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Decorative Pottery at Prestongrange

Jane Bonnar

This analysis is complemented by the
Prestoungrange Virtual Pottery Exhibition
to be found on the Internet at
<http://www.prestoungrange.org>



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FOREWORD

This series of books has been specifically developed to provide an authoritative briefing to all who seek to enjoy the Industrial Heritage Museum at the old Prestongrange Colliery site. They are complemented by learning guides for educational leaders. All are available on the Internet at <http://www.prestoungrange.org> the Baron Court's website.

They have been sponsored by the Baron Court of Prestongrange which my family and I re-established when I was granted access to the feudal barony in 1998. But the credit for the scholarship involved and their timely appearance is entirely attributable to the skill with which Annette MacTavish and Jane Bonnar of the Industrial Heritage Museum service found the excellent authors involved and managed the series through from conception to benefit in use with educational groups.

The Baron Court is delighted to be able to work with the Industrial Heritage Museum in this way. We thank the authors one and all for a job well done. It is one more practical contribution to the Museum's role in helping its visitors to lead their lives today and tomorrow with a better understanding of the lives of those who went before us all. For better and for worse, we stand on their shoulders as we view and enjoy our lives today, and as we in turn craft the world of tomorrow for our children. As we are enabled through this series to learn about the first millennium of the barony of Prestongrange we can clearly see what sacrifices were made by those who worked, and how the fortunes of those who ruled rose and fell. Today's cast of characters may differ, and the specifics of working and ruling have surely changed, but the issues remain the same.

I mentioned above the benefit-in-use of this series. The Baron Court is adamant that it shall not be 'one more resource' that lies little used on the shelves. A comprehensive programme of onsite activities and feedback reports by users has been designed by Annette MacTavish and Jane Bonnar and is available at our website <http://www.prestoungrange.org> – and be sure to note the archaic use of the 'u' in the baronial name.

But we do also confidently expect that this series will arouse the interest of many who are not directly involved in

educational or indeed museum services. Those who live locally and previously worked at Prestongrange, or had relatives and ancestors there (as I did in my maternal grandfather William Park who worked in the colliery), will surely find the information both fascinating and rewarding to read. It is very much for them also to benefit – and we hope they will.

Dr Gordon Prestoungrange
Baron of Prestoungrange
July 1st 2000

Jane Bonnar

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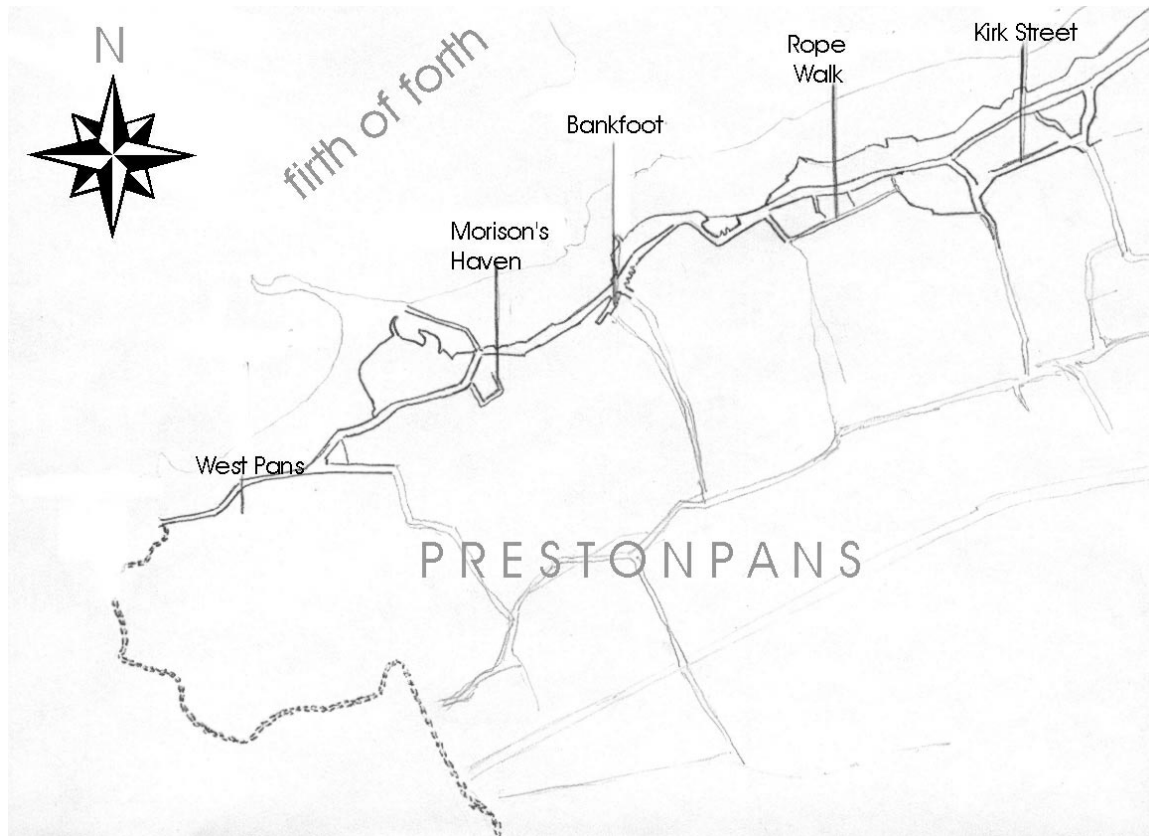
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Close proximity of Potteries

THIS WORK is neither about the manufacturing process of Prestonpans pottery, nor a guide to attributing and valuing Prestonpans pottery. It rather focuses on the ‘potworks’ of the four Prestonpans potteries and the families who owned them. The intention is to bring to life the story of a craft community whose wares have given much enjoyment and whose story has been all but disregarded thus far.

Prestonpans forms part of East Lothian and is found on the east of Scotland. Situated on the south coast of the Forth estuary, around eight miles east of Edinburgh, Prestonpans had all the elements required for a successful pottery industry; local clay, water and coal mined nearby. The working harbour of Morrison’s Haven enabled the necessary additional materials of china clay and flint to be brought to the site from the South of England. By the end of the nineteenth century, the main potteries were those of William Cadell & Company, West Pans, Gordons and Belfield & Company. All were in close proximity to each other, stretching from the west of Prestonpans eastwards to where the town bounds Musselburgh.

Pottery manufacture was not concentrated in Prestonpans, however, as the resources that made pottery production possible were found in other parts of Scotland. The largest and best-known Glasgow firm was that of J. & M.P. Bell & Co., which was producing white earthenware from c1842–c1910 in an attractive array of transfer-printed milk-jugs and dinnerware. Kirkcaldy also had a thriving pottery industry, with a number of potteries in production at the end of the 19th century, dominated by David Methven & Sons who produced white dinnerware, bowls and mugs and brown teapots and other domestic items. However, at the advent of pottery making in Prestonpans, the Glasgow potteries and their satellites were in artistic decline, producing a vast amount of unimaginative transfer-printed ware, while the Kirkcaldy potteries were diversifying into more industrial wares. Prestonpans was therefore free to concentrate on high quality, sophisticated wares and to welcome the now redundant craft potters needed to produce them.

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Today, there are very few visible remains of the kilns and workshops and it is only with the help of old maps that we can pinpoint the extent of the potteries. Remnants of the products can be found on the beach at Morrison's Haven, where damaged and imperfect pieces were dumped. Different kinds of domestic pottery shards can be found of, mainly, tableware such as bowls, cups, plates and small jars. Pieces of round earthenware saggars, which held the pottery when it was put into the kiln, are found, together numerous three-legged clay stilts or 'craws' taes' used to separate each piece of ware to stop them from sticking together in the saggars.

The potteries left their mark on the landscape. At Prestongrange Industrial Heritage Museum, eleven circular kiln foundations indicate the scale of Prestongrange brick and tile works which catered for the building trade, manufacturing bricks, chimney pots, drainage pipes, outdoor garden urns and fountains. The pedestrian walkway from Tranent to Prestonpans (known locally as 'The Heugh') reminds us that clay for the potteries was brought by (Scotland's first) narrow gauge waggonway from a clay pit in Birsley, Elphinstone. Many examples of Prestonpans ware are now family heirlooms or collectibles, treasured almost as much as the memories of the 'potworkers'.



Beach finds

POTTERY

WHY WAS the pottery industry concentrated in the coastal region of East Lothian? Early eighteenth century conditions provided all resources required allowing the industry to take-off. A good quality local clay from Upper Birslie Plantation (or ‘Clay Holes’), coal mined at Prestongrange and nearby Elphinstone, water power at Morrison’s Haven Harbour and Pinky Burn, a working harbour at Morrison’s Haven bringing in china clay and flint and a central position giving access to markets – all contributed to success in the nineteenth century. Such favourable conditions were not sustained. As clay deposits ran out and clay became more expensive, twentieth century production declined. Also, due to silt build-up, the harbour at Morrison’s Haven had to be filled in, undermining transport facilities. The final blow was the increase in foreign competition which meant reduction in demand for Scottish pottery.

Commercial pottery production began in Scotland in the early eighteenth century, with domestic-use pottery being manufactured according to consumer demand and expenditure. The turning point came mid-century, when 1740s plaster moulds (which produced clumsy, irregular shapes which were thereafter salt glazed) were abandoned around 1756–60 for white enamelled earthenware or delftware, which in turn were made possibly by the introduction of new lead glazes and double firing.¹ The introduction of transfer printing, painting, gilding and colour meant that the Prestonpans potteries could ably cater for the local demand for inexpensive decorated ware.² Their success was built on innovative design and the ability to keep production costs down.

Changes in design were led by William Litter’s introduction in the early 1760s of the use of Scottish Cobalt to produce a deep blue product. The later introduction of mineral oxides meant creamware could be stained to produce a ‘tortoise-shell’ effect, a speciality of Cadell’s pottery.³ Gordons utilised local clays to make terracotta and jet, or basalt wares including

¹ Paul, I. *The Scottish Tradition in Pottery* (1948), p2.

² Whipp, R. *Patterns of Labour; Work and Social Change in the Pottery Industry* (1990), p17.

³ Dalgleish, G., Haggarty, G. & McVeigh, P. (eds) *Pots at the 'Pans – The Potteries of Prestonpans, Musselburgh and Portobello* (1990)

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black lustre ware, while using imported china clay to make more ornamental pottery. Rising demand for such products was stimulated from the social revolution of the early nineteenth century when each social strata sought to emulate their social superiors.⁴ The average Scots family was increasingly paid in cash, rather than in kind, and had achieved a greater degree of comfort, security and prosperity. Houses were better equipped and meals became more elaborate.⁵ So, the demand for quality pottery increased and was furnished at this time by Charles Belfield & Co. from their Kirk Street site.

Domestic salt glazed ware did remain popular, not only for its domestic usefulness but its industrial use too. Amongst other products, Cadell's made stoneware bottles for holding Prestonpans Ale.⁶ Gordons potteries eventually diversified into brick and tile manufacture, around 1812, to meet the demands of the growing industrial sector. Belfield's was first to make 'white' pottery – WC's basins and sinks that were constantly in demand from Edinburgh and Leith Plumbers.

Over time, a pattern emerged in the demand for pottery. The mid-eighteenth century saw high demand for ornamental, novelty, one-off products, later to be superseded by demand for all kinds of tableware, toiletware and stoneware, it featured quality craftsmanship and lively colour. The mid-nineteenth century growth of Edinburgh and the associated industrial structures increased the need for building materials. By the late nineteenth century, demand had shifted to ornamental pottery ranging from plaques and garden tiles to figurines. It could be said of Scottish pottery then that it took its impetus from the fashion of the day. However, this statement undermines the fact that there are characteristics common to all domestic products; low relief ornamentation in shades of green, yellow, blue and brown, combining good design and workmanship with a strong sense of proportion and form.

Fashion was one reason for the apparent growth surges in the pottery industries, but what about mechanisation? Certainly, the early eighteenth century saw the introduction of steam power in flint/glaze milling, and indeed, Morrison's Haven had a steam operated flint mill by the 1850s. However, expansion in Prestonpans pottery production relied more on innovative body/glaze composition, improved factory organisation and

⁴ Whipp, *Patterns.*, op cit., p18.

⁵ Paul, *Scottish Tradition*, op cit., p3.

⁶ Fleming, J.A. *Scottish Pottery* (1973), p158.

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adoption of new technology. Considering the twenty-percent failure rate in production due to breakage's and faulty firing, it follows that fragile materials were discarded; off-white salt glaze was considered more fragile than brown, so substitution took place, not just in Prestonpans but nationally. The quality of clay available in Scotland determined what new glazes; moulds and designs were introduced. Cash for any design innovation was very limited, so any new use for available materials was eagerly adopted.⁷

Changes of materials and designs were made successful by partial mechanisation; such as the introduction of the potters' wheel (for throwing) and the lathe (to extract excess clay). The pottery process still required human manipulation however, as exemplified in Belfield's invention of a system of hand pressing pipes.⁸ Similarly, although mechanised *jolley*, *jugger* and *battling machines* produced flatwares, manual techniques were still required for standardised items, slipcasting and pressmoulding.

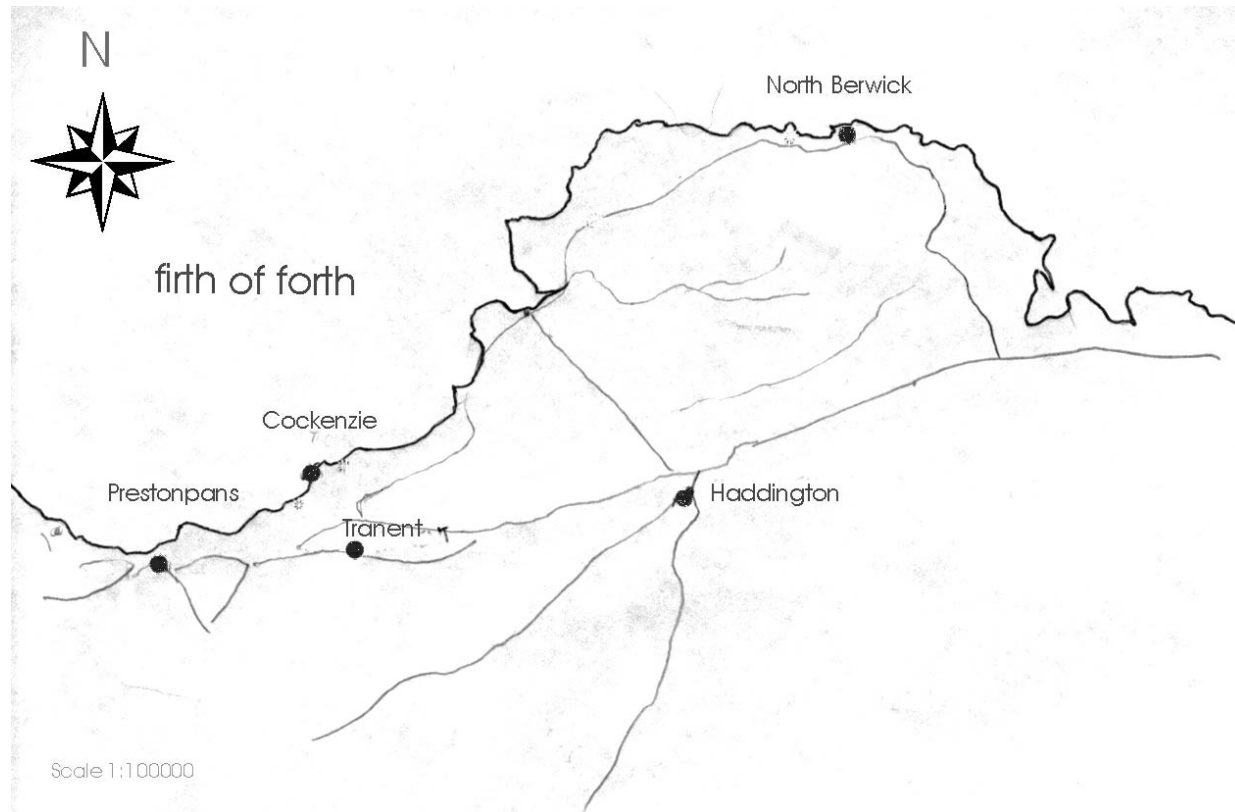
The issue of mechanisation highlights three points. Firstly, the quality of available clay determined glaze, composition and the amount of mechanisation required. Secondly, mechanisation was only adopted where it facilitated the use of new materials and designs. Finally, uneven and partial mechanisation meant that craft skills remained very important.

Such a complex mix of manual and mechanised production had to be well planned and well organised; hence the reason for the distinctively entrepreneurial element to Prestonpans pottery production. For most owners, pottery was only one of many business interests. Even Cadell's, one of the largest of the Prestonpans pottery firms, highly capitalised and commanding world markets, was almost a sweetener to William Cadell's business empire. As potteries were only part of larger enterprises, they tended to collapse when entrepreneurs lost interest or other interests demanded more time. Cadell, for instance, used his business connections as a local merchant, landowner and shipowner to distribute the pottery's produce via Morrison's Haven harbour through Cadell's existing trade links in Scandinavia, Russian, North America, Spain and Italy.⁹ However, when Cadell decided it was time for a new venture, to establish an ironworks, he left the pottery business in the hands

⁷ The introduction of Spongeware is a clear example of a technique discovered by accident. Women transfer printers began applying glaze with discarded sponges, to great effect.

⁸ McNeill, P. *Prestonpans & Vicinity: Historical, Ecclesiastical and Traditional* (1984), p104.

⁹ Dalgleish, G., Haggarty, G. & McVeigh, P. (Eds.) *Pots at the 'Pans – the Potteries of Prestonpans, Musselburgh and Portobello* (1990)



East Lothian

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of his son. Similarly, in 1811, the Gordons looked to pottery because they had capital, facilities and access to clay. That domestic pottery production was reduced in scale however, in response to increased demand for brick, tile and pipes.

Aside from the fact that Prestonpans pottery firms were all run by entrepreneurs, two of the four had another common feature – family orientation. The Cadell family had three simultaneous operations in Prestonpans, run by William Senior, his son and his nephew. Similarly, George Gordon and his three sons ran Gordons Pottery. Arguably, such family orientation allowed these two Prestonpans potteries to expand rapidly because it was in the best interests of the family to make the project work. In addition, descent from a line of potters meant family members had a wealth of practical experience.

As the pottery industry proved increasingly profitable even previously inexperienced local businessmen were tempted to participate. One example is John Fowler, a local brewer, who helped fund the Kirk Street pottery in 1796, when it was run by David Thomson & Co.

All four of the main Prestonpans pottery production businesses ran along the same lines; workers were employed on a casual basis when demand was particularly high and production closed down when the business became unprofitable. As a consequence of this almost ‘disposable’ nature of the Prestonpans potteries and workforce, no one family forged strong associations with the industry, unlike the successful Wedgewoods in England. This may be symptomatic of Scottish business practice of not putting all one’s eggs in the same basket, or perhaps a reflection of the changeable nature of the then Scottish economy.

In summary, the history of the potteries at Kirk Street, Bankfoot and West Pans followed the same path. In terms of location, all pottery owners chose East Lothian because of the readily available natural resources. In terms of range of wares, the demand for fashionable pottery was met by innovative use of existing materials and new technology. In terms of factory organisation, the Prestonpans potteries were most notable for their good designs and excellent workmanship, which meant that the manual part of the manufacturing process was maintained well beyond mechanisation. Finally, despite the diversity of ownership, the reason for the decline of pottery production is arguably similar in each case; potteries were only part of larger enterprises, and tended to be abandoned when a more profitable venture came along.



Prestonpans tu'penny Ale

OWNERS

William Cadell & Company – 1750–1840

IN 1750, William Cadell (1708–1777), a merchant from Haddington undertook the construction of a pottery in Prestonpans, situated in Kirk Street, to the west of the old Parish church. His family had been associated with industrial and commercial development in the area as, from 1732, Cadell leased Cockenzie House, the Boat Shore Harbour, some Salt Pans and coal pits at Tranent. The property was owned by the York Buildings Company, a London based property developer. So, by 1750, William Cadell was an accomplished merchant shipowner, land owner and entrepreneur, who traded from the harbour at Port Seton, exporting coal amongst other things to Edinburgh, and salt to Hanseatic ports, Norway and the Baltic.¹⁰

Cadell's Prestonpans Pottery was specifically designed to make creamware,¹¹ leading to McVeigh's assertion that Prestonpans is the home of creamware in Scotland.¹² A variety of mineral oxides were used to stain the creamware producing a mottled 'tortoise-shell' effect.¹³ This technique remained a speciality of Cadell's until 1755, when the range expanded to include white saltglazed stoneware.¹⁴ Further expansion came in 1789, when the company contemplated manufacturing glazed brownware '...Pigs, at five pence per dozen ...'; if this venture was successful, Caddell's intended to build workers' housing.¹⁵

In 1759, William Caddell left Cockenzie to join with John Roebuck and Samuel Garbett in founding the Carron Iron Works near Falkirk, the first large ironworks in Scotland; later, the partnership purchased the Cramond Iron Mills, near Edinburgh.¹⁶ William Cadell passed the Kirk Street Pottery to

¹⁰ Campbell, R.D. *Captain Cadell and the Waikato Flotilla* (1995), p1.

¹¹ Creamware is cream coloured earthenware with superior style and finish.

¹² McVeigh, P. *Scottish East Coast Potteries 1750–1840* (1979), p7.

¹³ McVeigh, P. *The Creamware Potter: East Coast of Scotland – 1750–1840* (1980)

¹⁴ Dalgleish, G., Haggarty, G. & McVeigh, P. (Eds.) *Pots at the 'Pans – the Potteries of Prestonpans, Musselburgh and Portobello* (1990); McVeigh, *Creamware*, op cit.

¹⁵ NAS SC 40/20/12. Decreet Absolvi for and for Expences Charles Ramsay one of the Partners of the Potterie Co. at Prestonpans against James Anderson, Potter at Prestonpans (1790).

¹⁶ Campbell, R.D. *Captain Cadell and the Waikato Flotilla* (1995), p1.

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the management of his son, John Cadell (1740-1814), leaving the former managers, William Cadell's nephew (also William) and his wife Margaret Cadell (nee Inglis), free to establish a pottery of their own at Bankfoot.¹⁷

Situated half a mile west along the town boundary William Cadell (nephew) built a pottery on the Bankfoot site, which consisted of a 'Tenement of land with houses, biggings, yards, corn barn, malt barn and kiln steep-stove'.¹⁸ Bankfoot originally specialised in basic brown earthenware, using local clay which was plentiful in the area. To produce a glazed brownware range, flints were ground at a nearby mill let to Margaret Caddell by the then owner of Prestongrange, Janet, Countess of Hyndford.¹⁹ White clay, which gave a finer product, was later imported from the South of England to recreate the Creamware of the original Kirk Street pottery. Bankfoot also produced salt-glazed stoneware bottles, particularly used for holding the famous Prestonpans (tu'penny) Ale.²⁰

William Cadell & Co. was a relatively large pottery, employing 40 men and 30 boys in 1791 and selling articles of earthenware to a value of upwards of £5,000 per annum.²¹ John Cadell's pottery in Kirk Street, Prestonpans employed 40. Margaret Cadell (now widow) employed 12 at Bankfoot, including Adam Cubie, master potter.²² All the Cadell potteries benefited from the business connections of William Cadell Snr, who built up a thriving export business in Prestonpans pottery.²³ Building on his existing trading links from the port of Morrison's Haven, about a mile west of Prestonpans, Cadell exported pottery along his existing merchant shipping lines to Scandinavia, Russia, North America, Spain and particularly Italy.²⁴ Patent books featuring pottery were distributed by Cadell's various agents, which showed Cadell's awareness of the power of advertising and faith in his product.²⁵

¹⁷ NAS RS 27/175/173.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ NAS SC40/20/5 & NAS 40/20/70. For nineteen years to 1790.

²⁰ Fleming, J.A., *Scottish Pottery* (1973), p158.

²¹ Trotter, J. Rev. Mr. 'Parish of Prestonpans' in Sinclair, J. *The Statistical Account of Scotland* (1791), p570-1.

²² Shirlaw, J. 'Potters at Morrison's Haven c1750-1833 and the Gordon's at Bankfoot 1795-1840' in *Scottish Pottery Society Historical Review* (1997), p1; The total population of Prestonpans town, in 1791, was 1492, with the number employed in the potteries and their families, totalling 252; Trotter, *Statistical Account*. op cit., p570-1.

²³ McVeigh, *Creamware*

²⁴ Dagleish, op cit.

²⁵ McVeigh, *Scottish East*, op cit., p13.

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In 1777, John Cadell purchased Cockenzie House and the lands formerly leased from the now sequestered York Buildings Company and the Cadells began their 140-year reign as Lairds of Cockenzie.²⁶ The pottery business failed to keep pace with this success however, as the late eighteenth century saw a general decline in pottery business. In light of this, Caddell decided to reorganise the pottery and, in 1786, considered engaging Richard Adams from Cobridge, Staffordshire. Adams may have been experienced and enthusiastic, but he failed to impress John Caddell and was not appointed.²⁷ Decline in business ultimately led to Margaret Caddell (nee Inglis) giving up Bankfoot to the Gordons in 1795; John Cadell gave up Kirk Street a year later, to David Thomson & Co.²⁸ David Thomson was a Potters' Society and Committee member, which status attracted large amounts of finance from John Fowler, brewer, and his partner Robert Hislop. David Thomson & Co. operated successfully from Kirk Street until around 1813–1814.²⁹

When David Thomson died in 1819, the pottery passed to Hamilton Watson, Thomson's manager, competent potter and one time President of the Potters' Box Society.³⁰ Watson recruited a manager in J.J. Foster, master potter, originally from Newcastle.³¹ The Kirk Street Pottery was now 'Watsons' and was responsible for the change in technique from the basic hand painting of clear or self-coloured glaze to transfer printing. The original design was etched on a copper plate, transferred to tissue paper and then rolled to the ware. Hamilton Watson remained owner of the Kirk Street pottery until 1838, when his business affairs were sequestered and Foster left for Reid's Pottery in Musselburgh.³²

In its 75-year lifespan, the Caddell pottery tradition in Prestonpans can be credited on three counts. Firstly, for introducing Creamware pottery to Scotland. Secondly, for establishing an international market for Prestonpans Pottery. Finally, for constructing purpose-built potteries in which to perpetuate the Prestonpans pottery tradition.

²⁶ Campbell, *Captain Cadell*, op cit., p1.

²⁷ Trotter, *Statistical Account*, op cit., p570.

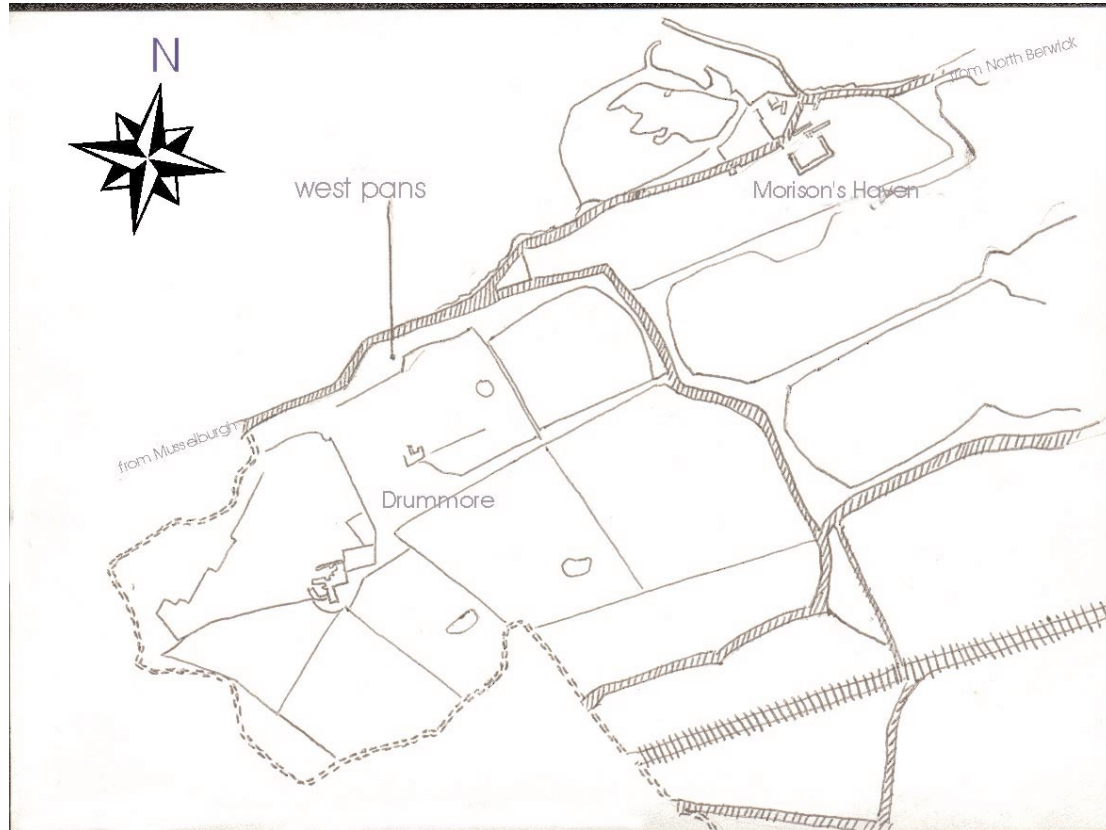
²⁸ *Potters Box Society Rule Book*

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ McVeigh, *Scottish East*, op cit., pp34–41.

³² Shirlaw, *Potters*, op cit., p3.



West Pans Pottery

West Pans Pottery – 1764/5–1817

West Pans is situated three miles westwards of Prestonpans, on the seaward side of the road to Edinburgh. Opposite there is a knoll or hill which takes its name ‘Drumore’ (the ‘big ridge’) from Gaelic. West Pans had all the basic pottery making elements; clay, coal, salt and waterpower (provided by Pinky Burn). While the monks of the Cistercian order at Newbattle settled in the area in the twelfth century, and in all probability produced pottery, the first specific record appears in 1754, when the Burgh Council of Musselburgh ordered a Samuel Lambas to pay for the right to dig clay.³³ Pottery production, on a significant scale, began, in the 1760s, when William Littler arrived at West Pans, after the failure of his factory at Longton Hall in Staffordshire. Littler is respected today as the founder of Scotland’s porcelain industry, but he was as highly regarded by his contemporaries who elected him honorary burgess of Musselburgh in 1764.³⁴

The Littler pottery range included basic wares in white and brown, stoneware, creamware and earthenware.³⁵ Mapped in 1766 as a ‘china work’, Littler specialised in soft paste porcelain using clay from the Pan Brae, a pit on the side of the Drummer Ridge. Littler’s work is characterised by a deep blue colour, achieved by utilising Scottish cobalt from Alva at the head of the Firth of Forth, refined by Roebuck at his chemical works in Prestonpans.³⁶ Littler had a tendency towards producing raised floral and leaf patterns on jugs, dishes and tureens as well as *lustre* decorated crests and coats of arms. Such decorations reflected not only the importance of aristocratic patronage, but also the West Pans tradition of ‘novelty’ and ‘one-off’ items.³⁷ Despite the admiration of his contemporaries and the patronage of the gentry, the pottery closed in 1777 principally because Littler was unable to produce porcelain at an affordable price.³⁸

The West Pans pottery was reopened in 1784 with the arrival of Robert Bangle, a Glasgow potter who had been forced to abandon his own, successful, pottery business after riots in the city. In 1779, the Bill before Parliament to repeal

³³ McVeigh *Scottish East*, op cit., pp47–9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p51. ‘Honorary’ indicating that Littler did not own the land, he leased it from a superior.

³⁵ McVeigh *Creamware*, op cit., (1979)

³⁶ Trotter, *Statistical Account*, op cit., p142.

³⁷ McVeigh, *Scottish East*, op cit., pp51–64.

³⁸ Dalglish, G, *Pots*, op cit.

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the Penal Code against Roman Catholics in Scotland met with violent opposition by the Committee of Correspondence. Fired by Lord George Gordon's speech making, mobs destroyed Catholic meeting houses and shops in Edinburgh and Glasgow; Robert Bagnall had a pottery at Turine Street which was set on fire in February 1779. Similarly, rioters destroyed the contents of his pottery warehouse in King Street. Although Bangle received a small amount of compensation from Glasgow Town Council, he eventually went bankrupt and moved to West Pans to take over Litters' pottery, which he operated as a cream-ware pottery until 1792.³⁹

Suffering a decline in sales, Bangle attempted re-organisation. However, the pottery went bankrupt and was re-opened by Bangle's creditors, trading as the West Pans Stoneware Company. A William Smith was succeeded, in 1813, by David Wilson and James Gibson who produced brownwares, until 1817.⁴⁰

Gordons Pottery – 1772–1842

About 1750, a Newcastle potter, Anthony Hilcote, leased the pottery at Morrison's Haven Harbour, situated at the western extremity of Prestonpans. In 1772, Janet Grant, Countess Hyndford (c1729–1818) granted a nineteen-year lease to Rowland Bagnall, potter and alchemist, and a George Gordon, then a clerk at the Glass House Company, Leith. The Partnership was given rights to ground at Morrison's Haven, including a Sea Mill and a number of houses from which Anthony Hilcote had carried out 'pottery work'.⁴¹ The partnership planned to make cream coloured ware, black tortoise-shell and white ware.⁴² However, Bagnall died on 22 February 1773 leaving his wife Elizabeth who, under the Partnership Agreement, had no hereditary entitlements and was removed. In 1774, Gordon personally moved into the pottery at Morrison's Haven along with his two sons, George (2nd) and Robert, both potters.⁴³ Initially, fuel for the Morrison's Haven pottery came from Elphinstone colliery, but the increasing success of the Gordons pottery concern allowed them to take over the lease of the colliery at Wallyford.

³⁹ *The Prestonpans Potters Rule Book (1766–1807)*

⁴⁰ Dagleish, *Pots*, op cit.

⁴¹ Shirlaw, *Potters*, op cit., p1.

⁴² NAS CC 8/17/39 – Partnership Agreement between R. Bagnall and G. Gordon. Dated 12 May 1773.

⁴³ NAS SC 40/20/12 – Summons. Elizabeth Bagnall v Geo. Gordon, 1774.

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By the end of the eighteenth century, Gordons was exporting, and in 1795 took over Bankfoot pottery from William Cadell and Margaret Inglis. Bankfoot was situated to the west of Prestonpans on the landward side of the main road, which ran along the coast to Edinburgh. To the east lay the small promontory known as the Cuttle, or 'Cuthill'. To the south was the estate of Prestongrange and to the west, Morrison's Haven Harbour. Bankfoot was described, in 1766, as 'a Tenement of land with houses, biggings, yards, corn barn, malt barn and kiln steep stove'.⁴⁴ Bankfoot proved a suitable location for industrial pottery production because of the readily available, good quality clay from Upper Birslie Plantation or 'Clay Holes' in the Barony of Falside.⁴⁵ The existence of Prestongrange and Elphinstone coalfields conveniently provided coal suited to firing and the harbour and main Edinburgh Road provided transportation for produce.

Bankfoot, under the Cadells, had to 1790, produced glazed brown ware. This range was carried on by the Gordons, and by the first quarter of the nineteenth century this pottery was producing a wide variety of good quality earthenware.

By George Gordon (the elder)'s death in 1809, pottery production was a success. Robert was the proprietor of two feus, described as;

lying over against the harbour of Milhaven, now called Morrison's Haven, betwixt the ... harbour on the north and west ... and the other called the Salt Girnee ... bounded by the Sea Craig on the north ⁴⁶

Conditions were attached to the nineteen year lease (1772–1791) for Morrison's Haven granted by Janet, Countess of Hyndford, exemplifying how she advocated the movement towards agricultural 'improvement', an ideology which focused on the development of agriculture and which was a forerunner to later nineteenth-century industrialisation. Gordons had to provide a carriage of six carts and two horses on Janet Grant's demand, from Prestongrange to within a radius of ten miles, as well as infilling any clay excavation to make way for crops the following year.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ NAS RS27/175/173 – Register of Sasine entry, recording Mr. W. Cadell and Elizabeth Inglis' ownership of Bankfoot.

⁴⁵ McNeill, *Prestonpans*

⁴⁶ NAS GD 357/49/25 – Legal Papers Grant Suttie v Gordon, Edinburgh, 16 December 1834.

⁴⁷ NAS RD5/263/p719 – Renewal of Hyndford/Gordon lease for Morrison's Haven, flint mill and land adjacent to Bankfoot.

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By 1812, Gordons operations at Morrison's Haven had expanded to include brick and tile making while pottery production continued and increased. Gordons' now leased the Bankfoot pottery to a Charles Belfield, whose three kilns at the Cuttle complemented Gordons' existing two.⁴⁸ Gordons' further expanded their pottery operations by taking over the bankrupt Prestonpans Vitriol Company's premises in Prestonpans.⁴⁹

Gordons' success lay in the ability to continually manufacture products suited to the demands of the consumer. Plaster moulds used up to the 1740s were superseded by more sophisticated methods and wares were enhanced by transfer printing, painting, gilding and colouring. The change allowed Gordons' to cater for local demand for inexpensive decorated ware.⁵⁰ Initially producing coarse slipware pottery, Gordons' later produced white enamelled earthenware, whiteware or delftware. However, this proved unsuitable for domestic use because it was too brittle and was liable to crack. So, from 1770 when it was discovered in Devonshire, china clay was utilised.⁵¹ Gordons' thereafter produced white and decorated ware in an extensive variety of shapes and patterns. Indeed, from inventories of Gordons' goods sent to buyers, about fifty per cent of the goods were whiteware.⁵²

Gordons' looked to available resources to expand their range; local clays were utilised to make terracotta and jet, or basalt wares, including black lustre teapots, toy figures, banded bowls, enamelled pressed jugs, lustre bowls, lustre cream ewers and lustre sugar boxes.⁵³ Gordons' most popular moulded plates included 'Bird and Fly', the monarchy, nautical scenes and fruit designs. The range also featured hugely popular blue and white transfer printed ware, known patterns of which included Willow, Asiatic Pheasant, and Lady of the Lake. In addition, Robert Gordon probably produced hand painted pieces; his father had been a 'master potter', Robert was apprenticed to James Ramsay (an Edinburgh painter) for six years and he acted as Clerk at the 1799 Annual General Meeting of the Prestonpans Potters' Society, of which he was a

⁴⁸ *East Lothian News* 06 April 1979; Charles Belfield and his son James, who started Belfield's pottery, both were originally employed in Gordon's (c1800–1830).

⁴⁹ NAS SC40/20/196. Execution of Sequestration. Trustees of Wm. Cadell, deceased and George Gordon. Dated 03 July 1841.

⁵⁰ Whipp, *Patterns*, op cit.,

⁵¹ Paul, *Scottish Tradition*, op cit., p2.

⁵² Shirlaw, *Potters*, op cit., p2.

⁵³ Fleming, *Scottish Pottery*, op cit., p252; Shirlaw, *Potters* op cit., p2.

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member.⁵⁴ Whatever their style, Gordons' pieces can be identified by the impressions R. & G. Gordon with a *crown*, *Geo. Gordon*, or simply *Gordon*.

Despite adequate local resources and innovative designs, the success of Gordons' did not endure. Robert was prosperous enough to become a founding member of the East Lothian Bank in 1810,⁵⁵ but his fortunes suffered when one of the cashiers disappeared with the funds in 1822, and the partners were left liable for the substantial loss.⁵⁶ Other events conspired against him.

In 1818, Sir James Grant-Suttie, 4th Baron of Balgone and Prestongrange (1759–1836) had inherited the land at Prestongrange. The Grant-Suttie/Gordon relationship got off to a bad start with Grant-Suttie taking the Gordons to court over the disrepair of the housing and the Sea Mill at Morrison's Haven.⁵⁷ Gordons' had originally leased the 'flint mill at the foot of Prestongrange Avenue for a period of 14 years' from the Countess Hyndford in 1812.⁵⁸ The lease included an agreement that Countess Hyndford's 'heirs and successors ... warrant [the Gordons'] ... peaceable possession of said mill'. This was not entirely adhered to when, in 1826, a grievance was raised by Grant-Suttie that the power of the mill had been diminished as '... caused and continued by the negligence, or by the permission of the Gordons'.⁵⁹ Such disrepair was presumably due to the Gordons indebtedness over the East Lothian Bank crisis. Whatever the case, Grant-Suttie refused to renew the Gordons soon to expire lease and began litigation banning Gordons' from winning the clay at Morrison's Haven.

It would seem that the action against Gordons' was part of Grant-Suttie's plans to consolidate his lands. Although, Grant-Suttie's treatment of the Gordons seems heavy handed, it is worth bearing in mind that Grant-Suttie moved to Prestongrange after retiring as Member of Parliament for Haddingtonshire; he was used to applying legal power to his will. In 1832, Grant-Suttie complained that a 'small stripe of

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p2; Scottish Record Society *Register of Edinburgh Apprentices, 1756–1800; The Rulebook of the Prestonpans Potters' Society, 1793–1801*

⁵⁵ The East Lothian Bank had been formed on the premise of agricultural prosperity and speculated in wheat and barley prices.

⁵⁶ Cameron, A. *Bank of Scotland, 1695-1995: A Very Singular Institution* (1995), p107.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p3.

⁵⁸ NAS GD357/49/1 – New Issue, Gordon's v Suttie, 1826.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

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ground' to which Grant-Suttie had legal right on the north side of the Edinburgh Road had been 'taken of them when the old road was changed from ... the south side of the houses and yards at the harbour at Morrison's Haven to ... the north side of the Houses and yards'.⁶⁰ It emerged that reallocation of the road was 'in consequence of an Act of Parliament' which had moved Morrison's Haven Harbour westwards. The move was only feasible because of land reclamation efforts instigated by the Gordons, where 'the ground in dispute may have been gradually formed by the accumulation of rubbish from ... [Gordons] manufactures'.⁶¹ In effect, Grant-Suttie wrongly blamed Gordons' for his loss of a small strip of ground to facilitate improvements to the road system.

Further, Grant-Suttie still insisted that Gordons' pay him compensation for any clay they took for making brick. His pedantic view was that this was contrary to the terms of their lease, which stated that clay could only be used to make bricks for the pottery. His perception was that Gordons' were allegedly making excessive amounts of bricks and transporting them elsewhere.⁶²

Later in 1832, a petition was served on 'Geo. Gordon, Potter at Morrison's Haven' claiming that he had 'thought fit to take off the turf of a part of the ... links grounds next [to] the Harbour with the intention apparently of carrying it off and applying it to some other purpose'.⁶³ In February 1833, an agent was assigned to survey and measure the grounds in question, and Gordons' were not only requested to 'replace any Turf that may have been taken from the ground ... and [banned] ... from removing any more', but a claim was made that Gordons' were liable in all expenses.⁶⁴ Again, it was noted that the piece of ground in question was now much bigger because of Gordons' reclamation efforts, indeed it was deemed that the ground belonged to Gordons'. It thereafter came to light that Grant-Suttie had ordered East Lothian Road Trustees to 'remove the turf and the soil ... with the view to blasting the Craig below'. This apparently '... had been done maliciously, and in order to annoy' the Gordons.⁶⁵ Unhappy

⁶⁰ NAS GD357/49/3 – Petition and Complaint of Sir James Grant Suttie of Prestongrange and Balgone, Baronet, 10/11/1832.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² McVeigh, *Scottish East*, op cit., pp90-91

⁶³ NAS GD357/49/2- Turfcase interlocutor Suttie, Bart v Gordons. 21/11/1832.

⁶⁴ Ibid; GD357/49/25 – Edinburgh, 16 December 1834.

⁶⁵ NAS GD357/49/26 – Plan of Two Feus of Messrs. Gordon, Morison's Haven. Surveyed 9 February 1883.

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with this allegation, Grant-Suttie ordered the case to be put before the Lord President. The case was ultimately dismissed in 1837, when it was deemed that no expenses were due by either party; the death of Sir James Grant-Suttie the previous year was noted in the dismissal, and perhaps his successor saw more clearly the futility of the action.⁶⁶ However, if Grant-Suttie's actions had failed to exact any financial gain from the Gordons, he did succeed in removing them from the premises at Morrison's Haven.

The most notable feature of Gordons' pottery production history was their determination to remain in the pottery trade. The mid-nineteenth century saw pottery operations in decline, throughout the area, as one contemporary observed;

'Of late [1831], all operations of potting, with the exception of two small works for brownware ... [have] been suspended, to the serious disadvantage of numerous and manifold interests'.⁶⁷

Robert moved to a small brownware pottery at Rope Walk, Prestonpans to be succeeded, in 1839, by his brother George Gordon (3rd). George Gordon (2nd) took over management of the pottery at Bankfoot but was soon struggling financially and was ultimately sequestered, in 1828, for not paying his coal account to Grant-Suttie.⁶⁸ George Gordon (2nd) probably moved to the old vitriol works at Prestonpans; he already owned the site and the existence of two beehive kilns, suggests he used the premises as a pottery.⁶⁹ In 1840, he took on a five-year lease of the main Cadell Pottery in Kirk Street, Prestonpans. By this time, the pottery included 'three kilns and adjacent building along with the two dwellinghouses on the main street and small garden behind'.⁷⁰ By the end of his first year, Gordon had to relinquish the lease because he could not afford the rent arrears of £17 10s.⁷¹ Subsequently, any existing Gordons' pottery stock was sold and, in 1841, George Gordon

⁶⁶ NAS GD357/49/27 – 1st Division, 20 January 1835. Additional Appendix to the Reclaiming note for Sir James Grant Suttie, Bart against Lord Corehouse's Interlocutor; GD357/49/31 – Note for Sir George Grant Suttie to order process of Advocation to the Roll along with Declarator. 22 February 1837.

⁶⁷ *The Story of Prestonpans from Contemporary Records: 1790s-1950s* (1995), p52.

⁶⁸ Shirlaw, J. op cit., p3.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p2.

⁷⁰ NAS SC 40/20/196. Execution of Sequestration. Trustees of William Caddell, deceased and George Gordon. Dated 03 July 1841.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Water Jug, Belfield's c1880



Belfield's Water Jug

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(2nd) was ordered out of the pottery, a year before his death in 1842 when all debts of Gordons' were discharged.⁷²

The Gordons dominance of Prestonpans pottery production ended in 1842, after seventy years of producing pottery from premises in Kirk Street and Rope Walk in Prestonpans, Bankfoot and Morrison's Haven.

Belfield & Company – c1835–c1935

With the demise of Gordons' domination of the Prestonpans pottery industry, two potters – Andrew Mitchell and Charles Belfield – were only too happy to set up another pottery, initially trading as Mitchell & Belfield and, by 1847, as Charles Belfield & Co.⁷³ Charles Belfield was familiar with both pottery and Prestonpans; he had previously managed Gordons' at Bankfoot and his father, James Belfield had probably originated from one of the Staffordshire potteries. James had established a pottery on the site of the old Salt manufactory of Robert Laidlaw – the property known as 'Seacliff' – on the north side of the west end of the High Street in Prestonpans.

At this time, the older potteries of Prestonpans were in difficulty and Belfields' is known to have bought a large amount of bankrupt stock from Watson's Pottery. The Victorian Era had begun and the average Scots family had better equipped kitchens and meals became more elaborate. The result was that demand for large quantities of quality pottery increased and Belfields' expanded to include premises on the south side of the High Street facing Rope Walk.⁷⁴

Belfields' was best known for its fine quality sanitary ware and brown (or *Rockingham*) glazed tea and coffee pots. Their range included *Majolica* ware, everyday kitchen ware and high quality relief moulded plates featuring leaf decoration and/or leaf shape and coloured with a variety of deep oxide and lead glazes in green, yellow and brown.

Belfields' product range expanded in a different direction from previous Prestonpans pottery producers in that Belfields' ultimately specialized in drainpipes. Indeed, Charles Belfield invented (but did not patent) a system of hand pressing pipes

⁷² NAS GD357/49/30 – Discharge dated 14 July 1842 of 'all Bonds or Debts due by George Gordon, Senior or Robert Gordon, or George Gordon, Junior; Shirlaw, J. op cit., p3.

⁷³ Shirlaw, *Potters*, p2.

⁷⁴ McVeigh, *Scottish East*, op cit., p107.

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of about thirty-seven centimetres long, wider at one end than the other. Some were utilised at Prestonpans for water drainage and gas while the remainder was transported to Forfarshire for use as water pipes.⁷⁵

In 1850, Charles Belfield died, leaving the business to run as a family concern until shortly before the death of John Clark Belfield, in 1941, the last remaining potter in the family. This was not the end of industrial pottery production in the area however, as bricks and other fireclay goods continued to be produced at Morrison's Haven by a variety of companies until the early 1970s. However, Belfields' remains the most technically accomplished of the Prestonpans potteries, with a continuous record of family ownership lasting over one hundred years.

⁷⁵ McNeill, *Prestonpans*, p115.

THE POTTERY COMMUNITY

IN 1792, the *Statistical Account of Scotland* reported that Prestonpans Parish had a working population of 1435, of which 252 ‘Persons ... [and their families were] employed in the potteries’.⁷⁶ This was by no means the high point in the history of Prestonpans Pottery production; Bankfoot had just ceased production and was about to resume, and Gordons’ had yet to start. In the meantime, Cadells’ was the biggest employer with a workforce of upwards of 70, with about 35 employed at Morrison’s Haven. This workforce comprised of men, women and children – the pottery community of Prestonpans – who established rules and work practices designed to protect their identity and themselves.

Pottery production has many elements that distinguish it from other manufactories. Firstly, production took several different processes, therefore requiring a workforce trained in their own particular skill. Secondly, an extensive product range was coupled with a low level of mechanisation. Thirdly, because technological change only occurred strategic points of the process, manual manipulation remained an essential part of the process. Put together, these elements ensured a complex sub-division of labour, which in turn resulted in a definite hierarchy within the potteries. This was best shown in the contract hiring system.

Pottery owners contracted individual craft potters to head the pottery hierarchy. Craft potters were chosen because of their manual dexterity and deep knowledge of technology, clay, its composition and its behaviour. Craft potters frequently brought their own work groups to produce a ‘count’ of ware, and managed the staff by determining wages and delegating supervision.⁷⁷ George Gordon was an eighteenth century example of a successful Prestonpans pottery owner with no experience of pottery production. To compensate for his inexperience, Gordon, in 1772, entered into partnership with Rowland Bagnall, potter and alchemist. Gordon advanced the money necessary for carrying on the pottery work, while

⁷⁶ Trotter, *Statistical Account*, op cit., p589–91.

⁷⁷ Whipp, *Patterns*, op cit., pp53–55.

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Bagnall was to receive '16s per week of wages'. Bagnall only received half of this wage, however, the other half was to be left to accumulate to 'help the Company's stock till the trade should be able to afford the whole'.⁷⁸ It is interesting that while Gordon was confident that Bagnall had the ability to generate 'trade', a financial incentive was put in place to ensure that he did.

Prestonpans had many craft potters, all were itinerant and were temporarily employed by different potteries. Adam Cubie, master potter for William Caddell at Bankfoot, helped Cadell's widow to carry on the pottery, until his own death in 1791. Jonathan Foster, pottery engraver, worked at all of the Prestonpans potteries, until c1800, when he became manager of Watsons'. John Jenkins, journeyman and copperplate engraver, came to Scotland in 1820 and was employed for a time at Gordons'. The master potter at Belfields' was Andrew Mitchell, who managed an increasing number of staff: the workforce rose from twenty-one in 1851 to thirty-nine by 1861.

By today's standards, life at the Prestonpans 'Potworks' was bad and poorly paid. Potwork was not a glamorous job, but messy, repetitive and hard work. Before the 48-hour week was introduced, in the early 1920's, most 'potworkers' endured a 60-hour, 6-day week. Potwork did, however, constitute a valuable source of employment, with many members of the same family working in the potteries at different skills.

Men were mostly employed in creating pottery in the workshop area. 'Throwers' made the different pots, cups, saucers and plates, while 'turners', finished-off and made smooth the pieces before hardening them off in a warm kiln. Thereafter male 'carriers' transported pieces to the biscuit kiln, to be dipped in glaze, then back to the glaze kiln for around three days firing. Men were paid on piece-work, and only kilnmen or master potters, were paid a weekly wage. Aside from creating pottery, men were responsible for counting the ware, cleaning water pots, firing stoves and carrying coal.⁷⁹

Women were often employed in the handlers' shop, making handles for cups and teapots, while others made spouts. Clay had to be cut up, manually manipulated and put in a box, from which equal quantities of clay emerged which would be set in a handle shape mould. Potworks used a high proportion of female labour, particularly in the decorating process. After

⁷⁸ NAS SC 40/20/12 Summons. Elizabeth Bagnall and George Gordon. 1774.

⁷⁹ McNeill, C. *Kirkcaldy Potteries* (1998), p46.

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baking, the pieces went to a painting shop, where the workers were regarded as superior to other sections of the workforce.⁸⁰ Up to the nineteenth century, child labour was a way of life in the Prestonpans manufactories, with ten-year-olds spending one day at work, one day at school, before entering full-time employment at around thirteen years of age.

Whatever the gender of the Potworker, in the mid-1800s all risked two industrial diseases. As lead was one of the main ingredients in the glazes, anyone in the glazing process was particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning. Additionally, pneumoconiosis (lung damage) could be contracted by inhaling the flint dust particles used in the clay mixture.⁸¹ Consequently, potteries were sited away from residential areas because of the atmospheric pollution caused when the kilns were fired; in 1792, an average of 24 tons of coal were consumed per week at Kirk Street.

The abundance of natural resources attracted many manufactories to Prestonpans, which meant that although potters were numerous they did not dominate entirely the areas working population; colliers were more numerous than potters. However, colliers lived and worked in even more depressing surroundings than the potworkers and were treated as 'serfs' (or slaves) of the pits who, up to 1799, were contracted for life to personally provide labour, and that of their families. In contrast, while skilled potters also had to provide assistants, who were normally family members, they never had to commit themselves or their families to lifetime allegiance to one employer. Potters and coalworkers may have shared the same locality and had similarly strong links between home and work, but they had different experiences in terms of skill. Coalworkers comprised of largely non-skilled labourers, convicts and unemployed agricultural workers, while potters were acknowledged as highly skilled craftsmen, noted for their independence, pride, thriftiness and prudence.

Potters then, were well respected in the local community and also well represented. Such a large proportion of the local workforce had to have a large impact on the community. To ensure that impact was a positive one, in 1766, a 'Potters' Friendly Society' was established. Various benefits were attached to membership of the Society, including an annual 'Potters Day' parade (on the First Friday of June) and access to

⁸⁰ Ibid., p42.

⁸¹ Whipp, *Patterns*, pp53–55

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the 'Prestonpans Potters Box'. Managerial potters introduced the 'Box' to administer support for the remaining members of the pottery community during retirement, sickness and bereavement. Monthly dues were collected by members for the 'benefit of all' and were fairly high at one pence ha'penny per month, if living within 10 miles and every quarter if outwith. Benefits included sickness payments, retirement pension, widow's pension, maintenance for orphans and compensation on death of a child. Costly subscriptions and the scope of the aid on offer indicate not only how realistic benefits were but also the wealth of the potters.⁸²

Members of the Society had to strictly adhere to its written Rules, which included penalties for inappropriate behaviour. For instance, any 'backbite or threat' incurred a fine, as did non-attendance at Annual General Meetings. Swearing on the Sabbath and any sort of theft meant exclusion from the Society. Burials had to be attended by all members within a two-mile radius or they were fined. *Mortality Cloths* were provided by the Society for use at members' funerals, including those of members' unmarried children, who had heritable benefit of the cloth.⁸³ Possibly due to demand or the inconvenience of transporting the cloths, a 1785 ruling forbade the use of mortality cloths ten miles outwith Prestonpans (members received 5s instead).⁸⁴

Establishing a workers' society may, to the twenty first century mind, suggest some sort of trade unionism, however, there are no political references in the *Prestonpans Potters' Society Rule Book*. Indeed, pottery owners, John and William Cadell, encouraged the benevolent measures, made subscriptions and chaired committee meetings which were made up of Boxmaster, two Key Keepers, a society member and clerk, all of whom were elected annually.⁸⁵ Any identifiable undertones are those of Protestantism. For example, at a meeting in 1779, for opposing the Repeal in favour of Popery, the Society agreed that the measure would threaten the interest of the 'Protestant Religion and the Civil Liberties of this Country'. And, along with 'Other Society's of Scotland', namely Hammermen, Weavers, Shoemakers, the Potters

⁸² *The Prestonpans Potters' Rule Book (1766-1807)*

⁸³ Trade and craft guilds owned at least one mortality cloth; a heavy cloth embroidered with the guilds' emblem which was draped over the coffin at funerals. Funds from the hire of the mortality cloth were used towards poor relief and/or funeral expenses.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

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resolved to use every Constitutional measure to oppose the repeal.⁸⁶

It was not only in times of personal tragedy that members could rely on Box benefits, as members could count on the Society to act to alleviate potential problems. For example, in July 1800 a shortage of corn moved the Society to purchase and distribute grain amongst its members thus acting to prevent hunger.⁸⁷ So, aside from monetary benefits, the Society offered the Prestonpans pottery community protection, identity and a collective voice.

In summary, Prestonpans potters had a distinctive experience of work compared to their industrial and agricultural contemporaries. Firstly, the complex production process meant sub-division of labour, resulting in a definite hierarchy. Secondly, itinerant specialists who imported designs and techniques managed an indigenous workforce. Lastly, in an area dominated by manufactories, the pottery workforce emerged as respected and highly skilled craftsmen armed with a published code of conduct.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ *Prestonpans Potters'*



Fishwife Figurine

CONCLUSION

THE HISTORY of the potteries of Prestonpans, Morrison's Haven and West Pans follow the same path. In terms of location, all the pottery owners chose East Lothian because of readily available natural resources. In terms of range of wares, the demand for fashionable pottery was met, determined by technology and innovative use of existing materials. In terms of workforce organisation, the Prestonpans potteries are most notable for their good design and excellent workmanship, made possible by maintaining the highly skilled, manual part of the process beyond mechanisation. Finally, despite the diversity of ownership, the reason for the decline of pottery manufacture is arguably similar in each case; potteries were only part of larger enterprises, which tended to collapse when more profitable ventures came along. In all instances, the success of the Prestonpans pottery community was based on hard toil, adaptability and self-preservation, evident in the two hundred-year association with Prestonpans.

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