

# 2009 TCC Annual Meeting Excursions & Events

Submitted by Dick and Judy Wagner  
and Loren Zeller

## Friday, 16 October – A day in Bath

We headed for Bath in a comfortable Turners Coachways bus ably shepherded by Sue and Frank Wagstaff and in the hands of seasoned driver Mike Phillips. This morning it was critical that Mike knew all possible routes as an accident had closed the nearby motorway causing major traffic jams in and around Bristol.

On our way through Bristol we traveled along the “new cut” a deep tidal channel dug by hand in the early 1800s by French prisoners of war. We saw the cut when it was a muddy ditch and again later filled with water as tides as high as 42 feet pour in.

While traveling during the next two days we also



Members board our bus for the trip to Bath



Poultney Bridge

had some good views of the famous suspension bridge.

Once out in the country we passed Cadbury's large chocolate manufactory.

We entered central Bath viewing the Poultney Bridge and its adjacent weir – the only Bath scene known on transferware. Our first destination was the Roman Baths.



Peter Scott and new-found street friend at the Roman Baths

## The Roman Baths

The Baths existed from 75 CE and were in operation for 400 years. They were rediscovered in the 1870s. The hot water spring source is the Pennyquick fault beneath the City of Bath.

The site was the temple of Sulis Minerva and Romans visited its sacred waters for healing and prayer. But for all levels of society it was a social gathering place as well. Men and women bathed together until a decree from Hadrian changed the practice.

Major portions of the structure have been excavated and enough of its components have been exposed to



Sue Wagstaff and Margie Williams viewing the Roman Baths



**Scottish Members David and Catriona Maisels enjoy lunch with Frank Wagstaff at Woods Restaurant**

provide an explanation (via audio guides) of how the baths were engineered and used. Also on display were artifacts found: mosaics, jewelry, tools, pottery, prayers, coins, etc. The site was far too huge to fully explore in the time available but surely a place to revisit and wander anew.

From the baths we coached to Wood's Restaurant and were refreshed by an excellent lunch.

After our meal, members split into two smaller groups. Some walked to the nearby Museum of East Asian Art, others to the Georgian House and Museum, #1 Royal Crescent. Then we switched sites.

### **Museum of East Asian Art**

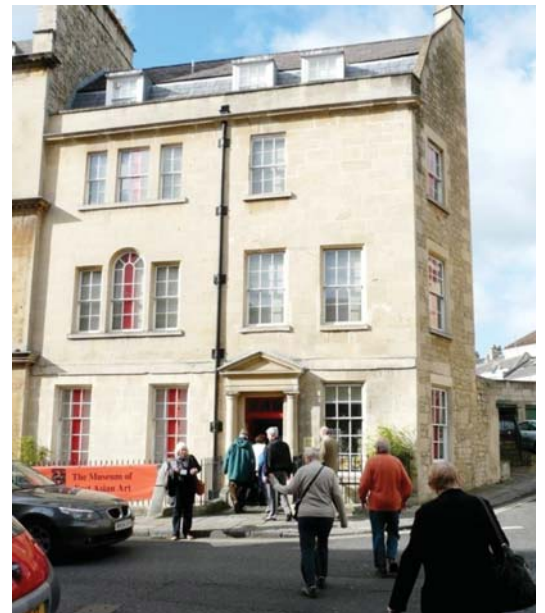
The Museum was established sixteen years ago based on the collection of Brian McElney. McElney retired to Bath from Hong Kong. We explored three floors of museum holdings guided by the curator Michel Lee. His early discussions focused on material of the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) considered a golden age when trade along the Silk Road was at its peak. This was also the period when cobalt pigment was first used in China. It was imported from Persia or central Asia where it was already in use. The pigment was very expensive and highly valued. A lead glaze was common on wares but people soon learned of its poisonous effect so lead was reserved for decorative items.

We were also shown marbled wares, a mix of light and dark clay, as well as black wares – actually a dark brown. The latter

were generally utilitarian pieces used by common people.

Green wares occurred before and after the seventh century when white ware was also strong. Green was for elite ware – the renowned celadon color – and may have been used for Buddhist rituals.

The next floor held the jade gallery where figures, bowls and jewelry were displayed. The curator explained the two kinds of jade, nephrite and jadeite, and noted that jade can't be carved but must be shaped by abrasion. Jade occurs in a variety of colors – whites, greens, browns and yellow. Also on this floor were bronzes and other metal ware. A feature of the upper floor was blue and white painted ware from the Ming Dynasty – 14th Century on. Also on display were paintings and lacquer ware.



**Members arrive at the Museum of East Asian Art**



**Michel Lee, Curator, lectures at the Museum of East Asian Art**



## Royal Crescent

After the East Asian experience, we walked around the Circus built 1854-69 and on to the Royal Crescent constructed 1767-75. Address number one is the Georgian House and Museum.

The ground floor had a gentlemen's study where the males could retreat to drink, smoke, and converse undisturbed. The dining room was on this same level.

The first floor had a drawing room (one of the most elaborately decorated rooms in the house) where the ladies came after dinner for tea. The mistress of the house also had her bedroom on this level. This room had a very large blue and white printed jug for filling a footbath. The jug's view was of Bath's bridge and weir.

The large kitchen was in the basement. It was fitted out to represent a kitchen in a typical 18th century Bath townhouse. The most dramatic feature was a "dog wheel" over the large hearth. It was a weight operated mechanism to turn the spit. A dog, caged inside the wheel, turned the spit as it walked, drawn on by the scent of the cooking meat.



**The Famous 18th Century Royal Crescent.**

## Saturday, 17 October – A day in Bristol



**Attendees visit the SS Great Britain.**

## Brunel's S.S. Great Britain

Our intrepid band coached to the Great Western Dockyard to visit the S.S. Great Britain, acclaimed the world's first great ocean liner. She was designed by I. K. Brunel to add to his business empire i.e. his rail-road would carry passengers to port where they would stay in his hotel before boarding his ship to cross the Atlantic.

Work began on the vessel in 1838 in Bristol. Some 3000 men were involved in the construction. She was large for her time at 322 feet long, iron clad and powered by a 1,000 horsepower screw steam engine. She was launched at London in 1843. Because of her size, she was based in Liverpool, providing passenger service to New York. The Great Britain had a hard luck history with wrecks and storms. After brief service to America, she carried passengers on the two-month trip to Australia. During the



Crimean War, she served as a troop carrier.

Eventually she was sold to carry coal to San Francisco. For this, her engines and interior were stripped, and she was rigged as a three-masted sailing ship. Going around Cape Horn, on her third coal trip, she was bested by a storm. She turned back and was sold, remaining in the Falkland Islands at anchor as a floating coal warehouse.

She rusted away during the 1880s and sank in shallow water. Some residents in Bristol wouldn't let her go and on July 19, 1969, she was brought back to Bristol on a barge. After millions were spent, she was relaunched on July 19, 2006 amidst great celebration.

Before exploring the ship, dry dock and museum at our own pace, the group was assembled beneath her stern for an extended series of group photos.



**Karin Walton greets members at the Bristol Museum**

### **Bristol's City Museum and Art Gallery**

Karin Walton, curator of Applied Art at the gallery, greeted us at the door. First order of business was partaking of a sandwich buffet arranged in the main reception hall.

After lunch we headed to the second floor (3rd U.S.) where Karin highlighted for us the museum's ceramics holdings including Oriental exports, Bristolington delftware (1670s - 1680s), white on white ware, painted porcelains and a variety of utilitarian stonewares.



**Sue Wagstaff & Peter Scott at the Bristol Museum**

Then we were on our own to follow our interests. During this time Karin opened a small room displaying about twenty pieces of transferware (Bristol views) and shards. In groups of about ten, we were free to examine and photograph the items.

Other delights of the museum and gallery have to be held for another visit. As we gathered at the main entrance, awaiting our coach for the return to the hotel, many expressed gratitude for Sue and Frank Wagstaff's work in organizing the varied activities in Bath and Bristol.



**Our meeting organizers, Frank and Sue Wagstaff**





**Robert Copeland autographs his latest book.**

copies of his new book, *Manufacturing Processes of Tableware during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, published by the Northern Ceramics Society.

Other honored guests for the day were Paul and Kathy Holdway. The TCC Anniversary Ceramics Tour members were invited to visit the Holdways at their Sunnyside Cottage the previous week to view their special collection of Spode blue and white pottery.

Sunday afternoon was reserved for the special Dealer Sale attended by “the best” transferware dealers in England: Edward Goatham, Richard and Rosemary Halliday, Trevor and Hazel Kentish, Sue Norman, Peter Scott, Louise and David Scriven, and Sue Wagstaff.

## **Sunday, 18 October – Sunday Sale and Special Event**

During a break in the morning session, TCC President Loren Zeller, on behalf of the membership, presented a special Life-Time Honorary Membership to Robert Copeland. Robert Copeland, a long-standing contributor to the TCC, was recognized for his outstanding contribution to the field of ceramics by bestowing on him the club’s first and only Life-Time Honorary Membership.

Over the years, TCC members have benefited greatly from Robert’s highly esteemed research, publications, and his numerous speaking engagements. In 2003, Robert sponsored a very special day at the Spode factory and museum and honored members with a personally guided tour of the company’s special private collection. He has been a guest speaker at our meetings and has continually served as an advisor and mentor to the club’s collectors and to the Pattern and Source Print Database editors.

On the previous week, Robert welcomed 25 TCC Anniversary Tour members to his home to view his well-researched collection. Robert attended the activities on that day and autographed



**Margie Williams contemplates what to buy from the Scriven’s table**



**Loren Zeller and David Hoexter examine some of the day’s purchases as Paul and Kathy Holdway look on.**



**David Martin and Chet Creutzburg visit with Hazel at the Kentish’s sales table**