

Meakin Revisited...

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Tea Leaf Club International

The original Alfred Meakin Survey was presented on July 30, 1988 at the 9th annual Tea Leaf Club Convention in Evansville, Indiana. In January, 1991 the convention presentation was published for the membership by the Education Committee. Since that time, additional body styles, as well as different and newly discovered items by Alfred Meakin have been found by Tea Leaf members.

Since the original printing was published over 10 years ago, this article is intended to review and update the Alfred Meakin saga.

I truly doubt that any one of our active collector members are without at least a piece or two of Tea Leaf potted by Alfred Meakin in their collections. Many members collect only Alfred Meakin pieces, and there's a very good reason for their collecting preference.

He was, in my opinion, the most prolific of Tea Leaf potters. The stacks of plates and platters we find today are likely to be stamped with the Alfred Meakin mark.

To quote the original Alfred Meakin Survey, "Alfred Meakin came about his potting business honorably. He was related to the Pearsons, Ridgeways, Johnsons and other Meakins, all noted potters in the late 18th and 19th century in Staffordshire, England."

The family tree (page 194, *Staffordshire History* by Josiah C. Wedgewood, published 1913) shows that Alfred Meakin was the son of James Meakin, Master Potter of Hanley, and the brother of Charles, James and George (J and G) Meakin, all familiar names to ironstone collectors.

He first purchased the Royal Albert Pottery Works in the early 1870's—the exact date of purchase varies from author to author. He then purchased the Victoria Works and the Highgate Pottery, all located in the Tunstall District of Staffordshire. Great quantities of very good quality ironstone were produced in these potteries for perhaps a thirty year period.

Alfred Meakin was known to be ambitious, possessing good business judgment as well as good marketing skills. Timing was also to his advantage as he entered the potting business when there was a great demand for table wares from the American market.

His innovative and intelligent approach to the potting process led to the use of newer industrial equipment thus improving the quality and process of potting ironstone.

Jewitts Ceramic Art of Great Britain by Geoffrey Godden stated that the Meakin Company (referring to Alfred Meakin) had become one of Britain's foremost manufacturers of good quality ironstone and semi-porcelain in the latter part of the 19th century in Tunstall. It was also stated that he was an energetic, benevolent man of high ideals.

Alfred Meakin died in 1904 and the making of Tea Leaf was discontinued in the Meakin potteries in 1910.

On the following pages are examples of popular, well known body styles potted by Alfred Meakin. They are presented in alphabetical order by body style: Bamboo, Beaded Tracery, Bro-

cade, Chelsea, Fishhook, Scroll, Simple Pear, and Miscellaneous. Photos from their collections have been contributed by members, as well as others pulled from our photo archive files.



This Meakin collection belongs to Ethel Teegarden, mother of Linda McElwee, grandmother of Rebecca McElwee. There are many lovely pieces, including an almost complete set of Scroll, Mrs. Teegarden's favorite body style.

Linda tells us that her mother started her collection with a soup tureen undertray or stand in Scroll and has continued to collect since 1963 when she acquired her Great Grandmother Butler's collection. Great Grandmother Butler used her Tea Leaf, Meakin Bamboo, for everyday use.

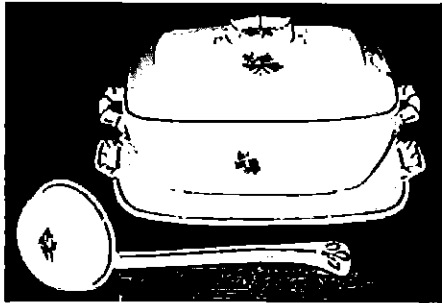
Linda's own collection was started with six pieces from her grandmother's collection. How fortunate to have those wonderful links and memories of family treasures from the past!



Now turn the page and view beautiful examples of Meakin's potting mastery.

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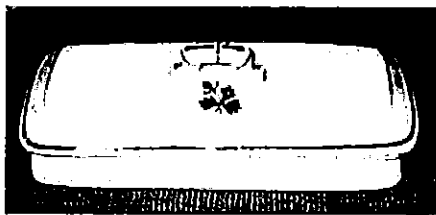
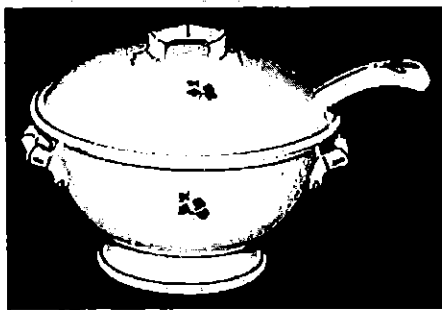
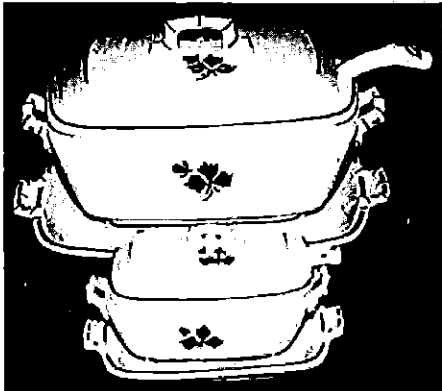
Bamboo



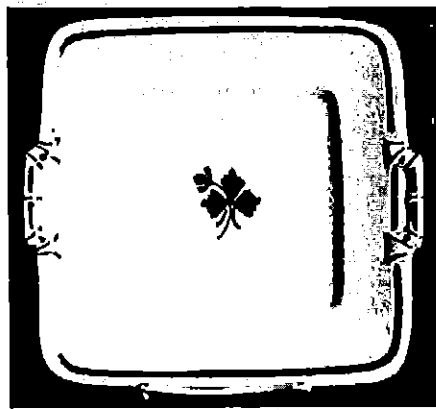
Above, Soup Tureen and Ladle (Collection of Eleanor Washburn); below, Tea Set from collection of Jane Washburn.



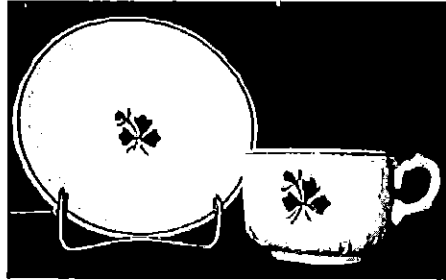
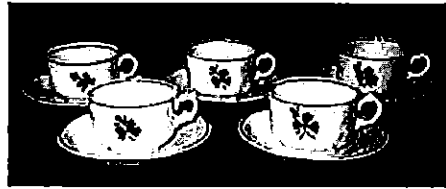
Remainder of photos from archive files.



Bamboo name comes from the shape of the applied and decorated handles which resemble bamboo stems.



Beaded Tracery



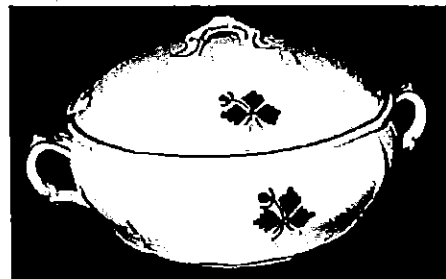
New discovery since the original Meakin Survey is Beaded Tracery. Mike & Marie Compton found these cups and saucers in a mall in St. Charles, Illinois in 1999. They had all white, undecorated pieces in this body style but these cups and saucers seem to be the first found with Tea Leaf motif.

The marks on these pieces are Alfred Meakin, Ltd. After 1897, perhaps or possibly his last body style.

Now, let's all look in our cupboards and maybe we can uncover more!!!

Brocade

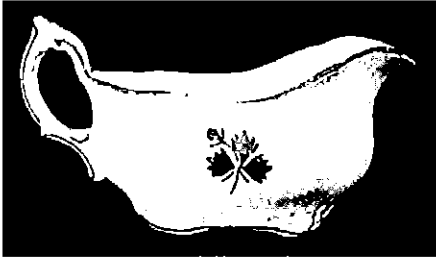
Name comes from delicate raised design that encircles the horizontal ridge above the base of hollowware pieces.



Above, Charla & Charles Warner's Brocade Chowder Bowl. Anyone have an extra ladle?

Meakin Revisited...

Brocade (continued)

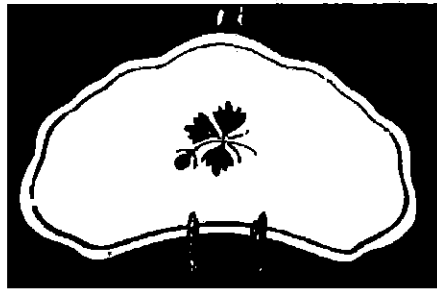


These three photos are from archive files.

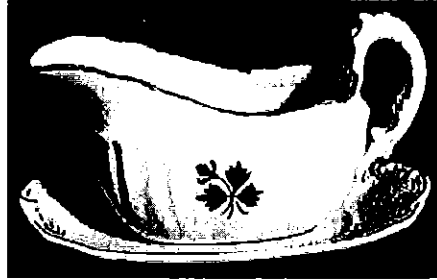
Chelsea

The Chelsea body style is characterized by its oval appearance, vertical fluting, ornate handles, a plain base with copper lustre band, and usually a large Tea Leaf.

Below is photo from Bob Skinner showing his bowl with measurements of 1-1/2" deep, 7-3/8" diameter. He says it looks like a small pie plate.



Above, Eleanor Washburn's Chelsea bone dish. Below photo from our archive files.

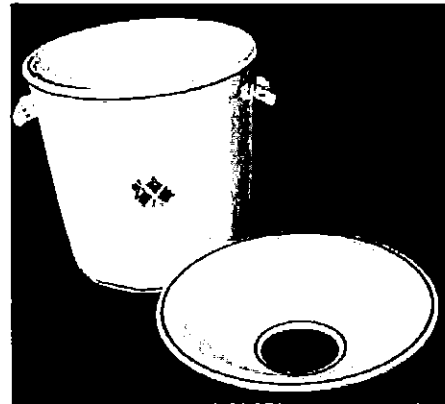


Fishhook

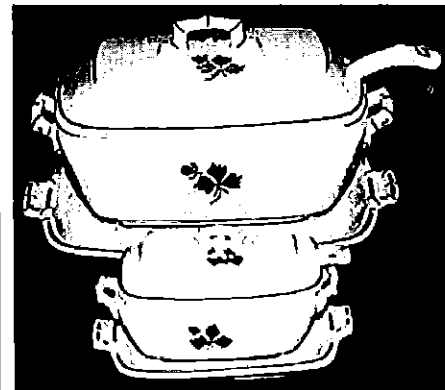
Alfred Meakin referred to this shape as "square shape" although the hollowware is rectangular. The use of the term "square" was possibly from square corners. Vertical corner fluting is also characteristic of the hollowware. Fishhook nomenclature comes from the fishhook-like copper lustre decoration on the handles of hollowware and the flat cake plate, relishes, and perhaps other pieces. Below is a file photo of a Fishhook bath set.



In the next column are photos of two different Fishhook slop jars in the collection of Valerie & Al Giorgi. Val says: "Notice the dome lid on one and the handles and how different this slop jar is from the other with silencer and turned down handles."

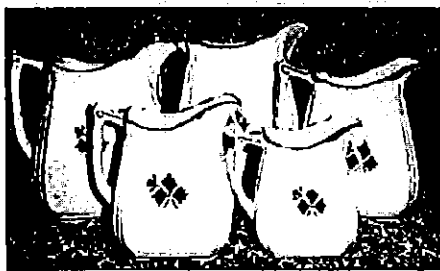
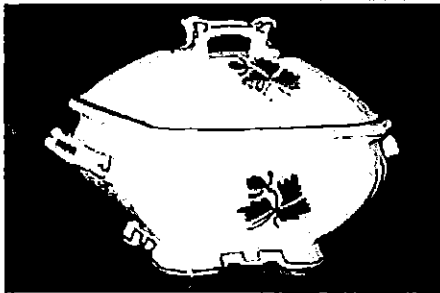


The remainder of the Fishhook photos are from the archive files.



Above, 4-piece soup tureen and sauce tureens. On page 4, covered vegetable, round soup tureen, butterdish, set of five matching pitchers, tea set and lidded chamberpot—It's all beautiful Alfred Meakin Fishhook!

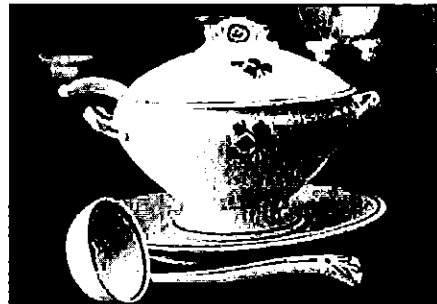
Fishhook (continued)



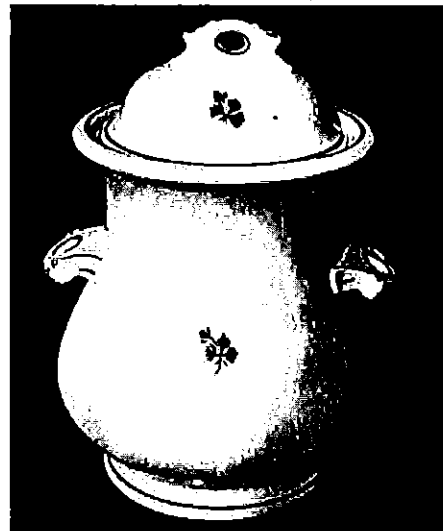
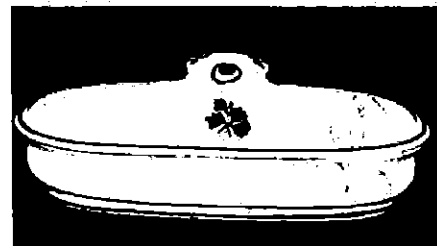
Scroll

Scroll is believed to be the oldest of Alfred Meakin's body styles. It is characterized by a heavy body, plain, simple designs, oval and pear shaped.

On page 1 you saw two cupboards which contain the large Meakin Scroll collection of Ethel Teegarden, mother of Linda McElwee and grandmother of Rebecca McElwee. Below are photos of Mrs. Teegarden's 4-piece Scroll soup tureen, covered butter dish, and a pair of relish dishes—pickle and mitten.



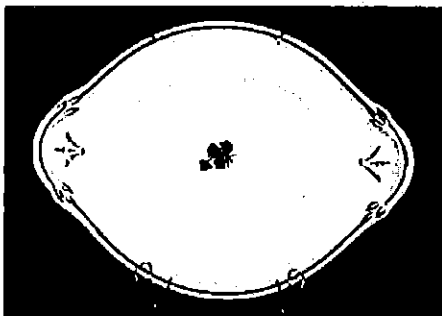
Next five photos from the archive files.



From Chris Weinbrenner's collection (above next column): Scroll compote (a present from Carl), and beautiful Scroll cake plate.

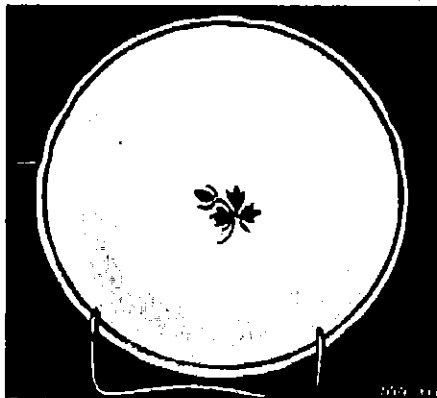
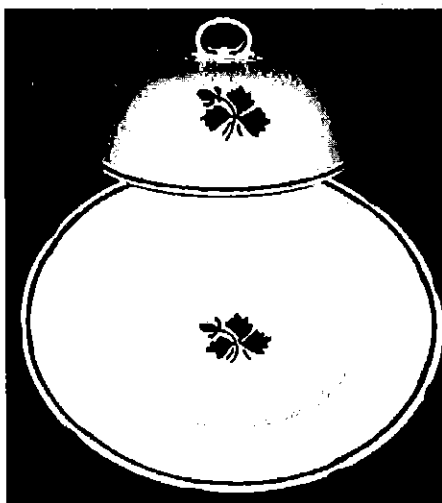
Meakin Revisited...

Scroll (Continued)



Simple Pear

This body style by Meakin has been discovered since the original Meakin Survey. The butter dish, circa 1880, below is from the collection of Vic & Peggy Regnaud. It was purchased at an auction in Lexington, Kentucky in 1996.



Mike & Marle Compton question if their cereal size bowl is Simple Pear or Chelsea, but we're listing it here. Comments, please.

From our photo archive files, the following:

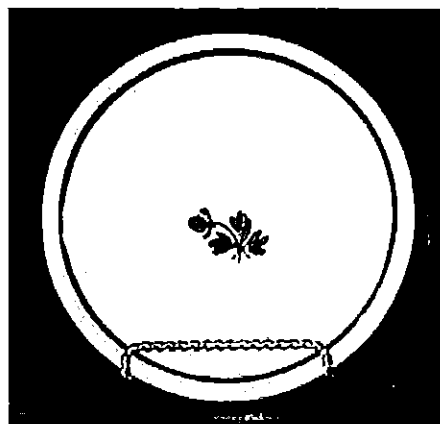


Please let us know if more pieces in this body style have been found.

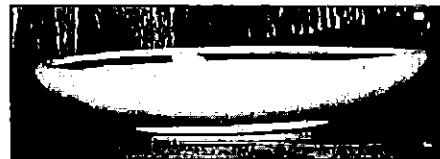
Meakin This 'n' That



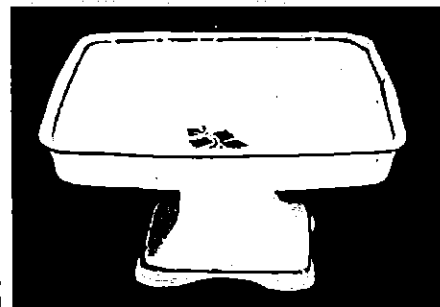
From the collection of Bob Skinner, Meakin cups and saucers in graded sizes: LtoR, cup size—2-3/4" height, 3" diameter; 2-7/8" height, 3-1/16" diameter; 3-1/16" height, 3-1/2" diameter; 3-1/2" height, 3-13/16" diameter.



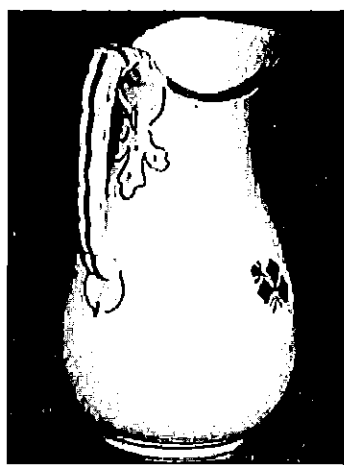
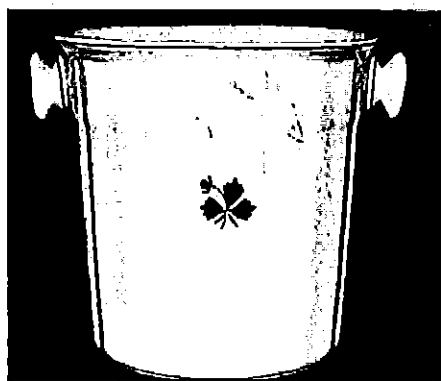
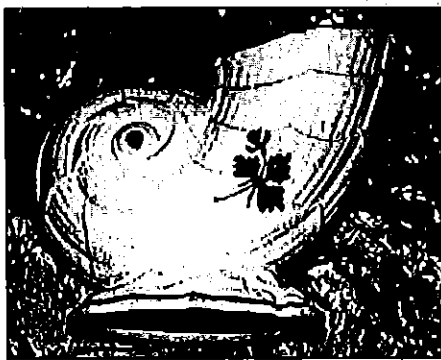
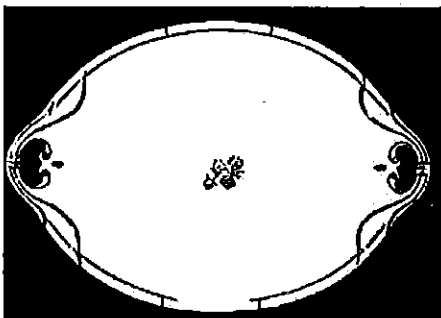
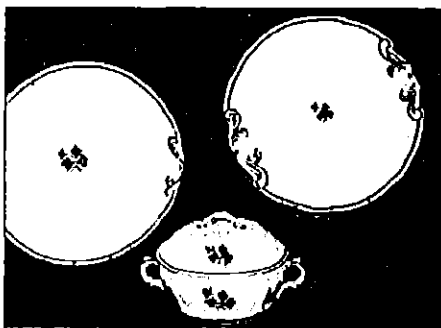
Above, Meakin saucer (?), heavy ironstone, 5" diameter, 7/8" height, in the collection of Bob Skinner. Bob says it is cupped out, not flat, not a saucer (see photo below).



Below, from the photo archive files.



Meakin This
'n' That (continued)



Above,
Squatty
cups &
saucers

Left,
Ewer:
Un-
known
body
style,
chain
link
style
handle

About the photos (all from archive files):
Left, top to bottom: Meakin cake plates & Bro-
cade covered butter dish;
Senate Shape cake plate;
Deep compote (9" x 5-5/8") and Boston
egg cup (4" x 1-3/4") from collection of
Eleanor Washburn;
Nautilus spoon warmer;
above: Toothbrush, unknown body style;
Hot water jug, unknown body style; and
Master waste jar (Fishhook?)

References:

Grandma's Tea Leaf Ironstone by Annise
Heavillin
Old China by Minnie Watson Kamm
Ironstone China, China Classics IV by
Larry Freeman
*Encyclopedia of British Pottery and Porce-
lain Marks* by Geoffrey Godden
Ceramic Art of Great Britain by Lewlleyn
Jewitt
Staffordshire Pottery by Josiah Wedgwood
& Thomas H. Ormsbee
Staffordshire History by Josiah Wedgwood,
1913
English Staffordshire, China Classic by
Serry Wood
Jewitt's Ceramic Art of Great Britain by
Geoffrey Godden, 1972
A Second Look at White Ironstone by
Jean Wetherbee
*Alfred Meakin, A Survey, Convention
Presentation, 1988* by Eleanor Washburn

Credits and special thanks to those who have shared photos and stories from their col-
lections; Linda McElwee, Bob Skinner, Val Glorgi, Charles & Charla Warner, Vic & Peggy
Regnaud, Mike & Marie Compton, Jane Washburn, and Chris Weinbrenner.