

# Something borrowed...

By Richard Halliday

With Assistance from Sue Wagstaff



Dr. Paul Scott's Exhibition Table: *Confected, Borrowed and Blue*.

When one thinks of the English town of Bath, one thinks of the stunning Georgian architecture typified by 'The Royal Crescent,' or the Roman history that lies encrusted within its very heart. From a transferware perspective, Bath, and more specifically, Pulteney Bridge, brings images of Swansea Cambrian's famous "Pulteney Bridge" wrap-around scene usually seen adorning high-quality hollowware pieces. Recently, Dr. Paul Scott added his own flavor to Bath and indeed transferware with his amazing '*Confected, Borrowed and Blue*' exhibition, which opened on October 31 and will run through January 18, 2015, at the beautiful Holburne Museum on Great Pulteney Street in Bath. (<http://www.holburne.org/>)

For the exhibit's opening, a full house was treated to a talk by Dr. Scott and a glimpse of the exhibition. Upon entering the large gallery space, visitors encountered a huge table, enclosed in a clear protective box. Dr. Scott's work

was carefully arranged on this table. As a testament to his attention to detail, the exhibition table was covered with a runner that subtly incorporated more than 800 Spode pattern names.

Of striking note, visitors will discover, is Dr. Scott's "re-appropriation" and updating of the William Adams "Palestine" pattern. To the foreground of 3 red transfer "Palestine" plates, Dr. Scott has added modern images of the Holy Land in disarray. The juxtaposition of the old and the new is obvious and typical of the attempt to think about transferware in the context of the political and social events dominating the world today.

Dr. Scott's approach to the medium is fearless. He fuses pieces together in a very innovative fashion. For example, there is the joining of the "Wild Rose" platter with one in the "Italian" pattern to create the "Wild Italian" pattern.

Another such combination is a 9" pottery silhouette of a cow standing on a platter, titled "Cow in a Meadow after

Thomas Bewick." Bewick's engravings were used as source material for many printed wares, with Minton's "Bewick Stag" being perhaps the most familiar. A bifurcated cow creamer forms the basis for another display: "Cow in a Meadow after Damien Hirst." Hirst, prominent in a movement known as "Young British Artists," is known for works featuring dead and dissected animals. Here Dr. Scott shows his sense of humour and doffs his cap to contemporary British art.

Scattered around the exhibit table are ceramic trees, modelled after those found in popular transferware images. These free-standing trees challenge everyone to be aware of our surroundings in the natural world.

Dr. Scott uses the anti-slavery images seen in late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramics to remind us that the slave trade is still very much alive, primarily in the form of the exploitation of illegal immigrants. He created a tribute to the 21 Chinese cockle pickers (shell fish



*Holdburne Museum, Bath.*



*The "Wild Italian" platter.*



*Tea set recalling the Chinese cockle pickers washed away in 2004.*



*Scott's reinterpretation of the "Palestine" pattern by Adams*

harvesters) who drowned in Northwest England in 2004 when caught by the incoming tide. All, apparently, were illegals forced to face extremely difficult circumstances to eke out a meagre living. This tribute could easily be extended back in time to represent the working conditions, poor pay, and short life-span of the pottery workers in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Dr. Scott lives in Cumbria in the Northwest of England and has long been a major name in the world of ceramics and print. His research and artworks can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, The National Museum, Stockholm Sweden, The National Decorative Arts Museum, Norway and The Museum of Art and Design, New York. In addition to his many exhibitions, teaching roles, and prolific writings, Dr. Scott's book, *Ceramics and Print*, is an essential volume in any art, historical or ceramics library.

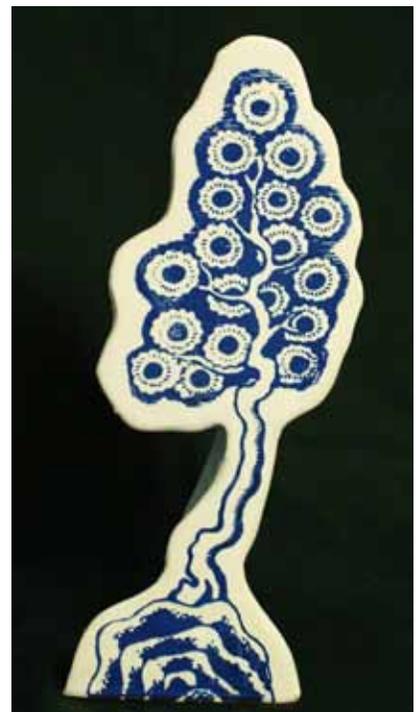
It is amazing to see what Dr. Scott does with 'our' transferware and how he re-uses, re-works and re-invents already established designs and thinking. His new collage works will be on show and available for sale at the New York Ceramics and Glass Fair, January 21<sup>st</sup> - 25th, 2015. On January 23, Dr. Scott will be giving a lecture there. If you can, visit the exhibition and be prepared to be moved.



*"Cow in a Meadow after Damian Hirst"*



*"Cow in a Meadow after Thomas Bewick"*



*Free-standing ceramic trees, similar to those found in popular transferware patterns.*