

# OBSESSION:

THE MYRNA & BENZION SCHKOLNE COLLECTION OF EARLY ENGLISH POTTERY, VOL. 2



MYRNA SCHKOLNE

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CHAPTER 7

# Gardening

*Extract from an engraving for a children's book, c. 1800.*

**I**N MEDIEVAL TIMES, GARDENS PROVIDED essential medicinal and culinary ingredients, but the English have always loved gardens for their beauty alone, and in later centuries the expansion of Britain's global footprint brought thousands of novel ferns, orchids, bulbs, trees, and shrubs to English gardens. The introduction to the *Gardener's Pocket-Calendar* of 1787 declares that "gardening is at this time so much esteemed by almost everyone, from the profit and pleasure received from it, that scarce a person, from the Peer to the Cottager, thinks himself tolerably happy without being possessed of a Garden."<sup>1</sup>

In the nineteenth century, reformers gave gardening their gold seal of approval when they deemed it a "rational recreation" that was beneficial to all classes. Indeed, despite England's rigid class structure, the love of gardening crossed all social divides. Amateur gardeners at every level of society nurtured their prudently planted gardens, and many gardened with scientific enthusiasm. Horticultural societies formed to improve gardening practices, and devotees of particular plants competed to exhibit the finest specimens and new varieties.

By the 1800s, gardening on small allotments was a favorite pastime for many laboring people. In industrialized areas of big cities, before factory and railroad expansion gobbled up most land, workers rented garden allotments where they spent their leisure hours. In the same spirit, industrialists wanting to

encourage their employees to adopt better lifestyles allocated garden allotments and offered prizes for the finest flowers and vegetables. Gardens were thought to be so beneficial to the lower class that the *Gardener's Magazine* endorsed mandatory gardens for new workers' cottages and recommended that the old and infirm in work houses be required to cultivate their own sustenance.<sup>2</sup>

Early nineteenth-century industrial advances brought pulverized bone for fertilizer and the first lawnmower, but flowers always took pride of place in English gardens. An American tourist noted in 1832 that "during the season of flowers, girls are to be seen in every town and village, with baskets on their arms, filled with nosegays tastefully arranged with well contrasted colors. These culled bunches of flowers are sold at a halfpenny each."<sup>3</sup> 🌸

## 7.1.1

# Tree Grafter, Lady Gardener (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8.5 in. (L); 8.6 in. (R), MBS-217*





## Notes

In April 2006, Nick Burton, who is drawn to quality as a bee is to a honey, drove all the way from Leek, Staffordshire, to Hampshire to bid on this pair of figures at Jacobson and Hunt for us. They were not inexpensive, but the dealer who underbid the pair, the late Bernard Trower, afterwards told me how much he regretted losing these figures.

Those stunning bocages had Nick—and they have me still. There is nothing finer than a superb bocage in original condition, and that's exactly what these figures sport. Because the bocage is so prominent on this figure model, typically most of it, if not all of it, is lost. I have not seen another example of either figure in this condition.

Looking at the figure of the woman, you would expect her extended arm to get damaged, and this figure had indeed lost her hand. Nick and I were determined to get the restoration done correctly, so we needed detailed photographs of a figure with an undamaged hand to supply to Alan Finney, who always does superb restoration.

To track down a perfect hand, Nick traveled to the home of Michael and Elizabeth Goodacre, who own a figure with an undamaged hand that I had photographed on a previous visit. Michael and Elizabeth have lived all their lives in the lovely small village of Sewstern, near Grantham in Lincolnshire. Michael comes from a long line of farmers who have tilled the

same land for generations, and his son carries on that tradition today. Michael's first wife, Ann, started collecting and dealing in early Staffordshire many decades ago, and Michael has loaned me her tiny diaries filled with her musings on figures and their makers. Ann was clearly a woman who was ahead of her time, but she died prematurely, as did Elizabeth's husband, so Michael and Elizabeth married and built a life together that is enmeshed in the activities of their village. They are the most "rooted" people I know, and that sense of belonging to just one spot on earth permeates their lovely home and their interesting collections. I enjoy visiting them, which I have done on several occasions, at least once with Ben and always with my camera in hand.

This pair was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 24.1–3.

For a similar tree grafter in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 215. ❁



## 7.1.2

# Lady and Gentleman Gardeners

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.5 in., MBS-290*





## Notes

I intended using a trumpet spill vase on the dust jacket of my *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, volume 1, but when I ran it by my friend Nick Burton, whose advice I value enormously, he suggested I instead select a pretty bocage figure because it typifies what we both love about early figures. No sooner were the words out of his mouth than this gardening figure group came to mind.

This is one of my favorite bocage groups—in fact, I used another like it on the dedication page of *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*. That group is no longer in our collection because I sold it when I acquired this one in perfect original condition at Christies, New York, in June 2008. Our daughter Deborah collected it after the sale and met us with it at the North Carolina coast for our family vacation.

This group (and others just like it) remains an academic mystery. It oozes Walton, yet not a single example with the Walton mark is recorded, nor does it sport a specific Walton attribute. Perhaps Walton failed to mark this model, or perhaps some other potter made it.

## Literature

For this group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, dust jacket and fig. 24.12.

For another in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 215. ❁



### 7.1.3

## Lady Gardener, Gentleman Gardener (pair)

*Both impressed and painted "GARDNERS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>4</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.4 in. each, MBS-247*





## Notes

It should have been a simple quest, but seemingly “ordinary” figures in largely original condition are elusive, and it took me a long, long time to find a true pair of small gardeners in good condition. I finally found this little pair at auction at Waddington’s, Toronto, in March 2007. They are prettier than most—but then they are “Sherratt.” Although the cockade on her hat is typically “Sherratt,” features nailing the attribution are not glaringly obvious. However, the tiny four-petaled flowers on her sleeves and on the cockade atop her hat are exclusive to “Sherratt.”

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 24.31. ❁

## 7.1.4

# Gentleman Gardener, Lady Gardener (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>5</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 5.2 in. each, MBS- 255b (L), MBS-588 (R)*



## Notes

This is another of the small pairs of figures that I have been able to re-unite—if indeed they were ever paired in the first place as I rather suspect figures such as these were originally sold individually. Little “Sherratt” figures are among the cutest and rarest of pre-Victorian figures. Because many have been lost over the years, I tend to try to save them for posterity whenever they come my way.

I bought the man in 2007 from Lochiano Antiques and a companion lady the next year on eBay. Her bocage was not in the best shape, and only in 2018 did I find another, fortunately in better condition, as shown here.

## Literature

For this male figure paired with the first lady gardener I owned, see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 24.33. ❁



## 7.1.5

# Lady Gardeer, Gentleman Gardener (pair)

*Impressed and painted "GARDNERS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Samuel Hall and impressed "HALL", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.7 in. (L), 6 in. (R), MBS-426 (L), MBS-563 (R)*





## Notes

Samuel Hall was a rather sloppy potter, but he managed to get it just right on some of his smaller figures. For a while, this lady, bought on eBay in 2011, stood well with my Hall bird nester boy, who was also seeking a mate. They made what an English friend of mine, for some reason unknown to me, calls an “Irish pair.” Then in 2017, a friend sold me the companion male gardener from his collection.

I know of no other examples of either figure with the Hall mark. I respect marked figures enormously, and because they are important artefacts, I tolerate more damage than I otherwise would.

The human brain is a peculiar beast, and mine has learned to distinguish the nuances of a pot bank’s handiwork in ways that I can’t articulate. Thus, although a Hall bocage usually looks rather like the generic bocages several potters used, I am usually able to recognize Hall’s handiwork almost immediately.

## Literature

For these figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 24.65-66. ❀

## 7.1.6

# Lady Gardener, Gentleman Gardener (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.5 in. (L), 6.1 in. (R), MBS-245 (L), MBS-264 (R)*



## Notes

I bought the lady from Aurea Carter in March 2007 because of her unusual bocage form and was able to find the companion gentleman at Bonhams, Chester, in October 2007. I have seen only one other example of her and none of him. That these two unusual figures came on the market so close together makes me wonder if they were not previously together in an estate that was disbursed around that time.

Over the years, I have assembled quite a few pairs of figures that are both rare and not recorded as a pair. I could not have achieved this without the internet. I fear that at the end of my time these carefully assembled pairs will be randomly sold in lots at auction, with scant attention to pairing them. Perhaps I should spend my final days taping paired figures together!

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 24.101. ❀

## 7.1.7

# Lady Holding a Flower

*Lead-glazed earthenware with gilded and enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>6</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 6.2 in., MBS-191*



## Notes

I bought this figure from Griselda Lewis in March 2005, when I visited her in home in Woodbridge to photograph the relatively few enameled figures in her collection. I had admired this figure on an earlier visit, and this time I commented that it was quite my favorite on her shelf. Griselda then offered to sell it to me, saying, with typical modesty, that it was “much too grand” for her collection and “made all the other figures feel bad.”

This figure was formerly with Jonathan Horne, from whom Griselda bought it. Note the gilded shoes and plume. We have a small figure of a Turk (no. 12.1.4) on this base, which is quite specific to the “Patriotic Group” pot bank.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 252; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 24.133. ❀

7.1.8

# Lady Gardener

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 6.6 in., MBS-173*





## Notes

This figure and our Salt archer (no. 3.2.3) were the first small additions to our collection with the assistance of Nick Burton. He bought both at Bonham, Knightsbridge, in October 2003. I have not yet seen another gardener like this with an intact bocage.

Significantly, this bocage is only meant to have two branches. I know of one other example of this lady and two of her gentleman companion, all with totally restored bocages with four branches!

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 252; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 24.43. ❀

7.1.9

# Lady with Flowers (plaque)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 8.3 in., MBS-476*



## Notes

In 2013, I bought this high-relief plaque from John Howard who, like I, thought it exceptional. The fabulous creamy enamels are very like early Neale enamels. On the other hand, the sharp modeling—and in particular the bulging eyes— is reminiscent of Ralph Wood. The lawn and flowers adhere firmly to the black background, yet the figure itself does not quite touch the background, which is visibly black all the way behind it. How was the background painted behind the dress without getting black paint on the back of the dress? It seems that the black rectangle had to have been made and colored first, and then the figure applied atop—but what made it adhere tightly? The production process mystifies me, but the result is extraordinary.

An old collection sticker on the back of the plaque reads “Embossed Lady by Ralph Wood of Burslem. Part of 300 item collection of J. Bowles. This was his favourite piece.”

The plaque at one time cracked through, but the repair is not visible and thus does not detract. I was intrigued to see in Jonathan Horne’s 1983 exhibition catalog a black and white photo of a plaque that must have come from the same pot bank.<sup>7</sup> That plaque has an integral frame, and the production process must have been puzzled Jonathan for he notes that the plaque and frame seem to have been “cemented” together. ❁

# Endnotes

1. Weston, *Gardener's Pocket-calendar*, page a.
2. *Gardener's Magazine*, Feb. 1832, in *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, "Cottage and Workhouse Gardens," 39.
3. Allen, *Practical Tourist*, 362.
4. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?; Schkolne, Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
5. Ibid.
6. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
7. Horne, *Early English Pottery*, 1983, no. 76.



## CHAPTER 8

# Farming

*Extract from "THE COTTAGER'S FAVORITE." Edward Bell, after James Ward, c. 1800. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*

**F**ROM MEDIEVAL TIMES, STRONG BONDS between farmers and their workers were at the heart of rural life. But in the eighteenth century, farming became Big Business, and, as wealthy landowners consolidated small farms into vast sweeps of countryside, peasant proprietorship vanished, and poverty seeped into rural life. The impoverished farm laborers who tended England's fields and pastures in the early nineteenth century were once labeled the rural poor. Staffordshire earthenware representations of them are reminders of men and women who might otherwise have vanished without a trace.

Traditionally, parishes relieved the indigent by levying a poor rate on all parishioners, but after 1795, variations of a relief system dubbed the Speenhamland system forever changed both the dynamics of hiring farm labor and attitudes to charity. In its original form, this system paid every male pauper a weekly subsidy. To offset the cost, parishes put paupers to work on parish projects or hired them to local farmers for a few pennies a day.

The Speenhamland allowance system gave farmers cheap labor, but this set wages at artificially low levels. Farmers quickly learned they could dismiss all their men and hire them from the parish the next day at half the cost. Farmers forced to pay the parish's poor rates abandoned their traditional philanthropic assistance to their laborers, and the age-old bonds

between farmers and workers eroded further.

By the 1820s, poor harvests, rocketing food prices, a lack of work, and the inability of parish subsidies to keep pace with rising bread prices had brought hunger and misery to rural England. Workers' distress intensified as parishes cut subsidies, and farm laborers starved. In some areas, homeless, hungry farm laborers rioted. For many, theft and poaching became the only paths to survival, and the threat of punishment by hanging was preferable to the certainty of starvation.

By this time, it was clear that the allowance system of poor relief had spawned a spirit of dependence and entitlement. Workers wanting employment learned to become impoverished because farmers hired paupers before others to reduce the parish load. Supporting the population had become the parish's responsibility: family men got more money than single men, and families abandoned frail members if the parish did not pay extra for their care.

Commissioners investigating the Poor Law around 1830 noted that where laborers remained independent their standard of living was notably higher, even when they earned less. Dependence on relief was akin to a hereditary disease: a family on relief raised children who expected to live similarly.<sup>1</sup>

In 1830, the Swing Riots, named for the mythical Captain

Swing who dispensed threatening letters to farmers, swept through a third of England's shires. Repression was harsh: nineteen rioters were hanged, about five hundred were transported, and even more were imprisoned. In 1834, the Tolpuddle martyrs, six farm workers who had merely formed a trade union, were transported.

In 1834, the new Poor Law ended parish wage subsidies, and future parish assistance was to be doled out only to those residing in work houses. In ensuing years, industry's voracious growth coupled with railroad expansion eased the rural labor glut, and prosperity slowly returned to farming. ❁

## 8.1.1

# Lady Harvester, Gentleman Mower (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Leather Leaf Group" pot bank,<sup>2</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.4 in., MBS-153*





## Notes

We bought this pair at Sotheby's Bond Street in July 2002, with Ray and Diane Ginns executing a commission bid. They are extraordinarily fine, and I have not seen another pair or even a single figure with an intact bocage. Those stiff "leathery" bocage leaves prompted me to dub the pot bank that made these figures—and others with similar attributes—the "Leather Leaf Group" pot bank.

## Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 295; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 28.18. ❀

## 8.1.2

# Gentleman Mower, Lady Haymaker (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>3</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8.6 in. (L), 8.5 in. (R), MBS-122*



## Notes

This splendid pair was formerly in the collection of Miss Reed and Miss Fitt, which sold at the Lawrences, Taunton, in February 2000 (see 4.1.1 Notes). I have yet to see another true pair of these figures with this stunning bocage, and even a single is a rarity. An assembled pair is in the Hunt Collection.

This pair was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 300; also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, figs. 28.22–23.

For similar figures in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 155. ❀

### 8.1.3

## Gentleman Mower, Lady Mower (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled and silver luster decoration, possibly made at Leeds, c. 1810,  
H: 8.6 in. (L), 9 in. (R), MBS-298*



## Notes

I bought this pair from Elinor Penna in June 2008 on one of my trips to photograph her stock and collection, which she has always been most generous in sharing for this purpose. The figures' bodies are creamware, and the faces are very suggestive of Leeds. I have since seen two other examples of her but none of him.<sup>4</sup>

I well recall this long car ride from North Carolina to Elinor's home on Long Island because Ben and I stopped overnight in Baltimore, and as we pulled out of a parking spot to return to our hotel late that night, the wheel of our Volvo (ironically, bought for its alleged safety) came off. Fortunately, this had not happened while we were on the road, but we were stranded in a not-very-nice part of downtown, and we seemed to have the only white faces! I introduced myself to one of the black gentlemen surrounding us, explaining, in response to his question about my accent, that I was African born and so a true Afro-American, despite my skin color. This went down well, and we had all the help we needed resolving our sticky situation safely.

This pair of figures was formerly with D. M. & P. Manheim, New York, as the sticker testifies. Why are there two of our collection stickers on several of our figures? The reason is not ego! I have been through several sets of collection stickers that have failed to adhere after a while, even though I had added glue to their adhesive backing for extra measure. Picking up a figure and seeing its label lying on the shelf is annoying. I noted that

my UK dealer friend John Howard's labels seemed to stick enduringly, so I used his label source and have been pleased with the result. I can only conclude that there is some ingredient in UK glue that is not used in the US, perhaps due to industry regulation.

## Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 28.26. ❀

## 8.1.4

# Lady and Gentleman Harvesters

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Box Title Group" pot bank,<sup>5</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.2 in., MBS-192*



## Notes

We bought this figure group at auction at Andrew Hartley in Yorkshire with the assistance of Nick Burton in March 2005. I was excited to get it, and Nick and I loved the sweet faces on these little people. The rake was lost, and I restored it myself. A similar pair is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1486). This group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 303; also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 28.36.

For a similar pair in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 296. ❀

## 8.1.5 Lady Hay Maker

*Painted "ALE" on the barrel, lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, impressed "31" and attributed to Ralph Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 7.5 in., MBS-244*





## Notes

I bought this figure from Aurea Carter in March 2007. It is the only known example of this enameled Ralph Wood model impressed “31”; the same figure model is also found enameled and impressed “33”. A closely similar Ralph Wood figure impressed “31” but with a quite different head and titled *Hay Maker* is in the Potteries Museum (48P70).

This figure model more commonly occurs in colored glazes, and color-glazed hay makers are in the Potteries Museum (186.P.1949) and the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.39-1930).

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 28.7.

For a similar figure albeit with a different head titled *Hay Maker* and impressed “31” in the Potteries Museum see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig.28.8.

For a similar figure impressed “33” see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 28.6.

For a similar but color-glazed hay maker, without an impressed number and impressed R WOOD, see Falkner, *Wood Family of Burslem*, 12 and plate IV. ❀

“OF ALL QUADRUPEDS, SHEEP ARE the most stupid,” wrote Buffon in his *Natural History*, adding that “without the assistance of man, the sheep could never have subsisted.”<sup>6</sup> By the late eighteenth century, the shepherd was central to the well-being of the farm’s flock, and farmer’s profits hinged on his diligence.

The shepherd’s role in 1780 was very different from that of a century earlier, when sheep were scrawny animals valued primarily for their fleece. The shepherd then had allowed his flock to graze and roam across vast open sweeps of land. From the mid-eighteenth century, a scientific approach to animal husbandry transformed sheep into plump animals valued mainly for their contribution to the dinner table. Now every aspect of the sheep’s existence—its diet, its environment, its breeding—had to be regulated, and the shepherd had to confine his flock to a small area and monitor it closely.

Sheep were at the forefront of the Agricultural Revolution that swept England in the eighteenth century, and their value exceeded the worth of their flesh and fleece. In those days before artificial fertilizer, the sheep was often the only source of manure for outlying fields. The shepherd and his dog moved the sheep into a fold (an area temporarily enclosed by wooden hurdles) and, once the sheep had grazed and manured the area, the shepherd moved them onto the next fold. By then, most shepherds were employees of large farms, and landed

gentlemen took an avid interest in these country estates. A skilled shepherd was frequently the highest paid farm worker, with some of his payment being in kind to align his interests with the flock’s well-being. At the Duke of Bedford’s magnificent annual meetings at Woburn each year, England’s leading farmers showcased their livestock, and the best shepherds received prizes. Thus, in 1808,

*To John Holland, the Duke of Bedford’s shepherd, for having reared 807 lambs, from 614 ewes, 5 guineas.*

*To John Clark, shepherd to Samuel Whitbread, Esq. from 224 ewes, 289 lambs, 4 guineas.*

*To John Samuel, shepherd to Mr. Runciman, from 251 ewes, 282 lambs, three guineas.<sup>7</sup>*

In parts of the country, the shepherd lived within a wooden hut on wheels so as to be close to his flock and minister to its needs, particularly at the critical lambing season. Being a shepherd was a lonely task of self-reliance and constant attendance, and this accounts for the strong bond between the shepherd and the dog that worked at his side. ❀

## 8.2.1

# Shepherdess, Shepherd (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.2 in. (L), 7.7 in. (R), MBS-227*



## Notes

We bought this fine pair from John Howard in July 2006, and I have yet to see another pair with bocages. I admired a similar shepherdess that I had photographed in the Willett Collection in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1612), so I was thrilled to add these figures to our collection.

## Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.119.

For the shepherdess in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, & Pleasures*, 298; also Beddoe,

*A Potted History*, 267 for the Willett Collection example.

For a similar shepherd see Earle, *Earle Collection*, fig. 611. ❁

## 8.2.2

### Sheperdess (vase)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by James Neale and impressed "Neale & Co", Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 8.5 in., MBS-551*







## Notes

I often ponder the many collections I have visited and their owners' different approaches to collecting. The vast majority are haphazard in that their owners simply buy whatever they like when they stumble upon it, and I envy their uncomplicated collecting paths. Afterwards, in some cases, they forget they even have that new acquisition, and, in most instances, they certainly can't recall where they bought it.

Our collection is different, at least from my perspective. I like to buy unusual and unrecorded figures, preferably those that I had not even imagine existed. Also, I keep a mental list of recorded figure models I want to own and I wait for a good example to come up. Sometimes, I pass over a much-coveted figure because it just does not meet my quirky criteria, but often my wait is rewarded, even though it takes a long time.

This Neale shepherdess vase was on my Most Wanted List for ten years. In 2006, at the Staffordshire Figure Association meeting, a collector had a similar vase and she asked an "expert" dealer what it was. He was puzzled, but I knew the answer immediately, even though the vase was across the room from me. This was not genius on my part; rather, the vase was easily identifiable because it is of the same form as one on the dust jacket of Diana Edward's *Neale Pottery and Porcelain*. To compound the collective ignorance on display that day, the dealer who had sold it to the owner was present, but he had not known what he had sold. And to make the story even more implausible, the vase was marked! Admittedly, the mark was

not boldly impressed on the base; rather, it was impressed on the ground to the side of the shepherdess. The owner of the vase was delighted to learn she had a marked treasure, and an especially early one at that. I thought it lovely, but I wouldn't have wanted to own that particular example because it had been heavily overpainted and restored. So I added it to my Most Wanted List and watched and waited.

In November 2016, my patience was rewarded with this beautiful example at Dreweatts. This example has been well documented, having been illustrated in publications going back to 1929, at which time it was in the Bernard Middlebrook collection. In 1991, Jonathan Horne showed it at his annual London exhibition. At that stage, Jonathan had the chipped bocage leaves restored, and the difference in green to some leaves seems to be as they were originally painted—indeed, those two shades are present in the leaves on the garland. The vase, prior to restoration is pictured within Diane Edwards's book.

## Literature

For this vase see Edwards, *Neale Pottery and Porcelain*, 173; also Horne, *English Pottery*, 1991, no. 317; and also Read, *Staffordshire Pottery Figures*, plate 53.

For similar vases see Edwards *Neale Pottery and Porcelain*, dust jacket; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 26.126. ❀



## 8.2.3

# Shepherd and Shepherdess

*Impressed "SH...DESS" and "SHEP...", lead-glazed earthenware with under-glaze decoration, made by Charles Tittensor and impressed thrice "TITTENSOR", Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 9 in., MBS-259*



## Notes

In June 2007, we bought this important unrecorded figure on eBay with the help of my friend Nick Burton, who bid for me because we were at the North Carolina coast, where the internet connection was spotty at best. As happens when something special appears on eBay, we paid a full retail price, but I was thrilled to have this rare, naive, and awkwardly lumpy group—a true conglomeration! Tittensor really marched to his own drummer, and his work is quite unlike anything his contemporaries produced. ❀

## 8.2.4

# Shepherd with Shepherdess

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825 , H: 6.7 in., MBS-502*



## Notes

The “hunt” for the unusual is what makes figure collecting exciting, so I was over the moon when I spotted this figure group on eBay in September 2013 because, while I recognized the individual figures,<sup>8</sup> I had not seen them arranged together on one base. The pot bank that made such figures (individually or as the group shown here), consistently placed a leaf on the sheep’s back.

## Literature

For this group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 203.09. ❁

## 8.2.5

# Shepherd with Shepherdess

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Walton and impressed "WALTON", Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.6 in., MBS-271*



## Notes

When I bought this group on eBay in January 2008, we already owned a similar model with a spill vase (later sold). There was one other difference: this group lacks a dog on the base. At first, I thought the dog had broken off, but closer examination revealed that the dog was actually lost during manufacture. Its paw and the rough patch where it sat are visible on the base, covered with original enamel.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.155. ❀

## 8.2.6

# Shepherdess

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 7.6 in., MBS-310*



## Notes

I bought this uncommon and very appealing lady from Andrew Dando, who had it in his pocket at the Staffordshire Figure Association meeting in Alexandria in 2008. Andrew didn't think too much of her because she looked to be in a sorry state, but I fell in love, brought her home, and tidied up the old restoration, which mostly involved removing yucky overpainting of her base and making her a new staff.

This figure exudes charm, and visitors to our collection never fail to admire her. She reminds me of Little Bo Peep in the old nursery rhyme.

I have documented a handful of somewhat similar shepherdesses, all with variations in their modeling. Others are in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1283) and the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.846-1928).

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.135.

For a similar figure in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 277.

For a similar figure in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 158. ❀



## 8.2.7

# Spanish Shepherd

*Painted "Spanish Shepherd", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, impressed "69" and attributed to Ralph Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 9.2 in., MBS-421*



## Notes

We bought this shepherd from John Howard in July 2011. Another (lacking an impressed number) is in the Potteries Museum.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.131.

For a similar shepherd in the Potteries Museum see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.133. ❀

## 8.2.8

# Shepherd, Shepherdess (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Walton and impressed "WALTON", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.6 in. each, MBS-467*





## Notes

Walton shepherd and shepherdess pairs are next to impossible to find. I previously owned a pair of lesser quality that just didn't do anything for me, and I replaced them with this little pair from Andrew Dando in December 2012. The shepherdess's raised hand had been restored incorrectly to hold a flower, and I redid it as it should be, modeling it after the figure in the Hunt Collection.

## Literature

For this pair (prior to corrected restoration to her raised hand) see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.42.

For another pair in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 157. ❀

## 8.2.9

# Shepherd

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to John Dale, Staffordshire, c. 1825,  
H: 5.3 in., MBS-443*



## Notes

That distinctive green, the color of a Golden Delicious apple, that Dale favored for bases gets me each time! I bought this figure because it oozes Dale charm and retains its beauty despite the loss of bocage—and I wanted an example of the flower on the base in my collection.

A restorer has painted over the break at the stump with an attractive swirl that simulates that on a severed tree trunk, an approach I wish more restorers would use rather than attaching a replacement that looks patently faux.

For the companion shepherdess see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.37.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.35. ❁

## 8.2.10

# Shepherd

*Impressed "BOY A D DOG", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Samuel Hall and impressed "HALL", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.3 in., MBS-472*





## Notes

There is little to identify this figure as a shepherd, but figures of a boy with dog in this style were routinely made to pair with a girl holding a sheep, he being the shepherd and she the shepherdess.

This shepherd is not Hall's finest work—and Hall was quite a sloppy potter at the best of times—but it is none the less a sweet figure that was made for the “cheap and cheerful” end of the market. I bought it from Andrew Dando in December 2012 because I wanted an example of this Hall oak-leaf bocage in my collection. The heavy tooling of the veins on the backs of the leaves is typical of this Hall bocage form. The impressed “HALL” mark is a little difficult to see because it is camouflaged by brown paint.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.35. ❁

## 8.2.11

# Shepherd

*Impressed "SHEPHERD", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Dale and impressed "I. DALE BURSLEM", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6 in., MBS-369*



## Notes

I bought this shepherd at auction, (in a lot with a few other figures that moved on to new homes via eBay) because of the Dale mark and typical Dale flowers. It was a good academic addition, and, at the same time, I thought it very attractive, as Dale figures usually are. It also marked a turning point in a relationship with an older collector friend, to whom I typically deferred at auction: I reminded him that it was my turn!

I have learned the perils of standing aside at auction for friends and won't do it any longer. That sounds nasty, but it reflects the reality of my experience and human nature. I have watched friends miss items at lower bids than I would have placed; I have watched them forget to bid—in one instance, a friend was so busy cooking chicken soup that the auction escaped his mind; and I have watched them overlooking returning the favor.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.67. ❀

## 8.2.12

# Shepherdess

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>9</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.2 in., MBS-267*



## Notes

I bought this sweet “Sherratt” figure on eBay in January 2008, and she remains a firm favorite. I have recorded three examples of this figure but only one of her mate, and that resides in a UK collection.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 27.106. ❀

FOR CENTURIES, THE ENGLISH SHEEP was a puny creature. While its wool comprised the bulk of farm profits, its sparse flesh was insignificant. Attempts to improve livestock prior to the eighteenth century were fatally flawed: farmers, lacking feed crops for the winter months, usually slaughtered their largest animals at the start of winter, leaving the runts to form the nucleus of future breeding stock.

By 1750, change was afoot: the Agricultural Revolution was underway, and farmers were growing fodder crops for winter nourishment. Increasingly, they fenced their land so as to confine their animals and control their diets, their breeding, and the spread of disease. Now able to accumulate quality livestock, farmers turned their attention to breeding animals that required the least amount of food to mature quickly into large creatures, ready for an ever-growing number of dinner tables. The burgeoning middle class wanted mutton and beef, so farming emphasis was changing: meat was becoming more important than fineness of fleece or strength at the plow.

From 1750, the Leicestershire farmer Robert Bakewell pioneered animal genetics to produce new sheep breeds that could satisfy the country's craving for meat. Bakewell selectively inbred animals—a practice many farmers initially decried as immoral—and he improved his animals' diets, kept them indoors in winter, and treated them with kindness. The improved

breeds of sheep were mutton makers, and the animals' bodies ballooned to barrel-size. Now every portion of the sheep had economic worth. As Thomas Bewick noted, "There is hardly any part of this animal that is not serviceable to man: of the fleece we make our cloaths; the skin produces leather, of which are made gloves, parchment, and covers for books; the entrails are formed into strings for fiddles and other musical instruments, likewise coverings for whips; its milk affords both butter and cheese; and its flesh is a delicate and wholesome food."<sup>10</sup>

Bakewell and his disciples were at the forefront of the livestock breeding craze that swept England. The English have always valued a country lifestyle, and wealthy men took an active interest in improving their farms. At agricultural meetings on their estates, illustrious foreign visitors, royalty, and commoners rubbed shoulders. England's sheep were transformed: whereas in 1700 the average sheep at London's market had weighed a mere 23 pounds, by 1828 that weight had increased to 80 pounds.<sup>11</sup> People remembering the scrawnier animals of bygone years must have looked at the enlarged livestock in awe, and oversized Staffordshire earthenware animals reflect their amazement. ❁

### 8.3.1

## Ram

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to John Dale, Staffordshire, c. 1825,  
H: 5.8 in., MBS-272*



## Notes

I bought this ram from John Shepherd in January 2008, and when it arrived and I could see the flowers and sprig on the base properly, I realized that John Dale had made it. Now I would be able to tell from the distinctive form of the ram alone.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.10. 🌸



## 8.3.2

## Ewe

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>12</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.3 in., MBS-585*



## Notes

Always a sucker for an unusual sheep, I found this sweetie on eBay in the summer of 2018. The photographs were blurred and unflattering, and the sheep was missing an ear and had a chipped bocage leaf, but I could just discern the distinctive “Sherratt” floral garlands on the base, so I bid—there was no competition!—and made it ours. I am very pleased with the overall quality and did the restoration myself.

This sheep can be attributed to “Sherratt.” In his book on that pot bank, Malcolm Hodgkinson dubbed bocage of this form “turquoise bocage” because it occurs on “Sherratt” figures that are mostly painted in a turquoise palette. Indeed, the only other similar “Sherratt” sheep that I have recorded is painted in that color scheme.

Collectors often ask me which piece in our collection is my favorite, but there really isn’t one. I find great beauty in the simplest of figures, and if at the end of my day all I have left is this sheep, I will be content.

## Literature

For another sheep from these molds see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.161. ❁

### 8.3.3 Ram with Lamb (vase)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Walton and impressed "WALTON", Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.3 in., MBS-133*



## Notes

We bought this ram spill vase from Ray and Diane Ginns in 2001. It was a lot of money then—twice what it would cost now, but the market was at its peak and collecting tastes were somewhat different. In all the years since, I have not been able to find a matching ewe of comparable quality, so our ram remains a bachelor.

Another similar ram (bocage lost) is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (128-174).

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 287; also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.16. ❀

### 8.3.4

## Ram, Ewe (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Ralph Salt and impressed "SALT", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.5 in. each, MBS-134 (L), MBS-91 (R)*





## Notes

We bought these sheep individually and assembled the pair, and they are as close a pair as if they had been painted together initially, and perhaps they were.

The ram came from Ray and Diane Ginns in 1996, The ewe arrived later. By 2000, the internet was just starting to bring figures from all over the world to my desk top, and John Howard, who is always at the cutting edge, had launched a lovely new site that I poured over avidly. In June 2001, I noticed on John's site an ewe that I was sure was the perfect companion for our ram. I could have approached John directly, but I didn't know him then, and, as Ray and Diane were helping build our collection, I felt a loyalty to them. As they were to exhibit just a few feet from John Howard's stand at the Olympia fair in London that month, I asked them to assess and purchase the ewe for me. To my surprise, they declined, saying I should contact John myself. I did just that, and this was the first of very many purchases from John. None has disappointed, and all have been delivered to our door with lightening speed. We collectors are fortunate that a man of John's integrity—not to mention his wit and charm—is at the top of the trade.

The Ginnses reluctance to assist with completing a pair put a tiny nick in our relationship—really the second nick, the first being their refusal to assist with a small restoration on something not bought from them. But I was very fond of them and I needed them, so I sucked it up. In those days, collectors could not pick and choose as they can today. To get special pieces,

you needed to have a contact. I remember approaching one of today's small dealers in my early collecting days when he stood on Portobello Road, and I asked if he had any "Sherratt" figures, but he dismissed my request, saying he already had a collector who bought all his "Sherratt." Clearly, he didn't want or need me!

The ram was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 287; *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.28. ❀

### 8.3.5

## Ram, Ewe (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>13</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.4 in. each, MBS-319*







## Notes

I bought this sharp-looking pair on eBay in November 2008.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.38. ❀

### 8.3.6

## Recumbent Ewe, Recumbent Ram (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>14</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.5 in. each, MBS-183*





## Notes

This pair's quality and fine condition caught Nick Burton's eye at the NEC (National Exhibition Center) antiques show in Birmingham in July 2004, and he bought them for us. Nick and I share the conviction that an unpretentious figure of not particularly rare form can be an object of uncommon beauty, as is the case here, and time has taught us that such figures are surprisingly elusive.

The pair was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 287; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.166. ❀

### 8.3.7

## Ewe with Lamb (vase)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Leaf Mat Group,"<sup>15</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 4.4 in., MBS-447*





## Notes

I bought this red-brown sheep, one of Ben's favorite figures, from John Howard in February 2012. His pert expression is engaging, and he is very eye-catching among the paler sheep in my flock. I have not seen another but have noted the companion ram in an old advertisement placed by the late Wynne Sayman, a New England dealer still remembered for his discerning eye.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.100. ❀



### 8.3.8

## Sheep (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made by the “Sherratt” pot bank,<sup>16</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 3.6 in. (L), 3.1 in. (R), MBS-305 (L), MBS-334 (R)*



## Notes

I am cautiously certain that both these sheep are “Sherratt.” I bought the sheep with lamb at its feet from Jane McClafferty at the Staffordshire Figure Association meeting in Alexandria in September 2008, and the lone sheep on eBay in March 2009. I have yet to see companion rams for either, and, as so many must have been made, I can only conclude they have been lost over the centuries.

We have a lovely arrangement of sheep in a corner cupboard on our staircase landing. Most of them are in pairs, but odd singles such as these adds a quirkiness to the display.

## Literature

For the sheep with lamb on the left see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.124.

For the sheep on the right see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.123. ❀

### 8.3.9

## Ram, Ewe (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1835, H: 4 in. (L), 3.8 in. (R),  
MBS-324 (L), MBS-140 (R)*



## Notes

This is an especially cheerful assembled pair. I have seen a handful of examples of these models, and the goofy ram is consistently larger than the ewe. I bought the ewe on eBay in November 2001 and then the ram, again on eBay, in December 2008. It takes patience to assemble a pair!

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.129. ❀

## 8.3.10 Recumbent Sheep

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 3.8 in., MBS-147*



## Notes

We bought this ewe in a lot of figures at Gorringes in April 2002, with Ray and Diane Ginns executing a commission bid. Over the years, I have sometimes picked up unintended purchases at auction when I have bought a mixed lot containing figures that were not the focus of my attention. I tend to part with these to reduce my cost, but this figure was worth keeping.

This sheep was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 287; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.137. ❀

## 8.3.11 Recumbent Sheep

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4 in., MBS-164*



## Notes

I got this sweet little sheep at auction in the same lot as the gorgeous dandies group on the dust jacket of Griselda Lewis's *A Collector's History of English Pottery*, third edition (no. 17.1.3). As the dandies once belonged to John Hadfield, I think the sheep may have too. John Hadfield was the Lewis's friend. Griselda described him to me as "a great anthologist [who] wrote several books, the most famous, I suppose was *A Book of Beauty*, and for many years he edited a publication called *The Saturday Book*, which came out weekly."<sup>17</sup>

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.140. ❀



### 8.3.12

## Recumbent Sheep

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 3.5 in., MBS-450*



## Notes

I recall buying this little figure on a very hot spring day in 2012, bidding on my phone on eBay while driving back to North Carolina from Atlanta, where I had just lectured. Ben was with me, and I craved hot tea (my drug of choice) SO badly but could only find iced tea at the fast-food stops in Georgia.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.148. ❀

### 8.3.13 Recumbent Ram with Lamb

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>18</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.7 in., MBS-232*



## Notes

In November 2006, I bought this ram with a splendid and relatively uncommon “Sherratt” bocage on eBay. I had the small bocage restoration done in the UK by a new restorer whom I wanted to try. It was the most ridiculously expensive bocage restoration ever, but I will admit the work is outstanding. At those prices, however, the restorer soon went out of business, and he still owes me money!

The ram is glorious, and the enamels are particularly strong, so the figure merited the overpriced work. I am still been searching in vain for the companion ewe, a “Sherratt” ewe in our collection (no. 8.3.14) being the closest I have come, although, obviously, the bocages do not match.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.156. ❀

### 8.3.14

## Recumbent Ewe with Lamb

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>19</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.3 in., MBS-364*



## Notes

I bought this ewe on eBay in February 2008. It is the companion model to the previous ram (no. 8.3.13), although the bocages differ. I have long doubted that I would ever find a true match for either one, but as I update this work in late 2018, the companion ram to this ewe, significantly damaged but with the same bocage, is on eBay...for \$1,200. At that price, my ewe must remain lonely for a while longer.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.154. ❀

## 8.3.15 Recumbent Ram

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 2.8 in., MBS-345*



## Notes

I bought this humble but adorable addition to our flock on eBay in July 2009 and have not yet seen either another or the companion ewe.

## Literature

For this ram see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.172. ❀



### 8.3.16

## Recumbent Ram, Recumbent Ewe (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>20</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 2.8 in. each, MBS-314 (L), MBS-373 (R)*



## Notes

I bought these sheep individually and assembled the pair. The ram came first, acquired on eBay in October 2008. At that time, we already owned a pair of the same sheep made without bocages (no. 8.3.17, also included below), but I thought the bocage version would be an appropriate collection addition. I found the companion ewe, again on eBay, in April 2010. How the supply of figures on eBay has since dried up!

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.181. ❁



### 8.3.17

## Recumbent Ram, Recumbent Ewe (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>21</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 2.2 in. each, MBS-248*



## Notes

I bought this pair of sheep from Andrew Dando's March 2007 Exhibition. They are like a pair we already owned (no. 8.3.16) but in this case the figures were made without bocages. We now have a flock of tiny "Sherratt" sheep! They are shown below.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.182. ❀



8.3.18

## Recumbent Sheep, Recumbent Sheep with Dog, Recumbent Goat (vases, pair and single)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, from left H: 3.1 in., 4 in., 3.1 in.,  
MBS-352 (pair), MBS-353 (single)*



## Notes

I bought the vase with the dog on eBay in August 2009, and loved its diminutive size and crisp modeling, I am not a big fan of tree-trunk-like spills, but the small scale of this one, coupled with the attention to detail, makes it very attractive.

I was chatting to John Howard in August 2009 when he mentioned having just received a tiny pair of spill vases, one vase with a sheep and the other with a goat, so I bought them, and they stand well with the larger vase with a dog.

Working on this document in 2017, I am amazed at the number of figures I was able to find on eBay in the first decade of this century. By now, the supply has apparently dried up, as has the supply from other sources.

## Literature

For the largest vase see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.83.

For the pair of vases see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.191. ❁

## 8.3.19 Sheep and Dog (Vase)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 4.5 in., MBS-357*



## Notes

I bought this vase at Woolley and Wallis in October 2009, along with several lesser figures that I subsequently sold. It was probably made by the same pot bank as a slightly smaller vase on the same farmyard theme in our collection (no. 8.3.18).

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 131.213. ❁



FOR CENTURIES, THE ENGLISH VALUED their cattle primarily as draft animals and only secondarily for their milk. Cattle to be driven on foot to market and then fattened for slaughter, and this made beef a costly luxury. But by 1780, better farming practices coupled with advances in animal genetics were yielding “improved” cattle that were much larger than their recent ancestors, and with each passing year, these animals carried more of the meat consumers craved. By 1828, England’s cattle were transformed: the average calf that in 1700 had weighed a mere 50 pounds now weighed 140 pounds.<sup>22</sup> A livestock breeding craze swept England in those decades, and landed gentleman strove to improve their herds. Corpulent cows, dubbed fatstock, were lugged around agricultural fair circuits for all to admire. Proud owners commissioned portraits of these obscenely inflated animals, and naive paintings of large bovines with reproachful expressions recall what those animals looked like then.

In the spirit of the times, model farms on gentlemen’s estates were status symbols, and dairies showcased their owner’s prestige and refinement. In 1828, the German nobleman Hermann Pückler-Muskau observed that

*the dairy is one of the principal decorations of an English park, and stands by itself, quite away from the cow-house. It is generally an elegant pavilion, adorned with*

*fountains, marble walls, and rare and beautiful porcelain; and its vessels, large and small, filled with the most exquisite milk and its products, in all their varieties.*<sup>23</sup>

In that era, milk presented challenges. Without refrigeration, milk cows had to be located within quick reach of consumers, and even then, drinking milk was not for the faint-hearted. Milk could spread life-threatening diseases, including tuberculosis and typhoid. It was routinely adulterated with water (itself often contaminated) and then thickened with starch, and spurious chalk products masqueraded as milk. In 1811, the French-born American merchant Louis Simond noted in his journal that in London women with milk pails suspended from yokes on their shoulders went door to door dispensing a quota of milk that was “as big as an egg, being the allowance of a family; for it is necessary to explain, that milk is not here either food or drink, but a tincture,—an elixir exhibited in drops, five or six at most, in a cup of tea, morning and evening.”<sup>24</sup> ❀

## 8.4.1

# Cows with Milkmaid

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, L: 9.4 in., H: 8 in., MBS-485*







## Notes

We bought this large and unique group from Elinor Penna in June 2013. She had owned it for a good many years, and I know of others who, like I, had coveted it for a long time. I had drooled over it when I photographed it at her home a few years previously and often looked at my picture, marveling at the beauty of it. Fortunately, I caught Elinor at the right moment, and it joined our collection.

As always, I am amazed that we know of no other example of this group and that none of the component figures is recorded as an individual figure. The molds required to manufacture this must have been complex and expensive, so they would have been used again and again—yet this group is the last survivor.

## Literature

For this group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 28.43. ❀

## 8.4.2

## Cow with Calf

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Leather Leaf Group" pot bank,<sup>25</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.3 in., MBS-149*



## Notes

I am not drawn to figures of cows—perhaps it is because they often are bent to gaze at the ground—so the few that have earned their places on our shelves are rather special to me. I like “Leather Leaf Group” figures in particular, and here the bocage and large flowers are as appealing as the little cow, which looks straight at me. We bought this figure in a mixed lot of figures at Gorringes in April 2002, with Ray and Diane Ginns executing a commission bid. It was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 293; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 118.40. ❀

### 8.4.3

## Bull

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>26</sup>Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.8 in., MBS-479*





## Notes

Small “Sherratt” figures are among the most charming, and I particularly love this stocky bull, which I bought from Barbara Gair at Castle Antiques in May 2013.

## Literature

For a similar bull see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 178-1840*, vol. 3, fig. 118.78. ❀

## 8.4.4

# Cows with Calves (vase)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, L: 10 in., MBS-193*





## Notes

I have dubbed this group “the Dairy Farm” and wince at how I came to own it.

My fifteen-year friendship and business relationship with dealers Ray and Diane Ginns had come to an abrupt end in 2003, and in 2005 I remained hurt and puzzled (as I still am) at its sudden termination. Then, to my surprise, that spring Diane contacted me with a photograph of this cow group and a letter emphasizing its fine condition and extraordinary quality. I couldn’t resist. I was like a woman going back to the man who had beaten her, an addict returning to her supplier, but I had to have it. I wish I could say it was a bargain—that might have at least been an excuse, however feeble—but it certainly wasn’t. I talked to Nick Burton about it, but ultimately the decision was mine and I went ahead. My philosophy has always been to buy from the person who has the goods, even if I would rather spend my money elsewhere, so I sucked up my pride and agreed to the purchase—but it was on condition that it was delivered to me in my hotel in London that June. Diane duly arrived with the group, and we had a very cordial conversation, but we have not spoken since.

Unlike other animal groups of this sort, this group is particularly petite and refined, and not at all clunky. The enamels glow, and the calves and cows look at each other with meltingly sweet expressions. The quality just could not be finer, and that’s why I swallowed my pride and bought it. I have not regretted this decision for even a moment, and I have to see

another of the same caliber.

This group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 285; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 118.89 and dust jacket. ❁



# Endnotes

1. *Poor Law Commissioners*, 169–175.
2. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:31–33.
3. ———, 1:34–35.
4. ———., 1: figs. 28.27–28.
5. ———., 1:30.
6. Buffon, *Natural History*, 3:463–465.
7. *Universal Magazine*, “Provincial Occurrences,” 565.
8. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1: figs. 27.100–101.
9. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
10. Bewick, *History of Quadrupeds*, 53.
11. *Register of Arts*, “Consumption,” 303.
12. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 36–37.
13. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
14. ———, 1:34–35.
15. ———, 1:42.
16. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
17. Letter from Griselda Lewis to me, dated 15 May 2004.
18. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. *Register of Arts*, “Miscellaneous Intelligence,” 302–304.
23. Pückler-Muskau, *Tour*, 318.
24. Simond, *Journal of a Tour*, 1:33.
25. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:31–33.
26. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.



## CHAPTER 9

# Trades and Occupations

*Extract from "PEDLER." T. L. Busby, London, c. 1800. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.*

**I**N THE MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY, WIGS (also known as periwigs) became fashionable for English gentlemen. They were practical because they were easier to keep clean and free of lice than natural hair, and they concealed the sores and patchy hair loss concurrent with syphilis. By 1700, wigs were mandatory attire for gentlemen and were responsible for a resurgence in the barber trade.

Wigs were expensive to buy and maintain, and it became customary to powder them with white “hair powder” comprising ground flour scented with additives. In April 1795, England’s government imposed a tax of one guinea per annum on hair powder.<sup>1</sup> Exemptions from the tax extended to certain army officers, clergy of modest means, and royalty and testified to the perception that wigs were a social necessity. This was also a time of serious food shortage, and legislation of December 1795 forbade the use of wheat and other food in the manufacture of hair powder.<sup>2</sup>

Resistance to the powder tax coupled with a shortage of powder signaled the demise of wigs. In any event, by then fashionable younger gentlemen preferred wearing their own hair in natural styles. By 1820, wigs were confined to older gentlemen and those of certain professions. ❀

## 9.1.1

## Barber

*Impressed "DEP GOBBLE WIG THE LONDON BARBER", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 6.4 in., MBS-338*





## Notes

Stella Beddoe, who was keeper of Brighton's Willett Collection for many years, had kindly allowed me to photograph a similar weird little figure of a barber (HW662)—and much else—for inclusion in *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*. It is a very rare little figure, and I added it to my wish list

In April 2009, I was thrilled to see this example on eBay and was determined to buy this it. I know of no others. The “Sherratt” barber, which was made a little later, does not have the impressed wording on the plinth.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 29.18.

For the barber in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 126; also Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 306; and also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 29.17. ❀

## 9.2.1 Bar Maid

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 7.6 in., MBS-434*



## Notes

We have dubbed this lady, the only erotica in our collection, the “bawdy bar maid” because she has beneath her skirt two freely formed legs and realistically painted genitalia.

When I bought her at auction in the UK in November 2011, she had pantaloons of a sort, made of an unknown brown substance, that a previous owner had applied over her upper thighs and lower abdomen. It looked like hard cookie dough, and I couldn’t wait to soak it off! I marvel at the mind of the individual who wanted to own this figure but went to great pains to conceal the lower body, even though it was not obviously visible.

The bar maid’s mouth always amuses me because it has been painted in the middle of her chin, perhaps by a potter with a hangover, as was often the case in the Potteries then. I enjoy showing her to visitors and watching their reaction when they turn her over!

Similar barmaid figures are in the Potteries Museum and Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1474), but neither is “bawdy,” the bases having been closed over.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, figs. 29.23–24.

For the barmaid in the Potteries Museum see *Staffordshire*

*Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, figs. 29.25–26.

For the barmaid in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 285.

For the barmaid in the Sharp collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 91. ❀

## 9.3.1

# Man with Cask

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 4.5 in., MBS-118*



## Notes

The open cask on this figure served, I suspect, as an inkwell. We bought the figure from the sale of the Reed-Fitt Collection in February 2000 (see 4.1.1 Notes), where it was far too expensive, but I have yet to see another quite like it or as nice, and Ben particularly admired it. Each time I look at it I am reminded that the cask was the cardboard box of its day!

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007. Similar figures on a different base are in the Hunt Collection and the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1362).

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 169; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 29.31.

For the figure in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 152.

For the figure in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 29.32; also Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 295. ❀

**T**WO CENTURIES AGO, A BLACKSMITH at his anvil and a girl at the water pump were everyday sights. Then, water was in short supply. In London three times a week, private conduits transported river water to the homes of those who could pay, but for many more people access to water was, at best, from a shared pipe in the yard. Some drew water from wells and springs in the city or from the River Thames, and carriers sold spring water by the bucket. Robert Southey described London's water as "abominable; it is either from a vapid canal in which all the rabble of the outskirts wash themselves in summer, or from the Thames, which receives all the filth of the city."<sup>3</sup> The water was also uncertain and inadequate, and people hoarded water in containers, which were an added source of contamination.

Further afield, the water problem was worse. Joseph Lawson writes that in rural Yorkshire "there are ponds in the village for cattle, but the water is not all that desirable, being a little spoiled by the rotting carcasses of dogs and cats, though it is said some publicans use it for brewing."<sup>4</sup> In the Staffordshire Potteries, all water came from defective public pumps until 1820. Thereafter, enterprising individuals established private water works that sold spring water, delivered by the container. Writing in 1829, the historian Simeon Shaw notes that

*good Water is supplied from Reservoirs at Lane End,*

*and Hanley; but is more of a rarity in all the Towns, than is desirable for the health and cleanliness of the population. A stranger is surprised to see water carts in the streets selling at a halfpenny a pailful, this essential article of human enjoyment.<sup>5</sup>*

The dearth of water contributed to the general filth and made fires especially hazardous. Dry years brought much distress, more so in towns that had neither a well nor a spring and depended totally on rainwater.

For many centuries, the blacksmith's expertise at manufacturing and repairing metal objects was essential to the functioning of rural and urban life. In England, an age-old system of apprenticeship bound youth for seven years to masters who instructed them in the trade, but in small villages, the blacksmith was often self-taught and he pursued multiple occupations. As the nineteenth century progressed and the Industrial Revolution advanced, metal skills became industrialized, and the independent local blacksmith was not as critical to the fabric of daily life, but blacksmiths continued playing a role in the economy into the twentieth century. ❁

## 9.4.1

# Girl at Water Pump, Blacksmith (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 6.4 in. (L), 5.9 in. (R),  
MBS-222 (L), MBS-234 (R)*



## Notes

I have recorded only a few examples of the girl at the water pump (dubbed “the cow with the iron tail” in bygone times) and just one other blacksmith. I bought her in Holland of all places, via eBay in May 2006. That very November, I purchased the blacksmith from John Howard.

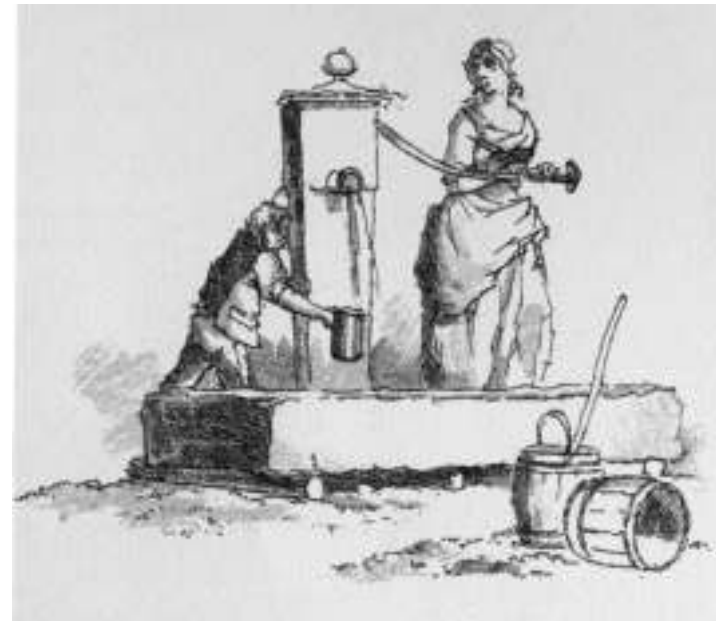
Such rare figures, one after the other! I have to believe that a Pottery God helped make this pair. The only other pair of these figures that I know of is in the Hunt Collection, but figures of the girl are in the Potteries Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.950-1928), and the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1346).

## Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, figs. 29.34–35.

For the pair in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 147.

For a similar girl see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 269; also Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 174.



By William Henry Pyne for *Microcosm of London*, c. 1810.



## 9.5.1

# Laborer

*Impressed and painted "THE POOR LABORER", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.2 in., MBS-531*



## Notes

This treasured figure was a fabulous and unexpected gift from my generous and very true friend John Howard in 2015.

*The Poor Laborer* (spelled the American way, but at the time this figure was made there was not yet a dictionary to standardize and guide spelling) is a companion figure to our *The Poor Soldier* (no. 2.10.1). The close similarity of the designs supports my hypothesis that just about every figure was designed as a companion to another. Clearly, there are exceptions, but among the smaller figures the rule repeatedly holds.

## Literature

For a similar figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 29.47.

For another in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 156. ❀

**I**N THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, COAL was the fuel source for rich and poor alike, but burning it deposited soot that had to be brushed and scraped away by hand. Chimneys then were particularly narrow, so children were ideal sweeps. Master sweeps apprenticed children, usually aged six but often younger, for seven-year terms. The apprentice received no pay and was totally dependent on his master. Parishes provided a steady stream of poor and orphaned children, poor families sold their young children into apprenticeships, and vagrants were taken from the streets.

Nearly all apprentices were boys, and they were known as “climbing boys” because they used their knees and elbows to scale narrow, soot-clogged chimneys. Their work took a dreadful toll: skin, although scrubbed with brine to harden it, became raw and scarred; extended periods in abnormal positions caused skeletal deformities; eye irritation and infections might lead to blindness; and soot inhalation contributed to pulmonary problems. Cancer of the scrotum—the first occupational cancer identified—was yet another hazard. Worse yet, reports abound of children suffocating within tight chimneys. A young child reluctant to climb or one who dallied in a chimney risked having a fire lit beneath to speed him on his way.

Most child sweeps lived in abject squalor and rarely bathed,

and critics of the system dubbed them “English slaves.”<sup>6</sup> One who survived his apprenticeship was free to work as a journeyman for another master sweep, but in reality he was ill-fit for society and was best suited to a career as a burglar.

From the eighteenth century, concern about the plight of young chimney sweeps mounted. From 1788, successive legislation aimed at eliminating the most egregious wrongs, but, as it was not enforced, child sweeps persisted until the Chimney Sweep Act of 1875 prohibited the use of children in the chimney sweeping trade. ❀

## 9.6.1

# Chimney Sweeps

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.5 in., MBS-538*



## Notes

This figure group is unrecorded. The chimney sweep lady holds a wafer or coin; only the child's eyes are not caked with soot. The figures are formed from the same molds used for the chimney sweep lady and child seated upon a donkey in the Hunt Collection. I believe this group is from the same pot bank that made a stylistically similar parson and clerk group,<sup>7</sup> known from only one example, because the base, the tree trunk, and the bocage are alike and appear to have been formed from the same molds.

This little figure group came on eBay in early 2015. It was atrociously photographed against a red background. It looked like nothing, and I expected it to go for nothing. It did indeed go for very little, and somebody outbid me. I was mad at myself for being complacent, and I regretted missing out on owning this important record of social history. Ben thought I was nuts. He couldn't see why I wanted to own an item, which, from his perspective seemed so trivial and unimpressive. The next week, a UK dealer told me he had been offered something he had never seen before, but he had passed on buying it because he didn't know what it was. As he started telling me, I knew that it was this figure, and I explained its significance to him.

It seems that the person who bought this figure group on eBay was a restorer in the US. He first offered it to a small-time local dealer, who offered it to the UK dealer who had contacted me. As neither dealer knew what he was looking at, both rejected it, and the buyer promptly put it back on eBay. This time, the

listing was somewhat better and included the information I had supplied, which had filtered back. I had a second chance! The starting bid was just enough for the seller to break even. I was the only bidder, and I was over the moon.

That month we ordered a new car. It is a very lovely Mercedes, and it was built for me, so I had to wait for it for a while. Was I excited at its pending arrival? Not one bit. A car is just a car...a conglomeration of parts that soon will be on the scrap heap. On the other hand, I couldn't wait for this little figure to arrive, and I still get a huge thrill out of looking at it.

## Literature

For the chimney sweeps figures on horseback in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past* , 149; also Schkolne,  *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840, vol. 1* , fig. 29.54. ❀

**F**OR CENTURIES, TRADERS HAVE PEDDLED their wares on the streets of England's cities and towns. Hawkers bearing baskets and boxes, pushing carts, or leading beasts of burden were a common sight well into the nineteenth century. In London, they sold merchandise ranging from the mundane to the macabre to the accompaniment of catchy ditties that made the city remarkable for its cacophony of "cries." The din was deafening as hawkers of oysters, figs, wigs, songbirds, dog meat, lavender, and old clothes vied for the public's pennies.

Marcellus Laroon's *Cryes of the City of London*, published in 1687, first portrayed London "criers" in art. Other mimicked this influential work, and by the nineteenth century art works ranging from sophisticated colored engravings to clumsy wood images depicted London's street vendors. In the same spirit, Staffordshire potters fashioned figures that are tantalizingly realistic portrayals of public life. ❀



*Buy my Great Eels, buy my live eels.* From *The Cryes of the City of London Drawne after the Life* c. 1800. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

## 9.7.1 London Criers (pair)

*Impressed and painted "LONDON CRYERS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>8</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.1 in. (L), 6.2 in. (R), MBS-607 (L), MBS-514 (R)*



## Notes

My journey in assembling this pair of “Sherratt” cryers followed a long and twisted path. In 2004, I acquired my first “Sherratt” female London Cryer (no. 9.7.2), which is very like this female figure but was made with a bocage. It took ten more years to find a male “Sherratt” cryer, the figure shown here. However, he was made without a bocage, so the two figures formed a rather odd couple. Then in 2019, I acquired this female without bocage at Windibank Auctions in the UK, and my pair was complete.

I know of only one other pair of “Sherratt” London cryers. It belongs to my friend Malcolm Hodkinson. While his female figure is just like mine, the male figure is quite different. If “Sherratt” made two versions of the male figure, did he also make two versions of the female figure?

## Literature

For the only other recorded pair of “Sherratt” London cryers (the same female figure paired with a different male figure), see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 30.31. ❀



## 9.7.2

# London Crier

*Impressed and painted "LONDON CRYERS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>9</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.1 in., MBS-175*



## Notes

I pursued this lady at auction as part of my quest to learn about the smaller “Sherratt” figures. Nick Burton bought her for us in 2003 at Tenants, Yorkshire, along with a bird nester boy (no. 16.2.1). This was the fourth small figure purchased with Nick’s help at the start of our relationship, and when Ben and I visited him and Vicky in early 2004, all four were waiting to greet us on a shelf in our bedroom. It took ten years to find another “Sherratt” London crier (no. 9.8.1), and I am still searching for the male figure that pairs with this lady.

## Literature

For the female figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 307; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 30.32. ❀

### 9.7.3

## Fruit Vendor

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, possibly made by Enoch Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1800,  
H: 6.2 in., MBS-490*



## Notes

This figure previously belonged to my parents, who acquired it from Ray and Diane Ginns in the 1980s. I believe it is an early example of a figure that was produced for several decades. Later examples are not to my taste because they have lost any refinement, but the soft early enamels on this girl are particularly pleasing.

Fruit vendors were a common site on England's streets in bygone times, but the reason for this model's angel-like wings remains a mystery.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 306; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 30.7.

For another in the Hunt Collection with the companion male vendor see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 153. ❀

## 9.7.4

# Fruit Vendor

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>10</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.7 in., MBS-436*



## Notes

Two examples of this especially sweet figure, similar in all but their coloring, came into David Boyer's stock simultaneously in October 2011, probably having lived together for a long time. I bought one, and a collector friend the other.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, fig. 30.57. ❀

## 9.7.5

# Flower Sellers (2 pairs)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>1</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.3 in. max., from left MBS-301, MBS-428, MBS-548 (pair)*



## Notes

In my perennial pursuit of small “Sherratt” figures, I acquired the girl with the red dress on eBay in August 2008. She needed a little restoration, and Malcolm Hodgkinson gave me a few lessons when he stayed with us the next month. This set me on course to do minor restoration work, but I only do it when the value of the figure doesn’t warrant costly professional restoration. I have seen enough botched amateur restoration, so I remain acutely aware of my limitations and routinely rely on professional expertise for all but the most minor tasks.

The companion figure to the girl in the red dress wears a yellow spotted dress, and we acquired her from Barbara Gair three full years later.

After more than thirty years of collecting, I finally found the only true pair of “Sherratt” basket girls that I have ever seen. We bought the pair in yellow dressed at Applebrook Auctions in October 2016. As both figures are painted in the same manner (right down to the bocage flowers and the baskets they girls hold), there is no doubt in my mind that they have been together since “birth.”

Note that in both pairs, the heads on the girls differ. Sherratt made two different heads for the girl facing right, and three different heads for the girl facing left! I have yet to see any two with the same heads that are anywhere close to a pair.

## Literature

For the assembled pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, figs. 30.82, 30.84.

For other similar figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, figs. 30.80-81, 30.85-89. ❀



## 9.7.6

# Lady Fruit Vendor, Gentleman Egg Vendor (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made by Enoch Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1810,  
H: 6.5 in. (L), 5.7 in. (R), MBS-285 (L), MBS-286 (R)*



## Notes

I bought this fine pair on typical Enoch Wood bases from Aurea Carter in May 2008. The girl is perhaps after *The Strawberry Seller* in the *Cries of London* series, after paintings by Francis Wheatley.

## Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 1, figs. 30.27–28.

For a figure of the boy upon a naturalistic base and with a bocage in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 154. ❁

**I**N THE EARLY 1800S, BEEKEEPERS housed their colonies in upturned straw baskets called skeps, which sometimes had sticks inside to support the honey combs. The skep's shape was conducive to the formation of the honey comb, but the downside was that it was impossible to see what was happening within. Add to that, turning the skep over to collect the honey released angry bees and destroyed the hive. Having killed or released the bees, the beekeeper had to hunt down a new wild swarm and start from scratch. 🐝

## 9.8.1

# Bee Keeper

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 3.6 in., MBS-612*



## Notes

This gem is unrecorded—indeed I have yet to see bee-keeping portrayed in figural form. The object in her hand is probably a smoker, not a watering can. Smoke calms bees, so a smoker was a must-have item for bee keepers.

This figure caught my attention at auction in the US, and I was determined to bid on her, but the more I looked at the images supplied by the auction house, the more the head bothered me. The condition report, which did not inspire confidence, made no mention of the head, but that didn't mean that all was well with it. A friend scrutinized the images too, and we both had doubts. Had I been confident, I would have bid generously, but I could not face the prospect of buying a figure and finding it had a restored head. What would I do with it in those circumstances? The trade has ways of moving mistakes on, but I would have been stuck with my mistake, so I did not bid.

I discussed the piece with John Howard, so when it came his way some months later he contacted me right away, telling me that the head was indeed original. The person who bought it at auction (I assume a minor dealer of sorts) offered it to John. The final price was less than I would have been prepared to bid had I been armed with a reliable condition report, so all ended well. This was one of only two purchases that we made in 2021.

Who made this figure? Attribution is as much an art as a

science, and, while there is no basis for attributing it, I would bet John Walton made it. I am the first to wince at the manner in which anything and everything is glibly attributed to Walton, but the combination of decorative elements on the base may well be specific to Walton, and the glaze and enamels are suggestive of Walton. Above all, I am thrilled to own it, whoever made it. ❀

# Endnotes

1. *Statutes at Large*, 13:89.
2. ———, 13:250.
3. Southey, *Letters from England*, 1:171.
4. Lawson, *Progress in Pudsey*, 5.
5. Shaw, *Staffordshire Potteries*, 13.
6. Evangelical Magazine, “An Appeal on Behalf of Climbing Boys,” 11:569.
7. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 2: fig. 109.17
8. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
9. Ibid.
10. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
11. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.



## CHAPTER 10

# Menageries

*Extract from "Royal Menagerie, Exeter Change, Strand." Thomas Rowlandson, 1816. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

A PEARLWARE MENAGERIE EVOKES ALL THE excitement of a circus visit in childhood days, but nineteenth-century menageries were not circuses. Rather, they were collections of unusual animals whose mere presence was entertainment enough. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, in the days before zoos, those wanting to see wild animals visited a menagerie. This was considered a respectable educational outing. Scientists came to menageries to observe animal behavior and draw conclusions about natural history, and artists lingered there, studying and sketching animal musculature.

The earliest menagerie in England was housed at Woodstock, where in the twelfth century King Henry I kept a collection of beasts that included lions, leopards, and lynxes. In the thirteenth century, the royal menagerie relocated to the Tower of London, and the Tower Menagerie was to become a public attraction that endured into the nineteenth century. The beasts within were often gifts from foreign diplomats, and they helped acquaint Londoners with wild animals from afar. Over the centuries, English explorers and traders unveiled an ever-widening world, and their ships hauled home a plethora of unusual animals. The wealthy stocked prestigious menageries on their country estates, but displays of exotic animals were not only for the nation's elite. By the seventeenth century, anyone with an unusual animal or two was tempted to rent tem-

porary space, ideally in a bustling inn or at a fair, and charge a viewing fee, so increasingly ordinary people in distant towns were able to view the wonders of the animal kingdom.

In 1708, the first small commercial menagerie, or “Collection of Strange and Wonderful Creatures,” exhibited at London’s Bartholomew Fair. In 1769, the enterprising showman Gilbert Pidcock hired assorted animals and used Bartholomew Fair to stage the largest, most thrilling display of wild animals ever seen in a temporary setting. By 1786, Pidcock was touring with a collection of exotic animals ranging from a porcupine to a Bengal tiger; the next year he added an African lion.<sup>1</sup> In 1789, Pidcock came to an arrangement with Thomas Clark, who had a long lease on the Exeter Change building in London.<sup>2</sup> Clark traded animals from this building, which had many small shops on its street level, and used the Great Room on the second floor to house a menagerie that grew to accommodate hundreds of animals. For almost fifty more years, the menagerie at Exeter Change was to be one of London’s better known attractions.

From 1789, Pidcock relentlessly criss-crossed England with an ever-growing variety of animals, some of which were probably hired from Clark. An entrepreneurial showman, Pidcock focused on buying novel animals that would lure crowds. When Clark decided to auction off his animals in 1793, Pidcock



bought many and took over the Exeter Change menagerie. Here he displayed his animals in the Great Room within caged dens with scenic backdrops simulating their natural environments. To lure crowds, the attendants outside the menagerie donned the colorful beef-eater attire<sup>3</sup> associated with the Tower of London, home of England's oldest but then-waning menagerie.

The year Pidcock acquired the Exeter Change menagerie, he purchased an elephant for one thousand guineas,<sup>4</sup> and by 1796, he owned four elephants,<sup>5</sup> which enabled him to have both resident and traveling pachyderms. Moving, stabling, and boarding animals that came to also include a rhinoceros and many felids was a daunting task. Even within the Exeter Change building, operations were exacting, and a platform was placed over the building's stone steps when an elephant had to ascend to the second floor.<sup>6</sup> With time, the menagerie became increasingly overcrowded because of Pidcock's voracious appetite for novel attractions and his successful breeding program. Around 1800, Pidcock decided to stop touring and focus solely on his Exeter Change Menagerie.<sup>7</sup>

Gilbert Pidcock died in 1810, and Stephani Polito<sup>8</sup> bought his animals and took over the Exeter Change menagerie. By then, Polito, was probably England's leading traveling menagerist. As early as 1797, his "Grand Collection" had been on the road with animals packed into two caravans. Polito was a hard working entrepreneur who took enormous financial risk in procuring expensive animals that sometimes quickly



Detail of *Cross's Menagerie at Exeter Change*, c.1829. This affords a final glimpse of London's last permanent menagerie, which was then owned by Edward Cross. An elephant, a prominent feature on the backdrop of all earthenware menageries, has pride of place on the overhead billboard.

succumbed to their new environments. An advertisement in the *Nottingham Journal* of 1805 indicates that by that year *Polito's* owned six traveling caravans, which somehow accommodated a lion, pairs of male and female tigers, panthers, kangaroos, leopards, wolves, and over fifty other quadrupeds, including an "Ethiopian savage"! Significant to pottery collectors, *Polito's* appeared in Wolverhampton, near the Potteries, in 1808,<sup>9</sup> and this visit possibly inspired the potting of earthenware menageries and their animals in later years.

Polito died while in Manchester with his menagerie in April 1814; his wife Sara died that July.<sup>10</sup> Edward Cross, who had managed the Exeter Change menagerie for Polito, acquired it, and his brother John Polito acquired the traveling menagerie. Thereafter, *Polito's* traveled primarily in Scotland, Ireland, and North England. In April 1823, it went to Europe, and never again returned to England.<sup>11</sup> It has long been held that Polito's menagerie was sunk by a storm in around 1835,<sup>12</sup> but there is no basis for this belief.

George Wombwell was the nineteenth century's preeminent menagerist, and his menagerie succeeded *Polito's* as the leading menagerie of its day. As a young man, Wombwell in 1805 had splurged the enormous amount of £75 on two monster boa constrictors, but he had quickly recouped this investment by exhibiting the reptiles. From his premises in London, he then traded animals, while his agents scoured England's ports for the arrival of exotic creatures. It seems Wombwell soon had amassed an impressive array of animals, and thereafter his

menagerie too toured, predominantly in East Anglia and the Midlands<sup>13</sup>, showing near the Staffordshire Potteries at Leek in 1822 and Lichfield in 1824 and 1826.<sup>14</sup> Wombwell was so successful that he came to own three menageries and to exhibit for royalty.<sup>15</sup> He died in his caravan in 1850, and his menageries passed to family members.

In the early nineteenth century, a host of smaller traveling menageries also toured Britain. The resilient men who ran them relentlessly drove themselves and others, for sustaining and moving men and beasts was a Herculean undertaking. Advance agents had to advertise arrivals and arrange food and accommodations. Wagons for the animals were cumbersome and heavy and needed many horses. Wombwell's elephant wagon—used to conceal the elephant from those who should pay to see it—was thirty feet long, thirteen feet high, and nine feet wide, wider than many roads. It had six wheels and, depending on the incline, required anywhere from twelve to thirty horses to drag it. A procession of menagerie caravans entering a small English town must have been a sight indeed.

In the nineteenth century, the age-old fairs that spanned Britain were perfect staging sites for traveling menageries, and records indicate that these were the most popular of all fair attractions.<sup>16</sup> James Rennie, writing in 1829, tells of their allure.

*The travelling menageries which form the chief attraction of country fairs . . . are amongst the most rational gratifications of the curiosity of the multitude. All classes of persons go to see these exhibitions; and it*

*is not too much to assert that many come away with their understandings enlarged, and their stores of useful knowledge increased. The animals may be confined in miserable dens, where their natural movements are painfully restrained; the keepers may be lamentably ignorant, and impose upon the credulous a great number of false stories, full of wonderment and absurdity: but still the people see the real things about which they have heard and read, (though they are not always pointed out to them by their right names,) and thus they acquire a body of facts which make a striking impression upon their memories and understanding.<sup>17</sup>*

Rennie explains that menagerie visits did much to dispel myths, and long-held beliefs in creatures like the centaur and phoenix dimmed when they failed to appear in menageries.

Customarily, the menagerie set up in the village square. A rectangle was formed, using animal cages for three sides and an elaborate front entrance, bedecked with colorful representations of the animals, for the fourth. Thomas Frost, who visited menageries in those distant days, wrote that he

*could never sufficiently admire the gorgeously-uniformed bandsmen, whose brazen instruments brayed and blared from noon till night on the exterior platform, and the immense pictures, suspended from lofty poles, of elephants and giraffes, lions and tigers, zebras, boa constrictors, and whatever else was most wonderful in the brute creation, or most susceptible of brilliant colouring.<sup>18</sup>*

Frost recalled, “The display of show-cloths on the outside ...

extended about forty feet in length, and the proprietor’s name flamed along the front in coloured lamps.” He added that “a brass band of eight performers, wearing scarlet tunics and leopard-skin caps, played on the outside.”<sup>19</sup> Staffordshire menageries depict the colorful exteriors that Frost describes, complete with bandsmen in scarlet uniforms, colored lamps, and show cloths portraying immense animals. But, in truth, menageries were cruel dank prisons, and the animals crammed into cages against backdrops painted to resemble natural environments, led wretched existences.

In the 1820s, cultural attitudes to animal displays were changing, and by the 1830s, London’s most famous menageries were no more. The London Zoological Gardens—today’s famous London Zoo—opened in 1828, and by 1835 it had absorbed the animals from the Tower menagerie. The Exeter Change menagerie closed in 1829, and its animals were moved to the new Surrey Zoological Gardens.

In the next decade, newly established zoological gardens in Liverpool, Manchester, Dublin, and Edinburgh displayed animals in more natural environments. Traveling menageries continued touring England into the twentieth century, but by that time animal exhibitions had largely become the domain of circuses and zoos. Staffordshire menageries forever freeze a pleasure of the past, for potters have magically captured in clay the excitement that menageries then evoked. ❁

## 10.1.1 Wombwell's Menagerie

*Impressed and painted "THE LARGEST COLLECTION OF ANIMALS WOMBWELL'S IMMENSE MENAGERIE OF WILD BEASTS & C.", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8.5 in., MBS-451*







## Notes

To my mind, this menagerie is the ultimate piece of pottery, the perfect eyeful. If I could keep only one figure group in our collection, this would be it.

This is the smallest, and I suspect, earliest menagerie. It is the only menagerie model not attributed to “Sherratt.” I have recorded five of this form. Three are in private collections in Dallas, Texas, (including ours and one in the Hunt Collection); one is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (C.961-1928); and one is in the Newcastle-under-Lyme Museum.

Our road to owning this group is torturously long. It stretches back to one of my very first phone conversations with Nick Burton in 2003 (see 3.2.3 Notes), when we got on to the topic of the Polito’s menagerie that had sold at Christies, New York, that January. Nick and I had both been at the sale, which was very well attended. As can happen at a sale, collectors had selected what they were going to bid on, and that left room for a good piece to fall through the cracks. In this case, the overlooked item was none other than a lovely menagerie, admittedly missing one of the figures on the platform. The dealer Jonathan Horne was in the room, and when the menagerie was about to get knocked down to him for around \$8,000, Nick—who had had had no intention of bidding on it up to that moment—had the presence of mind to raise his hand, while the rest of the room sat in shocked silence. Nick pushed the menagerie to over \$20,000, and I am sure he was relieved not to have to find the money to pay for it!

As Nick and I recalled what had happened, he mentioned then that there was a little Wombwell’s menagerie in the Newcastle-under-Lyme museum that he thought infinitely nicer than any of the “Sherratt” menageries and he wanted me to see it. So in early 2004, when Ben and I stayed with Nick and Vicky in Leek, Nick took us to the museum. The menagerie sat well back in a large display case, but, even through glass, it was tantalizingly delicious, exquisite.... I know not what. Words still fail me.

In preparing *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, I asked the Newcastle-under-Lyme museum for permission to photograph its little menagerie, and I arranged to do so with Nick in the summer of 2005. On that trip, Nick helped me with a big chunk of my photography. I stayed with him in Leek for a few days, and to avoid traffic, he and I would set out early in the morning to travel to wherever we had to be—Nick always thoughtfully prepared a flask of tea (my drug of choice) to keep me going. On our first trip, we went to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, and, as it too has a small Wombwell’s menagerie, I photographed it. I still get goosebumps when I think of handling that exquisite gem. Less than twenty-four hours later, Nick and I repeated the exercise at the Newcastle-under-Lyme museum. The two menageries are very, very similar. Which is the better one is impossible to say. Both are fine examples. These are the only two examples in England, and I might have considered parting with a body part in exchange for either one.

In January 2006, I missed going to the New York Ceramic Fair

for the very first time. Instead, I spent a full twenty-four hours at a printing facility checking the proofs of *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures* at forty-five minute intervals. A few days later, I read a write-up on the fair and was shocked to see that a small Wombwell's menagerie had been offered by a rather unlikely dealer.

I was still licking my wounds over having missed the menagerie when Nick Burton called me to say he had just seen the poster for Jonathan Horne's much-awaited annual exhibition of early pottery in London at the end of February. The lone item on the poster—which Jonathan subsequently gave me and it still hangs on my office wall—was a little Wombwell's menagerie. Clearly, Jonathan had bought the Wombwell's menagerie that I had missed in New York, so I called him. After some negotiation on price and condition, we bought it. Nick collected it, and Alan Finney, who does superb restoration, did the necessary work. In fact, such is Alan's reputation that the Newcastle-under-Lyme museum actually lent him their menagerie so he could do the work to his high standards. I was thrilled with our purchase. At that point, I had tracked down only three of these menageries. Two were in museums, and we were lucky to own the third.

Then, in 2012, a man whom I shall refer to only by his first name, Jean Paul, emailed from Brussels asking if I had any interest in a Wombwell's menagerie he owned. I clicked on the accompanying image, fully expecting to see the Asian reproduction that periodically masquerades as the Real Thing on

eBay. Instead, I saw the Real Thing. I almost jumped out of my skin! To top it, the menagerie was in lovely unrestored condition and needed only minor work. I made Jean Paul a generous offer, but he hesitated, saying he didn't know the worth of the menagerie and would like to contact Sotheby's or Christie's first. I suggested he do whatever was necessary for him to be comfortable, but I asked that he come back to me with the price he had in mind so that I could see if I could meet it or find a buyer who would.

Fast-forward some months, and Jean Paul emailed me again with the estimate he had obtained from, I think, Christie's. It was not a paltry amount, but I offered him more than the top range of the estimate because this menagerie is a special treasure and I didn't want to lose it. He accepted, and I had to send payment in multiple PayPal installments because it far exceeded the maximum amount allowed per transaction. Bear in mind that I didn't know Jean Paul, so I was taking a chance, but he seemed such a decent man.

Jean Paul mailed the menagerie to the UK, where Alan Finney did the required restoration. I went to the UK, taking our little menagerie with me, and I stood the two next to each other to see which was better. The new purchase was sharper and brighter. It was the hands-down winner. I decided to keep it and let the other go to another home.

I still am over the moon with our menagerie because it is as good as it gets—and I have photographed and examined each



of the five known examples. The colors are all pretty close, but the differences are subtle. Here the modeling is particularly crisp and the glazes and enamels are rich. I rate this menagerie better than those in private collections. I can't imagine that it is not as least as fine as either the Fitzwilliam Museum or Newcastle-under-Lyme Museum's examples, which I photographed in 2005.

Strangely enough, the menagerie we first bought changed hands yet again and now resides in Dallas, as do ours and the menagerie belonging to Herbert and Nancy Hunt. So of the five menageries, two are in UK museums and three are in Dallas collections. Our menagerie was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

After Jean Paul and I had completed our transaction, he wrote me a note telling me how he had acquired this menagerie, and the note still sits within the menagerie. As he tells it, it was one of those bright sunny days when all seems well with the world, and he went down to the market with his wife. As she shopped, he made his way around, ending up at the last stand, the one where everything goes before being tossed. There sat this menagerie, price at 120 euros. Jean Paul didn't know what it was, but he liked it, so he offered 100 euros, and a deal was finally struck at that price, but had the seller not taken 100 euros, Jean Paul would have walked away. His wife thought him crazy, but Jean Paul certainly had the last laugh. He and I stay in touch to this day.

## Literature

For this menagerie see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 112.1 and dust jacket.

For another, see Horne, *English Pottery*, 2006, 32-33.

For the example in the Newcastle-under-Lyme museum see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, & Pleasures*, 101.

For a similar menagerie in the Hunt Collection, see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 79. ❀



## 10.1.2 Polito's Menagerie

*Impressed and painted "POLITOS ROYAL MENAGERIE OF THE WONDERFULL BURD AND BEASTS FROM MOST PARTS OF THE WORLD LION & C.", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>20</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 13 in., L: 9 in., MBS-226*







## Notes

I have recorded ten examples of this menagerie model. It is rarer than the larger Polito's and, because all recorded examples only occur on clawed bases, probably earlier. Three large holes beneath the menagerie allowed for venting during firing. We bought it from Alan Kaplan on my birthday in July 2006. Alan uses the internet sparingly, and credit goes to Nick Burton for spotting this. Needless to say, it was a big purchase, and we had bought our little Wombwell's menagerie just months before. I hesitated—but Ben did not flinch. He encouraged me to go for it, and we have both enjoyed it immensely ever since. It was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007. Similar menageries are in the Potteries Museum and the Hunt Collection.

This was my second attempt at buying a “Sherratt” menagerie. The first, in 2002, had ended in abject failure. That spring, I had a serious case of the collecting bug, but I had never seen a Staffordshire menagerie. Yes, I had seen pictures in books, but not in the flesh, so to speak. My auction experience was limited—zero would be closer to the truth—because in those days auctions were not yet on the internet. And then I discovered that Waddington's in Toronto had a large Polito's menagerie coming up. Clearly, it was going to be a major purchase and, as I had no idea of what I might be buying, I decided to buy a plane ticket and go and see for myself.

I arrived in Toronto on the afternoon before the auction, and

walked over to Waddington's. Bill Kime, the ceramics specialist, could not have been more patient and helpful. The menagerie had been bought at Grosvenor House from Alistair Sampson for £500 in the early 1970s, and it was impressive, but it didn't make my heart sing. It had the structural perfection I sought, but the colors were wan. It seemed clunky. Nothing was redolent of fairgrounds in bygone days. Was this as good as menageries got? Should I consider bidding at a low level? Was there something wrong with me...or with the menagerie?

Confusion ruled my brain that night, and I tossed and turned. The auction was the next day at around noon, and all my worries about what to bid or whether to bid quickly evaporated. I didn't even get to raise my hand as the bidding rapidly soared to, as best I recall, a final price of over \$40,000 (USD). The buyer, I later learned, was the Victoria and Albert Museum.

That night, my flight was canceled, and I slept in a very empty airport. In those days, phones did not have alarm clocks, so I propped up a sign reading “Please wake at 5,” and promptly at that time a courteous Indian gentleman said “Wakey, wakey, lady.” This experience taught me to always travel with a small pillow!

In other ways, too, my trip was not wasted. I might have been empty handed, but I was “full-headed.” I had learned a lot. You have to know what you don't want before you can know what you do want. Would I want to own that large Polito's menagerie today? Well, I have always thought the large Polito's model

to be rather clunky, but today I would add the right one to our collection—although I would not trade it for this smaller Polito's, which, to my eye, is more pleasing.

### Literature

For this menagerie see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 112.3.

For a similar menagerie in the Hunt Collection, see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 87.

For a similar menagerie in the Potteries Museum, see Halfpenny, *English Earthenware Figures*, 233.

For a similar menagerie see Oliver, *Staffordshire Pottery*, dust jacket and 53. ❀

## 10.1.3 Wombwell's Menagerie

*Impressed and painted "WOMBWELLS MENAGERIE", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>21</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 14.6 in., MBS-603*













## Notes

This large menagerie is such a major addition to our collection that it should have come to us with much fuss and deliberation, but instead it slipped quietly onto our shelves, as if it was destined to be there. It is a riot of color. I was familiar with it, having photographed it in the home of the dealer and collector Elinor Penna more than ten years ago. A while later, Elinor sold it to a collector friend. When he wanted to part with it, he contacted me. Ben and I and our dogs drove out to his lake house one hot July day, and returned with the menagerie carefully packed into a box. When we placed it on our shelf for safe keeping, we knew it could go no further, and we are privileged to have been able to keep it. Of the fewer than three dozen menageries that I have documented, Dallas now is home to fourteen.

I have recorded four large Wombwell's menageries. One in the Willett Collection, Brighton, is constructed differently, but the other two (both in the Hunt Collection) are constructed in the same manner as this menagerie. I had thought that the back plate of this menagerie comprised a single slab of clay, but I was wrong because two sheets were used. They lie almost on top of each other with only a narrow gap between, and that slender space permits the door to open into the interior. The opening thus created facilitated venting during firing. A hole punctured in the back of the back plate served the same purpose.

Unlike the two Wombwell's in the Hunt Collection, this me-

nagerie was made without steps in front of the platform. The sides of the platform have been glazed particularly heavily, and thick drops of blue glaze drip from it. Also, the painter painstakingly applied a dappled design beneath the menagerie and onto its back. Consequently, it is beautiful enough to display the wrong way around, and I imagine the painter enjoyed dabbing on those splodges of color.

This menagerie was exhibited at the J. B. Speed Art Museum, Kentucky, c. 1990, and at Stoke Museum *Fantastic Figures*, 1991.

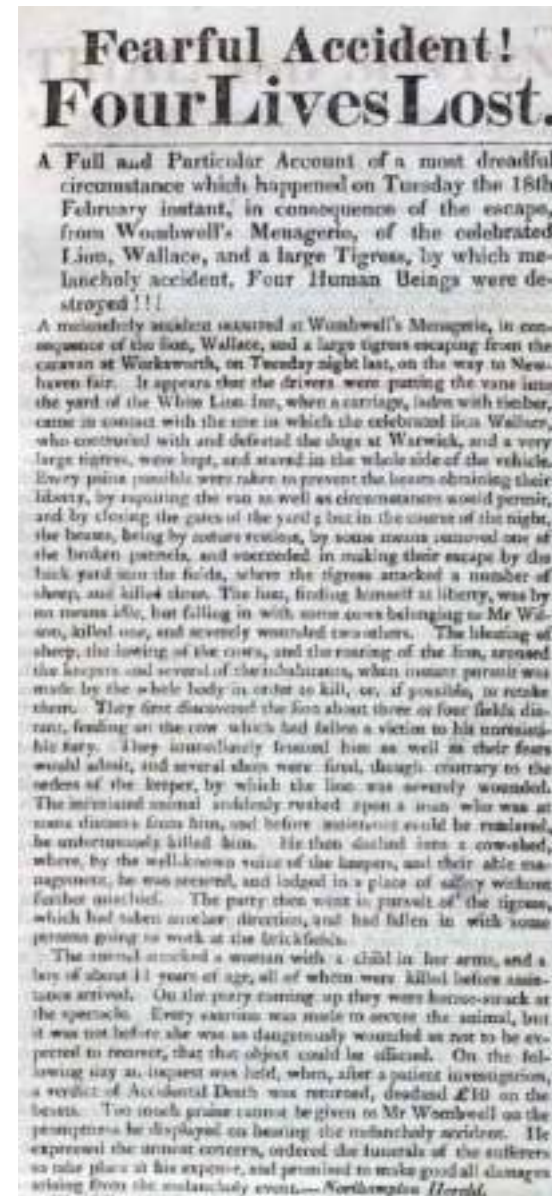
## Literature

For this menagerie see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 112.12-13; also Halfpenny and Beddoe, *Circus & Sport*, 9; also Halfpenny, *English Earthenware Figures*, 236.

For the two large Wombwell's menageries in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 112.15-16; also Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 88, 89. ❀

IN 1834, THE TALE WAS told of a horrendous incident befalling the menagerist George Wombwell. Allegedly, on February 18 of that year, as Wombwell's traveling menagerie rested overnight just a short distance from the Staffordshire Potteries, a tigress and a lion named Wallace escaped from their cages. The two beasts are said to have attacked and killed four people, including a mother with a child in her arms. The animals were caught, and, in the manner of those times, the animals were fined £10 for "Accidental Death." The event is documented in the *Northampton Herald* of February 22, 1834, and in a broadside sourced from the *Northampton Herald*, now in the National Library of Scotland.

This terrifying tale was republished in numerous provincial papers—but thereafter first one then others published retractions.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the chilling escapade did not happen. The story that circulated on nation's streets could well have been a puff piece, a hoax perpetuated by the publishers of penny dreadfuls. But be it fact or fabrication, this tale nonetheless inspired the creation of Staffordshire figures. ❀



*Fearful Accident! Four Lives Lost. A Full and Particular Account of a most dreadful circumstance which happened on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup> February instant, in consequence of the escape, from Wombwell's Menagerie, of the celebrated Lion, Wallace, and a large Tigress, by which melancholy accident, Four Human Beings were destroyed !!!*

A melancholy accident occurred at Wombwell's Menagerie, in consequence of the lion, Wallace, and a large tigress escaping from the caravan at Worksworth, on Tuesday night last, on the way to Newhaven fair. It appears that the drivers were putting the vans into the yard of the White Lion Inn, when a carriage, laden with timber, came in contact with the one in which the celebrated lion Wallace, who contended with and defeated the dogs at Warwick, and a very large tigress, were kept, and staved in the whole side of the vehicle. Every pains possible were taken to prevent the beasts obtaining their liberty, by repairing the van as well as circumstances would permit, and by closing the gates of the yard ; but in the course of the night, the beasts, being by nature restless, by some means removed one of the broken pannels, and succeeded in making their escape by the back yard into the fields, where the tigress attacked a number of sheep, and killed three. The lion, finding himself at liberty, was by no means idle, but falling in with some cows belonging to Mr Wilson, killed one, and severely wounded two others. The bleating of sheep, the lowing of the cows, and the roaring of the lion, aroused the keepers and several of the inhabitants, when instant pursuit was made by the whole body in order to kill, or, if possible, to retake them. They first discovered the lion about three or four fields dis-

tant, feeding on the cow which had fallen a victim to his irresistible fury. They immediately fronted him as well as their fears would admit, and several shots were fired, though contrary to the orders of the keeper, by which the lion was severely wounded. The infuriated animal suddenly rushed upon a man who was at some distance from him, and before assistance could be rendered, he unfortunately killed him. He then dashed into a cow-shed, where, by the well-known voice of the keepers, and their able management, he was secured, and lodged in a place of safety without further mischief. The party then went in pursuit of the tigress, which had taken another direction, and had fallen in with some persons going to work at the brickfields.

The animal attacked a woman with a child in her arms, and a boy of about 11 years of age, all of whom were killed before assistance arrived. On the party coming up they were horror-struck at the spectacle. Every exertion was made to secure the animal, but it was not before she was so dangerously wounded as not to be expected to recover, that that object could be effected. On the following day an inquest was held, when, after a patient investigation, a verdict of Accidental Death was returned, deodand £10 on the beasts. Too much praise cannot be given to Mr Wombwell on the promptness he displayed on hearing the melancholy accident. He expressed the utmost concern, ordered the funerals of the sufferers to take place at his expense, and promised to make good all damages arising from the melancholy event.—Northampton Herald.

Extract from the broadside detailing the attack that inspired the figure titled *MENAGERIE*.<sup>23</sup>

## 10.2.1 Tiger Attacking Woman and Child

*Impressed and painted "MENAGERIE", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>24</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1834, H: 6.6 in., MBS-179*







## Notes

In May, 2004, Nick Burton bought this unique figure group at Bonhams, Knightsbridge, for us. This was the first major purchase Nick made on our behalf, and what a winner! As previously noted (see 3.2.3 Notes), Nick's father, Brian, was also a collector of early figures, and Nick would buy on his behalf. This figure was just up Brian's alley, but he stood aside when he knew of my interest, such was his kindness to me. I think Brian didn't particularly relish the thought of English figures leaving England for America, but he recognized my very deep love of figures, and, knowing I was researching and writing a book, he always assisted in any way he could.

From the get-go I was intrigued because the title *MENAGERIE* didn't fit the subject matter. Researching on the internet late one night, I found a broadside of circa 1834 in the National Library of Scotland that claimed to be sourced from the *Northampton Herald*. Its account of how the menagerie animals had escaped and killed people, including a mother and child, explained this *MENAGERIE* figure group. Of course, I was thrilled by my discovery, but, knowing broadsides can be fictional, I then confirmed the tale at the source by visiting the British Library's newspaper archive in Colindale, where I pulled the *Northampton Herald* for February 22, 1834. Finding this account gave our figure group its story back. It also helped me identify and date other figure groups on the same theme.

The fact that the event was not reported in *The Times* has

always haunted me. Now in 2017, I doubt the veracity of the report. Although I suspect the story was most probably planted to drum up readership on a slow news day, one thing is certain: be it fact or fiction, this tale dates to 1834, and it inspired this and other figure groups on this theme.

This group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 112; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 136.1 and dustjacket.

For other figures relating to this incident, see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 136.2–7 and dust jacket. ❁



THE MENAGERIST GEORGE WOMBWELL WAS a consummate showman, and, although a host of menageries toured Britain in the early nineteenth century, only *Atkins's Royal Menagerie*, renowned after 1824 for its hybrid lion-tiger cubs, posed a serious challenge to *Wombwell's* supremacy. The story is told that in 1836, Wombwell, in the north of England, learned to his dismay that Thomas Atkins was advertising that his would be the sole menagerie at Bartholomew Fair some ten days later. Wombwell was so determined to prove his rival a liar that he pushed man and beast day and night to reach London for the fair opening. *Wombwell's* arrived in time, but at a cost: everyone was exhausted and *the* elephant died. A victorious Atkins then promoted his elephant as the only living elephant at the fair. Realizing that a dead elephant was a greater rarity than a live one, Wombwell displayed a huge banner inviting all to “Come and see the only dead elephant in the fair!”<sup>25</sup> He had to use barricades to hold back the enthusiastic crowd, while *Atkins's* elephant went largely unnoticed.

Clearly, George Wombwell would subject his animals to anything to turn a penny. Most remarkably, in 1825—at the very time when humane individuals were vociferously denouncing baitings and Parliament was considering banning them—Wombwell baited two of his menagerie lions, and he did it twice. Staffordshire's potters have memorialized the two ani-

mals who contested their royal titles as kings of the beasts, and earthenware lions bearing the names of the baited lions, Nero and Wallace, survive to remind us of the depravity of those days.

By 1825, no living person had witnessed a lion baiting.<sup>26</sup> In the seventeenth century, lion baiting had found royal favor, and King James I (1603–1625) had built viewing galleries in the Tower of London from which he and his family watched lion baitings and even a battle between a lion and bear. In the same spirit, various large cats were baited elsewhere in London for public amusement. In 1699, the East India Company lost a crucial vote in Parliament “so many of their friends being absent, going to see a tiger baited by dogs.”<sup>27</sup> In 1716, some “persons of quality” had a leopard baited to death in London, and a panther was baited in 1721.<sup>28</sup> In 1747, a tiger was baited, but thereafter exotic cats were spared the baiting pit because they were expensive and those who could afford them increasingly viewed baitings with disgust.

In 1825, George Wombwell wagered five thousand sovereigns that Nero, his five-year-old lion and one of the largest lions ever seen in Britain, could outlast any six bulldogs. There is little doubt that Wombwell staged this infamous “lion fight,” as the baiting was termed, to promote his menagerie. The anticipatory buzz was a moneymaker, and wherever the menagerie

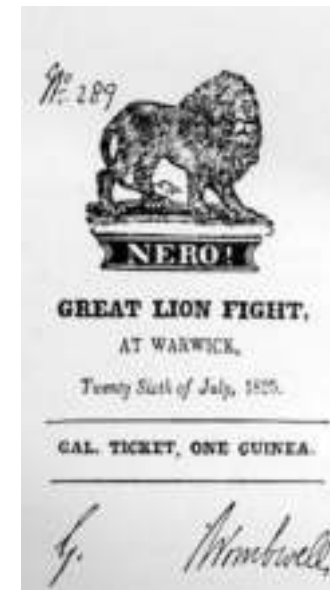
appeared, people paid a premium to peep at Nero. Those who saw the lion suspected a hoax, for Nero, despite his intimidating size, was the tamest of beasts. He had been born in captivity in Edinburgh and at heart was an overgrown kitten. He allowed his keepers to ride on his back and sleep in his cage, and even the public patted him.

While the menagerie was raking in entrance premiums from Nero's new allure, an outraged public tried stopping the baiting. Pleas to Wombwell fell on deaf ears, for, as the publisher and reformer William Hone wryly commented, "the pain of the lion was to be Wombwell's profit; and between agony to the animal and lucre to himself, the showman did not hesitate."<sup>29</sup> The contest was set for the evening of July 26, on the outskirts of Warwick. The rules pitted three dogs against Nero in two twenty-minute bouts.

On the morning of the fight, Nero's adversaries were on display for a fee. Eight of these rather puny mixed-breed dogs, described as "good-looking savage vermin,"<sup>30</sup> had arrived in Warwick but, to the surprise of their keeper who thought the dogs were "all on the same side," a nighttime skirmish had left one dead and another requiring stitches to stanch bleeding from the loss of an ear and a cheek.<sup>31</sup> The fight site bustled with activity that morning. The arena consisted of a flimsy, fifteen-foot-square cage mounted on a stage. It was flanked on two sides by animal cages with seating atop them, and on the remaining two sides by empty workshop buildings with makeshift seating within their windows. That afternoon, attempts to



George Wombwell, 1777–1850.



Ticket for Nero's baiting.

halt the fight continued, but the landmark animal protection legislation of 1822 known as the Martin Act protected neither lions nor dogs. The local magistrate, believing that no legal interference was justified if no act of cruelty had yet taken place, declined to act. Suspicion that the contest was staged combined with the chance of its cancellation deterred spectators from afar. By evening, a mere five hundred people assembled. Not a single lady was present.

Shortly after seven o'clock, George Wombwell and a very relaxed Nero entered the combat cage to greet the crowd. When Wombwell left the cage, the first three dogs, Tiger, Turk, and Captain, were loosed. Nero had been watching them playfully, but his anticipation turned to horror as they pinned him by the nose and mouth. He howled, roared in pain, and rolled about, but he was more intent on ridding himself of his agony than injuring those that caused it. The scene was extraordinary because Nero showed no aggression. By his size alone, he seriously injured Tiger and Captain, and they were withdrawn. That left just Turk, who succeeded in pinning Nero by the nose repeatedly. Finally, Nero flung his full weight upon the little dog and held him between his paws but made no attempt to kill him. At the end of the round which had lasted just eleven minutes, Turk lay mangled and dying.

At halftime, Wombwell entered the cage, sloshed water over Nero's wounds, offered the lion a drink, and familiarly poured water over his head. Then, the remaining three dogs, Nettle, Rose, and Nelson, were loosed. These dogs were heavier than



*The Fight between the Lion WALLACE & the dogs TINKER & BALL in the Factory Yard in the Town of Warwick. Theodore Lane, c. 1825.*

the first team, and Nero was tired. To make matters worse, he kept slipping on the wet floor as he frantically sought an escape. Confused, exhausted, and in pain, he collapsed. The dogs pinned him repeatedly, and five minutes into the round Nero was bleeding so profusely that Wombwell, not wanting to lose an expensive animal, conceded defeat.

Although Wombwell appeared to have lost a sizable bet, the press noted that no other party to the bet seemed to exist and the flimsy cage, puny dogs, and docile lion indicated that no true fight had been intended. On balance, it seemed Wombwell had allowed Nero to suffer so he could line his pockets, and the public and press scathingly condemned his mercenary cruelty.

Spitting in the face of public opinion—or as William Hone wrote, “determined not to forego a shilling which could be obtained by the exposure of an animal to torture,”<sup>32</sup>—Wombwell that very week offered to set his lion, Wallace, against six of the toughest dogs in England. Wallace, had been born in captivity in Edinburgh in 1812 and was probably named for the Scottish hero William Wallace. He was a mean-tempered beast. A bulldog bitch had nursed him, but this had done nothing to soften his attitude to dogs or to life, and even his keepers approached his cage with trepidation. Attempts to stop Wallace’s baiting failed. Just four days after Nero’s humiliating defeat, over fifteen-hundred spectators gathered on the same spot. This time, the crowd included well-dressed women, and the dogs—Tinker, Ball, Tiger, Turpin, Sweep, and Billy—were no puny runts. Tiger had survived his battle with Nero, and Billy was one of

the nation’s top fighting dogs. At the start of the contest, Wallace’s demeanor was so ferocious that the dogs were reluctant to enter the cage. When they did, he used his teeth freely and viciously dispensed with all of them in mere minutes, seemingly without suffering a scratch. His kingly rage was such that even his keepers kept their distance afterwards.

Wombwell was pleased with the outcome of the fights and unashamedly bedecked his menageries with painted show cloths depicting the “The Conquering Lion” and “Nero, the Great Lion from Caffraria.”<sup>33</sup> But public opinion was inflamed at the indefensible depravity of baiting. London promptly passed a city ordinance banning fighting dogs and establishments that traded in them. Baiting remained a legal and even popular entertainment in many parts of Britain for a while longer, but its days were numbered. By 1835, brutality to man or beast was unacceptable, and Parliament outlawed all baiting sports.

George Wombwell died in 1850 and is buried in London’s Highgate Cemetery. A sleeping lion, intended to be Nero, seals the tomb of England’s last lion tormentor. Wallace’s remains watch the world from within a glass case at the Saffron Walden Museum, where they have resided since his death in 1838. Today, Warwick has forgotten the royal beasts that turned the national spotlight on the town, and no statue memorializes man’s demeaning failure to dethrone the king of beasts. But Staffordshire renditions of Wallace and Nero are eternal tributes to the spirits of two celebrated lions and remembrances of the barbarism of their era. ❀

### 10.3.1

## The Lion Wallace , the Lion Nero (pair)

*Impressed "WALLACE" and "NERO", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, L: 6.5 in., H: 5.8 in. each, MBS-194*





## Notes

When I saw these lions, it was love at first sight, and merely glancing at them still never fails to thrill me. I know of no other titled pair of figures of Wallace and Nero. Their bocages are lost, but their extraordinary faces more than compensate for that and I am unapologetically proud of them!

My friend Nick Burton traveled a long distance across England to buy Wallace and Nero for us at auction in April 2005. We had left him with a very generous bid, despite both lions being *sans bocages*. I had a fair idea of the time the lot would come up, and I was planting summer flowers as I listened for the phone, expecting Nick to call from his car to tell me he had the lions on the seat beside him. When my phone stayed silent, I called Nick, only to hear that we had been outbid.

For the first and last time in my life, I wept at the news of a lost bid. I wanted these lions so badly. Their remarkable faces had stolen my heart, and I was fascinated by their real-life story. I suspected this may have been our only chance to own a true pair of titled Wallace and Nero figures, and I was furious at myself for letting them get away. Nick rose to the occasion. He was a prince! He tracked down the buyers and paid them a generous mark-up to part with the figures. To rub salt into our wounds, the buyers had “Ban the Hunt” signs papered on their car, and Nick was an avid supporter of that now illegal sport.

In the summer of 2005, I went to England to photograph figures in museum and private collections, dragging lights, tri-

pods, converters, and a ton of other equipment with me. Once I reached Staffordshire, Nick helped me every inch of the way, and he and I went to Saffron Walden Museum, where we saw the famous lion Wallace, whose remains George Wombwell had bequeathed to the museum in 1838. Today, Wallace, looking fiercely catty rather than shaggily friendly, is not a pretty sight. He is puny, and I suspect that spending his life in a cage stunted his development. Although he is mounted at a height, I put up my hand as if to touch him, whereupon I was advised not to approach because the taxidermist had used huge amounts of arsenic to do his task.

In the 1990s, the Saffron Walden Museum staged a pottery exhibition that included a mis-matched pair of figures of Wallace and Nero, with their bocages lost. These belonged to the actress Miss Jean Anderson, deceased in 2001, but their whereabouts are now unknown.

These figures of Wallace and Nero were exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 147; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.48.

For the figures exhibited at Saffron Walden Museum in 1990 see Hall, *Staffordshire Portrait Figures*, 68, 69. ❀



# Endnotes

1. Grigson, *Menagerie*, 97.
2. ———, 100.
3. ———, 108
4. ———, 106.
5. ———, 108-109.
6. Garner, *Brief Description of the Principal Foreign Animals and Birds*, 9.
7. Grigson, *Menagerie*, 115
8. Stephani Polito, an Italian by birth, is also known as Stephen, Stephanus, W *References*, 92.
10. Grigson, *Menagerie*, 194.
11. ———, 216.
12. Bostock, *Menageries, Circuses*, 5.
13. Grigson, *Menagerie*, 218.
14. Greenslade, *County of Stafford*, 14:159–170.
15. In 1820 and 1834.
16. Frost, *Old Showmen*, 303.
17. Rennie, *Menageries*, 1:20.
18. Frost, *Old Showmen*, 259.
19. ———, 277.
20. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
21. Ibid.
22. Cowie, *Exhibiting Animals*, 177-78.
23. <http://digital.nls.uk/broadsides/broadside.cfm/id/14647>.
24. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
25. Daniel, *Merrie England*, 2:192.
26. This “sport” had been introduced to England by King James I in 1610, but the last felid baited was a tiger in 1747.
27. Evelyn, *Diary*, 2:54.
28. Smeeton, *Doings in London*, 198.
29. Hone, *Every-day Book*, 994.
30. ———, 999.
31. ———, 979.
32. ———, 994.
33. Frost, *Old Showmen*, 273–274.



## CHAPTER 11

# The Circus

*“MR. DUCROW and MISS WOOLFORD as the Tyrolean Sheppard and Swiss Milkmaid.” Published by M. & M. Skelt, London, c. 1830.  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

STAFFORDSHIRE EQUESTRIAN FIGURES APPEAR TO the modern eye to be nothing more than ladies and gentlemen on horseback, but, in reality, these figures portray the people and the performances that gave birth to the modern circus. While so many other pre-Victorian Staffordshire figures are last glimpses of their era, early earthenware equestrians capture the emergence of a new entertainment genre.

In medieval times, some elements of today's circus were popular fairground attractions, but by the mid-eighteenth century, circuses as such did not exist. After 1750, outdoor trick horse-riding demonstrations became the newest entertainment fad. Traditionally, riders execute their routines in straight lines, but Philip Astley, a former military officer with a riding school in London, discovered that riding in a circle at a constant speed while leaning inward generated centrifugal force that facilitated balancing. Performing in this way, Astley could ride while standing dramatically on a horse's back, and it was easier for the audience to keep him in sight.

By 1773, Astley's show had evolved from an outdoor trick-riding event into the acclaimed *Astley's Amphitheatre*. Although Astley is credited for creating the entertainment genre that came to be dubbed the circus, he never used the word "circus" for his performances. Instead, a rival, Charles Hughes, opened the *Royal Circus* in 1782, applying to his new venue the word

that the ancient Romans had used for performances in circular arenas.

The early circus was very different from today's circus, and although routines soon included clowns, acrobats, and assorted animal, for decades the circus was primarily about equestrianism. Women played an important role because Philip Astley's wife, Petsy, was an acclaimed equestrienne who danced on horseback, and she paved the way for other female circus stars. An American visitor attended a performance in 1815.

*This evening went to Astley's amphitheatre near Westminster Bridge. The interior is very pretty, lighted by a splendid chandelier, which descends through the ceiling and when coming down makes a beautiful appearance. The performances were of the pantomime and equestrian kind, the subject being the Life and death of the high-mettled racer. During this piece there was a correct representation of a horse race. The pit was railed through the centre, and the horses started from the back of the stage at a long distance from the audience, and passed through the pit. A fox chase was also admirably done, from the starting of the fox until his death, the dogs and horses in full speed after the little animal. This was so illusive that the audience heartily joined in the tally-ho of the huntsmen, etc.<sup>1</sup>*

In the nineteenth century, *Astley's* took equestrianism to new heights and created hippodrama as a distinct theatre form. Public demand for hippodramatic spectacle was insatiable, and *Astley's* provided the best: in 1807, *The Brave Cossack* was the first full-scale, successful hippodrama; *Richard Turpin*, *Mazepa*, *the Wild Horses of Tartary*, and patriotic recreations of military battles, such as *The Battle of Waterloo* and *The Storming of Seringapatam*, followed.

*Astley's* performed in London from Easter until the end of summer; thereafter, the show traveled on the continent or around Britain. By the nineteenth century, other traveling circuses, many owned by those who had trained at *Astley's*, vied within distinct regions. The circus became so popular that bigger towns built permanent arenas, and larger circuses erected makeshift buildings for their performances.

The traditional circus tent was an American innovation: Joshua Purdy Brown and his partner Lewis Bailey are credited with using the first large canvas “pavilion” (or tent) in Wilmington in November 1835, and the tent rapidly took root as the ideal venue. As circuses grew, they used multiple tents, with the largest being called the Big Top. In 1843, Richard Sands's *American Circus* introduced the circus tent to England, and today, smaller traveling circuses continue using tents.

Circuses and menageries remained distinct entities for most of the nineteenth century, but by the century's end, the boundaries between them had blurred, and the two entertainment

formats had consolidated beneath the Big Top. Until its closure in 1893, *Astley's* always retaining the name *Astley's Amphitheatre*, but gradually the term “circus” prevailed. While today's circus is a far cry from the riding rings that incubated it, Staffordshire's stunning equestrian figures remind us of the circus's roots and of a simpler time. ❁

11.1.1

## Gentleman Circus Equestrian, Lady Circus Equestrienne (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>2</sup>  
Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 9.3 in., MBS-406*





## Notes

I waited for a long time for this pair of equestrian figures. Pairs are very rare, and the horses' legs are often restored, and I *had* to have a pair without too much restoration. Original legs in particular make all the difference to my eye. I had photographed a pair for *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, and, lovely as those were, their restored front legs had bothered both me. Perhaps the restoration was not what it might have been, but the horses just seemed to have lost their spring. My friend, Nick Burton, was with me on that occasion, and when I told him I wanted a pair of equestrians, he dismissed the pair we had photographed, saying I *had* to wait for a much better pair. So I waited and waited and waited!

This pair in outstanding condition came up for auction at Grogans in February 2010, while we were planning to be in South Africa, and although I hate leaving an absentee bid, I had no choice. For once, my trust was rewarded, and I was thrilled to get the pair—not cheaply, but fairly. This is by far the nicest pair I have seen. I believe that these molds were used into the Victorian era because I have seen examples that are less sharp, the bodies are whiter, and the enamel palette a little “off.”

An equestrienne from the same molds is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1176). That horse is painted with a beautiful zebra-like design suggestive of the circus, which supports my conviction that such figures are circus portrayals.

## Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 31.4 and dust jacket.

For a similar pair in the Hunt Collection, see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 79.

For the equestrienne figure painted as if it were a zebra, see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 99; Halfpenny and Beddoe, *Circus & Sport*, 31; and Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 245. ❀



## 11.1.2 Military Circus Equestrian

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 10 in., MBS-268*







## Notes

It is tempting to try to identify this dashing equestrian as one or other of the military heroes of the past, but many military portraits were then painted with the rider posed in just this manner. In reality, this figure probably represents a circus star in one of the circus's popular military re-enactments. A similarly styled figure of a lady on horseback in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.954-1928) supports my conviction that such figures portray circus performers.

We bought this figure at auction at Clars in January 2008. It was lumped in a lot with a Victorian monstrosity, and the reserve was \$100. As I wanted a phone bid, I agreed to open the bidding at a higher level—and I was my only competition!

## Literature

For a similar figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 31.15.

For a similar figure in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 80.

For a similar figure in the Sharp Collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 240. ❀

### 11.1.3 Lady Circus Equestrienne

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Leather Leaf Group" pot bank,<sup>3</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 7.7 in., MBS-500*





## Notes

Small figures of equestriennes of this form generally pair with a gentleman equestrian accompanied by a dog, and they probably depict the stars of a staged hunt. In reality, women did not typically hunt alongside men, but many of the circus's leading lights were women, and circus reenactments portrayed these women in hunting roles denied them beyond the circus floor.

Around 1788, the *Royal Circus*, Astley's rival amphitheater, staged a stag hunt, and hunts quickly became standard circus fare. Playbills of 1793 advertised a fox hunt that utilized dozens of dogs and two foxes, as well as a reenactment of the royal stag hunt at Windsor that included a stag and "Ten Male and Three Female Equestrians" with "the Stag ... Twice, and the Horsemen and Horsewomen Five Times, in FULL VIEW."<sup>4</sup>

Staged circus afforded glamorous equestriennes ample opportunity to showcase their skills. The showman Jacob Decastro recalls that at the Royal Circus in his youth "a real stag-hunt was brought out, and Miss Romanzini (now Mrs. Bland) sung a hunting song on horseback in the middle of the ring."<sup>5</sup>

I first saw this equestrienne in 2013 when I assisted Elinor Penna with the restoration, and, as can happen, shortly thereafter it was in John Howard's stock, and we bought it from John.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 203.1.

For the companion male figure, see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 31.23. ❀

## 11.1.4 Equestrian

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1835, H: 3 in., MBS-566*



## Notes

This figure came our way through eBay in the summer of 2017. I assume that he portrays a circus performer, but that might be a leap of faith.

I particularly enjoy teeny figures and have long been fascinated by a grainy old photo in my archive of a similar figure that is said to be impressed “SALT.” I have found no other similar figures in the literature. ❀

## 11.1.5

# Gentleman Circus Equestrian, Lady Circus Equestrienne (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Leather Leaf Group" pot bank,<sup>6</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 10.5" in., MBS-601.*











## Notes

These large, colorful figures portray a circus reenactment of a hunt. In the early nineteenth century, women did not participate in hunting sports, with the odd woman who did so being a notable standout. But by that time, female equestrians stars were displaying their skills in full-scale hunt reenactments that had become standard circus fare.

In April 2019, this pair of dappled ponies with their hounds and riders came to auction at Stair Galleries from the estate of William Kelly Simpson. When I saw them, I knew I had to have them, so I arranged a phone bid. I am the worst auction bidder in that I set an amount that I would like to pay. If I win the auction, I berate myself for overpaying, and if someone else wins, I regret my lower bid. In short, I can't win. But I am disciplined in that I seldom exceed my pre-determined bid. On the day of the auction, I bid a very generous amount, only to be outbid. Of course, I was angry with myself for not going higher, but as the days marched on, my regret did not abate. Rather, it morphed into sorrow. I had lost my one and only shot at this exceptional pair, which would probably not come to market again in my lifetime.

The auction was on a Saturday, and by Tuesday, I had to do something. I put out feelers and tracked down the dealer who had acquired the pair, and he kindly sold them to me at a fairly marked-up price. As the figures had not yet left Stair, I arranged shipping to Texas.

When I opened the mega-box holding this pair, I was blown away by all the little details, the color, the action, and the size. The man's horse has a beautifully painted saddle, while the lady rides bareback and sidesaddle. Both horses have white blazes and broad white chests and are much bigger, wider, and sturdier than I had expected. I hear thundering hooves! By comparison, our other equestrian pair (see 11.1.1) portray prancing ponies. Here, both riders are also somewhat larger, and with the added height of those beautiful bocages, the figures have a commanding presence.

Given their rarity and beauty, this pair was well worth the price. The figures have everything going for them in terms of subject, quality, color, rarity and condition. Amazingly, the bocages are in original condition. A similar pair with condition issues sold very well at auction in the UK many years ago, and I know of no others.

These figures previously sold at Sotheby Park Bernet, New York, November 3, 1979, lot 317. They were subsequently in the collection of William Kelly Simpson (1928-1917) and his wife, Mary, (1931-1980). Mrs. Simpson was a granddaughter of the financier John Davison Rockefeller Jr., and Simpson was professor of Egyptology, archaeology, ancient Egyptian literature, and Afro-Asiatic languages at Yale University.

## Literature

For the only other recorded pair of such figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 31.11. ❀

# Endnotes

1. Ballard, *England in 1815*, 36.
2. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
3. ———, 1:31–33.
4. Frost, *Circus Life*, 42.
5. Decastro, *Memoirs*, 136.
6. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:31–33.



## CHAPTER 12

# Turks

*Extract of a sheet from the sketch book of Sir William Gell, 1811.  
© The Trustees of the British Museum.*

**F**OR CENTURIES, FAIRS WERE THE highlights of recreational calendars throughout England, but, despite this, no extant images show the attire that performers donned then. On the other hand, an abundance of earthenware and porcelain figures portray entertainers of both sexes attired in colorful flowing robes, wide pantaloons, and head dresses of sorts—so called “Turkish” attire—suggesting that this garb was commonplace for them in their day.

Perhaps some of these entertainers we see captured in clay were actually of Turkish origin, for John Evelyn records in 1657 that “going to London with some company, we stepped in to see a famous rope-dancer, called The Turk.”<sup>1</sup> More likely, however, performers of assorted nationalities donned flamboyant “Turkish” garments. Certainly, early pearlware figures depict showmen in such garb with performing bears, but we know that these men were not Turks. Rather, they usually came from Italy or from the Savoy region of Europe that is now part of Italy. ❁

## 12.1.1

# Gentleman Turk

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 6.9 in., MBS-335*





## Notes

I bought this larger-than-usual figure of a Turk with a lavish bocage on eBay in March 2009. I know of no other example of either this figure with this bocage, nor have I recorded this extravagant bocage on any other figure.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 32.2. ❀

## 12.1.2

# Gentleman Turk

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank<sup>2</sup>, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.4 in., MBS-257*



## Notes

I bought this small figure on eBay in June 2007 and have yet to find another like it. “Sherratt” made a handful of other small figures on this scale that are sometimes also on this base (see no. 6.1.7).

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 32.3. ❀

## 12.1.3 Lady Turk

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.7 in., MBS-92*



## Notes

We bought this, our first Turk, from Ray and Diane Ginns in 1996. It was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 32.10; also Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, & Pleasures*, 115. ❁

## 12.1.4

# Gentleman Turk

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>3</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.4 in., MBS-367*



## Notes

I bought this small Turk on eBay in March 2010, in the hey-day of eBay buying. He has been repaired, but I have yet to see another and I am pleased I could “save” him. This base, which is quite specific to the Patriotic Group, is also on a gardener in our collection (no. 7.1.7).

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 32.14. ❀

## 12.1.5

# Lady Turk

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, possibly made by Enoch Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1815,  
H: 3.8 in., MBS-280*





## Notes

I found this tiny figure on eBay in 2008. The bocage is in surprisingly good condition, and the figure is more commonly found without a bocage.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 32. 16. ❁

## 12.1.6

# Lady Turk, Gentlemen Turks (single, pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4 in. each, MBS-444 (gentlemen), MBS-509 (lady)*



## Notes

These three figures stand happily alongside each other, although clearly two form a pair and one is still seeking a mate.

I bought the two gentlemen Turks together at Bonhams in December 2011. In October 2013, I found the lady in the collection of Malcolm and Judith Hodgkinson, and she makes a perfect pair with the pink-coated male. These figures are relatively uncommon, and the lady is particularly rare. Their quality is of an unusually high standard for small figures.

## Literature

For the pair, see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 32.28. ❀

## 12.1.7

# Gentleman Turk

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4 in., MBS- 466*



## Notes

I bought this figure from the collection of Malcolm and Judith Hodkinson in October 2012. I think it was made by the same pot bank that made some of our other Turks (no. 12.1.6) and is of the same high quality. The gentleman holds a vegetable of sorts and seems to be too well-dressed to be a vendor, but who knows?

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 2, fig. 32. 30. ❀

# Endnotes

1. Evelyn, *Diary*, 317.
2. Hodkinson, Sherratt?; *Schkolne, Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
3. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.



## CHAPTER 13

# Performing Animals

*Extract from "Dancing Dogs." Straightshanks, London 1824. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*

**I**N BYGONE CENTURIES, PERFORMING ANIMALS were favorite attractions at the network of fairs that spanned England. The peripatetic entertainer with his dancing bear dates to the sixteenth century, and dancing dog routines are at least that ancient, for King Henry VIII's expenses record twenty shillings "paied to the fellow w<sup>t</sup> the daunsing dogge."<sup>1</sup> London in particular has always been a showplace for animal artistry, and by the eighteenth century, strolling showmen and their animals were integral to London street life. In that century, canine theatrical performances became popular. At *Sadler's Wells*, which led the trend in animal acts, a permanent canine troupe staged full-scale canine pantomimes.

By the early nineteenth century, dogs were second only to horses as animal entertainers, and they appeared on both London and provincial stages. The animals' antics raised the tantalizing possibility that the intellectual faculties of animals could approach those of man and created a fad for teaching dogs to perform human feats. As a contemporary writer commented, "Every boarding-house romp and wanton school-boy is employed in perverting the end of the canine creation."<sup>2</sup> But the routines exacted harsh prices from their cute stars. James Rennie in 1829 noted, "What is generally called the docility of dogs—the faculty of being taught tricks contrary to their nature, is curious, but far from pleasing: the perfection is gener-

ally attained by cruelty."<sup>3</sup>

In an era when humane treatment had not yet been defined, pain was, by default, the tool for training most performing animals, and trainers barbarically broke the wills of the fiercest beasts. Describing bear training as "disgraceful to humanity," Thomas Bewick wrote that

*the excessive cruelties practiced upon this poor animal in teaching it to walk erect, and regulate its motions to the sound of the flagelet, are such as make sensibility shudder. Its eyes are put out; and an iron ring being put through the cartilage of the nose to lead it by, it is kept from food, and beaten, till it yield obedience to the will of its savage tutors.*<sup>4</sup>

Performing bears routinely wore muzzles and heavy chains, as well as painful wires through their lips, cheeks, and noses to control their movements. To reduce the hazards of training, trainers commonly declawed, blinded, and extracted the animals' teeth. The Italian trainers who customarily traveled with dancing bears trained each bear to dance by confining it to a space beneath which simmered a slow fire. The bear's forepaws were left bare, but its back paws were covered to shield them from the heat. As music played and the surface heated, the bear raised its forepaws and shuffled to escape the warmth. After just a few lessons, the bear danced at the mere



sound of music.

Prior to the railway era, most rural inhabitants never ventured far from home, and the arrival of an animal troupe was thrilling. Such shows must have been picturesque sights, but colorful Staffordshire renditions belie the harshness of the existence that men and animals shared. Small troupes depended on their feet for transportation, and most had to physically haul their possessions from place to place. As entertainers, they required permission to perform from local magistrates, and many a magistrate refused it. Lodging that accepted animals was even more problematic, and an entertainer and his troupe often had, at best, a barn for shelter.

An old street showman recalls his experiences with a traveling bear troupe around 1820.

*Michael was the man's name that brought over the bear from somewhere abroad. He was an Italy man; and he used to beat the bear and manage her; they called her Jenny; but Michael was not to say roughish to her, unless she was obstropelous. If she were, he showed her the large mop-stick, and beat her with it—hard sometimes—specially when she wouldn't let the monkey get a top of her head; for that was a part of the performance. The monkey was dressed the same as a soldier, but the bear had no dress but her muzzle and chain. The monkey (a clever fellow he was, and could jump over sticks like a Christian) was called Billy. He jumped up and down the bear, too, and on his master's shoulders, where he set as Michael walked up and down the streets. The bear had*

*been taught to roll and tumble. She rolled right over her head, all round a stick, and then she danced round about it. She did it at the word of command. Michael said to her, 'Round and round again.' We fed her on bread, a quatern-loaf every night after her work in half-a-pail of water, the same every morning; never any meat—nothing but bread, boiled 'tatoes, or raw carrots: meat would have made her savage. . . . Sometimes the butchers set bull-dogs, two or three at time, at Jenny; and Michael and me had to beat them off as well as the other two men that we had with us. Those two men collected the money, and I played the pipes and drum, and Michael minded the bear and the dogs and monkey.<sup>5</sup>*

Jenny was never baited, although Michael received offers. The troupe did well in London, but even better in the country, although some towns did not let them perform on the high street, and they often had to sleep in outhouses because they could not get lodging for Jenny. The act came to an abrupt end when they stayed in Chester a day longer than permitted: the men and animals were imprisoned for two days, and on their release the magistrate ordered Jenny shot. “They wanted to hang poor Jenny at first, but she was shot, and sold to the hairdressers,” said the former showman. “I couldn't stay to see her shot, and had to go into an alehouse on the road. I don't know what her carcase sold for. It wasn't very fat.”<sup>6</sup>

The performing animal business was largely run by industrious Italians. Providers imported, trained, and leased animals, and rented them to showmen. A “paw-a-piece” alliance was a four-

man partnership in bear ownership: two men traveled abroad with a bear and remitted a share of the profits to two domestic sleeping partners.<sup>7</sup> Some of these traveling showmen were children, and an 1831 article, titled “Italian Boys,” describes their wretched existences.

*The haunts of these unfortunate beings are in Vine-street, Saffron-hill; Bleeding-heart yard, Holborn-hill; Coal-yard, in Drury-lane; and in the purlieu of Shore-ditch. Whole houses are occupied by these wretched boys, who sleep eight and nine in a bed; each boy’s monkey is chained near him every night on going to rest, and the other curiosities are placed in situations appointed to the owner, so that on starting out in the morning each boy takes his own companion. On the ground floors reside the men, some Italian and some English, to whom the monkeys, &c. really belong, and they provide each boy with lodging at four-pence a-night, with a basin of gruel in the morning, upon starting upon their peregrinations, having first paid the master for the use of whatever curiosity they may take with them to exhibit. The following are the charges made by the proprietors upon the juvenile crew:—*

*For a porcupine (very novel, there being only two), and an organ, 4s. per day; being 2s. 6d. for the porcupine, and 1s. 6d. for the organ. For a monkey undressed, 2s. per day. For a monkey in uniform, 3s. per day. For a box of white mice, 1s. 6d. per day. For a tortoise, 1s. 6d. per day. For a dog and monkey (the latter may be frequently seen in the street riding on the dog’s back), 3s. per day. For dancing dogs, four in number, including dresses,*

*spinning-wheel, pipe and tabor, &c. 5s. per day.*<sup>8</sup>

Stand-alone animal shows roamed Britain into the Victorian era, but increasingly circuses absorbed all animal acts. In 1827, Frederick Reynolds reminisced about the great performing dog troupes of his youth, totally “unlike those straggling dancing dogs still occasionally seen in the street.”<sup>9</sup> Around then, James Rennie’s writes that “the dancing dogs of the showman, too, are almost extinct; though, now and then, his pipe and tabor are heard in some obscure street of London; and boys gather around to wonder at the sight of dogs turning a spinning-wheel, and dancing a cotillion; and they think of the story of ‘Mother Hubbard’ as a profound truth in natural history.”<sup>10</sup>

As the nineteenth century’s improved travel changed leisure patterns, performing bears vanished from Britain, along with other less enlightened entertainment genres that had spanned centuries. By century’s end, performing animal troupes had essentially disappeared, barring a handful of dancing dog troupes that still lingered in London. By then, the circus had claimed performing animals as its own, and we are left with only Staffordshire figures as eternal reminders of a bygone pleasure. ❀

## 13.1.1 Dancing Bear with Savoyard

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 8.5 in., MBS-78*



## Notes

We bought this gorgeous group in 1994 from Ray and Diane Ginns, and it remains the prettiest performing bear group I have ever seen. The enamels are delicious. The little lion in the foreground would in reality have been a dog dressed in a costume with raffia wig.

A dancing bear group is also in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1211).

This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 117; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 111.1 and dust jacket.

For another example in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 255.

For another example in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 111. ❀



*A Dancing Bear*. Thomas Rowlandson after Henry Bunbury, 1785. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

## 13.1.2 Dancing Bear and Savoyard

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Leather Leaf Group" pot bank,<sup>11</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 8.3 in., MBS-446*





## Notes

We were en route to South Africa in February 2012 when this dancing bear group popped onto John Howard's site. Although I have always thought the dancing bear group we bought in 1994 (no. 13.1.1) to be the ultimate and could not have imagined buying another, the presence of a monkey rather than a lion sold this group to us. Notice that the monkey wears white gloves!

Groups with a performing monkey are very much less common, and often the monkey is restored. Also, I particularly like the bold "Leather Leaf Group" bocage and the yellow and red enamels. Another dancing bear group from the same pot bank and also with a monkey is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1212).

On this figure group, the man's head has been reattached. Pottery collectors have learned that a clean break and reattachment is nothing to worry about, for, as John Howard likes to say "it is all there." Rather a reattached head than a made-up-something, any day!

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 111.9.

For a similar group in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 255. ❀

### 13.1.3 Dancing Dogs Troupe

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 8.9 in., MBS-86*





## Notes

The summer of 1995 was surely as fine a summer as England has ever seen. After several idyllic, sun-drenched days with my sister-in-law and young nieces on their Somerset farm, I returned to reality and took two hot train rides to East Grinstead to stay with Ray and Diane Ginns.

Ray and Diane would usually have something special to show me, and this time the dancing dog troupe was it. I clutched my new purchase all the way back to North Carolina. I recall showing my receipt to the VAT inspector at Gatwick airport, who, to my annoyance, wanted my carefully wrapped treasure opened for inspection. Turns out he was curious to see what some crazy American had bought for a ridiculous price. But when he saw this group, he changed his tune. He simply melted. He was charmed. He called his buddies over, and there was much discussion about the type of bagpipes being played!

A similar group is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1210).

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, & Pleasures*, 118; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 111.38.

For the group in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 253.

For a similar figure in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 113.

For a similar group in the Sharp Collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 172. ❀

### 13.1.4

## Showman and Show Woman with Leopard (vase)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 4.9 in., MBS-281*





## Notes

I first saw a group like this in the London home of Judith and Malcolm Hodkinson, displayed on a small shelf on a staircase landing, and I loved it. Malcolm has said it is his favorite figure group, and I understand why, despite the size and importance of the Hodkinson's collection, that is so.

When Malcolm saw this figure group, the look-alike of his favorite, with John Howard at Birmingham's N.E.C. (National Exhibition Centre) antiques fair in April 2008, he told me, and I bought it. I know of no others. It sometimes stands next to our delicious small Wombwell's menagerie (no. 10.1.1), and I speculate that they originate from the same pot bank.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 111.34.

For the example in the Hodkinson Collection see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 114. ❀

## 13.1.5 Performing Animal Troupe

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>12</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, L: 7 in., H: 5.9 in., MBS-386*





## Notes

By the time I bought this group in September 2010, I had seen a good number of similar performing animal troupes, largely in museum and private collections, but I had yet to see one with all the original figures in place. The dog and bear, in particular, tend to have been lost over time and replaced with invariably hideous restorations. A friend bid on this for me at auction at Bellman's in the UK in September 2010. I thought I got it at a good price but afterwards learned that a payment was expected to a member of the trade who had sat out the bidding. This has been my only exposure to illegal ringing.

The figure of the organ grinder on this group seems to have been a well-known model in the Potteries, for the same figure is found in other performing animal troupes, on large menageries, and as a free-standing figure (no. 6.1.8) in our collection.

A similar troupe (with replacements) is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1213).

## Literature

For this group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 111.21.

For a similar group in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Hold-ing the Past*, 109.

For a similar group in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 255. ❁



Organ grinder. From *The Penny Magazine*, February, 1833.



Performing animal troupe. Published by James Catnach, c. 1830.

## 13.1.6 Performing Animal Troupes (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>13</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 4.9 in. (L), 5.2 in.(R), MBS-241*







## Notes

The figures in these two petite groups are essentially the same as were used to assemble our larger performing animal troupe on one base (no. 13.1.5), but here the figures are spread across two bases. I know of no other example of either of these little groups. I acquired the pair on eBay in January 2007, when I persuaded the seller in the UK to end the listing early and sell to me directly. In those days, there was little redress if your purchase didn't arrive, so I did take a chance. I also annoyed at least one dealer who planned to win the auction.

## Literature

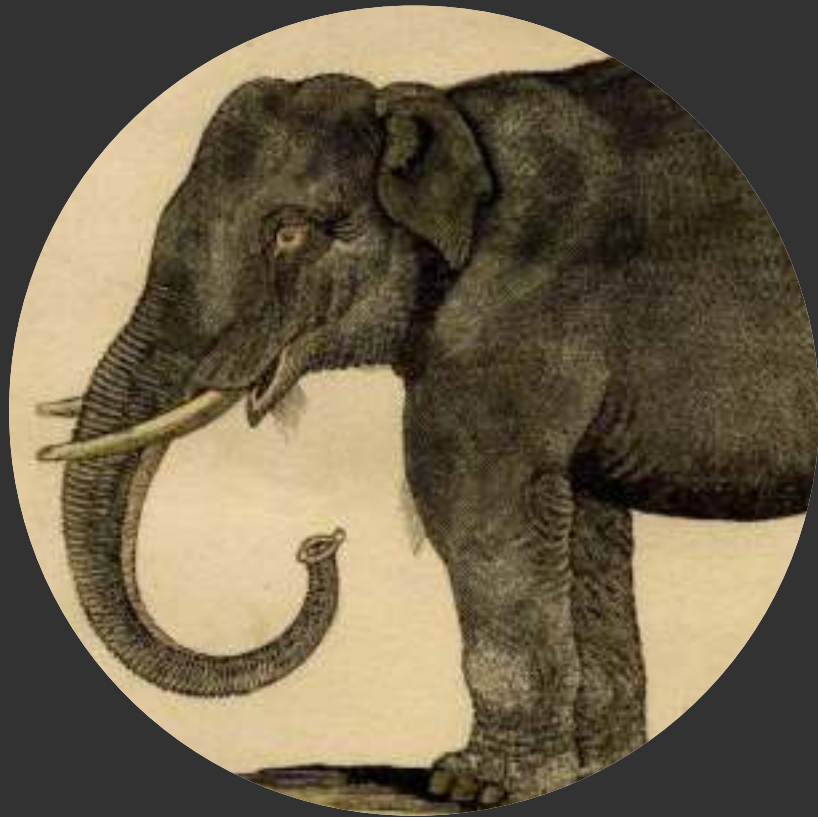
For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 111.22–23. ❀



Performing animal troupe from James Rennie's *Menageries*, c. 1830.

# Endnotes

1. Nicholas, *Privy Purse Expences*, 188.
2. Quoted in Frost, *Old Showmen*, 170.
3. Rennie, *Menageries*, 1:80.
4. Bewick, *History of Quadrupeds*, 263–264.
5. Mayhew, *London Labour*, 3:72.
6. ———, 3:73.
7. *Penny Magazine*, “Wandering Italians,” 43.
8. *Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, “Italian Boys,” 358.
9. Reynolds, *Life and Times*, 1:261–262.
10. Rennie, *Menageries*, 1:82.
11. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:32–33.
12. ———, 1:34–35.
13. ———, 1:34–35.



CHAPTER 14

# Wild Animals

*Extract from Elephant. Thomas Bewick, 1799. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*

**F**OR MUCH OF TIME, ELEPHANTS were unknown in Britain. These beasts first arrived in England with the Romans in around 43 C.E. Then in 1255, watched by a crowd that had traveled from afar to see it, the first elephant in over a thousand years landed on England's shore. The beast, an African elephant, was a gift from King Louis IX of France to King Henry III. That year, the king notified the sheriff of London, "We command you, That of the Ferm of our City, ye cause (without Delay) to be built at our *Tower of London*, one House of forty Foot long, and twenty Foot deep, for our Elephant."<sup>1</sup> The elephant lived for just two years.

Only in 1623 did an elephant again appear in England, that beast being a gift to King James I from the King of Spain. At the insistence of its Spanish keepers, it was denied water in all but the warmest months of the year and was fed instead a gallon of wine each day.<sup>2</sup> As Britain's colonial reach widened, elephants were to become increasingly common in the home land, and several Indian elephants arrived in London toward the end of the seventeenth century. In 1679, there were two elephants in London. One was displayed at Bartholomew Fair that September, where it was seen to "wave colours, shoot a gun, bend and kneel, carry a castle and a man, etc."<sup>3</sup> The other had arrived in 1675 to much fanfare, and crowds had lined up to pay a hefty fee to see the beast that many had thought

to be mythical. That elephant died in a fire in 1681, but it was replaced two years later by a young elephant that was exhibited until she died in 1706. In 1720, another elephant arrived in London but died just four months thereafter.

As the eighteenth century progressed, elephants became more familiar to British travelers and explorers, and they were coveted showpieces for the growing number of menageries throughout Britain. In 1763, Queen Charlotte, wife of King George III, installed the first of several elephants in her menagerie on the site of today's Buckingham Palace, and these were to become a London tourist attraction. By the century's end, Pidcock's menagerie housed an elephant in its London's Exeter Change building, and children visiting the menagerie rode it and watched it do tricks within its specially constructed "apartment." In 1813, Lord Byron visited the menagerie (now owned by Stephan Polito) and was delighted with the antics of Chunee, the resident elephant. Byron wrote, "The elephant took and gave me my money again—took off my hat—opened a door—*trunked* a whip—and behaved so well, that I wish he was my butler."<sup>4</sup> The German traveler Prince Pückler-Muskau visited the Duke of Devonshire's menagerie in 1826 and noted, "There is a menagerie attached to the garden, in which a tame elephant performs all sorts of feats, and very quietly suffers anybody to ride him about a large grass-plot."<sup>5</sup>

In the early 1800s, elephants were in the news. In 1811, Chunee, the elephant that later would impress Lord Byron, arrived in London to start a stage career,<sup>6</sup> but as his disposition was unreliable, he instead took up permanent residence on the second floor of *Polito's* Exeter Change menagerie. He never again left the building but quickly became a beloved London attraction. In 1826, Chunee, who had almost outgrown his cage and was sexually mature, was restless. It was decided to slaughter him lest he bring the building down, but his prolonged horrific death in 1826 outraged the public and contributed to the closing of the Exeter Change menagerie.

In 1828, an elephant act debuted at Astley's circus; and in 1829, an elephant first appeared on the London stage. By that time, traveling menageries had introduced elephants to people across Britain, but nonetheless, earthenware elephants of the period are particularly uncommon. ❀

## 14.1.1 Elephant with Howdah

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 9 in., MBS-424*







## Notes

The motif of a castellated elephant has been used for centuries in the arms of the city of Coventry and as the emblem of London's Cutlers' Company. Also, a castellated elephant traditionally appeared on menagerie show cloths. A similar elephant on a different base is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1221). The only other recorded example of this elephant model on this base was in Jonathan Horne's 1983 Exhibition.

I have always loved elephants, those lumbering giants that ooze gentleness despite their gargantuan size. Give me the African elephant over the Indian variety any day. The African elephant is particularly beautiful because its head sits higher in relation to its back and it has larger ears. I was born and raised in South Africa, and the elephant was the first large wild animal I ever saw. Our home was within a short drive of Addo, the game reserve still famous for its elephant population. In my day, amusing children was not a priority, and so it was that, despite its proximity, we went to Addo only twice. At that time, huge quantities of oranges from the many citrus farms in the vicinity were put out daily for the elephants to feast upon, and the animals assembled at the expected hour to munch their way through the day's crop, to the delight of the assembled spectators. I recall a large bull elephant with a seemingly bottomless stomach eating and eating and eating! Recently, we returned to Addo with all our children, only to find that oranges are now forbidden within

the reserve. Apparently, the elephants' acquired penchant for citrus resulted in them destroying local orange groves as they sought out for the fruit man had taught them to crave.

The first pottery elephant that crossed my path is in the Brighton and Hove Museums' Willett Collection (HW1221). A lovely thing it is, with a howdah and a mahout upon its back, all gloriously colored. You cannot understand the deep thrill of handling such a treasure outside its museum cage, looking at it through the lens of my Nikon—and then the satisfying click as my camera captured it forever for me. For a long time thereafter I savored it again and again as I prepared the photograph for inclusion in my first book.

The second elephant—and the first that came to market in my experience—is the one that sold at the Hope McCormick sale in New York in 2003. That elephant is a slightly different model (for others like it see *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 122.9), with a smaller head and a less plump body. Add to that, it is painted cream rather than the soft gray that is so appealing in real elephants. It doesn't hold a candle to the Willett Collection beast. On the other hand, the third elephant that I encountered was rather like the one in the Willett Collection. It belonged then to Wynne and Jean Hamilton-Foyn (see 6.1.19 Notes). I first saw this elephant in 2006, and then again when it stood at Bonhams, London, awaiting sale in 2011. Although the Hamilton-Foyn elephant is very like the Willett elephant, it differs in that an opening cut in the howdah essentially transforms it into

a watch holder. On the day of the auction, I was torn. I loved the elephant but found the opening for a watch distracting. To top it, the condition report indicated that the castle had been broken. Nonetheless, I did bid for it, but I dropped out—with relief at being spared from myself!—and it made very good money.

I didn't expect ever to find another elephant, so I was surprised when this one appeared shortly afterwards in my routine scouring of online auctions in the summer of 2011. Cluny Auctions was not a saleroom I knew, and it was located at what seemed to be the northernmost tip of Scotland. I could see the expected damage to the elephant's extremities, but the colors were glorious beneath the very obvious filth, and, best of all, unlike the Hamilton-Foyn elephant, there was no distracting opening for a watch. I registered online and also secured a phone bid because I didn't want this elephant to get away.

On the day of the sale—the very early hours of the morning in the US—I watched the sale progress on line. Bidding was s-l-o-w, and the lots were everyday items that fetched a few pounds at most: a malting shovel, a black nurse's bag (“Nurse McGregor's bag,” said the auctioneer. “Imagine how many people she has seen in and out of the world with this.”) And then the phone rang, up came my lot, and I got it for £2,700 on the hammer. The room burst into applause, and I could see much celebration on my monitor. As I had not bought an impressionist painting for millions, I was taken aback. The lady on the phone explained that the auction was being

filmed for *The Antiques Road Trip*. On that show, two teams of experts compete by scouring a region for antique items they can buy to resell at auction, with the profits going to charity. Apparently, my elephant was part of this process, and its price was a record for the show. The next morning, I called to pay for my purchase, and the auctioneer wanted to talk to me. For a brief moment, in his eyes at least, I was a star!

In communicating with the auction house, I learned that Charlie Ross, a well-known UK auctioneer and an international celebrity auctioneer, was the expert who had found my elephant and that he had paid £8 for it. Whether this is true, I will never know because rumors abound about TV shows being rigged. I contacted Charlie, and he was as excited as I was at the success of the auction. “I knew as soon as I saw him he was something special” said Charlie, who was quite charmed by the elephant.

When my elephant arrived in the US, I sent it back to the UK for very careful and costly restoration, and I never look at it without getting a rush of pleasure. The story doesn't end there though. The *Daily Mail* got wind of this story, interviewed me, and published their article under the headline “Jumbo Joy: He's auctioned a Ferrari for £14m, but nothing has given Antiques Road Trip auctioneer Charlie Ross more pleasure than selling a china elephant.” In the article, I am described as about 40 years old and blond!

In due course, the *Antiques Road Trip* episode with my

elephant aired and, combined with the *Daily Mail* article, everyone apparently knew who the idiot was who had spent so much money on a piece of pottery. I was inundated with emails, and every time the show ran yet again, I heard from a fresh batch of its viewers. On social media, I was the crazy American who had paid so much for an elephant that was broken—and as the months went by, the elephant became more and more broken in the accounts of my foolishness. I didn't care. Compared to the Hamilton-Foyn/Bonhams elephant, our elephant is prettier and in better condition, and it was also much cheaper!

In 2015, another elephant came up, I think at Stair, New York. It was the same model as the white elephant from the McCormick Collection that I had seen auctioned in New York in 2003. It was more prettily painted—in fact, it was gray—but the model was to my eye not attractive. Evidently, the trunk was restored because, rather than curling up to touch the body, it dangled in the air. It sold for very much more than I had paid for my elephant. Since then, I have heard nothing more about my overpriced pachyderm!

### Literature

For this elephant see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 122.4–5 and dust jacket.

For a similar elephant see Horne, *Early English Pottery*, 1983, no. 74.

For the elephant in the Brighton and Hove Museums see *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 105; also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 122.6; also Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 241, 254. ❁



## 14.1.2

# Elephant

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to Enoch Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1820,  
H: 2 in., MBS-427*



## Notes

A tiny elephant of the same form as this elephant was excavated from the Burslem Old Town Hall site associated with Enoch Wood.

This elephant was made without a bocage, but examples made with typical Enoch Wood bocages are recorded.<sup>7</sup> I bought it from John Howard in September 2011. I remember spotting it on his site on my phone as we set out for the local farmer's market early that morning, and I called to buy it.

Over the years, I have known of only a handful of these little elephants, and they are always costly, however heavily restored. This is the only little elephant I know of that was made without a bocage. Others that I have seen were always made with bocages, which, more often than not, have either been lost or incorrectly restored—including one that has acquired a Salt bocage, courtesy of a creative restorer!

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 122.13.

For similar elephants with bocages see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures, Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, 137–138. ❀

**B**Y THE END OF THE last ice age, big cats were extinct in northern Europe, but in the early thirteenth century King Henry I introduced large captive felids into England by adding lions and leopards to his menagerie at Woodstock. By the next century, the royal menagerie had relocated to the Tower of London, and when the Holy Roman Emperor married King Henry III's sister in 1235, he sent the monarch three leopards.<sup>8</sup>

From 1240, references to the costs of keeping the king's felids recur through the centuries in ancient records, and radiocarbon dating of a lion's skull found in the Tower moat confirms the presence of Tower lions between 1280 and 1385. Scientists have dated other lion and leopard skulls found in the same location to between 1420 and 1480 and 1440 and 1625 respectively, suggesting that big cats were frequent or even consistent Tower exhibits. Certainly by Elizabethan times, the monarch's Tower menagerie was a public attraction, and around 1598 it included three lionesses, a large lion called Edward VI, a lynx, a tiger, a very old wolf, an eagle, and a porcupine.<sup>9</sup>

By the eighteenth century, the Tower menagerie was a popular London attraction. Although its collection of animals waxed and waned over the years, Londoners were always assured of seeing large cats. Most of these beasts were gifts from foreign diplomats, but they were known by familiar English names.

Thus, the lion family of 1768 included William, Nancy, Dunco, Hector, and Miss Fanny (said to be "a comely lass"), who lived alongside Sir Robert the leopard, Miss Lucy the panther, and tigers named Sir Richard, Grogger, and Miss Jenny.<sup>10</sup> The Tower lions were believed to be mystically connected to the well-being of the crown, and the death of a lion was thought to portend the monarch's death. Thus, in 1758, Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son "The King has been ill....It was generally thought that he would have died, and for a very good reason; for the oldest lion in the Tower, much about the King's age, died a fortnight ago."<sup>11</sup>

From the eighteenth century, commercial menageries displayed large felids throughout England. In 1708, the first small commercial menagerie, or "Collection of Strange and Wonderful Creatures," exhibited a leopard at London's Bartholomew Fair.<sup>12</sup> By mid-century, Londoners could choose from at least three such menageries, the largest of which, *Mr. Perry's Grand Collection of Living Wild Beasts*, boasted a lion, tiger, leopard, and panther, as well as "several other rarities too tedious to mention."<sup>13</sup> By the century's end, visitors to Gilbert Pidcock's sophisticated menagerie within London's Exeter Change building could view tigers any day of the week. Lord Byron visited that menagerie in 1813 and noted in his diary, "Two nights ago, I saw the tigers sup at Exeter 'Change."<sup>14</sup>

The menageries that traversed England in the early decades of the nineteenth century introduced assorted big cat species to the population. The savvy entrepreneurs who ran these enterprises used these animals as important marketing tools. Feeding time was an added draw card because the animals were kept hungry to ensure they were fiercely ravenous and vocal. Sometimes, keepers entered the cages of the more docile beasts and permitted the public to pat them through the bars, but caution was advised, for menagerie accidents were known to happen.

In this era when human life was cheap and the concept of personal responsibility prevailed, accidents were an accepted risk. Thus, when a keeper at the Exeter Change menagerie disturbed a sleeping lion, the startled animal killed him;<sup>15</sup> in 1826, in Mold, near Chester, a leopard sprang from its cage and severely mutilated a fifteen-year old youth;<sup>16</sup> in 1828, a lion that had previously killed its keeper tore the scalp off a boy who got too close to its cage;<sup>17</sup> in 1827, Wallace, the large lion belonging to *Wombwell's Menagerie*, grabbed his keeper's arm, with fatal consequences; that same year, Wallace attacked a visitor who put his arm on the bottom of his cage, and the man succumbed to his wounds;<sup>18</sup> and when in 1830 an inebriated visitor to Wombwell's menagerie placed his hand in the tiger's cage, it was severely mauled.<sup>19</sup>

Felids were costly to procure, so inevitably menagerists experimented with breeding. Edward Cross, proprietor of the Exeter Change menagerie in its final years, bred twenty-one

lions, as well as six tigers, four leopards, and four jaguars.<sup>20</sup> By 1821, Wombwell alone claimed to have bred nine lions, a panther, and two leopards.<sup>21</sup> Other menagerists too bred their animals, and Thomas Atkins, the proprietor of *Atkins's Menagerie*, was renowned for breeding six hybrid lion-tiger litters between 1824 and 1833.<sup>22</sup>

Housing and transporting ferocious animals was not without its hazards. In 1810, a leopard belonging to *Wombwell's Menagerie* escaped from its cage in London and “walked up Piccadilly in majestic style”; irritated at its keeper's attempts at recapture, it savaged the man's arm.<sup>23</sup> In 1816, a lioness belonging to *Ballard's Menagerie* escaped and attacked the lead horse of the Exeter mail coach. The lioness dispatched a mastiff that came to the horse's defense before holing up in a granary, where she was recaptured. Such a disaster would signal the demise of any modern-day entertainment enterprise, but not so in that era, when all publicity was good publicity. So many flocked to see the lioness that had attacked the Exeter mail that *Ballard's* was able to raise its admission price, and the animal remained a major draw for many years to come. In the same spirit, in 1825, George Wombwell, proprietor of the largest traveling menagerie of that day, pitted his lions Nero and Wallace against six dogs in two separate fights. Afterwards, Wombwell bedecked his menagerie with show cloths trumpeting Nero, the Great Lion from Caffraria,” and Wallace, “The Conquering Lion.” ❀

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, L: 11 in., MBS-430*





## Notes

Some large lions are among the ugliest of pearlware figure, and I avoid them, but when this fella came to auction at Pook and Pook in the fall of 2011, I was smitten. That bashful look on his face! Medium-sized rather than huge, he fitted into our collection quite discretely. The next year, a lion that had to have been the companion to this one came up at Pook and Pook, and I very much regret not buying it.

Lions of all sizes are frequently modeled standing with one front paw placed on a ball. This pose is after that of the lions at the Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence. One Florentine lion is of ancient origin; its mate is sixteenth century. The Bow factory mimicked these lions circa 1750, as did Chelsea thereafter, and Staffordshire potters followed suit.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.9. ❀

## 14.2.2

## Lions (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>24</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, L: 6.8 in., MBS-425*



## Notes

This pair was a lucky purchase on eBay in August, 2011. I was especially pleased to find that the tails, which are more often than not restored, are original.

August 2011 was a momentous month. I was working in my office on the last Friday afternoon of the month when Nancy Schiffer called to say that her publishing house would publish my work on early figures. For years, I had been assembling notes and a picture archive, and I was determined not to die with all that I had learned “in my head,” so this was a thrilling development. Elated, I sat back on the sofa in my office, and then the phone rang yet again. This time, the news was heartbreaking: my beloved father had contracted pneumonia and was not anticipated to live. My emotions swung from joy to deep sorrow, and I dropped everything to be with him.

By the next week, my father was no longer with us, and my attention turned to my book. My father’s death had tripped a switch in my brain, and I was imbued with a great sense of urgency, a drive to complete my task before I too died. Fate was knocking at the door! The undertaking was enormous. I had to glean additional images from many sources, and eventually over one hundred individuals and institutions assisted me in this regard. Sometimes, I traveled to photograph others’ treasures, be they in the US or UK, and sometimes I received pictures, which invariably required extensive editing. The paper work was burdensome too, and each image provider had to sign a release. Emails with

attached images and scans went back and forth endlessly. Complicating this, I had to walk collectors through capturing high-resolution images for publication. And I had to arrange, number, and caption over four thousand image and write supporting text. Structuring and preparing the material to Schiffer’s requirements was arduous and time consuming. And when all was done, the indexes had to be prepared!

When I look now at the files I submitted for the four volumes, I can’t believe I did it all, and I did it in fifteen months. I consistently worked at least twelve-hour days, and dinner was a twenty minute event—more time than was relegated to meals. I did walk my beloved Johnny Be Goode daily, but much else was foregone. Admittedly, this was lunacy, but I was driven by a great awareness of my own mortality, and that was, in some way, my father’s last gift to me.

Hindsight is crystal clear, and I could have done a better job on these books if I had extended the preparation period by some years—but that would always have been the case because there is always something new to add. But had I not done the books when I did, there wouldn’t have been time because the next years brought new challenges. In 2017, I launched a new site, *earlystaffordshirefigures.com*, to update my published work.

## Literature

For this figure *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.24. ❀

## 14.2.3

## Lions (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>25</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.7 in each, MBS-608 (L), MBS-480 (R)*



## Notes

The lion on the right came my way against enthusiastic competition on eBay in April 2013, and for a long time he stood alone with the other “Patriotic Group” big cats in my animal cabinet (no. 14.2.4). These figures seem to have been sold as singles, and the buyer could assemble a pair. As there is great consistency in the painting of the bases and bocages, they mix-and-match particularly well.

In 2020, I bought the companion lion on the left from Andrew Dando, and at last my lion had a mate. Both these lions wear harnesses. That’s because the pot bank that made them used these models as part of a larger figure group in which two lions draw a chariot.

## Literature

For the lion on the right see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.72.

For lions similar to the lion on the left see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.70, 126.71.

For these lion models drawing a chariot see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 196.5. ❀

## 14.2.4 Lion and Leopard (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>26</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.4 in (L) 5.5 in. (R), MBS-168 (L), 150 (R)*



## Notes

I bought this leopard in a lot of figures at Gorrings in April 2002, with Ray and Diane Ginns executing a commission bid. The charming lion came our way at Woolley and Wallis in September 2003, again with Ray and Diane Ginns bidding on our behalf. With their commission and all other costs, it probably cost us more at auction than we would pay for it at the very top of the trade today. It is particularly rare, but the market does not put much store by that today. I have recorded one other example, which went through auction with a companion lion facing in the other direction. The latter was so heavily restored that, sadly, the dealer who bought the pair separated them and sold only the good lion.

Several of our “Patriotic Group” felids wear harnesses, presumably because these models were used within larger groups where felids pull a chariot. I have recorded our pair of harnessed lions (no. 14.2.3) pulling a chariot. However, the very sweet lion shown here does not wear a harness, and I have yet to record it in any other context.

This lion and leopard were exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this lion see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 109; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.69.

For this leopard see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 109.

For a pair of such leopards see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, 126.75.

For this leopard model and another like it drawing a chariot see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 196.6. ❀

## 14.2.5

## Lion

*Impressed "LION", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Daisy Group" pot bank,<sup>27</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.2 in., MBS-456*





## Notes

I bought this sweet lion with a particularly expressive and well-modeled face from Andrew Dando in August 2012. The enamels have been fired poorly but rather attractively, and beneath the base dirt is trapped in the glaze.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.91. ❀

## 14.2.6 Lions (pair)

*Poorly impressed and painted "LION, lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to Samuel Hall, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.3 in. each, MBS-539*



## Notes

The dealer David Boyer happens to pass through Dallas routinely *en route* to shows in this country, and he and I sometimes use his visits to catch up. When he was at our home in April 2016, he commented on a single lion in our collection and told me of this unrecorded pair that he had just acquired, and I bought them.

Yellow enamels...they get me each time! The colors here are irresistibly cheerful. Samuel Hall was not the most detail-oriented of potters, and he modeled the blue ball beneath the lion's paw almost as an extension of the leg, allowing the color to demarcate it. ❁

## 14.2.7 Tigers (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to Samuel Hall, Staffordshire, c. 1825,  
H: 4.5 in. each, MBS-468 (L), MBS-530 (R)*





## Notes

My first-ever purchase of a small striped felid ended in a return-for-refund when I determined that the stripes were a modern addition. That was not an eBay purchase! Rather, the beasts came from a supposedly reputable UK antiques dealer, albeit not a pottery specialist.

Not so with this pair! I bought the tiger on the left from Andrew Dando in December 2012 and the other tiger (formerly in the Richard Mellon Scaife collection) from David Boyer in the summer of 2015, right after we moved to Dallas.

The potter took a short-cut by painting the end of each tiger's paw blue to simulate the ball that might normally be expected there.

## Literature

For the left figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.97. ❀

14.2.8

## Lions (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, L: 3.3 in., MBS-511*



## Notes

I bought this small pair of feisty lions from Elinor Penna in November 2013. I had been aware of them being in her home for a long time and was always drawn to their wrinkly faces. Subsequently, John Howard had a pair, but I know of no other pairs.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.104. ❀



## 14.2.9

## Lion

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to John Dale, Staffordshire, c. 1825,  
H: 5.2 in., MBS-542*

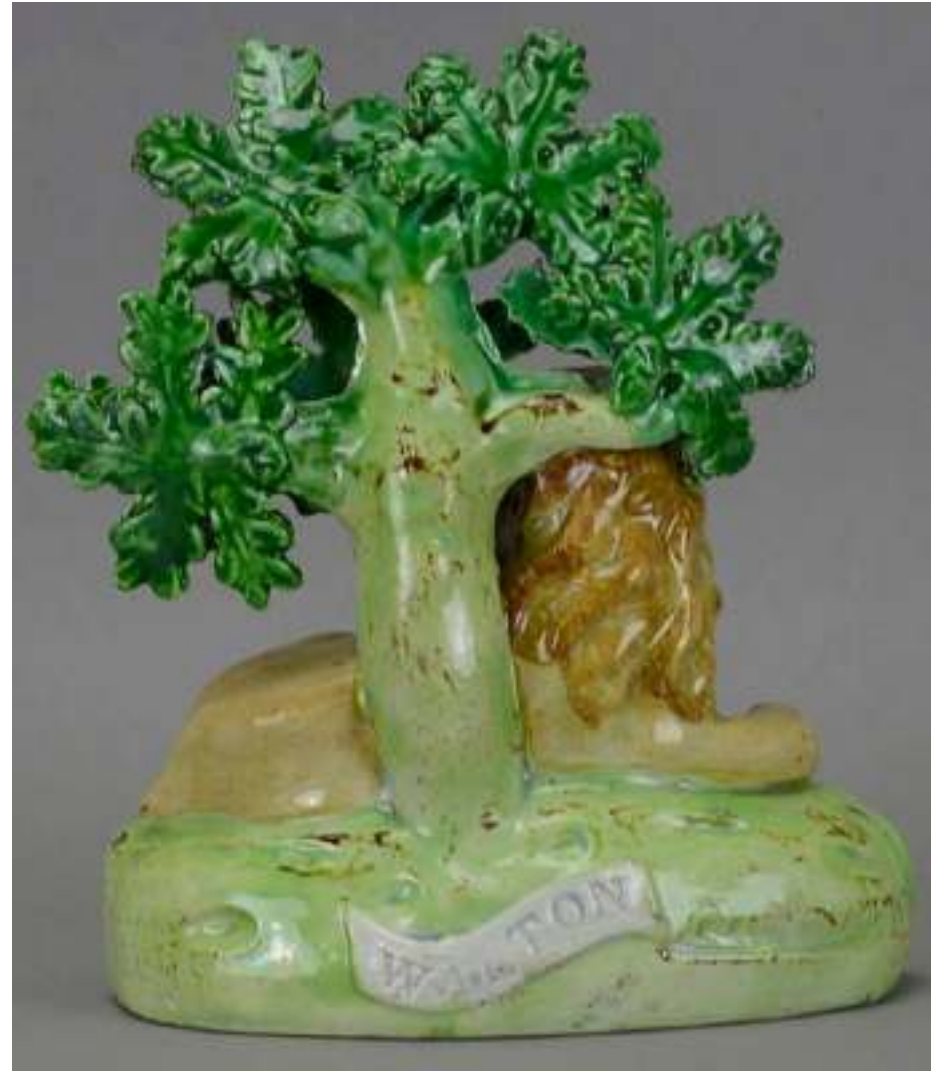


## Notes

I bought this small Dale lion from Andrew Dando in June 2016, ahead of his summer exhibition. I have not recorded this Dale model before, and, to top the excitement of the discovery, I love the distinctive and cheerful Dale flowers on the base and bocage as well as the animal's very red mouth. ❁

## 14.2.10 Recumbent Lion

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Walton and impressed "WALTON", Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.8 in., MBS-313*



## Notes

I bought this lion with a rather docile appearance from Martyn Edgell in October 2008. The model is not that common, but I have since seen only one lion facing the other way for sale, and it was a poor match. Another, also facing the other way, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum (2531-1901). I recently helped add a pair of such lions to the Hunt Collection.

I can't look at this little lion without thinking of a companion lion in the Hunt Collection, marked "Walton" but decorated under the glaze.<sup>28</sup> It is the only under-glaze Walton figure known to me, and I was very excited to discover it when I first visited Nancy and Herbert Hunt in their Dallas home in November 2012. At that point, I was in the final weeks of preparing my *Staffordshire Figures 1780-1840* for December submission. I was working non-stop and had returned home in late October from a grueling UK trip in which I had traveled extensively to photograph museum and private collections. I was exhausted and had sworn never to travel ever again...but when I heard about the Hunt Collection, I knew that my books could not be complete if I failed to include unrecorded figures from that collection. I contacted Barbara Hunt Crow, Herbert and Nancy Hunt's daughter, literally begging permission to see and photograph her parents' collection. I received the warmest reply, so the first Tuesday of November found me in Dallas, ready for my Big Day with the collection. That day also happened to be election day, with Mitt Romney and Barak Obama vying for presidential office, and the Highland Park

area where the Hunts lived, as well as much else surrounding it, was a sea of red posters supporting Romney.

On election morning, I met my friend and fellow-collector Mike Smith outside the Hunt's home. Mike lived then in Tyler, about ninety minutes east of Dallas, and he had kindly offered to assist me with the photography. I needed another pair of hands because I knew that I would have to photograph a lot of figures in a relatively short space of time, and Mike's help in passing, measuring, and re-shelving proved invaluable. Within the house, no less a person than the legendary Herbert Hunt himself was ready to greet us, as was Nancy. I was bowled over that someone as illustrious as Herbert should have taken time off from work to meet me, and I was immediately drawn to both Herbert and Nancy.

That meeting proved to be the start of a friendship that I treasure. Herbert and Nancy are the kindest, most thoughtful, generous, and all-around-decent people I know. Despite their prominent position in Dallas society and Herbert's renowned success in the business world, they are down-to-earth, modest, and unassuming. They have extended their loving friendship to us, our children, and our grandchildren—even my beloved spaniel Johnny Be Goode was explicitly included in an invitation to a family weekend at the Hunt's ranch that happened to coincide with my sixty-fourth birthday. I am very grateful to Staffordshire's potters for bringing Herbert and Nancy into my life.

My first day with the Herbert and Nancy began with Herbert telling me how their collection started, well over thirty years ago. I quickly realized that Nancy is enamored with the beauty of her figures, and she has a keen eye for detail; Herbert, on the other hand, loves the history embodied in each figure, and many times in later years when I proposed a collection addition, his first words would be “So what’s the history here?” As I set up the equipment that I had lugged from North Carolina, Herbert sat in a chair to my side and watched, declaring he was there to learn about his figures. He had taken the day off work—something I have not known him to do since for anything other than serious illness because he maintains a grueling work pace despite being in his late eighties.

During that first morning, I met Libby Hunt Allred and Barbara Hunt Crow, Herbert and Nancy’s daughters. They own most of the collection, which resides with their parents. At lunch, and again that evening at a family dinner at the Dallas Country Club, we discussed a book on the Hunt Collection, and I am honored to have been able to document the collection within the pages of  *Holding the Past* .

As absorbed as I was in writing  *Staffordshire Figures 1780-1840* , which I had sworn would be my last book ever, I eagerly embraced the chance to work with the Hunt Collection, and I started on  *Holding the Past*  in December 2012. I worked with great urgency because I wanted Nancy and Herbert, who, like the rest of us, were not getting any younger, to have the pleasure of holding the book in their hands for many years.

I visited Dallas often to do everything from photograph the collection to help move it into a new house. I came to know Barbara Crow, who embodies her parents’ finest qualities, and appreciate her sharp intellect and her love of the Hunt Collection. The timing worked out well because I used my visits to see our daughter Andrea and commence relocating us to Dallas. Along the way, I added to the Hunt collection, which now boasts eight menageries, more than I believe are in all England’s museums. Dallas itself is an epicenter of sorts for early Staffordshire pottery, and I am amazed at the array of lovely figures in collections big and small within the city.

As we age, we lose the capacity to experience the thrills of childhood, when the mere anticipation of a gift or event ensured a sleepless night. Inevitably, we become somewhat spoiled and jaded. Herbert and Nancy Hunt have always lived well and, frankly, can afford to purchase almost anything they want, so I suspect that there is not much left that they can buy that excites them at this stage in their long lives. But when a box containing a figure from afar arrives at their home, they open it together, with all the eagerness of children opening gifts on Christmas morning. Invariably, they are delighted, and their pleasure makes my task both humbling and enormously rewarding.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne,  *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840* , vol. 3, fig. 126.111. ❁

## 14.2.11 Leopards (pair, single)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, L: 2 in., H: 2.5 in. (pair), 3.3 in. (single), MBS-416 (pair), MBS-469 (single)*



## Notes

Measured by the inch or by the ounce, these small felids are the costliest of early Staffordshire figures because they are both very rare and irresistibly desirable.

I bought the tiny and, of course, costly pair from John Howard in mid-2011. When I saw the picture on his site, I knew I had to have them. They were made without bocages. They stand to either side of our leopard troupe spill vase (no. 13.1.4) and are of the fine quality I associate with our Wombwell's menagerie.

The single leopard came from Andrew Dando in December 2012. It is from the same molds, but here a bocage was added. The quality is of the same high standard.

I later added a similar leopard to Nancy and Herbert Hunt's Collection. That beastly had belonged to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Nancy Hunt really likes tiny animals, and she has a cluster of them arranged around one of the Hunt's many menageries. The leopard was a birthday gift from Herbert, and I was over the moon at her delighted reaction to it. I like to think it now belongs to the Duchess of Dallas!

## Literature

For the single leopard see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.123.

For the pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 126.121. ❀



## 14.2.12 Recumbent Leopard

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, L: 3.6 in., MBS-606*





## Notes

I have not previously recorded this petite recumbent leopard model, which is very reminiscent of its larger counterpart, a much sought-after figure. The body is creamware, as occurs with the larger model.

We acquired this little leopard in August 2019. It previously was with my collector friend, Mike Smith. Who can fail to be transfixed by this beast's hypnotic stare? ❁

**I**N NORMAN TIMES, HUNTING DEER for sport became entrenched in English social life, and in ensuing centuries, this “sport of kings” came to confer status because it required maintaining a deer park, as well as horses, dogs, and a skilled staff. But by the eighteenth century, deer hunting had declined in popularity. By that time, land enclosures had absorbed the sweeps of open land necessary for the chase, and forests and their deer populations had dwindled. Increasingly, deer were viewed as appropriate adornments for gentlemen’s parks rather than quarry for slaughter.

By the early nineteenth century, just a few packs carried on the ancient deer-hunting tradition. Their pace suited older hunters who were not able to join fast fox hunts. King George III was an avid deer hunter, and the Royal Chase, the nineteenth century’s most celebrated stag hunt, continued after his death in 1820. The *Sporting Magazine* of 1822 reports that

*on Easter Monday, the Grand Royal Hunt took place, as usual. It was very numerously attended by all ranks and descriptions of persons, who travelled in vehicles of various kinds, as well as several hundred pedestrians. The Royal huntsmen, sportsmen, and hounds, crossed from Windsor to Eton in a ferryboat, and proceeded to Farnham Common, where several hundred sportsmen awaited their arrival. At half-past ten o’clock a remarkably fine deer was turned out of the cart for the*

*day’s diversion.*<sup>29</sup>

By then, deer hunts had generally become staged exercises: a mature male stag was “uncarted” for the occasion and then recaptured and returned to the wild to be hunted again another day. Killing a precious deer was a mishap to be avoided. Thus, in 1822, it was reported that Lord Derby’s staghounds “have been particularly fortunate with their deer, two only having been killed during the present season.”<sup>30</sup> Although fox hunters were now unbagging foxes, an uncarted stag—even a royal one—was a target of derision, and fox hunters contemptuously dubbed the Royal Chase “calf hunting.”<sup>31</sup> But stags that were repeatedly uncarted became celebrated entertainers in their own right, and some provided hunters with thrilling pursuits. Moonshine, one such legendary stag, was so called because of his ability to lead the Royal Chase into the night, leaving an exhausted field in his wake.<sup>32</sup> And in 1822, a deer dubbed Alexander led Lord Derby’s staghounds on an exhilarating chase that claimed the lives of six horses. ❁

### 14.3.1 Doe and Deer (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>33</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.7 in. (L), 5.6 in. (R), MBS-504*



## Notes

Little “Sherratt” animals are enormously appealing, and the yellow enamel used here is particularly eye-catching, so I was excited to find this sharp pair at auction at Stair in 2013.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 119.57. ❁

## 14.3.2 Recumbent Deer (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Ralph Salt and impressed "SALT", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.3 in. each, MBS-419*





## Notes

Unable to resist the extraordinary quality, I bought this pair from John Howard in June 2011. The painter's finger prints are visible on each spot on the deers' coats. These beasts clearly have been together since the day they were made. Neither animal was made with antlers, so this may have been a same-sex marriage.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 119.110. ❀

### 14.3.3

## Recumbent Doe, Recumbent Deer (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>34</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 2.8 in., MBS-282*





## Notes

I bought this tiny pair of deer on eBay in April 2008. By then, I was avidly seeking unusual small figures to build my academic knowledge and to enhance our collection display. The outer portion of one bocage leaf required restoration, and when Malcolm Hodkinson visited us in Winston-Salem in September 2008, he brought along a starter kit of restoration supplies. Together we visited a big-box hardware store for basic equipment, and then Malcolm patiently demonstrated the restoration process. We worked on a very small make-shift wood surface that Ben had installed in the laundry room. Malcolm signed and dated the wood, and I wish I could have brought that as a reminder of our friendship to our Dallas home, where I now do tiny bits and pieces of restoration on a beautiful soapstone surface.

I am forever grateful for Malcolm's patience and persistence in teaching me, and his guidance continues to this day. Working with figures in this way has enhanced my understanding of the intricacies of manufacture, but above all it has taught me to appreciate the skills of the best restorers.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 119.178. ❀

## 14.3.4

## Recumbent Doe, Recumbent Stag (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, from left, c. 1815, c. 1825, L: 4.4 in.,  
H: 2.4 in., MBS-148, MBS-308*



## Notes

From the sublime to the ridiculous! We bought the particularly fine recumbent doe at Gorrings in April 2002, with Ray and Diane Ginns executing our bid.

The tiny deer, the sort of figure made for the “cheap and cheerful” end of the market, was my first purchase from David Boyer, and I bought it from him at the September 2008 Staffordshire Figure Association Meeting in Alexandria, Virginia.

The larger figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For the larger figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 215; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 119.84.

For the smaller figure, see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 119.175. ❁

## 14.3.5 Recumbent Doe, Stag (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.5 in. (L), 6 in. (R),  
MBS-94 (L), MBS-146 (R)*



## Notes

We bought the recumbent doe in our early days, May 1996, from Ray and Diane Ginns. We have since added splendid pairs of rather similar deer models, but this spiffy gal's tall bocage and good quality earns her a permanent home with us.

The stag came a few years later, in April 2002, at Gorringes. The bid was one of several commission bid that Ray and Diane Ginns executed on our behalf that day.

Both figures were exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For the doe see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 212; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 119.120.

For the stag see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 213; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 119.68. ❀

## 14.5.1 Bear

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enamel decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1800, L: 3 in., MBS-559*



## Notes

I first saw a little bear like this when I photographed the Brighton and Hove Museums' collection in early 2004. Stella Beddoe, then the collection's Keeper, handed me a very similar bear, commenting on its appeal. I did not see another until 2017, when this fellow appeared on eBay. He didn't sell for a song, but I got him at a good price considering his rarity and fine condition. His body is creamware.

One might think that this little fellow was made for the lower end of the market, but look at the care that went into painting his face.

## Literature

For the bear in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 134; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 129.1. ❀

# Endnotes

1. Stow, *Survey of the Cities*, 1:118.
2. Grigson, *Menagerie*, 23.
3. ———, 40.
4. Byron, *Letters and Journals*, 1:318.
5. Pückler-Muskau, *Tour*, 19.
6. Grigson, *Menagerie*, 190.
7. Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 106; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 3: figs. 122.12, 122.14.
8. The animals were described in that time as lions but are today thought to have been leopards.
9. Walpole, *Journey into England by Paul Hentzner*, 35.
10. Henry, *Historical Description*, 17.
11. Stanhope, *Works of Lord Chesterfield*, 561.
12. Frost, *Old Showmen*, 91–92.
13. ———, 159.
14. Byron, *Letters and Journals*, 1:318.
15. Rennie, *Menageries*, 1:17.
16. *The Times*, 1 February, 1826 in Cowie, *Exhibiting Animals*, 166.
17. Rennie, *Menageries*, 1:181.
18. Mayhall, *Annals of Yorkshire*, 330.
19. *Liverpool Mercury*, 1 January 1830 in Cowie, *Exhibiting Animals*, 169–170.
20. Grigson, *Menagerie*, 201.
21. ———, 217.
22. Ball, “Lion-tiger and Tiger-lion Hybrids”, 607–608. The parent lion had been bred in the menagerie and the tigress had been bred in captivity in India.
23. *European Magazine*, 58: 228.
24. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
25. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
26. *Ibid.*
27. ———, 1: 41.
28. ———, *Holding the Past*, 100.
29. *Sporting Magazine*, “Lord Derby’s Stag-hounds,” 41.
30. ———, “Sporting Intelligence,” 42–43.
31. ———, “The Royal Chase,” 42.
32. ———, “The Royal Chase,” 43.
33. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
34. *Ibid.*





## CHAPTER 15

# Dogs, Cats, and Mice

*Extract from painting by James Northcote, 1795. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

**T**HE ENGLISH HAVE ALWAYS HAD an affinity for their canine companions, and many Staffordshire figure groups include nondescript little dogs of unidentifiable breed. Early Staffordshire figures of individual dogs, however, almost always portray two kinds of dogs: the small dogs that were ladies' cosseted companions, and the dogs that were gentlemen's hunting helpmates. This is because class played a role in dog ownership. From Medieval times until 1831, game law restricted ownership of hunting dogs to landed gentry with sufficient income from land. This effectively barred over 99% of the population from owning hunting breeds. Defying the law invited a dog's death, and gamekeepers were entitled to shoot on sight hunting dogs that had the misfortune to have unqualified masters.

In those days, there were no dog shows and breed standards, so dog owners bred across breed divides to produce better puppies. The stars of the canine world then were pointers and setters. Their regal bearing made them gentlemen's hunting helpmates, and those with good field skills commanded high prices. The greyhound's superb sight hunting skills differentiated it from other hunting dogs and made it a specialist in the sport of coursing. Perhaps the most versatile of the English hunting breeds was the spaniel, and this merry dog started hares for coursing with the same enthusiasm that it bounded

into the roughest, wettest territory to flush and retrieve game.

By 1800, engravings memorialized skilled dogs, and books and journals extolled their feats. But most dogs then were neither gentlemen's hunting dogs nor ladies' pampered pooches. In this era of casual cruelty, dogs endured baiting and fighting sports at man's behest, children and the aged rode in dog-drawn carts, and teams of draft dogs dragged weighty commercial merchandise. Humanitarians pressed for change, and the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1835 protected dogs from the most extreme abuse and paved the way for future reforms. ❀

## 15.1.1 The Dog of Alcibiades

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4 in., MBS-392*



Alcibiades was an aristocratic fifth-century B.C.E. Athenian general and statesman. According to Plutarch's biography, Alcibiades bought a beautiful dog with a large tail but had the dog's tail cut off so that people might direct all their anger at him for just this abuse.

Around 1755, Henry Constantine Jennings, an Englishman, saw a sculpture of a dog in a pile of rubble in Rome and bought it for £80. Noting the dog's broken tail, he named the dog for Alcibiades. The sculpture Jennings salvaged is a Roman copy of a long-lost Hellenistic bronze from the second century B.C.E., and he shipped it back to England, where it became famous and was dubbed "Jennings' Dog." Many replicas were made—sometimes in pairs and always with intact tails.

By 1778, Jennings had to sell the Dog to settle gambling debts, and it is now in the British Museum. Earthenware figures of the Dog of Alcibiades are reduced-scale depictions of the many popular sculptures of their day.

### **Notes**

I bought this dog, a diminutive Dog of Alcibiades derivative, on eBay in October 2010 and know of no other.

### **Literature**

For this figure see Schkolne *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.5. ❀

## 15.2.1 Setter

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 6.6 in., MBS-137*



## Notes

In 2001, we bought this setter, formerly in the Robin Sanders collection auctioned that June at Christies, South Kensington, from Ray and Diane Ginns. It remains the finest bocage dog I have seen and the model is not common. Although almost every other figure of this sort has a companion model, I have yet to find this setter's mate. Perhaps one was not made, or perhaps those that were made have been lost over time.

This setter was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007. A similar dog, described as a water spaniel or otter hound, is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1081A).

## Literature

For this dog see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 226; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.9 and dust jacket.

For a similar dog in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 226; also Halfpenny and Beddoe, *Circus and Sport*, 42. ❁



## 15.3.1 Pointer

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made by Enoch Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1820,  
H: 5.5 in., MBS-159*



## Notes

This pointer is every bit as fine as the setter (no. 15.2.1) in our collection, but I prefer the setter, but only by just a hair. We bought it in the final months of our relationship with Ray and Diane Ginns in 2003. It is unusual to find this prominent Enoch Wood bocage in such clean condition.

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 223; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.12. ❀



## 15.4.1 Setter

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the “Leather Leaf Group” pot bank,<sup>1</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 5.7 in., MBS-442*



## Notes

For almost nine years after buying our two very fine large bocage dogs (no. 15.2.1, no. 15.3.1), we didn't add another, solely because it took that long to find another in the same league. I bought this shaggy, goofy dog, a setter I think, from Madele-na (David and Ben Tulk) in December 2011. I have not seen another like it, but I have recorded the companion dog, albeit with a made-up bocage.<sup>2</sup> I like the typically splotchy painting and applied leaves on the base, both of which are attributes of the "Leather Leaf Group" pot bank.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.17. ❀

## 15.5.1

# Dog

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, perhaps made by the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>3</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 3.2 in., MBS-256*



## Notes

I discovered this fine, sharp, and rare pooch on eBay in June 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.38. 🌸

## 15.6.1

# Dog

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 3.4 in., MBS-13*



## Notes

Although this dog has the low collection number of 13, it really was one of my very first serious purchases, most of the previous collection numbers having been assigned to knick-knacks that have long since left our home. I bought it in London in 1987. That May, after fourteen years of marriage, raising three children, emigrating from South Africa to America, moving house eight times, and to top it all, having recently had my elderly in-laws stay with us for six long weeks, I had earned my very first trip away from home on my own.

Although I had read and reread my two books on pottery (John and Griselda Lewis's *Pratt Ware* and Griselda Lewis's *Collectors History of English Pottery*), to say I knew not what I was doing puts it mildly. Nothing is a substitute for handling figures, and I longed to dip my toes into the water with a serious purchase. So, while in London, I went up to Camden Passage, which, in those days, was bustling with small antiques shops. There, I spied this dog in Gerald Clark's stock, and I thought it fabulous. The price of around £300 was SO much money that I had to sleep on it, but the next morning I hastened back to buy it. I have since seen other dogs of the same form, but none has appealed to me as much as this one.

After my expensive splurge, I strolled around the outdoor antiques market and found a rabbit on a cobalt blue base, which I bought for £6. When I got back to my hotel and unwrapped my purchase, it dawned on me that it was a reproduction. At least

I was a quick learner! I decided not to punish myself for my mistake and promptly threw it in the trash. It is unusual for me not to beat up on myself for a mistake, however trivial.

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 208; also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.49. ❀

## 15.7.1 Spaniel

*Impressed and painted "VAL LAY", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>4</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 4.1 in., MBS-169*



## Notes

I was very excited when I “won” this dog at auction at Bonhams, Knowle, in September 2003, on a commission bid with Ray and Diane Ginns. Sadly, this was one of our very last purchases from them before our friendship ended. Usually, the Ginnses had our restoration done for us, but such were things by this time that the figure arrived needing a small bocage restoration, which Jules Whelan of Bradshaw and Whelan, Asheville, NC, did for us.

Pouring through Malcolm and Judith Hodkinson’s book *Sher-ratt? A Natural Family of Staffordshire Figures*, I realized that our dog has what Malcolm has dubbed a “Rover” bocage. He named the bocage form for a dog with this bocage that is titled *ROVER &* on its base. Rover faces in the other direction to our dog because the two dogs were designed as companions. Placed side by side, their titles read *ROVER & VAL LAY*. Interpret that as you will!

I wrote to Malcolm and Judith, telling them that I owned the companion to their Rover, and Malcolm replied that he had not yet seen the female dog, so in early 2004, Ben and I took our figure with us to the UK because a visit to the Hodkinsons was on our itinerary. We stayed in Leek, Staffordshire, with Nick Burton, and set out in our rental car early on a cold February morning to visit the Hodkinsons in London. I was very excited at the prospect of meeting someone who had given so much thought to Staffordshire figures, and, not wanting to get lost, we allowed plenty of time for the drive. Alas, near the

Hodkinson’s home we got very lost. The Chiswick roundabout almost on their doorstep seemed to send us off into another direction again and again, and in that era before satellite navigation, we truly had no idea where we were, and we arrived embarrassingly late.

That visit was the start of my friendship with Malcolm and Judith, and many a day has since been spent sharing knowledge with Malcolm or absorbing his self-taught restoration processes. I value our relationship enormously, and I am grateful for all he has taught me.

As for Val (surely that part of the *VAL LAY* title is the mother dog’s name), I did not see another like her until 2018, and we bought her (no. 15.7.2). I have not found another titled Rover with which to pair either dog, although I have recorded one untitled example of the figure.<sup>5</sup> Of course, Malcolm and I would each like to own a dog of the opposite sex so as to make a pair!

*VAL LAY* was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this and the companion *ROVER &* figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 229; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 120.59–60. ❀



## 15.8.1 Spaniel

*Impressed and painted "VAL LAY", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>6</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 4.2 in., MBS-580*



## Notes

In summer 2018, somewhat annoyed by the comments of a Facebook “friend,” I clicked on his profile to learn more about him. Among his photos, was a picture of this dog. I almost fell off my chair because, until that time, the only example I knew of was the one in our collection (no. 15.7.1, previously shown). I immediately contacted the “friend,” only to learn he had sold the dog to Andrew Dando. I promptly messaged Andrew and arranged to buy the figure, which has had no repairs or restorations. I find the wear to the enamels endearingly authentic. Of course, I am now watching for the companion Rover.

## Literature

For this and the companion figure, *ROVER &*, see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 229; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 120.59–60. ❀

15.9.1

## Greyhound

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, L: 6.5 in., MBS-429*



## Notes

I hesitated to buy a single dog but was so drawn to this very gentle and refined hound that I decided to bid on it at Pook and Pook in September 2011. I was pleasantly surprised when it arrived in North Carolina, along with a large lion (no. 14.2.1) bought at the same sale. The quality is superb, as often is the case with figures on bases with vermicular decoration of this sort. It brings to mind my friend Nick Burton, a great greyhound enthusiast, who once owned a gorgeous greyhound by the name of Cassie, who was in her time the top greyhound in England.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.71. ❀

## 15.10.1 Dogs (3)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>7</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, from left H: 2 in., 1.9 in., 2 in., MBS-309, MBS-270, MBS-299*



## Notes

Small “Sherratt” dogs such as these enliven any display. They are quite difficult to find, and I am sure very many have been accidentally discarded over the years.

The center dog is the first we bought, and I looked long and hard before finding him with Dennis Berrard in January 2008. Then, as luck would have it, I found the next two pooches in quite rapid succession—both on eBay in that same year. I have not seen another for sale for years and wonder if these three came to market at almost the same time because they were previously together in a collection that was dispersed.

## Literature

For these figures see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 120.80–82. ❀

## 15.11.1 Dog atop Box

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>8</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 4.2 in., MBS-208*



## Notes

I bought this intriguing little box on eBay in late 2005 and had a gut feeling it was “Sherratt” from the get-go. I now can confidently attribute it to that pot bank based on several features: the vertical sprigging to either side is only otherwise found on the apron of “Sherratt” table-base groups; the striated painting is only otherwise seen on small tables within larger “Sherratt” groups; the little dog is from the same molds as other little dogs on large “Sherratt” groups; and the coat of arms motif is only found on “Sherratt” busts, such as the bust of Byron in this collection (no. 5.15.1). The coat of arms has three Prince of Wales feathers within, so I suspect the box was made while King George IV was Prince of Wales. That would date it to no later than 1820.

This box was far from cheap by eBay standards, and afterwards I saw another even costlier look-alike in the stock of Jonathan Horne. In that case, the enamels had fired badly. Also, there were large holes in the bottom, so perhaps that box was intended as a pastille burner.

## Literature

For this box see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.85. ❀



## 15.12.1 Recumbent Greyhounds (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>9</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, L: 7.4 in. each, MBS-524*



## Notes

These greyhounds are unrecorded. John Howard acquired them late in the summer of 2014, and, as I was to be working for him at the International Antiques and Fine Art Show in the Park Avenue Armory that October, he brought them to New York for my approval. From their photographs alone, I knew they were keepers, and as John and I bulldozed through unpacking his extensive stock, I eagerly anticipated getting to these.

John's stock travels across the ocean in very old tin trunks, the sort interior designers covet, and I never know what each one holds. Helping John has been an invaluable learning opportunity, as well as a lot of fun and an exhausting work-out! The 2014 show was his first October show, and the mild weather was such a pleasing contrast to the frigid January weather that is the norm for the January New York Ceramics Fair at which he had previously stood. As I was to do again, I rented an apartment a stone's throw from the Armory and loved every moment of that sun-filled week on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

## Literature

For a "Sherratt" greyhound in the same style but on a brown base and titled *MIND DASH* see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 120.61. ❀

## 15.13.1 Gentleman, Lady with a Dog (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, perhaps made by the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>10</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 2.9 in. each, MBS-548*



## Notes

These teeniest of figures were formerly in the collection of my friends Wynne and Jean Hamilton-Foyn (see 6.1.19 Notes), whose collection was dispersed at Bonhams, Bond Street, in 2011. I bought them from Madelena (David and Ben Tulk) in early 2012. That these minute figures have survived is amazing, and I have only been able to document a handful of others on this scale.

## Literature

See Schkolne *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 121.15 for her and vol. 4, fig. 199.27 for him. ❀

## 15.14.1 Boy with Dog

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, L: 7.2 in., MBS-418*



## Notes

When this unusual figure appeared on John Howard's site in June 2011, I couldn't buy it quickly enough because I had been very taken with another of the same form that I had photographed in the Brighton and Hove Museums.

The figure has a flat, undecorated back and is mounted on a rectangular base. It is larger than other figures made this way. Subsequently, I recorded another on eBay, listed as a "book-end, ?Staffordshire."

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 121.20.

For the figure in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 121.21. ❀

## 15.15.1 Lady with Dog (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 2.7 in. each, MBS-300 (L), MBS-266 (R)*



## Notes

I bought both these figures on eBay—the lady in the black-striped dress in 2007, and the other about eight months later. I couldn't resist duplicating because the figure is so appealing. A similar figure is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1618).

## Literature

For the lady in black striped dress see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 121.16.

For the figure in the Brighton and Hove Museum see Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 308. ❀



## 15.16.1 Man with Dog

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Charles Tittensor and impressed "TITTENSOR", Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 4 in., MBS-440*



## Notes

I was very excited to see this figure on eBay in early 2012 because marked Tittensor figures are rare, and enameled ones are even rarer. I have now recorded only five enameled figures, including this one. The other four have bocages, and the bocage flowers are of a form only otherwise found on Dale figures.

The bright yellow-green on this figure is a color that is strongly associated with Dale. Also, the unusual dimpling—almost like pock-marks—on the base is a feature otherwise apparent only on Dale figures, including our large Dale chariot group (see no. 22.1.4). Is it possible that Dale acquired the Tittensor molds (complete with their impressed maker's marks) and he used them to make enamel-painted figures with typical Dale attributes for the finishing touches?

My speculation that Dale or some other potter made the marked Tittensor figures after Tittensor's time rests on the assumption that the Tittensor mark is integral to the molds. In other words, if you picked up those molds today, you could make a marked Tittensor figure from them. But I lack faith in this assumption. Examining two Tittensor groups from the same molds has revealed that, in that case, the Tittensor marks are placed quite differently. In other words, the marks were not integral to the mold. Rather, the potter stamped them into the wet clay. I await further evidence as I try to resolve this vexing issue.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 121.24–25. ❀

**I**N THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY, the cat was not yet fully established as a domestic companion, and it lacked the status of pedigreed animals. That figures of cats are much rarer than figures of dogs reflects contemporary societal preferences. In many parts of England then, centuries-old superstitions still associated cats with witchcraft. Children tormented cats for pleasure, and traders barbarously slaughtered them for their skins.

England's first animal cruelty legislation, enacted in 1822, did not protect cats, but as the nineteenth-century unfolded, it brought with it a dawning appreciation of the cat's qualities coupled with an awakening humanitarianism, and cats gradually came to be considered hearth-side companions and symbols of domesticity. In 1871, England's first national cat show gave legitimacy to these long-overlooked companion animals. ❁

## 15.17.1 Cat

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 4.5 in., MBS-360*



## Notes

Although I am not a cat lover, I was taken with a cat rather like this in the Saffron Walden Museum that I photographed in 2005, and I kept hoping I would find another. This smug cat with its coat of many colors was in the collection of a dealer who had best remain nameless. That dealer traded it with me in 2009 for a pair of reproduction luster cats—an early online-bidding mistake on my part. Yes, the dealer knew what was being traded, but I suspect the next owner of the luster cats did not! In all the years, I have only seen one other cat of this form, and it was extensively repainted.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 116.9.

For the cat in the Saffron Walden Museum see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 233. ❀

## 15.17.2 Cat

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>1</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 2.1 in., MBS-303*



## Notes

I bought this cat from the late Bill Shaeffer at the Staffordshire Figure Association meeting in Alexandria in September 2008 and have only seen two others for sale since. It has the same naive appeal as similarly fashioned small “Sherratt” dogs (no. 15.10.1, also alongside). Collectors often overlook these teeny pieces, but they add immense charm to a display. Admittedly, they are very difficult to find.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 116.13. ❀



## 15.17.3 Girl with Cat

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1800, H: 6.1 in., MBS-283*





## Notes

I bought this figure from Juno Antiques in May 2008. The quality is superb, and the enamels are early and of the quality of those associated with Neale, but I wouldn't dare pin that attribution to it.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 117.4. 🌸

## 15.17.4 Cat and Mouse (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, L: 2.4 in. (L), 2.7 in. (R),  
MBS-375 (L), MBS-258(R)*



## Notes

Cat and mouse pairs are rarer than hen's teeth. I know of one other pair, which twice has sold for a very steep price at auction, despite the mouse having been broken in half.<sup>12</sup> In June 2007, while staying on the North Carolina beach, I found this mouse on eBay, described as a cat, and I prayed that my shaky internet connection would hold up for the bidding. As a mouse really does not make for an attractive cat, it sold for very little. In May 2010, I bought the cat, again on eBay, and made the pair.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 127.

For another pair see Horne, *English Pottery*, 2009, 35. ❁

## 15.17.5 Mouse

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, L: 2.7 in. , MBS-543*



## Notes

I bought this sweetest of mice from David Boyer in the summer of 2016, shortly before he was scheduled to pass through Dallas on his way to a show. As sometimes happens, he stopped at our home on his way to the airport for his outbound flight, and he had this mouse in his pocket. My collector friend Mike Smith was with him, and on that blisteringly hot Texas day, we went out for lunch and spent a few hours together before David flew home.

As previously noted, small mice are extremely rare. I have recorded two that pair with companion cats, but I am not sure that all mice were made with cats in mind. This mouse is upon a quilted cushion-like base, and I have yet to see a cat seated similarly, so I suspect I will not find a companion for this charming little animal. 🌸

# Endnotes

1. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:31–33.
2. ———, *Staffordshire Figures*, 3: fig. 120.15.
3. ———, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
4. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
5. This figure, made without a bocage, was in the stock of John Howard.
6. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Bonhams, Bond Street, April 28 2010, the Sampson Horne sale, lot 658 for £2,160 (\$3,175).



## CHAPTER 15

# Birds and Bird Nesting

*Extract from "BIRD NESTING." P. Stampa, London, 1799. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*

**I**N THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, a widespread interest in birds reflected society's fascination with nature. Birds confined in cages or within naturalistic settings became fashionable rustic adornments for even modest homes of taste, and affluent individuals stocked their aviaries with birds of exotic plumage. Aviaries came in all shapes and forms, but a natural effect was desirable. A green house or conservatory served well, but any well-lit indoor area—a room or a large bay window—did duty, and netting off some of the space and furnishing it with trees and branches created an outdoors ambiance. Enthusiasts formed more ambitious open-air aviaries by throwing netting over treetops to enclose an area that might occupy several acres and include a pond, trees, rocks, and long grass.

The assemblage of birds within an aviary was intended to be very beautiful, and any unusual species was a source of pride. In 1828, the traveling German nobleman Hermann Pückler-Muskau visited a country gentleman whose gardens housed what the tourist termed a “Paradise of fowls.”

*The aviary, which elsewhere is filled with gold pheasants and other foreign birds, was here more usefully tenanted; and was exclusively devoted to cocks and hens, geese, ducks, peacocks, and pigeons. It was however, from its extraordinary cleanliness and nice adaptation, a very pretty and agreeable sight. German housewives, listen and wonder! Twice a-day are the yards,*

*which are provided with the most beautiful receptacles of water,—the separate houses, pigeon-holes, &c., twice a-day are they cleaned: the straw nests of the hens were so pretty; the perches on which the fowls roost, so smooth and clean; the water in the stone basins, which served as duck-ponds, so clear; the barley and the boiled rice (equal to Parisian ‘riz au lait’) so tempting that one thought one’s self in the Paradise of fowls. They enjoyed, too, the freedom of Paradise: here were no clipped wings; and a little grove of high trees, close by their house, formed their pleasure-ground.<sup>1</sup>*

An aviary allowed its owner to observe and perfect nature within a controlled environment, and it satisfied the need to nurture. The smallest aviary, the *Magazine of Natural History* reported, “gives a sensation of the purest satisfaction to the benevolent heart, while their songs of gladness sound like those of grateful thanks to their kind protectors.”<sup>2</sup> ❀



16.1.1

Boy with Cockerel, Girl with Parrot (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1805, H: 6.6 in., MBS-441*



## Notes

Our very long journey to South Africa in February 2012 involved multiple flights and over thirty hours of travel, but when I staggered into our Cape Town hotel room close to midnight, I immediately connected to the internet so as not to miss my daily figure search. This pair of figures was listed on eBay, and I bought them for a very modest amount. I haven't seen another pair, although I have seen single examples of the girl.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 114.10. ❁

## 16.1.2 Boy with Cockerel, Girl with Parrot (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810 (L), c.1800 (R), H: 4.4 in. (L), 4.7 in. (R), MBS-278 (L), MBS-489 (R)*



## Notes

I bought the small figure of a boy with his bird when I was in Boston to lecture to the China Students' Club in March 2008. By then the antiques shops on Charles Street were becoming sorry shadows of their past, and this was the only figure I found.

The figure of the girl belonged to my late parents, and I suspect they bought it on one or other of their visits to England.

Although these figures are on bases of the same size and differ in height by a mere 0.3 inches, their scale is quite different.

## Literature

For the figure of the boy see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 14.14.

For the figure of the girl see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 114.16. ❀

### 16.1.3

## Bird Whistle

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to Dudson, Staffordshire, c. 1820,  
H: 3.3 in., MBS-327*



## Notes

I bought this whistle from John Howard at the New York Ceramics Fair in January 2009. Another like it is in the Potteries Museum.

## Literature

For a similar whistle in the Potteries Museum with a distinctive Dudson attribute see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 113.4. ❁

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 2.1 in., MBS-161*



## Notes

When Ben and I were in London in June 2003, we walked down Kensington Church Street, which then still had a fair number of antique shops. We bought this little whistle for not very much money at Mercury Antiques, which dealt primary in porcelain. It needed a bit of touching up, but, unable to get it done through Ray and Diane Ginns from whom we had bought nearly everything else for fifteen years, we brought it back to North Carolina and tracked down a local restorer: Jules Bradshaw of Bradshaw and Whelan in Asheville did the work, as well as a few other bits at a later date.

This whistle is after a similar Derby whistle. It was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this whistle see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 113.3; also Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 256. ❀



*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 3.5 in., MBS-366*



## Notes

I bought this whistle from John Howard in January 2010 at the New York Ceramics Fair. Another like it is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, given by Lady Schreiber in 1885 (414:1090/A-1885). There is a fine hairline where the tail has been re-glued, but as John says it “is all there”—all the material is original, and I prefer leaving figures unrestored when possible.

## Literature

For this whistle see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 113.7. ❀

## 16.1.6 Birds (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c.1835 (L), c.1815 (R), H: 2.7 in.(L), 3.4 in. (R), MBS-391 (L), MBS-181 (R)*



## Notes

We bought the pink bird, a finch, I believe, from Andrew Dando in July 2004. It was my first purchase from Andrew, but I had bought a Toby jug from his father, Gordon, more than twenty years previously. By 2004, I could access Andrew's stock on the internet. The world was changing for the better!

The finch is after a similar Derby bird, circa 1760. It was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

I bought the tiny bird on a nest on eBay in 2010, and, as with so many little figures, have yet to see another.

## Literature

For the finch see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 113.13; also Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 258.

For the bird on a nest see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 113.21. ❀

**I**N THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, COLLECTING birds' nests and the eggs they sheltered was an established childhood pastime, and children at all levels of society scaled trees and wormed through hedges to steal nature's fragile treasures.

From the late eighteenth century, children's books focused on moral instruction, and birds' nests were perfect tools for teaching the virtues of hard work and a humane attitude toward animals. By the 1850s, such guidance seems to have had effect, for George Eliot's character the rough Mr. Dempster notes, "I should like to know what good those Sunday schools have done, now. Why, the boys used to go a birds'-nesting of a Sunday morning; and a capital thing, too—ask any farmer; and very pretty it was to see the strings o' heggs hanging up in poor people's houses. You'll not see 'em nowhere now."<sup>3</sup>

Bird nesting was not only a childhood pastime. Agile young children also stole nests and fledglings for commercial purposes. The moral implications of capturing birds and the effects of plundering nests on species conservation were not early nineteenth-century concerns, and the first legislation prohibiting the removal of certain species' eggs from nests was only passed in 1880. Nostalgic renditions of children with birds' nests in hand recall an activity that has since been curtailed by law and displaced by modern entertainment. ❁

## 16.2.1 Boy Bird Nester, Girl Bird Nester (pair)

*Both impressed and painted "BIRDS NEST", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Ralph Salt and impressed "SALT", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.2 in. each, MBS-174 (L), MBS-197 (R)*





## Notes

When Nick Burton started helping build our collection in fall 2003 (see 3.2.3 Notes), he watched out for small perfect figures for us. In this spirit, he bought the boy of this pair at auction at Tenants that November.

In July 2005, I bought the girl, aware that she would make a perfect partner, from fellow-collector Malcolm Hodkinson.

This pair was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 147.1–2; also Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 257. ❀



## 16.2.2 Boy Bird Nester

*Impressed and painted "BIRDS NEST", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Samuel Hall and impressed "HALL", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 6.1 in., MBS-356*



## Notes

I have great respect for marked figures and learn a lot by owning them. I bought this figure—the sweetest of all Hall figures and closely similar to our marked Salt bird nester boy (no. 16.2.1)—at Canterbury Auctions in September 2009. When I stand him alongside our Hall gardeners (no. 7.1.5), the three figures demonstrate the remarkable consistency that is often apparent in the work of any one pot bank.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 147.6. ❀

## 16.2.3

## Girl with Bird

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>4</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.3 in., MBS-219*



## Notes

I bought this appealing petite “Sherratt” girl with her bright yellow bird on eBay in May 2006 and am still seeking her mate. I know of a single example, currently in a UK collection.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 147.17.

For the companion boy see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 147.18. ❁

## 16.2.4

# Gentleman Bird Nester, Lady Bird Nester (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 5.8 in. each, MBS-189 (L), MBS-544 (R)*



## Notes

Nick Burton bought the male figure on our behalf at Dreweatt Neate in February 2005. I have dubbed him the Green Man, and his sneaky expression amuses me. He looks as if he has been caught in the act of doing something he shouldn't have! I have not seen another like him, although I at one time owned and sold a similar figure with a shorter coat<sup>5</sup> because it simply lacked charm

The female figure is known only from this example. For a long time, she belonged to my friend Mike Smith, who parted with her so that I might make a pair.

The male figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this pair see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 147.27–28.

For the boy only see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 262. ❀

## 16.2.5

# Gentleman and Lady Bird Nesters

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 9.7 in., MBS-231*



## Notes

We bought this lovely group, one of our earlier purchases from John Howard, in 2006.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 147.48–49.

For a similar group in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Hold-ing the Past*, 229. ❀



## 16.2.6

## Bird Catchers

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, impressed "89", attributed to Ralph Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 11 in., MBS-576*





## Notes

In March 2018, I bought this stunning Ralph Wood group for far too little on eBay, where it was described as Italian porcelain! I remain over the moon with both the fine quality and very good condition.

The grouping is allegorical of liberty (the free bird) and matrimony (the cage.) Bow and Derby made porcelain interpretations of this theme from the 1750s, after Joachim Kaendler's Meissen prototypes of 1750–1752. The inspiration for the Meissen groups is thought to have been the notion of the conflict between liberty and matrimony, as captured by Nicolas Lancret (1690–1743) in his painting showing a youth holding a bird while his lady holds an empty birdcage. However, porcelain interpretations were modeled as two separate figures, while the pottery renditions that Ralph Wood introduced in the 1780s incorporated both figures within one grouping.

Similar Ralph Wood examples may be impressed “89” or “90,” and some are not impressed at all. A color-glazed example marked “Ra. Wood Burslem” has been documented, as has a porcelain example attributed to Ralph Wood, which is in the Potteries Museum.

## Literature

For similar groups see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 114.1–2. ❀

# Endnotes

1. Pückler-Muskau, *Tour*, 319.
2. Loudon, “Natural History in London,” 82.
3. Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 2:43.
4. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
5. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 147.29.



## CHAPTER 17

# Dandies and Dandizettes

*Extract from "Dandies of 1817, Monstrosities of 1818." George Cruikshank, 1818. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*

THE YEARS 1810 TO 1830 saw the emergence of the fashion phenomenon of dandyism, which brought with it gentlemen who preened as never before. Appropriate attire for a dandy gentleman was a *frac*, a long-tailed frock coat that fitted snugly at the waist, and the waist was cinched with a corset if necessary. Beneath was worn a white shirt with a high collar and a starched cravat that had to be knotted with painstaking precision. Loosely fitting trousers were acceptable for day wear, but for formal wear trousers had to fit snugly and, as pockets could not disturb fit, a dandy gentleman carried a little “manbag,” properly called a reticule, for his necessary objects. Polished boots, a silk top hat, and gloves completed the look.

Studied simplicity was the name of the game, but clothes alone did not make the man. A dandy had to be a gentleman of wit and sophisticated taste who at all times exuded an air of detached indifference and superiority.

Dandy ladies, sometimes called dandizettes, never reached the fashionable heights of their male counterparts, but not wanting to be outdone, they modified their attire too. In that period, hemlines were audaciously raised to expose ankles for the first time, waistlines rose to underarm level, and very large bonnets blossomed on the fashion scene.

George Bryan Brummell, known to his contemporaries as Beau

Brummell, was the trend-setting dandy of that day. Because being a dandy was expensive and inconsistent with working, Brummell had to flee to France in 1816 to avoid his creditors, but by then dandyism had become a widespread trend. Increasingly, faddish fops took their attire and mannerisms to extremes, and they became targets of ridicule. By 1830, dandies were considered vulgar, and the fashion faded away. ❁

## 17.1.1 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>1</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8.2 in., MBS-22*



## Notes

This, the very first bocage group we bought, lured me into the world of bocage figures. Perhaps because of it, I have always been enamored with dandies.

In early 1986, we were in England in February, staying in Tunbridge Wells with Andrea, who was only just two. It snowed and snowed and the wipers on our rental car wouldn't work, so we were fairly confined geographically. In nearby Westerham was Dunsdale Lodge, owned by Alec Scott, who seemed quite ancient to me then. The little shop was packed with Staffordshire figures in varying conditions. I knew next to nothing, but I was wary because the price tags were being adjusted—probably to accommodate the fluctuating exchange rate. I made one or two small purchases, but I also bought John and Griselda Lewis's *Pratt Ware* as well as Griselda Lewis's *A Collector's History of English Pottery*. The latter had a picture of a fine dandy couple on the jacket, and I was smitten!

Back in our hotel, I read and reread my new books as it continued snowing, and I returned to ask Mr. Scott about buying dandies. He promised to let me know when he had a pair, and in due course a letter arrived in North Carolina with two blurry Polaroid photos of two pairs of dandies. Even then I knew I wanted something better, so I declined.

On our trip to England in 1988—the first visit Ben and I made without children in tow—we contacted Ray and Diane Ginns and started collecting Toby jugs with them (see 1.1.2. Notes).

At our first meeting, I told Diane I really wanted a pair of dandies, and she said she would shortly have a fantastic pair to show us. I was very excited when the box containing this couple arrived, and I still think they exude a soft and engaging charm.

This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 57; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.8. ❁



## 17.1.2 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, possibly made by the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>2</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8 in., MBS-74*



## Notes

This dandies group, bought in 1991 from Ray and Diane Ginns, lives happily alongside a contemporary watercolor on the same theme that we acquired from the Bonham's sale of the late Jonathan Horne's stock (see alongside). The bright yellow enamels are so uplifting, and the gentleman holds such an elegant handbag!

This group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 69; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.11. ❀



## 17.1.3 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 7 in., MBS-163*



## Notes

This dandies group is on the dust jacket of the third edition of Griselda Lewis's *A Collector's History of English Pottery*. Ray and Diane Ginns bought it for us on a commission bid in June 2003 at a third tier auction house. This was in the days before internet auctions, there was no buyer's premium, and the scrap of paper that served as an invoice simply noted the sale of "china." Included in the lot was a small sheep (no. 8.3.11).

This group is absolutely stunning. The enamels are the prettiest I have seen for this period (of course the earlier Neale enamels remain my favorites). If this group had not already been on a dust jacket, I would have used it for one of my dust jackets. It was among the items that Ben and I collected from Ray and Diane in London a little later that summer, and we hand carried them home as the Ginns no longer wanted to mail for us. This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

At the time we bought this group, I didn't know Griselda Lewis, but I wrote to her asking if she had owned the dandies group on the dust jacket of her book. She replied, saying that it once had belonged to her friend John Hadfield.<sup>3</sup> She subsequently told me that she had always hoped that John, who was the editor of *The Saturday Book* and author of *The Book of Beauty*, would leave this group to her, but instead he had left it to a family member who, Griselda surmised, wanted a new sun room instead.



Griselda Lewis was a self-effacing woman of great substance. When I first took the train out to visit her in Woodbridge, she was in her eighties, but she seemed as fit as a fiddle—on that visit I found her digging in her garden. She had a razor-sharp memory. I visited her (and Milly her cat) several times in the beautiful but simple home she and her late husband John had lived in for many years. A corner cupboard housed an unforgettable display of Pratt ware. Most of the enameled figures were upstairs, but a row of sheep adorned the living room mantle with a figure of the Lost Sheep in the middle. Griselda was a tall woman even by today's standards, and she must have been a statuesque stunner in her youth. She went out of her way to encourage and help me and others as we traveled our exploratory paths through the ceramics world. I treasure her letters, complete with her sketches of figures illustrating her point.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 55; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.49 and dust jacket; also Lewis, *English Pottery*, 195 and dust jacket; and also *Antique Collecting*, Sept. 1987, cover. ❀



## 17.1.4 Dandizette, Dandy (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 8 in. (L), 7.5 in. (R), MBS-120*





## Notes

We bought this pair of dandies from the collection of Miss Reed and Miss Fitt, which sold at the Lawrences, Taunton, in February 2000 (see 4.1.1. Notes). Previously, the pair was with Jonathan Horne and is illustrated in his 1982 exhibition catalog. I have not recorded another similar pair.

Miss Beatrice Fitt, companion to Miss Cyllene Reed, was particularly fond of dandies, and long before the Reed-Fitt collection came to market I had heard of the ladies' legendary display of dandies arranged, I was told, within an arched alcove. When the collection was dispersed, the auction catalog showed a row of dandies standing as if in a snaking queue. Who could not be charmed? When we moved to Texas, I arranged my dandies together in an arched alcove, and I often thinking of Miss Fitt as I look at them and wish I had known her.

This pair was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this pair see Horne, *English Pottery*, 1982, no.52; also *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 60; and also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.23. ❀



## 17.1.5

# Dandy, Dandy with Dandizette (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>4</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 9.3 in. (L), 9.4 in. (R), MBS-187*



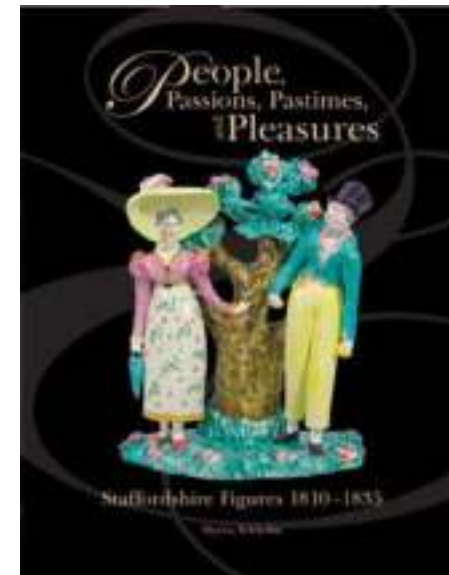
## Notes

Nick Burton bought these paired groups for us at Bonhams, Honiton, in December 2004. I became aware of the auction at very short notice, and Nick dropped everything to make a long journey in the wee hours of the morning on the day of the sale, traveling early to avoid traffic and to allow time to view our potential purchase ahead of the sale. The lot comprised two figure groups: the couple on the right, and the companion group with a dandizette alone, the dandy gentleman having been lost from the base.

We hoped that the loss to the one group would deter bidders because, in our opinion, the other group was so stunning that it most definitely merited purchasing in its own right. Nick secured the winning bid and had the minor restoration done before mailing me both groups.

Because the complete group is so spectacular and because I wanted Nick to have some satisfaction from his selfless work on my behalf, I decided to use the intact couple on the dust jacket of the book I was preparing, and today this group is, at least in my mind, synonymous with *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*.

Although the companion group clearly has lost the man, I still find it hauntingly beautiful and call the dandizette gazing forlornly at the spot where her man once stood “the tsunami widow” because it really looks as if a giant wave swept him off the base. It has been suggested that we add a dandy to the base



with the aid of a skilled restorer, but adding modern material to this mellow, old object would be sacrilege.

The perfect group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007. If I had it to do over again, I would exhibit the damaged group alongside it.

### **Literature**

For the intact figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 58 and dust jacket; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.1. ❀

## 17.1.6

# Dandies with Dandizettes (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>5</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 8.2 in. (L), 8 in. (R), MBS-437 (L), MBS-354 (R)*



## Notes

I had long suspected—and now I am certain—that every dandies couple was modeled to stand alongside a companion couple. I bought these two couples separately and was thrilled to be able to unite them to make a pair.

First came the couple with the gentleman wearing the tall hat, bought at auction at Maxwells of Winslow in September 2009. I was very pleased with the condition, and, in particular, the perfect bocage. This couple looked so familiar that I wondered if I had seen them before—and then I recalled that Malcolm and Judith Hodgkinson had a similar couple. In fact, the Hodgkinson couple was the companion to my couple, and they sold it to me in 2011.

When I stand these two couples beside our large “Sherratt” dandies (no. 17.1.5), the closeness in coloring is remarkable. It is as if they were all painted with the same enamels on the same day.

## Literature

For these see pairs see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 133.39–42. ❀

## 17.1.7

# Dandies with Dandizettes (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>6</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.5 in. (L), 7.6 in. (R), MBS-484 (L), MBS-483 (R)*



## Notes

I bought the couple on the right at auction at Keyes in May 2013. Buying at auction is fraught with perils and frustrations, and in this case it took over a month to get my purchase shipped.

When I realized that my friend Malcolm Hodkinson owned the couple on the left, the companion group to my purchase at Keyes, I asked him to sell it to me, which he kindly did. I suspect these were painted by the same hand because the painter missed painting a triangular area on the center of each base.

These couples are just like similar couples in our collection (no. 17.1.6, also shown alongside), which are from the same molds but were made with bocages.

## Literature

For these pairs see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.43. ❀



## 17.1.8 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 6.8 in., MBS-408*





## Notes

I bought this simple couple the instant John Howard got them into stock in March 2011 and enjoy and appreciate them as much today as I did then. They are particularly mellow and minimal, unfussy and restful to my eye.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, figs. 133.52–53. ❀

## 17.1.9

## Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration made by Samuel Hall and impressed "HALL", Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 7.3 in., MBS-253*



## Notes

Ben and I first visited the collector and dealer Elinor Penna at her Long Island home in April 2007, and I photographed her figures then. I have since done this several more times over the years, and Elinor always generously shares both her time and her figures. Sometimes, Ben has been with me, which is good because he and Elinor are particularly fond of each other, so they leave me to do my thing while they chat. I was pleased to find this marked figure tucked away in Elinor's dining room, and Nick had the odd bocage tip restored for me in England.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.27. ❀

## 17.1.10 Dandies with Dandizettes (pair)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1810, H: 6.3 in. (L), 6.1 in. (R),  
MBS-537 (L), MBS-516 (R)*



## Notes

I have not recorded another example of either of the couples in this assembled pair.

I first encountered the couple on the right at the New York Ceramics Fair in 2014, when I worked for John Howard. The group came in during the show. It had at one time been in the stock of Jonathan Horne, and, as I had not seen it before, I told John I wanted to buy it. When it came to settling for my purchases on the last day, he insisted I take it as a gift, and I was thrilled and appreciative of his great generosity.

I didn't think I would find the companion couple, but the late Aurea Carter got that group into stock in late 2015, and I am fortunate to have united these two seemingly unique objects.

## Literature

For the figure group on the right see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 203.9. ❀

## 17.1.11 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.8 in., MBS-488*



## Notes

Ordinary people tried to emulate the dandies and dandizettes who ruled the fashion world, and the result was often far from ideal, as is seen in this rather dumpy couple. They are a hoot! I bought the group from Malcolm Hodkinson in 2012 and know of only one other like it.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.67. ❀

## 17.1.12 Dandies with Dandizette (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.7 in. (L), 5.2 in. (R), MBS-532 (L), MBS-586 (R)*









## Notes

These are particularly rare groups. The figures' stance differs from the typical dandy pose, and I think they were intended as courting couples rather than dandies.

The two groups are companion models, but each has a different bocage and base, so I surmise that each was made by a different pot bank.

We first acquired the group on the right. It is otherwise unrecorded. The lady looks concerned, and the gentleman appears to be reassuring her. David Boyer helped add it to our shelves in September 2015. By then, we were somewhat settled in our new house in Dallas, and we would see David now and again as he passed through our new home city en route to US antiques shows.

David has an eye for small pearlware rarities, and so he helped us acquire the group on the left at auction at Gildings late in 2018. The lady looks quite terrified, and the gentleman has his arm around her as if to protect her. It could not be more charming, and that very broad bocage is particularly appealing. This group is unrecorded with this bocage form, but I have recorded two others with the same figures but with different bocages. and bases.

These same small figures are found on many New Marriage Act groups.

## Literature

For the a similar group to the group on the left see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.68.

For another group similar to that on the left see *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 61; also Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 324. ❀

## 17.1.13 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.6 in., MBS-546*



## Notes

I check auctions obsessively in my perpetual hunt for unusual pearlware figures, and so it was that in October 2016 I came across an unillustrated mixed lot at Semley Auctions, described as including an early nineteenth century "Staffordshire pottery marriage group with sheep." I immediately knew something was wrong because I have yet to record an early marriage group that includes sheep. I requested a picture, and found this figure group! This petite couple is not at the altar. Rather, they are a dandy and dandizette going about the business of being fashionable, albeit with a sheep, a goat, and two dogs at their feet. I have never seen anything quite like it.

The condition report that I requested stated that a small animal might be missing from the base, but I decided to go for the group anyway. I am NOT a morning person. The hardest thing I do each day is get out of bed, but, despite that, I was up at 4 a.m. to bid on the mid-morning auction the UK. I was successful but also had to acquire two tacky Victorian figures and a sweet little yellow ware cup that the auction house lumped into the same lot.

When my parcel arrived, I could not wait to open it. The dandies group was covered in black dirt, except for the center front of the base. This was sparkling clean because the auction house had rubbed it in an attempt to see if the two specks of clay/kiln dirt in that area indicated a missing beastie. Fortunately, nothing is absent. All is as it should be, with the two offending bits of clay well glazed. ❀

## 17.1.14 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4 in., MBS-71*



## Notes

This was our first tiny dandies group, bought in 1994 from Ray and Diane Ginns. I remember being puzzled as to why something this small was so expensive. I now know that there is not a direct correlation between price and size!

This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 61; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.78. ❀

## 17.1.15 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made by John Dale, Staffordshire, c. 1825,  
H: 4.9 in., MBS-198*





## Notes

I bought this prettiest of little figure groups from Andrew Dando in July 2005. She has no neck! The base is typical of John Dale, and the flowers and bodge are consistent with a Dale attribution.

This group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 61; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.71. ❀

## 17.1.16 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Ralph Salt and impressed "SALT", Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 3.9 in., MBS-525*



## Notes

This is the only pair of marked Salt dandies that I have recorded. I stumbled upon them in October 2014, while helping John Howard at the International Fine Arts and Antiques Show at New York's Park Avenue Armory. Early one morning, I walked down from my rented apartment on the Upper East Side to scout out the Manhattan Antiques Center, where I found this little couple. I wasn't sure if there was any over-painting and I didn't have my tools—not even a pair of reading glasses—with me. The dealer insisted that the janitor bring up some paint stripper, and the group passed the test!

Interestingly, the figures appear to be from the same molds as the small pair marked TITTENSOR in our collection (no. 17.1.17).

## Literature

For a similar unmarked example see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.78. ❀

## 17.1.17 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by Charles Tittensor and impressed "TITTENSOR", Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 5 in., MBS-552*



## Notes

This unrecorded little group is a rare gem that drew me from my sleep just after 4 a.m. so that I might bid at Aldridges, Bath, and it happened in November 2016. What makes this small pair of dandies different from all others? The answer lies in the mark “TITTENSOR” impressed on the reverse.

When I first glimpsed this group, I immediately recognized two of the bocage flowers and the flower on the base as “special.” Each of these flowers has twelve petals, that alternate between long and short. The potter John Dale used this flower form, and for a long time I thought this flower was exclusively his. But that was before I examined an enameled deer in The Potteries Museum with the Tittensor mark. Lo and behold, it sported the very same flower on its bocage.

Until around 2006, the Potteries Museum’s Tittensor deer was thought to be the lone Tittensor enameled figure. But when you look obsessively enough, things magically come your way. In my case, I am convinced I have divine help from a Pottery God of sorts. And so it was that my list grew and in the next few years, I found two more enameled figures marked Tittensor, each with the same bocage flower as the deer. Also, I found a fourth enameled figure with the Tittensor mark, but, alas, made without a bocage.

Four enameled Tittensor figures. That was it until this one made it five! It came out of a private collection that had been assembled between 1953 and 1970. In the same auction lot

was another small pair of dandies, damaged. Nonetheless, I paid an astonishing amount for the lot, as always seems to be the case when a Tittensor figure is involved. I am clueless as to who else has a special interest in these figures. Paul Tittensor, a direct descendant of the famous potting family, keenly re-searches the pot bank that bears his name. We keep in touch, but he was not my competition that day.

For completeness, I add that Tittensor figures are more commonly found decorated in strong under-glaze colors rather than enamels. The under-glaze figures are very different from the enameled ones, and their bocage leaves and flowers are different too. On the whole, the under-glaze figures differ so markedly from the enameled ones that it is difficult to conceive of them being the work of the same potter. The under-glaze figures probably came first. Perhaps Tittensor’s style evolved and around 1820 he started making enameled figures. More likely, Tittensor ceased working around 1820, and his molds passed to another potter, who used them for making enameled figures. Given the decorative similarities between enameled Tittensor figures and those made by John Dale, is it possible that Dale acquired the Tittensor molds (see 15.16.1 Notes).

On the puzzle of the twelve-petaled bocage flower that Dale and Tittensor shared, I throw one more spanner into the works. That flower otherwise only occurs on a lone bocage sheep impressed “SELLMAN.” That sheep is the only figure with the Sellman mark, and I have no idea who Sellman was or why he used the same bocage flower as Dale and Tittensor. ❁

## 17.1.18 Dandy with Dandizette

*Impressed "DANDIES" ("S" is illegible), lead-glazed earthenware with enamel decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 4.5 in., MBS-560*



## Notes

I acquired this group in a mixed auction lot that included an unrecorded pair of Tittensor dandies (no. 17.1.17). I bought the lot because I had to have the Tittensor dandies and gave no thought at all to this little couple. His head was off, but, significantly, the group was “all there,” aside from a chip to his hat and another to the side of the base. I decided to restore it myself, with the intention of selling it, but when the job was complete I was pleased enough with the result that I made room on our shelves. Notably, this pair has an unrestored and fine bocage, whereas most others that I have seen cannot claim that.

## Literature

For another see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 134; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.74. ❀

## 17.1.19 Dandy with Dandizette

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enamel decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>8</sup>Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 4.1 in., MBS-567*





## Notes

I was happy to acquire a tiny “Sherratt” dandies for our collection, and it looks as bright and fresh as the day it was made. The gentleman carries an umbrella, a feature not present on small dandies emanating from other pot banks.

I only know of this group from one other identical “Sherratt” example belonging to a collector friend. He also has an identical group with bocage, both examples being decorated in the same manner as ours.

## Literature

For another see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 3, fig. 133.76. ❀

# Endnotes

1. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
2. Ibid.
3. Letter from Griselda Lewis to me, dated 15 May 2004.
4. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
8. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.



## CHAPTER 18

# Family and Friends

*Extract from "A Family Piece." Thomas Rowlandson, 1811. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.*

**I**N MEDIEVAL TIMES, WEALTHY FAMILIES intent on arranging their children's marriages considered love fleeting and inconsequential, but by 1800, the Romantic Movement had altered attitudes toward marriage forever. Now love and passion were deemed essentials for a lifetime union, and marriages usually only proceeded after a stilted courtship in which the couple tested the waters for a shared fondness.

Courtship for the upper class was a serious entrée to the marriage market, and it had to be carefully monitored to ensure a suitable alliance. In the country, a shortage of prospects made the hunt difficult, so the aristocracy descended on London for “the season,” a hectic three-month period jammed with social events. A girl's first season “out” happened when she was about eighteen, and it marked a dramatic turning point in her life. Prior to this event, a girl was treated as a child and she dressed demurely, but once “out,” she donned tastefully seductive attire and attempted to lure desirable suitors at the whirlwind succession of balls, breakfasts, and dinners that comprised the season. A German visitor to England in 1835 found this high-stakes matchmaking game amusing.

*I must give you some idea of the extraordinary picture the author of this book draws of the state of English society in this respect. The competition for high prizes in marriage; the intrigues and manoeuvres of mothers*



*Money Hunting.* Thomas McLean, 1835. The print behind her is titled *The Bank of England* and that behind him *Siege of Acre*.

*to catch elder sons and to keep younger ones at a distance from their daughters; or if a girl have the folly or the magnanimity to prefer the latter, the tyranny or the falsehood resorted to separate them;—in short, as elder sons alone are considered eligible husbands, the supply of wives in the market, in economical phrase, exceeds the demand. Hence arises the noble science of husband catching. The more generous and amiable half of the human race is transformed into baits, with which to catch heirs.<sup>1</sup>*

Haste was of the essence because a girl who did not make a match within three or four seasons was doomed to spinsterhood. For girls from affluent families, failure was unlikely because many a young man happily married for money alone.

Courtship rituals among the middle class ran the gamut and varied with the degree of adult vigil. Letters, visits, and declarations of undying affection generally culminated in marriages in which, increasingly, both partners felt love rather than mere mutual affection. For middling class girls, failure carried a particularly high price. A girl who had a brother had no expectation of inheritance, so she had to marry if she wanted to maintain her life style and status in society. If she could not attract a husband, society expected her to live with her extended family and depend on their generosity, or lack thereof. A girl without family was forced to seek employment, but job opportunities were scant for a woman of this class. Generally, she had to reconcile herself to a poorly paid career as a companion or governess, and a lifetime of shameless exploitation. ❀

## 18.1.1 Patricia and her Lover (plaque)

*Lead-glazed earthenware decorated with colored glaze, probably made by Ralph Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1785, H: 13.8 in., MBS-178*









## Notes

This plaque is dubbed “Patricia and her Lover,” but it should be called “Jack on a Cruise,” after the source engraving titled *Jack on a Cruise* and sub-titled *Avast there! Back your mainsail.* Jack is a sailor, and Patricia’s billowing skirt is no doubt the “mainsail.” It has been suggested that the engraving was perhaps a commentary on “the extravagant millinery of the end of the 18th century.”<sup>2</sup>

I fell in love with this very plaque in John Hall’s *Staffordshire Portrait Figures* and often opened that little book just to gaze at it. For years when we visited New York, I would go to Leo Kaplan’s beautiful Madison Avenue shop, but I lacked the courage to browse as much as I would have liked, although Mrs. Kaplan was always more than kind to me, and once in my early collecting days she offered me an exquisite Whieldon-type arbor group to handle. In the Kaplan’s window there was for a long time a pair of separate plaques, the one of Patricia being the larger, and the other of her lover (Jack) the smaller. I assume they were made in different sizes so that when hung on a wall Jack might seem to be gazing at Patricia from afar. They were beautiful objects, in soft greens, and I stared at them longingly, but they lacked the impact of the larger, single plaque.

In 2004, I received a Sotheby’s catalog that included what was to become our plaque in it. This stunning object seemed to leap off the catalog page at me. I don’t recall being able to search Sotheby’s auctions on the internet in those days, so luck must



*Jack on a Cruise. Avast there!--- Back your mainsail.* Published by Robert Sayer and J. Bennett, 1780.

have brought the catalog my way. I just knew that I had to give the plaque a serious bid, so I called my friend (and advisor) Nick Burton to tell him what I proposed doing. I needed someone to stop my insanity, but, rather than telling me to slam on the brakes, Nick encouraged me to go for it.

This plaque is an awesome object—and I mean that in the literal sense of the words. It is probably the finest piece of pottery I have ever seen. When I take it off the wall to handle it—which I do on rare occasions for special visitors—I still get goosebumps. It is so thinly potted and the relief is very high. The back is dry (unglazed) and coated with dirt from the kiln and from hanging in rooms heated by coal. The expressions on the figure's faces transmit age-old behaviors: his lust, and her coquetry.

Because plaques like this have been documented in the literature for many years, it is easy to conclude that a plethora of them exist. Not so! Rather, the same two plaques seem to have been recorded over and over and again. Telling one from the other in old, black and white photographs is exacting, but the umbrella is darker on the plaque we own, and the other plaque has a little nick at 7 o'clock. Best I can gauge from color photographs, the other plaque is not as richly colored as this example.

The inked mark on the reverse of this plaque reads "ASPATRIA CUMBERLAND" and is probably the mark of a former owner who lived in the Cumberland town of Aspatria.

## Literature

This plaque is pictured (but the negative was flipped) in Hall, *Staffordshire Portrait Figures*, 76 (image courtesy of the dealers Jellinek & de Vermouthier), published in 1972. It later sold at Sotheby's Parke Bernet, NY, March 10, 1978, lot 35. Subsequently it was in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Victor, then the collection of Kenneth S. Battye, from which we bought it, again at Sotheby's New York, April 7, 2004, lot 14.

An almost identical plaque is illustrated in Falkner, *The Wood Family of Burslem*, no. 74, published in 1912, at which date it was in the Mayer Museum, Liverpool. That plaque was later in the Frank Partridge Collection (see Partridge, *Ralph Wood Pottery*, no. 164, page 45) and subsequently in the collection of G. N. de Facci Negrati (sold at Sotheby's, London, October 28, 1980, lot 28) and then in the collection of Stanley J. Seeger (sold at Sotheby's, London, October 20, 1993, lot 101). It is also illustrated in Oliver, *Staffordshire Pottery, The Tribal Art of England*, 147, fig. 191 and Horne, *A Collection of Early English Pottery*, 1997: no. 509. ❀

## 18.1.2

## Courtship

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>3</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.5 in., MBS-36*





## Notes

This group was our second bocage purchase and our first “Sherratt” group. We bought it from Ray and Diane Ginns in 1990, sight unseen on the basis of a small photograph, as was necessary in those times. It bowled over both of us when we unpacked it. I truly was overawed by it! Whatever else later went wrong in our relationship with Ray and Diane, I remain grateful to them for introducing us to early figure groups.

*Courtship* is, I think, one of the earlier “Sherratt” groups, and it was designed as a companion to our “Sherratt” family group (no. 18.7.1). We only later became aware of some of its restoration, but the other examples we have seen in private collections all have more than their share of problems because this uncommon group is particularly vulnerable.

I was so sad a few years ago to hear from a novice US collector who had bought a similar courtship at auction in the UK. I knew that particular group because it had previously belonged to a collector, a rather difficult individual, who had decided to exchange his collection for a spanking new kitchen or some such addition to his home. The new owner had bid online, won the item, and arranged shipping. When the box arrived it rattled ominously. The group had been packed (if that is even the right word) poorly and was literally in umpteen pieces.

A similar group titled *COURTSHIP* on its base is in the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1650). Another untitled group is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.958-1928).

This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 66; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 138.3.

For another in the Sharp Collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 99.

For the Brighton and Hove Museums’ titled group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 63; also, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 138.1; also Beddoe, *Potted History*, 323. ❀

## 18.1.3 Perswaition

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>4</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8.1 in., MBS-235*





## Notes

This courtship group is known as *Persuasion* because some examples are titled thus. Similar groups are in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.957-1928), the Victoria and Albert Museum (C.137-2003), and the Brighton and Hove Museums (no. 1651).

In the past, Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion*, first published posthumously in 1818, has been credited with influencing the design of earthenware *Persuasion* groups. However, a print titled *Persuasion* and published by W. D. Walker in 1809 is clearly the design source—I can still remember how excited I was when I found the print we own at London's Olympia antique fair very many years ago and knew it potentially changed the dating of *Persuasion* groups. I have since found two other versions of this print; they are undated, but I think all derive from the Walker print.

I suspect *Persuasion* was made over a longer period of time than many other groups, and they can vary considerably in their quality, not to mention their condition. Add to that, the lady sometimes looks nauseous rather than merely reluctant! Several times, I passed on a group because it didn't check all the boxes, until finally, in November 2006, I acquired our group at Woolley and Wallis with the aid of Nick Burton, who judged it to be fabulous.

Because of my web site and my books, I stay in touch with a relatively large net work of collectors on both sides of the pond, many of whom I have never met, but I feel that I know them



*Persuasion*. Reverse-painted print on glass. W. D. Walker, 1809.



well because of our correspondence. Among them is Richard Montgomery, who, like me, waited for years for just the right *Perswaition* to come his way. Each December, Richard sends me the most beautiful photograph of his two black Scottish terriers. It really could be on a calendar. Richard clearly is a picky person all the way round, and, as I am that way myself, I say this as a compliment rather than a criticism. In December 2016, Richard, to my delight, at last acquired his long-awaited *Perswaition*, and a splendid example it was too.

I often encourage collectors to wait for a finer example of something they want, but most either can't exercise restraint or they can't distinguish between the fine and the mediocre. Collecting is very personal, and how we go about it says much about us, but we are all different, and, were that not so, the world would be a dull place. I know an affluent collector with a lovely *Perswaition* who bought a second group with serious, ugly restoration. Possibly she had forgotten she already owned one! Those with the deepest pockets do not necessarily have the best collections.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 138.6 and dust jacket.

For the group in the Fitzwilliam Museum see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 64.

For the group in the Brighton and Hove Museums see Beddoe,

*Potted History*, 323.

For the group in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 115. ❀



## 18.1.4

## Courtship

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Straw Flower Group" pot bank,<sup>5</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 7.4 in., MBS-465*



## Notes

I bought this figure group from Malcolm Hodgkinson in late 2012 when he decided to pare his important collection, and I know of no other example.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 138.15. ❀

WEDDINGS IN PRE-VICTORIAN ENGLAND WERE very different from those of today. In an era without electricity, a wedding was a morning affair that was celebrated with a wedding breakfast at the bride's home. The Anglican parson had a monopoly on the wedding trade, so poor couples often awoke early for their lengthy trudge to his door. For the ceremony, the bride did not wear a white dress, but she did don her best dress. As Oliver Goldsmith's wrote in his *Vicar of Wakefield*, the vicar chose his wife "as she did her wedding gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well."<sup>6</sup> By 1810, an abundance of machine-made fabrics encouraged the use of special wedding dresses among the fashionable. When Queen Victoria wed in 1840, she wore a white dress, making white the height of bridal fashion.

From 1754, the passage of Hardwicke's Marriage Act made English marriage difficult. The act mandated that a marriage was only valid if a cleric performed the ceremony in the Church of England before at least two witnesses during hours dictated by church law. Either the reading of banns or a license was required, and those under twenty-one years of age needed parental consent for the latter. Quakers and Jews were permitted to marry according to their own customs, but marriages of other nonconformists, including Roman Catholics, were only legal if performed in the Church of England's parish church.

Those wanting to marry without the bother that Hardwicke's Act prescribed discovered that Scottish law merely required that a couple be at least sixteen years of age and plight their troth in the presence of two witnesses. Anyone could officiate at the ceremony. Inevitably, Gretna Green, the first village over the Scottish border along the major Carlisle-Glasgow road, became the destination for eloping couples. By some accounts, the blacksmith shop on the outskirts of the village was the first indication that runaway lovers had reached their destination, and so the smithy became a place where hasty marriages were forged.

By other accounts, there were no blacksmith shops in Gretna Green in the mid-eighteenth century. Rather, it is thought that an innkeeper became a "priest," re-named his inn *The Gretna Wedding*, and hung an inn sign depicting an anvil wedding. The sign fitted well with the romantic notion that the blacksmith, who forged hot metal at the anvil similarly forged binding unions. There are probably elements of truth to both stories, for marriages were performed at many places in Gretna Green, and a succession of anvil priests gained prominence in local folklore. Enterprising clergymen quickly set up shop in this border town, and town locals became "priests" to supplement their incomes.

Hardwicke's Marriage Act made English marriage law so cum-

bersome that it was tempting to side-step its persnickety requirements. But non-compliance came at a price: the smallest violation invalidated a marriage, and either party could seek an annulment, even many years later. Because there was no divorce law, annulment was the only feasible method of ending a marriage, but, tempting as it might be, it came with problems. Even if both the husband and wife wanted to end their marriage, an annulment might have disastrous consequences for their children who found themselves declared illegitimate.

The case that brought England's problematic marriage law to Parliament's attention concerned the young Earl of Belfast. On the threshold of the earl's marriage, his uncle stepped forward, disputing the earl's legitimacy and declaring himself heir presumptive to what the earl had thought was his inheritance. The basis for this challenge was that the earl's parents, the Marquis and Marchioness of Donegal, had married without the parental consent that marriage law mandated. The earl's parents tried every legal maneuver to establish the validity of their marriage and their children's legitimacy, but when all failed, Parliament legislated the New Marriage Act as a remedy.

Society expected marriage to last for life, so the Marriage Act of 1823 excluded petty violations of marriage law as reasons for annulment. Thereafter, a marriage was legal and binding, even if the couple was underage and had married by license without parental consent. It was said that the New Marriage Act "made many think, who otherwise would have married without thinking at all."<sup>7</sup> ❀

## 18.2.1 Anvil Wedding, New Marriage Act Wedding (pair)

*Impressed and painted "JOHN MACDONALD AGED 79 A SCOTCH ESQUIRE RUN OF WITH A ENGLISH GIRL AGED 17 TO GRATNAL GREEN THE OLD BLACKSMITH TO BE MARRIED" (L); "THE NEW MARRIAGE ACT. JOHN FRILL AND ANN BOKE AGED 21 THAT IS RIGHT SAYS THE PARSON AMEN SAYS THE CLARK" (R), lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1825, H: 7.4 in. (L), 7.2 in. (R), MBS-336*









## Notes

The plaque on the anvil group (on the left) reads “JOHN MACDONALD AGED 79 A SCOTCH ESQUIRE RUN OF WITH A ENGLISH GIRL AGED 17 TO GRATNAL GREEN THE OLD BLACKSMITH TO BE MARRIED”. It is suggested that groups with this wording poked fun at the elderly Lord Erskine, who, in October 1818, ran off to Gretna Green with his young housekeeper, Sarah (or Mary) Buck, and their three illegitimate children. Lord Erskine supposedly traveled disguised as a lady to elude his legitimate children who opposed the marriage. Lord Erskine was the Lord Chancellor of Great Britain and the most eminent lawyer of his time, and the story of his elopement was tantalizing fodder for the press—and a tempting subject for Staffordshire’s potters. A similar group is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.960-1928).

The plaque on the New Marriage Act group (on the right) reads “THE NEW MARRIAGE ACT. JOHN FRILL AND ANN BOKE AGED 21 THAT IS RIGHT SAYS THE PARSON AMEN SAYS THE CLARK”. In other words, whatever the true age of either John or Ann, who claimed to be twenty-one years old and thus of marrying age, they were married. Amen. After passage of the New Marriage Act, there was no going back!

These two fabulous groups are an original pairing and clearly have stood together always. They have no restoration. We bought them at Bonhams London, and paid a very full price—but great value!

## Literature

For these figure groups see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 139.1. ❁

18.2.2

Anvil Wedding (plaque)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1800, L: 9 in., MBS-388*



## Notes

I bought this plaque at auction at Mellors and Kirk in September 2010. It is after the print *Gretna Green, or the Red-Hot Marriage*, published circa 1795. ❀



*Gretna Green, or the Red-Hot Marriage.* c. 1795. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

## 18.2.3 Anvil Wedding

*Impressed and painted "WEDDING", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>8</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, L: 9.5 in., MBS-130*





## Notes

This, the prettiest of “Sherratt” weddings, is a on a larger base than others. Ray and Diane Ginns bought it for us in March 2001 from Phillips (now Bonhams), New Bond Street, London. I think this base style—the same is on our Death of Munrow—is earlier than some of most other “Sherratt” bases.

“Sherratt” wedding groups are very uncommon. I can think of one other in a private collection , but can’t recall seeing another on the market in all my collecting years. There is an example in the Fitzwilliam Museum, but on a brown table base (C.963B-1928). The Hunt Collection owns a unique “Sherratt” variant, with the figures (with replacements) flanking a trumpet-type vase.

This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 139.4 and dust jacket.

For the group in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne, *Holding the Past*, 118. ❀



## 18.2.4 New Marriage Act Wedding

*Impressed and painted "THE NEW MARRIAGE ACT. JOHN FRILL AND ANN BOKE AGED 21 THAT IS RIGHT SAYS THE PARSON AMEN SAYS THE CLARK", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1823, H: 7.5 in., MBS-195*







## Notes

My friend Nick Burton bought this group for us from the dealer Roger Deville at the Buxton Antiques Fair in May 2005. It is larger and rarer than New Marriage Act groups on square bases, and the figure themselves are bigger. I was very pleased to get it. Nick and I were both fascinated by the lady's finger sticking out in anticipation of the ring—the finger is so tiny and perfect, and a restored finger would just not have been the same.

Buxton is nestled in the Peak District of Derbyshire, and I always think of this spa town with a certain fondness because we have passed through it several times and once spent some days there exploring the surrounding countryside. We stayed at the Palace Hotel, a grand old spa hotel with a magnificent staircase. I recall Buxton's old chemist shop, with its beautifully fitted interior, all right out of a Masterpiece Classic.

That same visit, we went down one of Derbyshire's old lead mines, which no doubt supplied the Staffordshire Potteries with lead used in the manufacture of glaze. The mine was wretchedly cold, cramped, and dank, and it raised my awareness of the misery endured by those who gathered the materials needed to fashion the figures I collect.

This figure group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 75; also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 139.18.

For the group in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 121. ❀

## 18.2.5 Wedding

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 5.1 in., MBS-201*



## Notes

Nick Burton recognized the rarity of this group and bought it for us from Roger Deville in September 2005. I have not seen another. The bride and groom are from the same figure molds as were used for the bride and groom in anvil wedding groups.

I speculate that the pot bank that made this group also made a blacksmith at the anvil or perhaps a vicar with a similar bocage as a companion piece, but, as yet, I have not been able to find an example of either.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 72; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 139.17. ❀

## 18.3.1

# Christening

*Christening group, lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 5.2 in., MBS-568*



## Notes

I bought this christening group on eBay in the summer of 2017 because it was a wreck in danger of being discarded. It had been offered for sale more than once at token price, and there was no interest. As it is the only known example, I thought it should be saved.

More correctly, I bought the church rather than the whole group. The church was largely intact, but all the figures that now stand in front of it were missing. It was apparent that the back figure on the right was a man because his lower legs remained. Right next to him were two smaller feet that had to have belonged to a woman. The figure on the far left had broken away entirely, leaving an oval patch that corresponds to the way a vicar's coat might fall, so I deduced that this group was once a christening. This made the fourth missing figure (one large foot remained) the parson.

Restoring the group added no significant value, but un-restored it would almost certainly be discarded in future decades, so I wanted to replace the missing figures. The task was way above my amateur pay grade but, given that there was no commercial value at stake, I couldn't justify very costly professional restoration. But how was I to make the figures? Which figures should I try to copy? All except one christening recorded to date are from the "Sherratt" pot bank, and those figures are much too large for this group. Also, "Sherratt" christenings have two women (the godmothers) rather than the man and woman, who I believed had stood to the right of

the church originally.

The tiniest figures in our collection are a man and woman (no. 15.13.1). I made models from these figures in clay and tooled them to remove his hat (which in this case is lying on the ground) and her dog (which I replaced with a small handbag). I fired them in my little kiln, and, as expected, the clay shrank, making the figures about ten percent smaller than the originals. Next, I fitted them onto the base so as not to damage any original material. In other words, it would have been easier to remove the feet and legs remaining on the base to position my figures, but instead I removed the feet and legs from my figures and fitted them to the original body parts. The result looked reasonable, so I continued.

I needed a clerk and a vicar holding a baby, but, as we didn't then have a christening in our collection, the latter was a problem. My friend Malcolm Hodkinson came to the rescue with a vicar that he had made as well as a small clay clerk. I removed one of the clerk's feet so that the figure fitted onto the original foot that remained on the base. Malcolm's vicar presented great challenges because he was huge. Each time a figure is fired, there is shrinkage of about 10%, so I knew that I had to model another clay figure off Malcolm's, fire it, and keep on repeating this process until the vicar was suitably petite. This took four very long iterations.

I spent an embarrassingly long time on this project, and, as I have very little experience and am far from artistic, the result

could be improved, but I learned a lot, and it would be better if I were to do it again. I couldn't have done it had Malcolm not insisted that I could and must, and I am grateful for his encouragement and faith in me.

I hope that after my days this group passes to someone who is able to enjoy it despite its issues, and I also hope that a perfect example is lurking somewhere and comes to light to enable correct restoration. Most importantly my work is reversible; **it did no harm to any original material.** Above all, my task enhanced my appreciation of the enormous skills the potters had, as well as the craftsmanship and time required for professional restoration.

The group is shown alongside before restoration. ❁



## 18.4.1 The Baptism of Mary

*Impressed and painted BAPTISM OF MARY, lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>9</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 8.6 in., MBS-573*









## Notes

In more than thirty years of collecting, a “Sherratt” christening group of acceptable quality had somehow eluded me. This changed in early 2018, when we acquired this group out of a private New York collection with the assistance of Alan Kaplan. The group had previously been in the stock of Jonathan Horne.

A fine “Sherratt” christening is tough to find because the small figures are too easily knocked off the base and replaced with others, courtesy of a restorer. Over the decades, I have resisted succumbing to a group that was not largely original, and the wait has been worth while. To add to my pleasure, this group is titled “BAPTISM OF MARY,” whereas similar groups frequently are not titled.

Who was Mary? I have no idea, but I do know that the two ladies present at her christening would have been her godmothers. Her mother, on the other hand, would have been confined to home until her “churching,” a church service of thanksgiving for having survived the perils of childbirth. Babies were routinely baptized before the mother’s churching because in that age of high infant mortality a baby’s survival was uncertain and an unchristened infant could not be buried on church grounds. There were no restrictions on the father, of course, although this father appears to wish he were elsewhere.

## Literature

For similar groups see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes*,

*and Pleasures*, 80; also *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 142.1-142.4.

For the group in the Hunt Collection see Schkolne,  *Holding the Past*, 121. ❀

## 18.5.1 The Battle for the Breeches

*Impressed and partially painted "WHO SHALL WARE THE BRECHES" and "CONQUER OR DIE", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c.1815, H: 8.1 in., MBS-117*



## Notes

The power struggle in the home is a theme that has aroused mirth for centuries, and medieval carvings and illustrations attest to the significance of this age-old contest.

In the early 1800s, matrimonial battles raged unabated because there was no divorce law. Marriage vows did not ensure eternal bliss, and the battle for the breeches captured in Staffordshire clay symbolizes the inescapable matrimonial turmoil of bygone times. Usually carrying the amusing and typically misspelled inscriptions “Who Shall Ware the Breches” and “Conquer or Die,” these figure groups are pointed reminders of a time when death generally provided the only release from a miserable marriage.

This is a very rare group. We bought it from the sale of the Reed-Fitt Collection in February 2000, with Ray and Diane Ginns bidding on our behalf (see 4.1.1 Notes). We wanted this group more than anything else in that sale, and we feared that the National Trust, to which the collection was bequeathed, might hold it back. Luckily that did not happen.

Ray and Diane told us that the auction house had broken off the woman’s arm, so their restorer put it back in place. Over the years, the arm started bothering me. It had a slight yellow tinge of the sort that occurs when restoration ages poorly, and I assumed that the spray the restorer had used had discolored.

In 2021, another example of this model came up for sale, the

only the second one I have seen go through auction in my time. The lady had her original arm, but all the feet had been lost from the base. I sent my group to the UK to assist Alan Finney with restoring the feet, and I asked him to look at the lady’s arm. Turns out the arm was a restored arm! In other words, the previous restorer had re-attached a restored arm. As the other group had its original arm, Alan was able to model a new arm for my lady from it.

We had never suspected that the lady might have once held an object in her raised hand because none of the few remaining examples depict such an item. However, the lady with the original arm clutched the vestiges of a black object, and Alan believes that it was once a fire iron. That would explain the cat’s alarmed expression! My lady’s new hand now too clutches the remains of that tool.

I had not realized how much the slightly discolored restoration on the arm had detracted from my enjoyment of this group. It was like a small scar that overshadowed a beautiful face. After Alan’s superb work, the group glows. A true jewel.

I am unable to attribute this group to “Sherratt,” but I wouldn’t entirely rule out the possibility that “Sherratt” made it, and Malcolm Hodgkinson, whose expertise is “Sherratt,” concurs. The “Sherratt” pot bank produced an enormous range of figures and operated for an extended period of time. This group may have been an early model.

This group is constructed with an open rectangular cavity at the

back that is sometimes described as a spill vase, but I question whether it had any specific purpose. The smaller menagerie in our collection has a similar opening, which, again, I think was not intended to hold spills but was merely a byproduct of the design.

Groups portraying the battle for the breeches are recorded on either claw feet or on flat bases, with other minor differences between the two variants. Both are particularly rare, and most are in museums. Flat-base examples are in the Victoria and Albert Museum(C.131-2003), the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.987–1928), and the Brighton and Hove Museums (HW1696).<sup>10</sup>

This figure was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this group see Godden, *British Pottery*, plate opposite 280; also *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 89; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 140.1 and dust jacket.

For others on a flat base in the Brighton and Hove Museums and Victoria and Albert Museum see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 140.4, 140.5.

For another but on a flat base in the Fitzwilliam Museum see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 91

For another on a flat base in the Sharp Collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 107. ❁



## 18.6.1

## Family Group

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Patriotic Group" pot bank,<sup>1</sup>  
Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.1 in., MBS-123*



## Notes

Unlike dogs, cats seldom feature in early pottery groups because cats were not yet generally accepted as domestic companions, so this group, bought at the dispersal of the Reed-Fitt Collection in February 2000 (see 4.1.1 Notes) is notable for the inclusion of a cat.

This group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 81; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 144.06.

For a related group in the Sharp Collection see Sharp, *Ceramics Ethics & Scandal*, 94. ❀

## 18.7.1

## Family Group

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>12</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 6.2 in., MBS-475*







## Notes

This is one of the most elusive “Sherratt” groups, and I know of only two other examples. Years ago, Jonathan Horne had one with terrible enamels, and I could not let myself own it; the other is in the Fitzwilliam Museum (C.952-1928), and I photographed it in 2005 for inclusion in *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*.

Our group came our way in March 2013, thanks to David Boyer, who bought it out of a private UK collection. Interestingly, it uses the same figures that were later used in “Sherratt” *Tee Total* groups (no. 1.7.4). I believe it was modeled to stand as a companion group to the “Sherratt” *Courtship* (no. 18.1.2, also alongside) and that both groups are relatively early “Sherratt” models, possibly predating 1820.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 144.01.

For the group in the Fitzwilliam Museum see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 79. ❀



## 18.8.1 Mother with Child

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>13</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 6.3 in., MBS-503*



## Notes

This mother and child are from the same molds used for figures in our “Sherratt” family group (no. 18.7.1) and *Tee Total* group (no. 1.7.4). The group is perfect and as fresh and clean as if it were made yesterday. I was excited to find it at Northeast Auctions in October 2013 because it was then unrecorded and I know of no other.

A companion male figure (with a bocage of the same form) is in the National Trust Collections (no. 118864).<sup>14</sup>

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 144.3. ❀

18.9.1

## Girl with Doll

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1830 , H: 6 in., MBS-204*



## Notes

My friend Nick Burton bought this for us at Andrew Hartley in Yorkshire in 2005. His mother, Audrey, just loved it—who wouldn't?—and I never fail to think of her when I look at this figure, perhaps because she likes and collects early doll houses.

I have been told that the design source for the figure is a Regency print titled *See My Baby*, a companion to a print of a boy titled *Just Breeched*. A male figure derived from the latter print is recorded, but I have yet to find one that is a good match for my figure because sizes and colors vary.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 314; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 145.7. ❀

## 18.10.1 Tenderness

*Impressed and painted "TENDERNESS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 8.3 in., MBS-145*







## Notes

We bought this group from Ray and Diane Ginns in March 2002, and it is as fresh and bright (and almost as perfect) as the day it was made. It remains the finest Tenderness I have ever seen, and, even so many years later, each time I look at it (or even a picture of it), it takes my breath away. When this group arrived at our home, Andrea, then in her early teens, asked “Mom, is it new?”

This group was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*, November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 84; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 146.18 and dust jacket. ❀



## 18.11.1 Friendship, Tenderness (pair)

*Impressed and painted "FRIENDSHIP" and "TENDERNESS", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Walton and impressed "WALTON", Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 7.4 in. (L), 7.7 in. (R), MBS-410*





## Notes

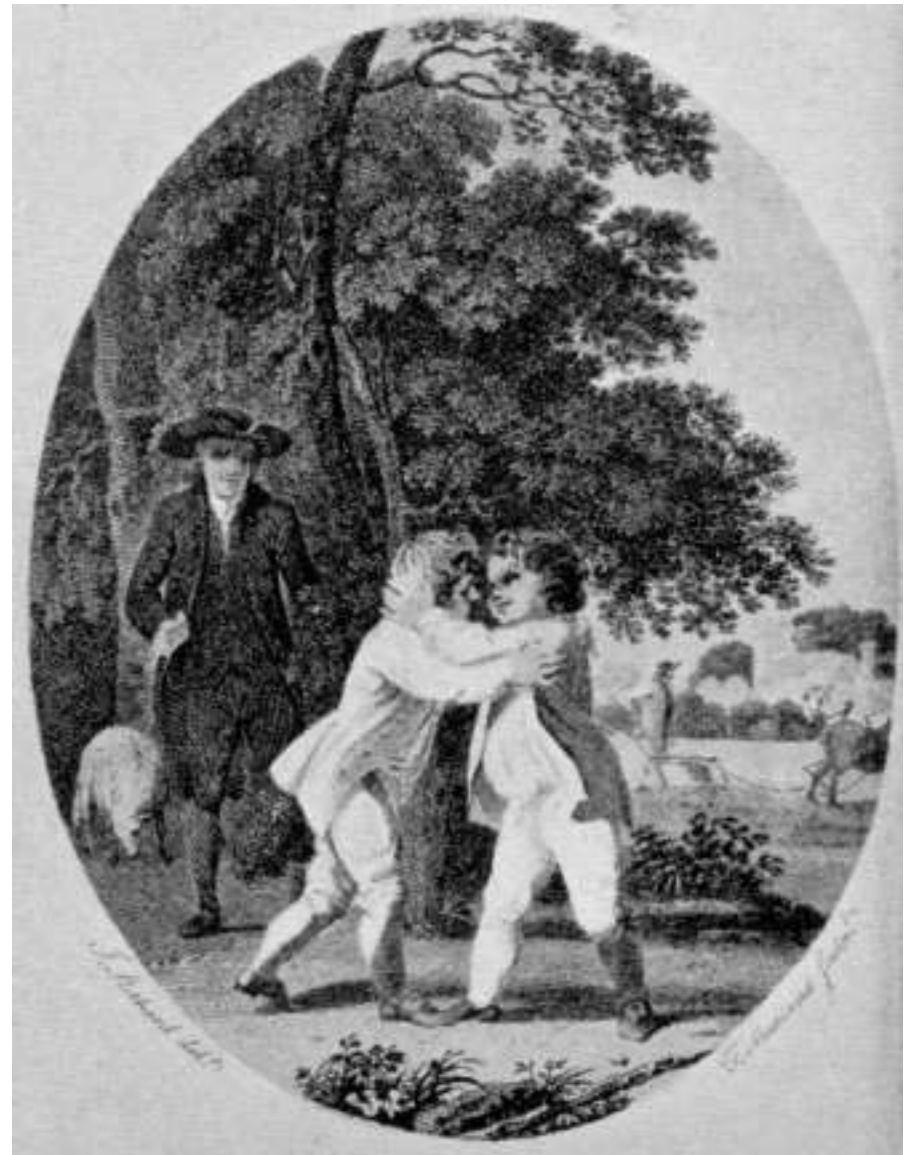
I suspect groups on the Friendship and Tenderness themes were available for purchase singly or in pairs. These two examples were made to pair, and I bought them together in one lot at auction at Cottees in April 2011, so I posit they have lived together always.

Walton figures are typically of good quality, but some can be quite gorgeous, and these, with their lovely full bocages, are just that. I then “upgraded” our collection by moving on two of lesser quality that we had bought in our early days from Ray and Diane Ginns.

Friendship may be based on the reconciliation between two quarreling lads in Thomas Day’s *The History of Sanford and Merton*. This moral children’s tale was first published between 1783 and 1789 and was enjoyed well into the nineteenth century. An engraving from the frontispiece may have assisted in the modeling of Friendship groups.

## Literature

For these figure groups see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 146.23, 146.8. ❁



Engraving from *The History of Sanford and Merton*, after Thomas Stothard, 1783–1789. Possibly this was the design source for Friendship groups.

## 18.12.1 Scuffle or Contest

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, made by John Walton and impressed "WALTON", Staffordshire, c. 1820, H: 8.3 in., MBS-199*



## Notes

Like other fine items in our collection, this group caught the eye of my friend Nick Burton, who bought it for us from Roy Bunn at the July 2005 NEC (National Exhibition Center) antiques show in Birmingham. Roy, a retired police officer, stood at smaller antiques shows, and, for a while had a web site.

This group is referred to as “Scuffle” or “Contest” because similar groups from other pot banks are sometimes titled thus. Scuffle and Contest groups are rather alike but differ somewhat, and one has a hat on the ground, while the other does not. As the titles were used interchangeably, it is not certain whether an untitled example is Scuffle or Contest! This is a companion theme in many ways to our Walton Tenderness and Friendship groups (no. 18.11.1), but unlike those groups, Walton Contest/Scuffle groups are always untitled.

I remain puzzled about the origins of the Contest/Scuffle groups, the earliest of which were made by Ralph Wood circa 1790. In 2005, an oak wood panel at auction bore a Scuffle/Contest motif (see alongside).<sup>15</sup> Because the panel is thought to predate the figure groups and may be continental, the groups’ design source may be continental in origin.

## Literature

For this group see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 86; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs 146.44. ❀



## 18.13.1 Old Woman

*Painted "Old Age", lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, attributed to Ralph Wood, Staffordshire, c. 1790, H: 9.9 in., MBS-322*



## Notes

This figure model, even when not titled, is known as “Old Age.” The subject of the figure may seem grim, but this lady is rather handsome, and she reminds me that age is something to be celebrated rather than denied. I bought her in November 2008 on eBay.

This particular figure is one of only three Ralph Wood figures that I have recorded that exhibit an atypical feature: the interiors of the bases have sharply squared corners, rather than the rounded corners that are otherwise found.

## Literature

For this figure group see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs. 141.6–7. ❀



## 18.14.1 Folly

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1815, H: 3.5 in., MBS-518*



## Notes

I find little houses charming, and this folly more so because of the two tiny naked figures and the potted plant perched alongside it. It first crossed my path when it came up at auction early in 2009. I gave it a very high bid, but I lost it. To my surprise, the cottage it appeared in Jonathan Horne's 2009 exhibition, and I stupidly thought that he would never sell it, given the very high price tag it had to have had on it by then. Of course, I was wrong, and it sold almost immediately.

In July 2014, this folly again came my way, this time at Sotheby's London. It had belonged until then to the late Stanley J. Seeger, a Milwaukee native who inherited an oil and timber fortune and was described in his New York Times obituary as "a reclusive, idiosyncratic art collector who disposed of Picassos, Beckmanns and Bacons nearly as fast as he bought them, and who for several years in the 1980s owned Sutton Place, one of Britain's grandest Tudor estates." I bought it at Sotheby's for about half of what I had bid the first time. Clearly, it was intended to be mine...eventually!

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, figs 149.13; also Horne, *English Pottery*, 2009: no. 27. ❀

## 18.15.1 Cottages (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, Staffordshire, c. 1830, H: 3.6 in. (L), 3.3 in. (R),  
MBS-202 (L), MBS-341 (R)*



## Notes

When I first visited Malcolm and Judith Hodkinson, the several small houses in their collection intrigued me, and when the cottage with a bocage (left) popped onto John Howard's site in 2005—still in the early days of internet shopping—I wanted it.

John was then an unknown to me, although I had bought a single sheep from him a while previously. I asked Nick Burton what he thought, and he said I could trust John and that I should approach him directly about a potential purchase. Good advice from Nick, as always! I was tickled with this purchase, as I have been with each and every one of my subsequent purchases from John over the years. He has helped me enormously in my collecting and learning. I value his integrity and his friendship immensely, and I enjoy his sense of humor.

The cottage with sheep, which I bought from Elinor Penna in June 2009, is from the same molds as the cottage with a bocage, but there is no indication that the two necessarily emanated from the same pot bank.

Like so many of the tiny figures in our collection, both cottages are unique, not, I am sure, because they were the only ones made but rather because so very many have been lost over time.

The cottage with the bocage was exhibited at the Mint Museum of Art, *Mirth and Mayhem: Staffordshire Figures 1810–1835*,

November 2006–April 2007.

## Literature

For the cottage with a bocage see Schkolne, *People, Passions, Pastimes, and Pleasures*, 255; also Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 149.5.

For the cottage with sheep see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 149.4. ❀

## 18.16.1 Cottages (2)

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, possibly made by the "Sherratt" pot bank,<sup>16</sup> Staffordshire, c. 1825, L: 6.3 in. (L), 3 in. (R), MBS-569 (L), MBS-331 (R)*



## Notes

1780–1840, vol. 4, fig. 149.2. ❀

Always on the watch for small pearlware cottages, I bought the otherwise unrecorded cottage on the right on eBay in March 2009. The design on the base is suggestive of “Sherratt.”

I bought the cottage on the left from David Boyer at the Staffordshire Figure Association meeting in Dallas in 2017. I was familiar with it because I had photographed it for my Schiffer books. The bocage is suggestive of the “Sherratt” turquoise bocage, albeit of a scaled down and different form, but I strongly suspect that this cottage too is “Sherratt.”

Both the cottages seem to have come from the same molds, and both are flat and unpainted on the reverse. Aside from this, however, the larger figure group is fully painted on the reverse; its base is formed in the round, but the tree, like the cottage, is flat.

I have recorded two other cottages with trees apparently from these molds, and both originally had tiny people on their bases. Both were in deplorable condition with significant losses. I also have noted one other cottage like the larger cottage, but with its lost bocage replaced with a “Sherratt” bocage.

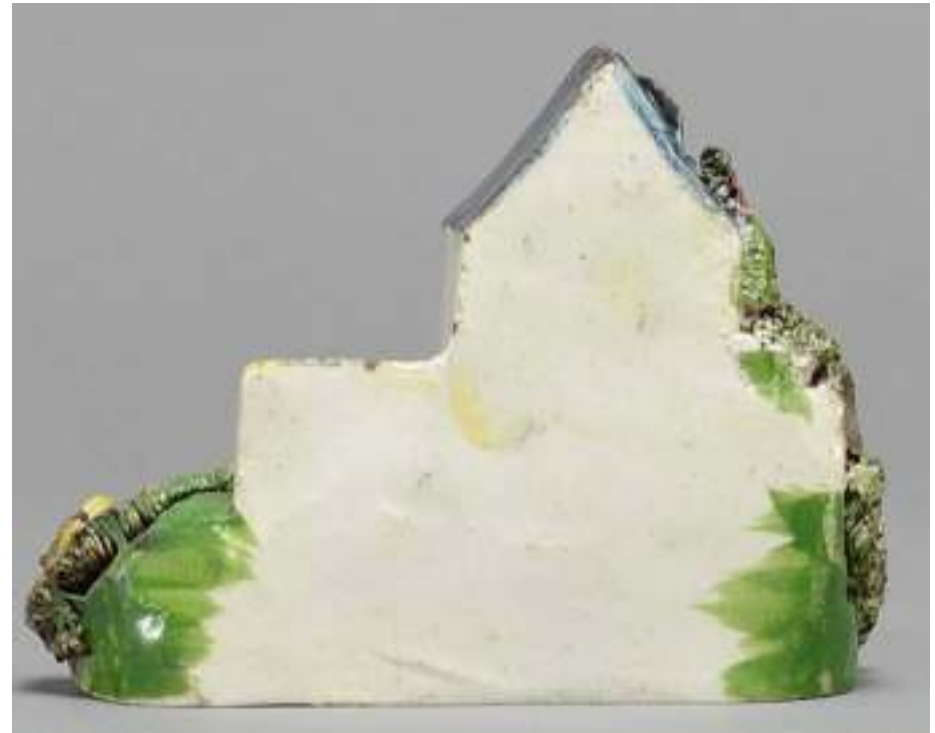
## Literature

For the cottage on the right see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 149.1.

For the cottage on the left see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*

## 18.17.1 Cottage

*Lead-glazed earthenware with enameled decoration, probably made in Scotland or perhaps northeast England, c. 1820, L: 4.3 in., MBS-460*



## Notes

I bought this cottage decorated in a typical Scottish palette on eBay in 2012. I am always thrilled to find small figures like this and eagerly anticipate their arrival. With a major purchase, I usually wait for Ben to arrive home so we can open the box together, but small items are my particular pleasure, and I watch for the mailman like my dog, Johnny Be Goode, watches for his next meal.

## Literature

For this figure see Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures 1780–1840*, vol. 4, fig. 149.12. ❀



# Endnotes

1. Raumer, *Letters*, 157.
2. Rackham, E.C.C. Transactions, “Caricature in English Pottery”, 262.
3. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
4. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
5. ———, 1:42.
6. Goldsmith, *Miscellaneous Works*, 3:5.
7. Mirror of Literature, “New Marriage Act,” 21.
8. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
9. Ibid.
10. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 3: fig. 140.4; Beddoe, *A Potted History*, 327.
11. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:34–35.
12. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.
13. Ibid.
14. Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 4: fig. 144.2.
15. Dreweatt Neate, June 2005, lot 131.
16. Hodkinson, *Sherratt?*; Schkolne, *Staffordshire Figures*, 1:36–37.