

Books

The Transferware Recorder Number 2 Selected British Views

By: Dick Henrywood

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colour

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The Transferware Recorder is a series of books on transfer printed wares made in Britain in the 19th century. The series was devised by Dick Henrywood as a follow-up to his two-volume *Dictionary of Blue and White Printed Pottery*, written with Bill Coysh in the 1980s and for many years the standard reference work in this area. The aim of the new series is to provide a more specialised and comprehensive coverage of many of the patterns with the aid of recent unpublished research.

Number 1 in the series was published in October 2013 and featured 'Selected British Views', as does this second volume. Views of British country houses amid manicured park landscapes are probably the most popular type of printed decoration on tableware and are keenly collected, both in Britain and in America.

The formula adopted in *The Transferware Recorder* Number 1 was well-received, and has accordingly been followed in Number 2. Dick Henrywood lists every known view in the 13 series of patterns chosen for the book with, wherever possible, an illustration and also the relevant source print. As might be expected, the majority of designs shown were used on blue printed wares made in the 1820s and 1830s and include some popular favourites: for example, the series of views known as 'Angus Seats' after William Angus's topographical work of 1787; the 'Rock Cartouche' series by Elkin, Knight & Co of Fenton; and the distinctive dark blue 'Foliage Border' series and the lighter blue 'Passionflower Border' series, both by an unknown maker.

For blue transfer print enthusiasts these *Recorder* volumes are indispensable, but they are certainly not just collectors' handbooks. Even for the more casual reader there is something deeply evocative in seeing so many grand houses standing alone in their extensive grounds with figures of the time dotted about – strolling mothers with children, fishermen, dogs, grazing cattle, swans, etc. With a little imagination each dish becomes a window into the era of Jane Austen. The borders, which of course were chosen by the manufacturers, are a study all of their own – typically strings of flowers, wild roses, or oak leaves and acorns, providing an intimate 'hedgerow' feel to balance the grandeur of the houses.

From a less romantic but more technical viewpoint it is intriguing to note how the designs have been developed from the source print and how they have then been fitted onto varying shapes of ware, and also onto lids and covers where it apparently did not matter, on occasion, if a large moulded knob obliterated the grand house after which the pattern was named. Generally speaking, though, the way in which the views are placed, particularly on oval or rectangular dishes, is quite sublime. (NCS members will be particularly pleased to see the fine platter on the cover of the book showing a view of Rode Hall in Cheshire, visited by the Society this year.)

Although blue predominates, three of the included series were issued in other colours: the 'Clyde Scenery' series by J. & J. Jackson of Burslem in the 1830s; the mid-19th century 'Old England' series by an unknown maker; and the 'Anglais' series made by W. A. Adderley of Longton in the 1880s in an Aesthetic Movement style. The inclusion of this latter series is particularly significant, as during the heyday of 'blue' collecting in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s patterns issued in the late 19th century were of little interest and tended to be dismissed as 'late'. Now, however, they are being collected, mainly because they are still in circulation and are not locked into old-established collections as much blue printed ware currently is. Furthermore, as this book shows, if the late wares are well made they can be attractive, and are now in any case well over 100 years old. They certainly deserve their coverage.

In his Introduction Dick Henrywood admits that British views are his own specific interest but foresees the development of *The Transferware Recorder* to include other types of patterns, for example romantic, literary, or zoological, provided that sufficient suitable images can be made available. One hopes that his invitation to collectors to offer him images of pattern series yet to be covered in the *Recorder* is taken up. In the meantime *The Transferware Recorder* Number 2 can be wholeheartedly recommended, both on its own account and also as part of what seems set to become a key series of works on British printed ceramics.