

# SPRIGGED WARE

## THE ORIGINS OF CARLTON SPRIGGED WARE

Sprigged Ware was produced by *Wiltshaw & Robinson* at the turn of the Century and was probably withdrawn from manufacture before the First World War.

As with all *Carlton Ware* it was available in many different shapes, several different patterns and a number of colours. Some are high glazed, taking the form of the tinted faience colourings whereas some have a more *Wedgwood Jasper* look to them and then we have also found some that have what can only be described as a matt varnish type of finish. All examples have the blue *Crown Mark* backstamp.

What we have found interesting with the sprigged range is that there were two types of body available. The usual earthenware, which *Carlton Ware* was well known for and also a stoneware body for which they weren't. The shapes would have been cast or turned and left to dry. This does not mean bone dry but what is known as being in a 'green' state. This allows work to be done to the body without damage, then the piece would be dipped into a coloured glaze and again left to dry.

Look at the vases illustrated on the opposite page in *Fig. 1*. As there are two different colours used on the one piece it would have been usual for the colour which appears in the middle of the piece to be dipped first (in the illustration we mean the light blue band). This colour would go over the whole of the body and then to get

the two darker bands the vases would be dipped top and bottom and again left to dry. Looking at *Fig 2*



(opp page) notice the band of white, this is actually the original body showing through. To stop this being coloured by the glaze a wax resist would be applied so that the glaze did not take on this area.

We believe that the range may have had just one firing, but it is possible that two firing or even three took place. Further research will be carried out to determine this.

It is unlikely that any of the patterns that appear on the sprigged ware are *Carlton Ware's* own creations. They seem to have all been used at sometime or another by other factories.

To help us with this intriguing subject and to attempt to unravel the history of where the sprigs came from we have enlisted the help of a few *Wedgwood* specialists. The first is a dealer, Angela Dixon, who as Arthur Puffett's partner is a *Carlton* Conference regular, not only as a delegate but helping him exhibit at the *Carlton Fair*.

### THE STORY

Sprigged Ware is a generic term given to pottery that has been ornamented in low relief, with motifs stamped or moulded separately and applied to the ware using water, or a very thin, liquid clay known as slip, as an adhesive.

Although he was by no means the first, Josiah Wedgwood was probably the most famous potter to use this form of ornamentation in the production of his *Basalt* and *Jasper*. Most of the low relief (or bas-relief) subjects used were based on Greek and Roman mythology and modelled from works of art encountered on what was known then as the *Grand Tour*.

*Wedgwood* employed the very best

designers of the day, including John Flaxman Jnr, William Hackwood and George Stubbs RA to

adopt these figures from their original settings into the cameos that would eventually adorn his ornaments. *Wedgwood* also issued patterns that were inspired by the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA, RA.

There are differing stories regarding the bas-relief moulds. Josiah II died in 1843 and the company sold some of their assets the following year. It is



thought by some that the bas-relief moulds formed part of this sale but Gaye Blake-Roberts, Curator of the *Wedgwood Museum*, assures us that the moulds were never sold and are

still at the *Wedgwood* factory and museum. It would seem, therefore, that other companies who are seen to have the same images as *Wedgwood* were plagiarising the patterns. We must assume therefore, that *Wiltshaw & Robinson* were one of these companies although it is possible that the factory purchased their

moulds from a company who had copied *Wedgwood* at an earlier date.

### THE PATTERNS

Most of the pieces of sprigged ware made by *Wiltshaw & Robinson* that we have seen, display the cameos of the Dancing Hours which are personifications of the hours of the day or 'Horae'. They appear as draped maidens holding hands and are amongst the



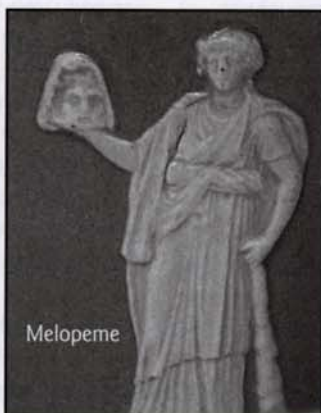


most famous of all the bas-relief subjects. They are believed to be the work of John Flaxman, although no positive proof exists, and

Hertfordshire, the seat of Sir Laurance Dundas, but today it can be seen in the *Lady Lever Gallery*, Port Sunlight.



Apollo



Melopeme



Urania

they were probably remodelled by William Hackwood, with a certain amount of added drapery, in 1802. The source is a chimney piece of white marble against a blue lapis ground, formerly in the *Palazzo Borghese* in Rome. In the 18th Century it was installed in *Moor Park*,

There are also cameos depicting the nine Muses and the god Apollo. The muses were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, and were born at the foot of Mount Olympus. They presided over the arts and sciences, and their function was to keep the gods amused. Apollo, amongst other things, was the leader of the muses, and is



Terpsichore



Erato

often portrayed standing with his lyre, which rests on a tree trunk.

There are two other cameos which we have seen on *Carlton Ware* - the scenes shown on the mustard pot to the right (which is at present an unknown pattern and of indeterminate source) and a Hunting



this article. Research is ongoing if any of you have sprigged ware in your collections which show scenes other than those which have been pictured here we will be very pleased to hear from you. Write to us enclosing a clear



scene that is pictured here.

Thinking that *Spode* might be a source we wrote to Pam Wolliscroft of

close up photograph, indicating on the back

the marks that appear on the bottom of the piece and whether they are transfer



the *Spode Museum*. She enthusiastically delved into the museums archives and discovered that the scene is very similar to one that appears on some *Spode* pieces.

Pam told us that they also have the *Turner* moulds and, whilst looking through the catalogue, came across several hunting scenes together with a photograph showing a portion of a hunting scene identical to the *Carlton Ware* version. Of course this does not prove categorically that they are either *Turner* or *Spode* patterns.



Leonard Whiter wrote in his book on the history of the family, factory and wares of *Spode*. "The hunting scenes are common to several potters".

We have only scratched the surface with regard to Sprigged Ware in

and/or handpainted. Send to the usual address CWCI, P.O. Box 161, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 6GA

We wish to thank Angela Dixon for her work in producing the text for the history of the *Wedgwood* cameos; Gaye Blake-Roberts, Curator of the *Wedgwood Museum*, & Pam Woolliscroft, Assistant Curator of the *Spode Museum*, for their help in correcting, confirming & adding to this information; Betty Mason, Mr. Ford, Roy & Mary Wilson, Bill Grieves and Glen Holman for



allowing us to use images of their collections.

We dedicate this article to Angela Dixon, who died unexpectedly in 2006.