ceramics. This may be seen in Rothwell's engraving of the Cambrian Pottery itself in August 1791. The coppers made for the pottery pieces were adjusted so the pattern would hold greater appeal for the market and also be more suitable for application on ceramics. Ceramic pots would have made good mementoes especially for people visiting the Pottery and buying on site which was, of course, practised at the Cambrian Pottery.



Fig.18

* Holdaway, M, *Hollins Blue Printed Earthenware Front cover image*.

The topography of the ‘Two Kilns’ pattern fits precisely the siting of the Cambrian Pottery as do the waterways involved.

We speak of Rothwell’s patterns and engravings and, although we are convinced that it is a Rothwell engraving on the fluted saucer, the engravings of the ‘Two Kilns’ pattern on the jug and the punchbowl are clearly the work of another hand also working at the pottery but clearly not as experienced or as adept as the master, Thomas Rothwell, himself.



Fig. 19

An additional note to make is that shards of a twin of this saucer also with the ‘Two Kilns’ pattern (**Fig. 17**) were unearthed at a site in Philadelphia. George Haynes of the Swansea pottery paid for the redevelopment of the Cambrian Pottery using funds from Philadelphia where he had family. Jonathan Gray indicates that Haynes was shipping quantities of ceramics through his family in Philadelphia. He states that between 1790 and 1807 “products of the Cambrian Pottery during that period” were “destined for the American market”.*

These dates fit precisely the date of the ‘Two Kilns’ shards found in Philadelphia. We have not seen all the shards found in Philadelphia, so perhaps there may be more Swansea examples among them.

Finally, touching the style of engraving we include two examples of a Pottery image; the first is the 'Two Kilns' pattern and the second is the 'Kilns and Galleon' pattern made by the Bovey Tracey Pottery. In recent times some confusion has arisen such that the 'Kilns and Galleon' pattern has also been named 'Two Kilns'. This has probably come about as a result of a short article by Norman Stretton where he gives both patterns the same name and gives both to the Bovey Tracey Pottery.*



Fig. 20

**English Ceramic Circle Vol. 12, Part 3 Plates 120 and 121.*

We are grateful to Brian Adams who has allowed us to illustrate the example of 'Kilns and Galleon' shards found at Bovey Pottery site.*

The 'Two Kilns' pattern is often confused with the Bovey Tracey example and apart from the differences in pattern the borders are entirely different. Swansea certainly did not use the distinctive small conifer-type border. Brian Adams states categorically that the 'Two Kilns' pattern is not Bovey Tracey. Both the excavations at Bovey Tracey and the subsequent book publication by Adams and Thomas came after the Stretton article so Stretton would have been unaware of the finds at Bovey Tracey. For comparison of the two styles of engraving and the patterns themselves see **Fig. 21 and Fig.22.**



Fig. 21

**Brian Adam and Anthony Thomas A Potwork in Devonshire.*



Fig. 22

CHINOISERIE (ORIENTAL PATTERNS)

‘ELEPHANT AND HOWDAH’ (Figs. 23 and 24.)

Grant-Davidson first named the pattern ‘Elephant and Castle’. The engraving style is incised to a more uniform depth into the copper plate which therefore concentrates on a more two-dimensional appearance with greater emphasis on the actual shape and outline of the pattern itself. This is true of the border also in **Fig. 23** but the border in **Fig.24** does reveal some deeper and wider engraving giving the impression of darker areas.

A well-known printed piece with this pattern is a plate with hand-written ‘Mifs Isabella Rowland 1794’. Whether or not Rothwell was still working in Swansea when this plate was produced does not disprove the copper plate was not of his making. For after all copper plates cost the pottery owners a lot of money to produce and would remain on site and used as required well after the engraver had left the Pottery. This pattern is also recorded with a ‘Fan and Lattice’ border.



Fig.23

The 'brick walling' which surrounds the 'Elephant and Howdah' cartouche is of interest. It seems Rothwell was in favour of such decoration as he used it on most of the topographical prints for paper and plaster which he made at Swansea; 'Port and Bay of Swansea' and 'Briton Ferry near Neath a seat of Lord Vernon' are just two examples. The same 'brick' theme is also to be found in the 'Brick and Garland' borders used with a number of different Swansea patterns.



Fig. 24

'PRINCE OF WALES' 'THREE FEATHERS' (Fig. 25)

This pattern is engraved using a lighter style whilst shadow and depth are created using shading to give a rounded impression in some areas. This method is also used on the 'musical trophies' of the 'Elephant and Howdah' pattern.

There is a deep 'Corn and Husk' border on the rim of this large punchbowl. We considered the border to be unique to Swansea as did Grant-Davidson, and Peter Pryce and Stanley Williams. It has been proffered that the Bovey Tracey Pottery also did this border but research has proved this to be wrong.



Fig. 25

'PRECARIOUS CHINAMAN' (Fig. 26)

This pattern is found on Side A of the punchbowl. The 'Precarious Chinaman' here shows one of the attendants wearing a hat of the same style as the precarious Chinaman himself. There are various differences to be found in the execution of this pattern done over a lengthy period of time. The pattern is taken from 'The Ladies' Amusement' (1793). It is possible that this may be the first interpretation of the pattern. For a fuller account of this pattern see Tanner's Book I pages 125-132.



Fig. 26

'FISHING WITH A DIPNET' (Fig.27)

The same style format is shown on this pattern which is on the reverse side of the punchbowl.



Fig. 27

'PRECARIOUS CHINAMAN' (Fig. 28)

This teabowl shows the same version of the 'Precarious Chinaman' pattern as on Grant-Davidson's teapot illustrated in his article on Early Swansea Pottery in his E.C.C. Transactions and also in his 'new' book. The inside border of the bowl is one of the Swansea 'Fan' borders-an extremely popular border found with many Swansea patterns. The 'Precarious Chinaman' pattern is also given to Rothwell by Grant-Davidson who believed it to be unique to Swansea. The engraving lines here are deeper and therefore a stronger, darker print is formed.



Fig. 28

FISHERMAN WITH NET (Fig.29)

The style of engraving of this pattern is the same as the 'Precarious Chinaman' pattern.



Fig. 29

'PRECARIOUS CHINAMAN' (Fig. 30)

This pedestal bowl shows yet another version of the pattern. Again it is quite deeply engraved giving strong lines of definition. The interior of the bowl has another 'Fan' border. The interior is inscribed 'Tho,s Dale/
Lambourn/1793'. The comma instead of a full stop suggests the hand written text belonging to the renowned Swansea 'comma painter'. Rothwell was, of course, still working in Swansea in 1793, however this fact does not qualify as being his engraving and it is more likely to be done 'in the manner of Rothwell'.



Fig. 30

'ELEPHANT' (Fig. 31)

This pattern derives its name from the elephant-shaped rocks to the right of the pattern. The plate has a cobalt wash that is not always present with early versions. (Later versions even have a winged insect which was used also on Swansea Porcelain). The Chinoiserie element is made obvious by the willow trees, flowering shrubs and the small fenced garden. The pattern is again engraved with a two-dimensional feel allowing the pattern to show more clearly. The colour wash does provide some depth of field but this is not achieved by engraving.



Fig. 31

LONGBRIDGE/WILLOW PRECURSOR (Fig. 32)

The weight of this tree and well platter is extremely light. The border on the platter is one known as the 'Moth' border. There is another version of the 'Longbridge' pattern that is also impressed 'SWANSEA' as is the 'Moth' border version.. The second version may be by Rothwell but we do not illustrate it.

Morton Nance calls the pattern 'Willow' hence the title 'Willow Precursor'. It is believed the pattern continued from 1790-1804, possibly even as late as 1812. Again Grant-Davidson and his fellow experts give the engraving to Rothwell.*



Fig. 32

**E.C.C.Transactions Vol. 7, Part I, page 69.*

'THE BETSEY GEORGE' Ship Plate (Fig.33)

(Courtesy of City and County of Swansea: Swansea Museum Collection)

This striking engraving shows the rise and fall of the waves extremely well and the wind blowing through the sails. The engraving shows the skill of the engraver in the width and depth of the incisions which provide a much more three-dimensional expression of the scene. The ship plate is included here because of the border. As Grant-Davidson wrote: "the border" pattern "should be noted as" it occurs "on other early wares made at the Pottery". This suggests the border was used on Chinoiserie-type patterns such as 'Full Nankin' and 'Two Figures'

The plate Grant-Davidson writes is "of the stock design of a brig" which has the ship's name added, viz. "The Betsey Ml George Mr" --- 'Michael George Master'.



Fig. 33

'GODDESS KUAN YIN' (Fig. 34)

Writing in 1973 P. D. Pryce and S.H. Williams refer to the main female figure as possibly that of the Goddess Kuan Yin. They also point out the similarity of some features and style in common with the 'Precarious Chinaman' pattern. Since that time we, along with some others, have always regarded the pattern as 'Goddess Kuan Yin', although, recently it is found given the name 'Bell and Toy'. The Caughley factory produced a pattern in porcelain named 'Bell and Toy'.

We prefer to stay with 'Goddess Kuan Yin' as this clearly differentiates it from the porcelain examples of Caughley. In the same way 'Pagoda/Two Temples' has helped to clarify in writing, one pattern name being for porcelain and the other pattern name for pottery (pearlware).



Fig. 34

'IDIOSYNCRATIC BOY ON A BUFFALO' (Fig. 35)

This bowl has the 'Fan and Lattice' border and its style of engraving is close to that used for the 'Longbridge' pattern (see Fig. 32). This pattern is an early example which pre-dates the more conventional ('Type D') version of 'Boy on a Buffalo' that is often found with one of the 'Fan' borders.



Fig. 35

A POST-ROTHWELL PATTERN CHANGE

A later version of the 'Herdsman with Cattle, Farmhouse and Barn' pattern c. 1796+ and thus post-dating Rothwell's earlier version was seen at the Sir Leslie Joseph Collection auction preview in 1992. This new version has a tiled roof on the farmhouse, two chimneys and no birds. This version of the pattern was found on a large punchbowl where in the Sotheby's Catalogue Item Number 880 it is listed as Swansea. The border on this punchbowl is one also known to have been used with both the early Rothwell version of this pattern and the early version of the 'Smartly Dressed Shepherd' pattern.

BORDERS AND HANDLE PRINTS

Finally here are some borders and handle prints linked to Rothwell designs which we illustrate in two groups.

N..B. A close-up of the bricking which surrounds the 'Elephant and Howdah' pattern is also found on Rothwell's prints on paper of Swansea and its locality, where it surrounds entirely the oval outline of each scene, for example--- 'South East View of Clasmont'; 'Sketty Hall'; 'North East View of the Town of Swansea'; 'Port and Bay of Swansea'; 'Briton Ferry near Neath' and 'Penrice Castle'.

Evidence of this bricking is also to be seen in the 'Brick and Garland' borders which are found with the 'Precarious Chinaman' and other Swansea patterns.



Fig. 36

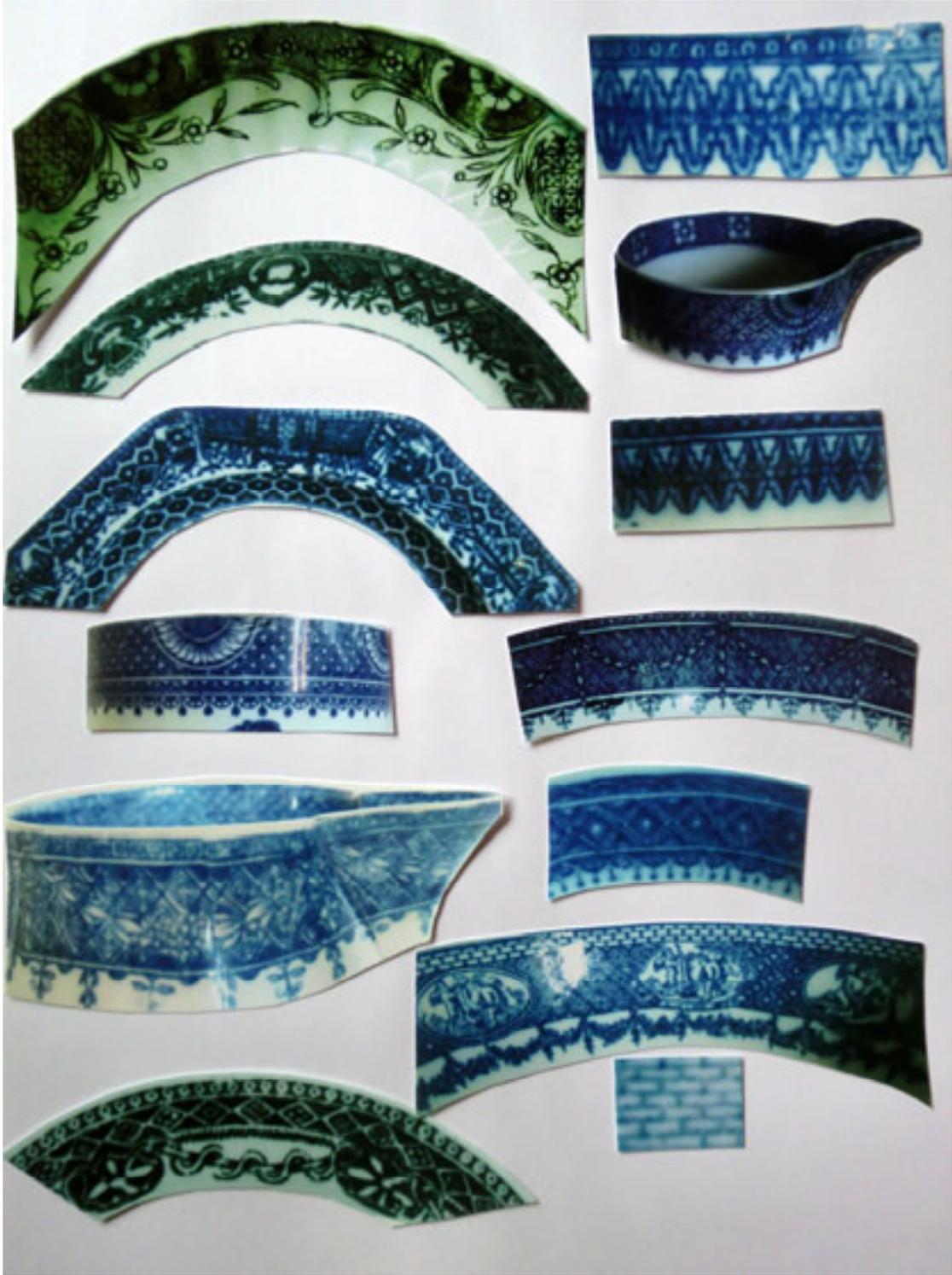


Fig. 37



Fig. 38

CONCLUSION

Although we are no experts on copper plate engraving we have been able, by judicious research, to ascertain salient facts about the process. Copper plates had advantages over steel engraving plates from an aesthetic point of view. Only about two hundred and fifty impressions could be obtained from a copper plate before some reworking or repairing would be required. Copper plates were easier to engrave than steel; in fact much harder tools were required to engrave steel. This ease of engraving on copper allowed more freedom in the effects that could be produced. Also the lines that could be produced were softer and not as fine or as hard-edged as those on steel, thus providing a richer, warmer feel to the print than could be obtained from a steel plate. Copper plates had the advantage of being easier to alter. All one had to do was to reheat the copper plate and beat flat the area to be changed, polish it and re-engrave. To some extent this can explain variations in impressions/patterns on pottery.

One online printing firm* illustrates an image of an engraver of 1805 working at a table with the source image propped up in such a way that it can be viewed in a mirror. He is, of course, engraving for printing on paper. Engraving a copper for pottery is, of course, always done as it will show on the pot so no mirror image is required. According to the Worcester Porcelain Museum website* transfer printed designs were created by punching dots and engraving/cutting fine lines. This was an exhausting and lengthy process. The Museum states authoritatively that to engrave a ten-inch copper plate, depending on its complexity, would take an engraver some 40 hours to complete. This does agree with our earlier estimate of approximately five days to finish a copper plate engraving.

Clearly in the 4½ years that Rothwell was in Swansea, not taking into account the time he spent on the topographical engravings he did for paper and plaster, his engravings for Swansea pottery must have been considerable. We have not included all the work attributed to Rothwell by previous experts and obviously there must be other patterns of his awaiting attribution.

We apologise to anyone who knows other examples of Rothwell's work we have not included. We have only included a selection of his work as attributed by other experts and a few we feel we have reason for crediting to Rothwell also.

We would wish to reiterate how important it is to stress that, although the pattern can be given to Rothwell, other engravers and even apprentices would have used his template patterns and to follow his style, which means that giving an absolute personal attribution to Thomas Rothwell is not as easy as it may seem; this was, of course, true of painting, where the master's studio would employ apprentices to work in the master's style thus causing attribution problems for art historians even today!

**Steve Bartrick Antique Prints and Maps.*
**www.worcesterporcelainmuseum.org.uk*

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