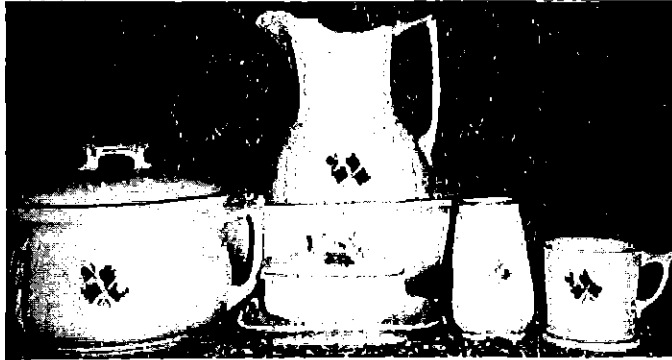


LEAFLETS

Convention Presentation

Alfred Meakin, A Survey

by Eleanor Washburn

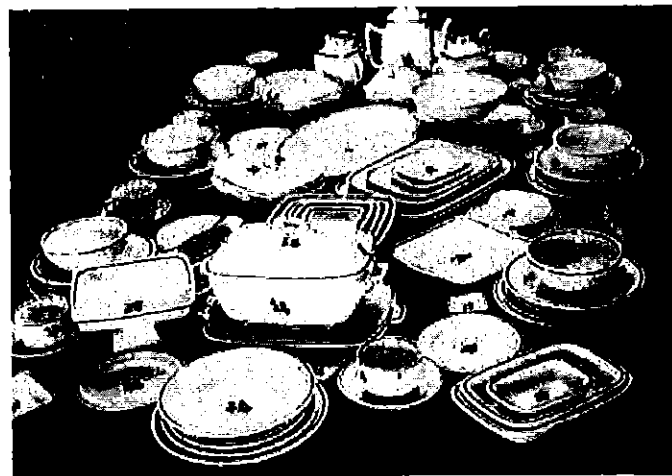


Fishhook Chamber Set—collection of Robert Skinner & Paul Risch



Alfred Meakin Sugar Bowls—collection of Gloria Poertner. Top, LtoR: Fishhook, unnamed with embossing*, Bamboo, Brocade; bottom: Brocade, Chelsea, Scroll

*This unnamed sugar bowl is the same body shape as the tea pot shown on page 92, GTLI. Annise Heavilin calls it "one-of-a-kind."



Bamboo "Set" minus round Waste Bowl—collection of Jahe & Mary Bertram

Contents

- I. Narrative, a brief history and known information—also, family tree
 - II. Marks
 - III. Map of Staffordshire
 - IV. Descriptions of body shapes including photo examples of tea sets
 - V. Advertisements from catalogs
 - VI. References
 - VII. Credits and a message of gratitude
- Photos of collections and special pieces of Tea Leaf can be found on pages throughout this paper.

Section I — Narrative

It is safe to say Alfred Meakin was one of the largest producers of Tea Leaf ironstone, and it is also safe to say that most collectors of Tea Leaf have many Meakin pieces in their possession simply because of the abundance of this fine ironstone.

Meakin came about his potting business honorably. He was related to the Pearsons, Ridgways, Johnsons and other Meakins, all noted potters in the late 18th and 19th century in Staffordshire, England.

The family tree, shown on page 194 of *Staffordshire History* by Josiah C. Wedgwood published in 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 good quality ironstone was produced in these potteries for perhaps a thirty year period.

Alfred Meakin was known to be ambitious and he possessed good business judgment as well as good marketing skills. Timing was also to his advantage because he entered the potting business at a time when there was a great demand for new table ware from the American market. He was intelligent, innovative and saw beyond the primitive potting procedures that had been, and were still, being used in most pot banks in England.

Determined to revolutionize the entire potting process, he convinced his workers that the use of progressive industrial equipment would promote expediency in the many processes of potting ironstone. The newer methods and machines were already being used in America as a result of the American Industrial Revolution but Staffordshire potters had rejected their use because they were afraid the machines would replace manpower.

It was Alfred Meakin who introduced the use of the steam powered press which replaced the slow drying process of sun drying clay in the primary process of clay preparation. Steam powered blungers and pug mills lessened the hard physical task of mixing and wedging the clay while also improving the quality of the ironstone and speeding up the whole production process.

Then, in 1880, bat making machines were introduced. These machines automatically measured the exact amount of clay needed



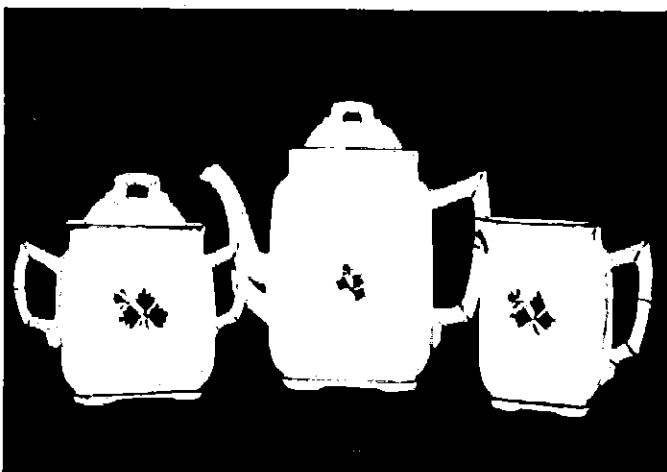
Convention Presentation



An unmatched Fishhook Tea Set—collection of Eleanor Washburn
Sugar bowl should have a larger creamer or perhaps the creamer should have a smaller sugar bowl! Good evidence that many serving pieces were made in at least two sizes. Dimensions: Tea Pot base to top of lid handle, 9"; Sugar Bowl base to top of lid handle, 7"; Creamer base to pouring lip, 5 1/4"



Brocade Bowl by Alfred Meakin—collection of Eleanor Washburn
Side view—Tea Leaf inside on bottom center; note lack of lustre band above base. Dimensions: width, 7 7/8"; height, 3"



Bamboo Tea Set—collection of Eleanor Washburn
Dimensions: Tea Pot base to top of lid handle, 9"; Sugar Bowl base to top of lid handle, 6 1/2"; Creamer base to top lip, 5 1/8"

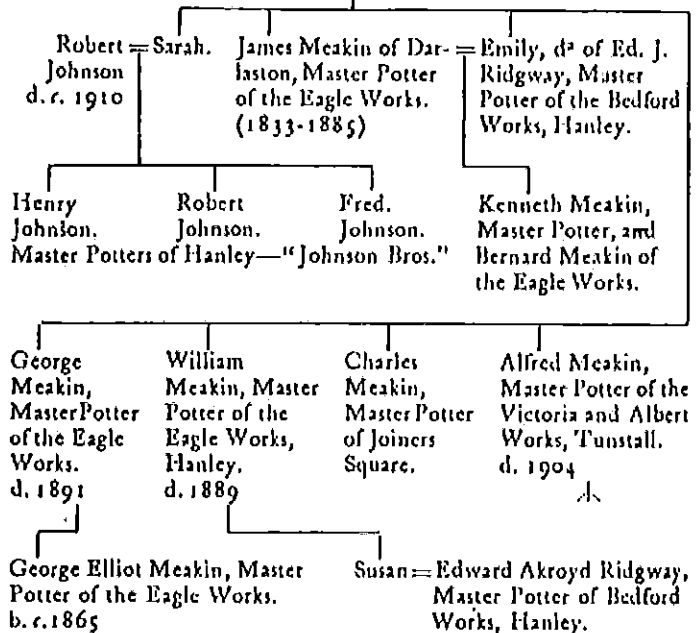
for a single plate, cup, etc., resulting in consistency and uniformity. The revised book of *Jewett's Ceramic Art of Great Britain* by Geofrey Godden, 1972, stated that the "Meakin Company (referring to Alfred Meakin) had become one of Britain's foremost manufacturers of good ironstone and semi-porcelain."

Known to be a man of high ideals, energetic, fair in his treatment of others, benevolent and generous, he was committed to making the best product for the most reasonable price.

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

The Meakin Family Tree

James Meakin, Master Potter of Hanley, d. 1855.



Lineage of the Meakin family from *Staffordshire History* by Josiah C. Wedgwood

NOTE: The line to Emily, as shown, must be in error. She was married to James Meakin and was actually the daughter of Edward J. Ridgway. Alfred Meakin was the third child, second son of James Meakin, Sr., Master Potter of Hanley.

II — Marks



c. 1891-97
(possibly pre-1891)*



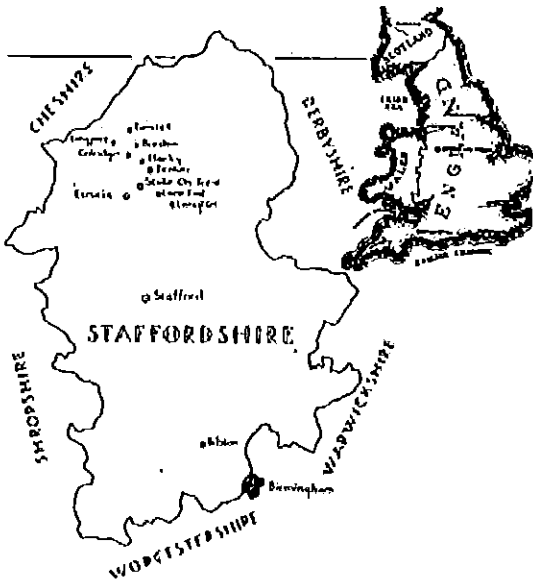
c. 1897
note addition of Ltd. after 1897

These are the common printed marks found on Alfred Meakin's Tea Leaf Ironstone. Cups generally were not marked. Cup plates, waste bowls and butter pats are found without marks as well as with marks. Egg cups were not marked.

*It is presumed that Alfred Meakin included "England" in his printed mark on Tea Leaf from the beginning of production (late 1870's) even though the American McKinley Tariff Act, which required that all items for export be marked "England," was not enacted until 1891.

III — Map of Staffordshire

Location of the potteries in Staffordshire

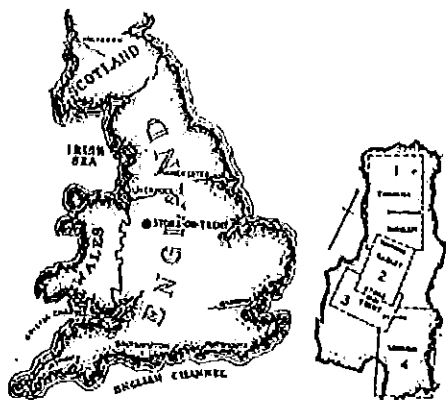


This outline map shows the close proximity of the pottery centers. Located in the northwest part of the country, they cover an area of less than twelve square miles. Here was produced all of the antique Staffordshire ware that is so widely collected today and pottery making still continues to be the dominant industry. In 1910 these towns were united to form the city of Stoke-on-Trent which is one of the leading industrial municipalities of England.

The Art Institute of Chicago

The small map of England above, shows the Staffordshire District.

NOTE: The Alfred Meakin potteries of Royal Albert, Victoria Works and Highgate Pottery were located in Tunstall. From *Staffordshire Pottery* by Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas H. Ormsbee 1947



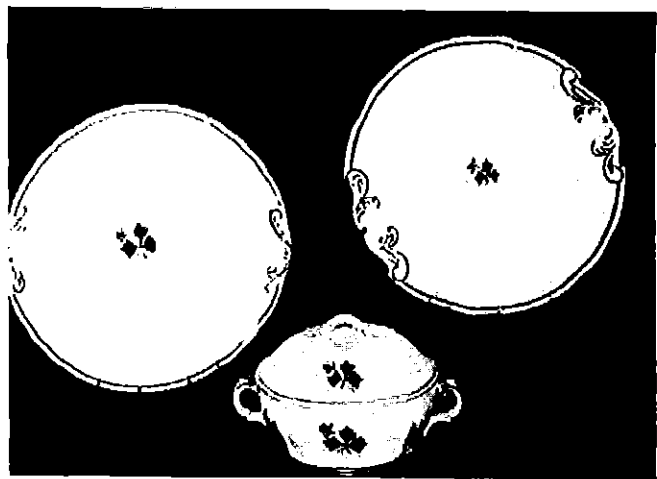
The Staffordshire District (map of England above): The city of Stoke-on-Trent comprises the Staffordshire pottery towns of Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke-upon-Trent, Fenton and Longton. From *China Classics Volumn VI, English Staffordshire*, by Serry Wood



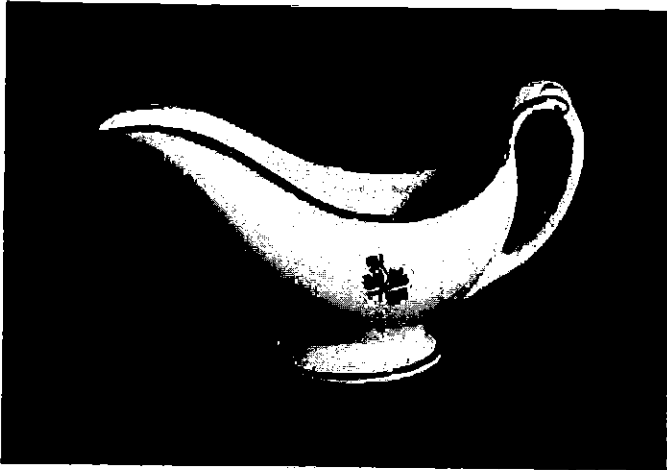
Scroll Sauce Tureen, 4-piece—collection of Gloria Poertner



Alfred Meakin Toothbrush Holders or Vases—collection of Gloria Poertner. LtoR: Bamboo, Fishhook, Scroll



Alfred Meakin Cake Plates and Brocade Covered Butter Dish—collection of Gloria Poertner



Meakin Scroll Gravy Boat—collection of Jake & Mary Bertram

IV — Body Shapes decorated with Tea Leaf by Alfred Meakin

Distinguishing features and identifying characteristics

SCROLL

Scroll is believed to be the oldest of the Tea Leaf body shapes made by Alfred Meakin. It is characterized by a heavy body, plain, simple designs, oval and pear shaped.

Note 1, Scroll—Note the lustre band on the top rim as well as on the flat, slightly indented base. The name "Scroll" comes from the shape of the lustre band application on the handles of the hollowware.

BAMBOO

This body shape's name comes from the shape of the applied and decorated handles which resemble bamboo stems. The copper lustre applied to the stem joints on the handles further accentuate the resemblance.

Minnie Kamm labeled a plain white undecorated Meakin tea pot "Bamboo" in her book, *Old China*, published in 1951. She called it a temporary title because it was "Chinese in design with straight sides and handle." The section of her book referring to Tea Leaf, text and photos, does not include a decorated Tea Leaf bamboo piece. Perhaps she was not aware of the bamboo decorated with Tea Leaf at the time she was writing her book.

Note 1, Bamboo—The base has four bracket feet and a band of copper lustre above the feet.

Note 2, Bamboo—This body shape was also sold as plain undecorated ironstone.



Bamboo Sugars & Creamers—collection of Jake & Mary Bertram
Note two sizes of sugars, different handles on two creamers.

FISHHOOK

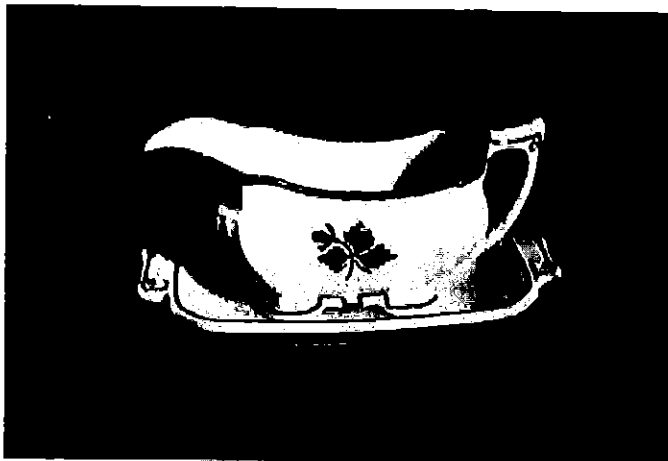
Alfred Meakin referred to this shape as "square shape" although the hollowware is rectangular. The use of the term "square" was possibly from square corners. Vertical corner fluting is also characteristic of the hollowware. Corner fluting is also found on square butter pats, square sauce dishes, and the square cake plates and undertrays.

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.

Note 1, Fishhook—Previous names for this body shape are "No. 1" [Annise Heavilin, *GTL*], "Square Shape", Alfred Meakin and "Standard" which some Midwest dealers called it in the early 1940's and 1950's.

Note 2, Fishhook—The base of the hollowware pieces have four bracket feet. A straight band of copper lustre is applied above the feet on the tea set, however, the base lustre decoration on the gravy boat, covered butter dishes, vegetable dishes and tureens have a different application. See gravy boat example in this text.

Note 3, Fishhook—The Fishhook body shape was also decorated with Moss Rose, Morning Glory (a colorful floral design not to be confused with Elsmore Forster's copper lustre Morning Glory), a delicate pink floral design, violets with foliage, and possibly other floral patterns. Undecorated white Fishhook ironstone may also be found.



Meakin "No. 1" (Annise Heavilin); "Square" (original advertising); "Fishhook" (TLCI) Gravy Boat & Undertray—collection of Jake & Mary Bertram

BROCADE

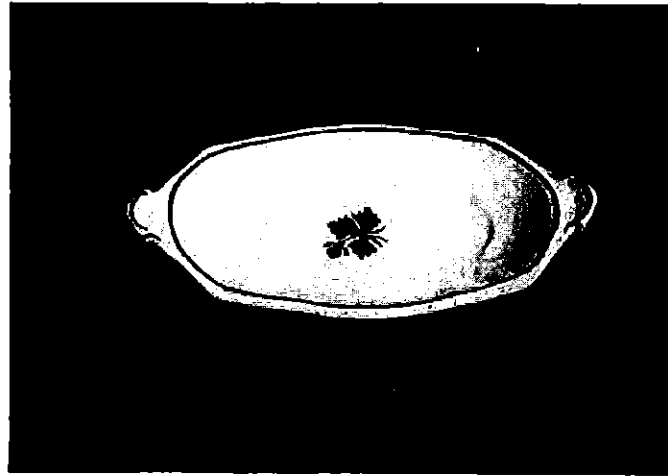
The name of this body shape, Brocade, comes from the delicate raised design that encircles the horizontal ridge above the base of hollowware pieces. The brocade-like embossment is also found circling the handles of the lids and the rim of platters, underplates, cake plates, relishes, etc., but does not extend into the lustre band outlining the outer rim.

There are four vertical single ridges extending from the top rim to the embossing above the base of the hollowware pieces. On pieces with lids—sugar bowls, teapots, covered vegetables, tureens and soaps—the ridges follow a continued line from the embossing on the lid to the embossing on the base. Ridges are also in evidence on platters, underplates, etc.

Handles are delicately shaped and touched with lustre band highlights. Most hollowware pieces have a band of copper lustre just above the base. One exception, the open bowl, see example in this text. Perhaps there are even more exceptions.

Note 1, Brocade—This body shape was also decorated with Moss Rose and possibly other patterns.

Note 2, Brocade—This body shape was previously referred to as "Embossed." However, the name has been changed because the term "embossed" is descriptive of any raised decorative ornamentation such as Lily-of-the-Valley, Basketweave, Hanging Leaves, Bordered Fuschia, Prairie Shape, Fig Cousin, New York Shape, Feather, just to name a few of the "embossed" or raised designs on ironstone china that was further decorated with Tea Leaf and many variants.



Meakin Brocade Undertray for Gravy Boat—collection of Jake & Mary Bertram



Chelsea Gravy Boat & Undertray—collection of Jake & Mary Bertram

CHELSEA

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

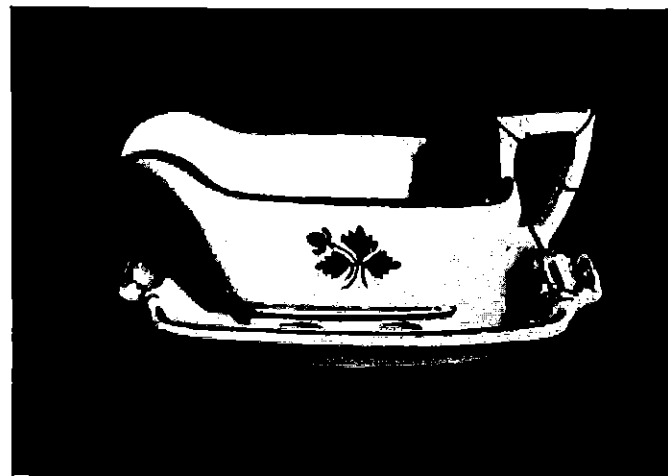
Note 1, Chelsea—The Chelsea body shape was also decorated with a pink and lavender floral design and perhaps other designs. White undecorated Chelsea was also marketed by Alfred Meakin.

Note 2, Chelsea—It is possible, perhaps even probable, that Chelsea was the last body shape that Alfred Meakin decorated with Tea Leaf. I say this because I have had flatware pieces with a gently scalloped rim edge resembling the top rim on the creamers (see photos in text), and on the ewer, *GTLI*, MEA-32, page 94. The plates I refer to are printed with the Alfred Meakin, Ltd. trademark which was used after 1897 and through the turn of the century, shortly after which Alfred Meakin died and the company was purchased by the Johnson Bros.

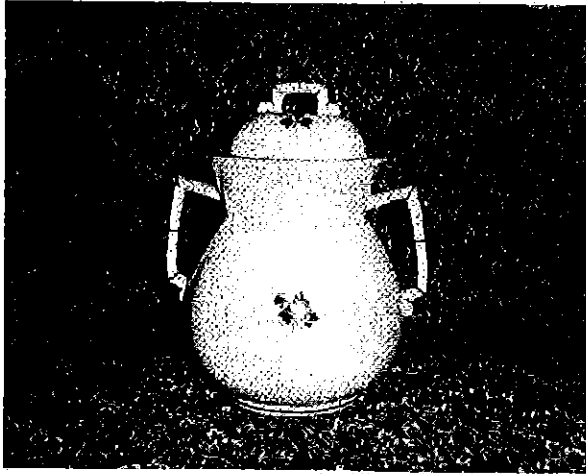
The body shapes decorated with Tea Leaf by Alfred Meakin described in this text are ones that are most available and familiar to Tea Leaf collectors.

However, from time to time, other pieces of Tea Leaf ironstone with Alfred Meakin's trademark are found which do not match or fit any of the body shapes herein described. These pieces seem to be chamber sets and tea sets including cake plates. Examples of these more unusual pieces are the sugar bowl from the collection of Gloria Poertner and the tea pot, page 92, MEA-22, *GTLI*.

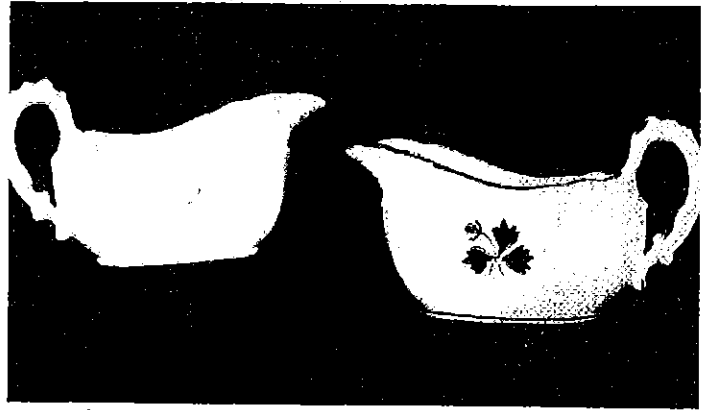
If you, the readers, are fortunate enough to find or own some of these unusual pieces, please share pictures and information with the membership.



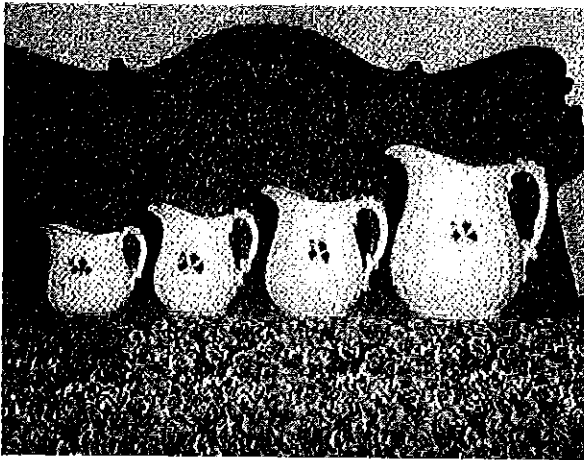
Bamboo Gravy Boat & Undertray—collection of Jake & Mary Bertram



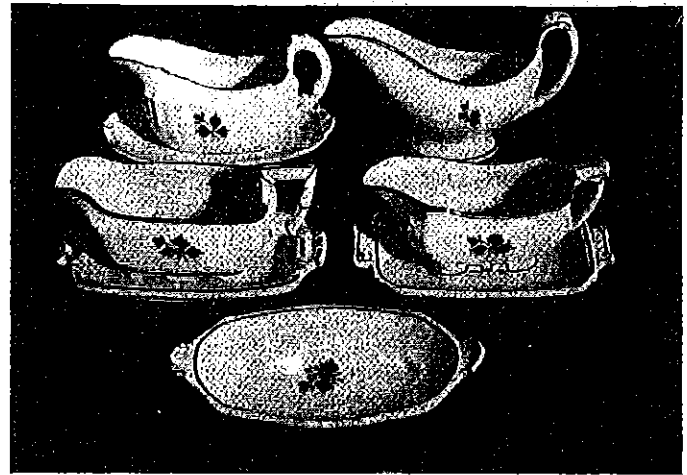
Bamboo Waste Jar—collection of Robert Skinner & Paul Risch



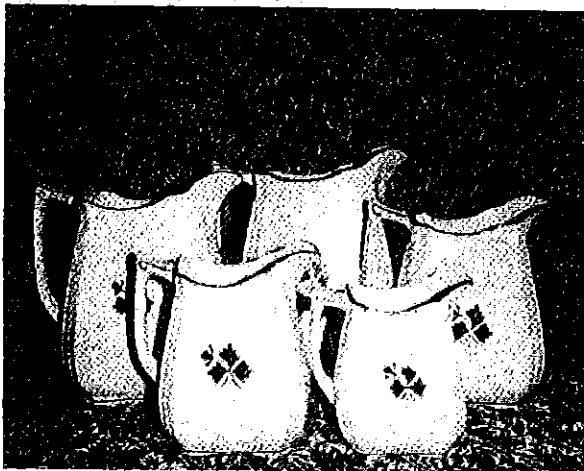
Chelsea Gravy Boats by Alfred Meakin—same body shape and size. Left, reverse side pink and lavender floral; right, Tea Leaf



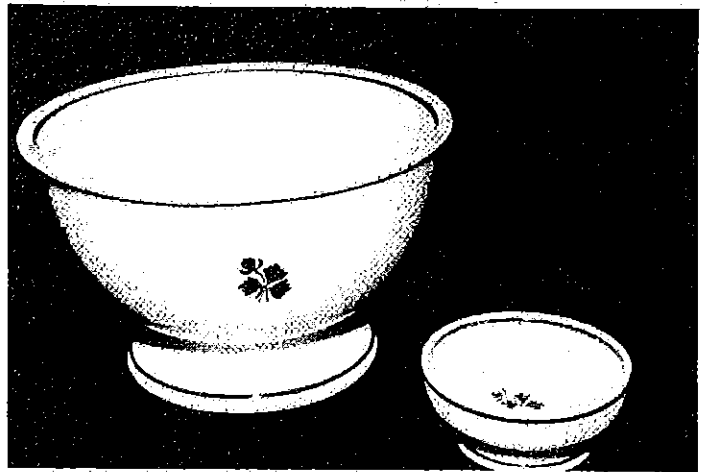
Chelsea Pitchers—collection of Robert Skinner & Paul Risch



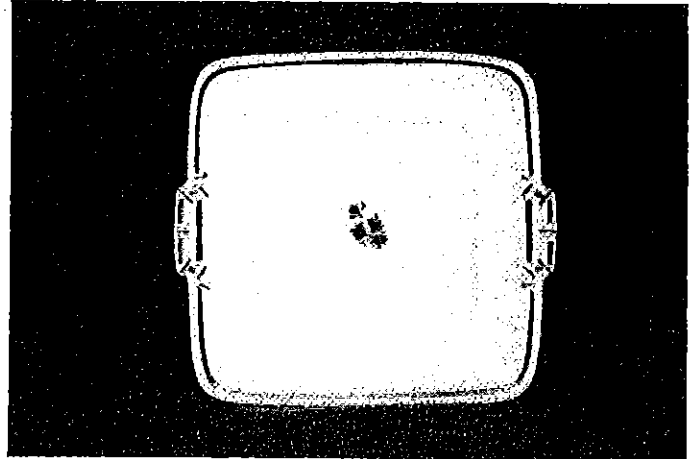
Meakin Gravy Boats & Undertrays from the Jake Bertram Fleet



Fishhook Pitchers—collection of Robert Skinner & Paul Risch



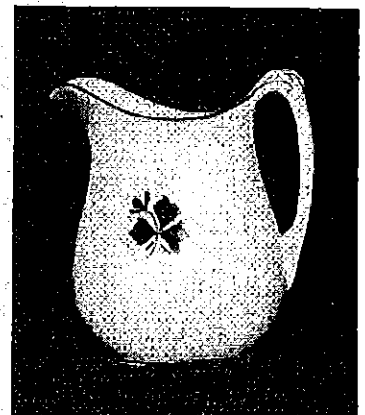
Deep Compote and Boston Egg Cup—collection of Eleanor Washburn
Dimensions: Compote, 9" x 5 5/8"; Boston Egg Cup, 4" x 1 1/4"



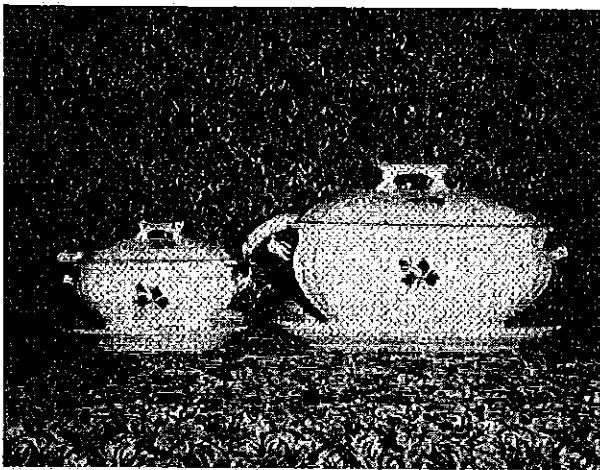
Bamboo Cake Plate—collection of Jane Washburn Bleck



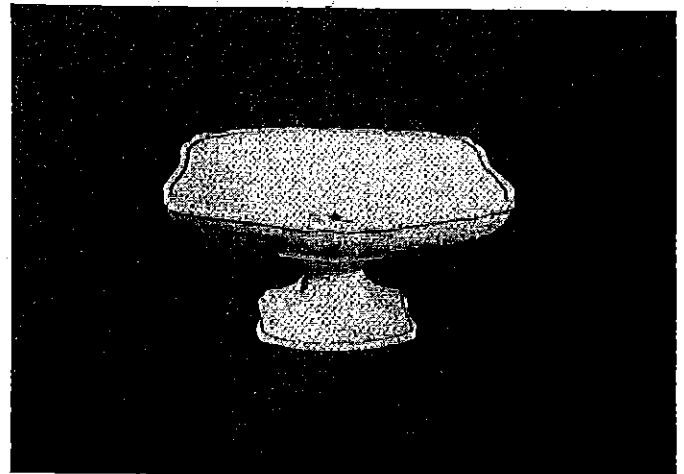
Chelsea Creamers & Coffee Pot—collection of Richard Brackin. Note creamers are both sizes and shapes.



Scroll Sugar Bowl (left) & Creamer (right)—collection of Jane Washburn Bleck. Sugar bowl dimensions: base to top of lid handle, 6½"



Fishhook Tureens, 4-piece—collection of Robert Skinner & Paul Risch. Left, Sauce Tureen; right, Soup Tureen.



Chelsea Compote—collection of Robert Skinner & Paul Risch



V - Advertisements from catalogs

This illustrated advertisement of Alfred Meakin's Lustre Band and Sprig Square Shape—the shape we now call Fishhook—was found in an undated cookbook which was used as an advertising item from H. Leonard's Sons and Company Price List and Cookbook. The company was located at Nos. 29 and 31 Monroe Street, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Though the book was undated, additional information from the book indicates the date to be about 1895.

Tea Leaf member Suzanne Schipper discovered this ad, now in the collection of Julie Rich, and it then appeared in the March 1987 issue of TLR.

H. LEONARD'S SONS & CO., GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. 137

OPEN STOCK LUSTRE BAND AND SPRIG.
ALFRED MEAKIN'S SQUARE SHAPE.

A. Meakin's Lustre Band.

Plates, 8 inch 1/2	1 00	Pitchers, 12 inch	2 50
Plates, 8 inch Tea	1 10	Pitchers, 10 inch	2 00
Pitcher, 7 inch Breakfast	1 40	Pitchers, 20 inch	3 50
Plates, 8 inch Dinner	1 60	Pitchers, 30 inch	5 00
Plates, 7 inch Soup	1 40	Pitchers, 36 inch	6 00
Plates, 8 inch Soup	1 60	Sauce Boats	3 50
Fruit Saucers, 4 inch	72	Buttins, Covered and Plainers, 6 1/2	75
Bakers, 7 inch	1 80	Oral Covered Dishes, 8 inch	84
Bakers, 8 inch	2 00	Casseroles, 8 inch	1 00
Bakers, 9 inch	2 20	Casseroles, 10 inch	1 20
Bakers, 10 inch	2 40	Casseroles, 12 inch	1 40
Bakers, 11 inch	2 60	Compotes, 8 inch	1 00
Bakers, 12 inch	2 80	Sauce Turcots, Complete	1 00
Bowls, No. 21, Oval	20	Soup Turcots Complete, No. 2	4 25
Bowls, No. 22, 1 1/2 Plat.	18	Tea Pots, 34	60
Bowls, No. 23, Plat.	15	Segars, 24	60
Oyster Bowls, No. 24, on Foot	50	Croquet, 24	85
Oyster Bowls, No. 25, on Foot	50	Bread and Cake Plates	85
Meat Platters, 8 inch, oval, 1 1/2 in	23	Covered Eggs	60
Meat Platters, 9 inch, oval, 1 1/2 in	25	Medium Mugs, 30	15
Meat Platters, 10 inch, oval, 1 1/2 in	27	Break Yakers	60
Meat Platters, 11 inch, oval, 1 1/2 in	30	Eggs and Baiters, 24	1 00
Meat Platters, 12 inch, oval, 1 1/2 in	32	Covered Chamberlains, 24	80
Meat Platters, 13 inch, oval, 1 1/2 in	35	Covered Slip Jars, No. 3, each	3 00
Meat Platters, 14 inch, oval, 1 1/2 in	38	Tea, Handled, per set	1 00
Meat Platters, 16 inch, oval, 2 in	45	Covers, Handled, per set	1 00
Scalloped Apples, 8 inch	21	125 Piece Dinner Set	85 00
Scalloped Apples, 7 inch	23	100 " " " "	75 00
Scalloped Apples, 6 inch	25	75 " " " "	60 00
Scalloped Apples, 5 inch	27	50 " " " "	40 00
Buttins, Individual	50	25 " " " "	25 00

For complete composition of sets, see page 138

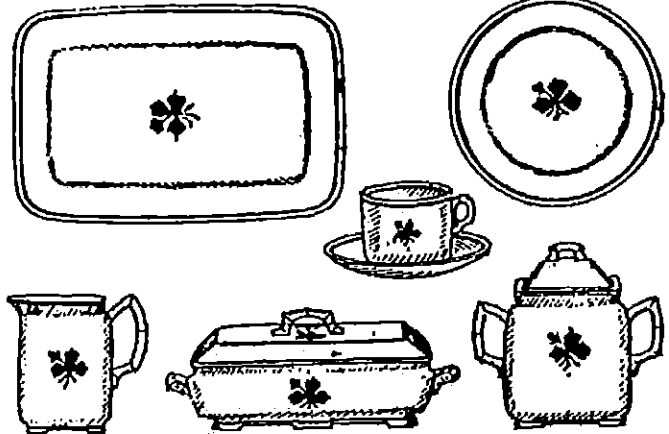
VI - References

- Grandma's Tea Leaf Ironstone by Annise Heavilin
- Old China by Minnie Watson Kamm
- Tea Leaf Readings, Julie Rich, Editor
- Ironstone China, China Classics IV by Larry Freeman
- Encyclopedia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks by Geoffrey Godden
- Ceramic Art of Great Britain by Lewellyn Jewitt
- Staffordshire Pottery by Josiah Wedgwood & Thomas H. Ormsbee
- Staffordshire History by Josiah Wedgwood, 1913
- English Staffordshire, China Classics IV 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 found many ways to market his ironstone in America. This advertisement appeared in the Sears catalog of 1897. The No. 9603 Lustre Band of 1897 is now known as Bamboo shape.

Patterns Sold in Open Stock.

to us, for goods on this page, unless same amount to \$2.50 or over,



No. 9603 LUSTER BAND, open Meakin's English-ware. This ware is so well known that a description is hardly necessary, the decorations are of a heavy luster band and a flower sprig in luster which resists gold very clearly, but will not wash off as gold is apt to do. Your choice of selection of any of below named pieces.

Ten Cups and Saucers	Per doz. \$1 50	Bakers, 3 inch	Per doz. \$1 00
Coffee Cups and Saucers	" 1 10	Bakers, 4 inch	" 1 00
Plates, 9 inch	" 70	Bakers, 5 inch	" 1 00
Plates, 7 inch	" 1 45	Bakers, 6 inch	" 1 00
Plates, 8 inch	" 1 25	Scallops, 6 inch	" 1 00
Plates, 5 inch	" 1 00	Scallops, 7 inch	" 1 00
Plates, 7 inch, soup	" 1 50	Scallops, 8 inch	" 1 00
Fruit Saucers, 4 inch	" 75	Scallops, 9 inch	" 1 00
Individual Butters	" 45	Scallops, 10 inch	" 1 00
Oyster Bowls	" 1 80	Soup Turcots and Ladle	" 2 00
Tea Pot	Each 80	(no stand)	" 1 00
Sugar Bowl	" 60	Sauce Turcots (complete)	" 1 00
Cream Pitcher	" 25	Sauce Brails	" 1 00
Bread Plate	" 25	Covered Dish, 8 inch	" 1 00
Bowls, 1 qt.	" 25	Casseroles, 8 inch	" 1 00
Bowls, 1 pt.	" 15	Covered Butter, 5 inch	" 1 00
Platters, 8 inch	" 20	Picklo Plates	" 1 00
Platters, 9 inch	" 25	Pitcher, 1 gal	" 1 00
Platters, 10 inch	" 30	Pitcher, 2 qts	" 1 00
Platters, 12 inch	" 35	Pitcher, 1 qt	" 1 00
Platters, 14 inch	" 40	Pitcher, 1/2 pt	" 1 00
Platters, 16 inch	" 45		

VII - Credits and message of gratitude

This Research Paper is intended to be an informational survey of the work and contributions to the ironstone-potting business of Alfred Meakin, Tunstall, Staffordshire, England.

It is hoped that more and additional information be found through extended research and study, and that any and all future information be shared with the Tea Leaf membership.

Credits and special thanks to those who have shared photos from their collections: Gloria Poertner, Jake and Mary Bertram, Robert Skinner and Paul Risch, Richard Brackin, Dale Abrams, Gale Frederick, Dan Overmeyer, Chris Weinbrenner, and Jane Washburn Bleck.

Typesetting and layout—Chris Weinbrenner
Eleanor Washburn, 1990