

2013 TCC Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts

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(with supplemental material from David Hoexter, Judie Siddall, Loren Zeller)

The 14th annual TCC conference was held at the Sheraton Conference Center in Wakefield, near Boston, Massachusetts. The conference was preceded by the Optional Day. We visited three wonderful sites located north of Boston on the Optional Day, each related to transferware. We were hosted by Leslie Frost in her 1809 house, featuring a remarkable garden and, of course, an admirable collection of historical transferware as well as many other Federal Period / Colonial Revival Style antiques. We visited Historic New England's Cogswell Grant, the former home of Bertram and Nina Fletcher Little located in Essex.



Glorious Fall Colors at Cogswell Grant, and Leslie Frost

We also visited Historic New England's Collections and Conservation Center in Haverhill. We were overwhelmed by the collections, including one containing hundreds of transfer-printed children's mugs.



Historic New England Associate Curator Laura Johnson,

showing children's mug collection (left); and the Conservation Room (right).



Just a few of the hundreds of children's mugs

Unfortunately, I missed the Optional Day and arrived at the conference on Thursday late but just in time to enjoy Peggy Sutor's talk on Architecture as seen on Historical Blue Transferware, 1815-1835, Part II, the second in a series that began at the 2012 meeting in Seattle. How Peggy had time to put together such an interesting and thoroughly researched talk while being responsible for the preparation of this conference is a testament to her ability to multi-task. Focusing on Bullfinch, the architect of the New Boston Statehouse and the Capitol in Washington, she brought his time period to life with interesting anecdotes and unusual facts as well as great images of ceramics and source prints. The hour passed in the blink of an eye.



Peggy Sutor, Lecturer and Indefatigable Meeting Organizer (as well as former TCC board member). Peggy claims this was her final meeting as organizer. We'll see.

Once again the hotel was terrific – well managed and very accommodating to our needs including a well stocked bar and excellent meals.



Breakfast and dinner!

Friday the troops rallied for an early bus ride to Downtown Boston to tour the “New” Statehouse resplendent with its gold dome sparkling against a deep blue sky. The tour of the Statehouse included both the original early 19th Century construction and the later Victorian addition which continues as the Massachusetts Statehouse. It was easy to see why the building, which must have towered over the City during its early days (see image, below), was such an important monument to the residents of Massachusetts and the accomplishments of the State Government, and why it became a popular view found on transferware produced in the second decade in the 19th century.



We enjoyed the Boston State House, and were blessed with an azure blue sky the entire day.

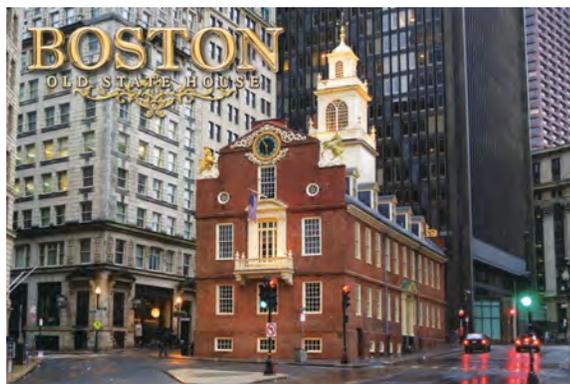


Boston State House source print by “Dobbins” 1804, and plate produced by John Rogers & Son.

The State House was just as fascinating on the inside, as it was on the outside.



After a quick walk to the Old Statehouse which dated from the 1713 and Faneuil Hall for a self guided tour, everyone grabbed lunch at the Quincy Market food court. The weather was perfect and smiles could be seen all around.



The Old State House (lower right, above), among modern and not so modern buildings.



Capping the day was a tour of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where curators showed us a sampling of the vast collections, including the museum's (surprisingly small) collection of transferware.



TCC members view examples from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' reserve collection of transferware.

Arriving at the hotel after experiencing Boston Friday traffic at its best (or worst), we eagerly jumped right into the cocktail hour and shortly after, a well prepared sit-down dinner.

The speaker that evening was Pam Woolliscroft, a lecturer and Spode aficionado (Pam was for many years the curator of the Spode Museum in Stoke-on-Trent) who enlightened and entertained us with research into the Spode pattern archives in a talk titled “The Josiah Spodes, Pottery Pioneers”. It was a very interesting talk that contained much new material including the fact that the factory produced an estimated 75,000 patterns plus thousands more whose only record is the original copper plates. I couldn't help but glance at Connie, our Database Editor in Chief to see her reaction to the information and I have to say she was nonplussed. Fortunately, many of those 75,000 patterns are post 1900 or do not feature transfer printing, and include different pattern pieces (handles, rims, feet borders, other parts and marks) which limited the potential new material for the Database, to the relief of the entire editorial team.



Another fine meal, followed by Pam Woolliscroft's presentation.

An old conference feature was revived this year with “Show and Tell”, where members could discuss particular pieces they wanted to know more about or introduce the members to. The pieces were all very interesting and resulted in a great deal of conversation with many interesting opinions and theories. Needless to say this well informed group was eager to offer insight and

opinion. The Show and Tell event was so popular that it ran over the allotted time and was continued the next day.



Left: David Hoexter demonstrates his not quite transferware piece, with President Loren Zeller's apparent approval; Right: Peter Scott with a Wedgwood Botanical jug Show and Tell example.



Jennifer Zwiebel brought two wonderful contributions, including Cuba Pattern or "Cubanas", right.

Saturday began early with a hardy breakfast buffet that stifled conversation. Michael Weinberg took full advantage of the lull in the conversation to hawk his wares - tickets to the raffle - Michael wearing his top hat, a big smile and telling funny stories.



Michael Weinberg hawks raffle tickets (left), while Peter Scott continues to show his jug (right).

The conference hit its stride with a talk by Dick Henrywood discussing “English Views and their Sources”. Dick regaled us with results of his research on British Transferware views for his new book. It was quite interesting and informative and at 9:00 in the morning, there wasn’t a sleepy eye in the crowd.



Left: Dick Henrywood announced the publication of his new book; Right: Judy (and Dick, unfortunately, no photo) Wagner teamed up for their presentation

The second lecture of the morning was: “Frank and Sissie: Beardsmores, Bennetts & Pots” given by Dick and Judy Wagner. They presented a thorough examination of the life and times of a potter and his family in the early 1900s. This was a tour de force of research and gave the members a good look at the trials and tribulations of this potter family. We were forced to take a

break halfway through when the hotel's fire alarm went off (false alarm) creating quite a stir among the crowd. But shortly, order was restored and Dick and Judy resumed their talk without missing a beat.

Pam Woolliscroft's second talk, the third of the morning, on "Pots of Orchids: The Spode Bateman Connection" was riveting, with solid research, well prepared slides and interesting asides into the present state of the Spode Works collection. And although lunch was to follow immediately after the talk, there was great interest in the subject and quite a number of follow-up questions. Those who missed her talk, and meeting attendees who wish a reprise, can download a printed version from the TCC website:

http://www.transcollectorsclub.org/specinterest/WOOLLISCROFT_Pots_of_Orchids_NOV_2013.pdf

We broke for lunch with the members seeking out interesting restaurants both in and outside of the hotel.

Reconvening after lunch we were treated to Louise Richardson's talk on importing transferware into Portsmouth NH titled: "Starting Over at Fifty: A Northern Ireland Merchant's Move to Portsmouth, NH, in 1796". Drawn from local documents and the result of archeological digs in the Portsmouth area, Louise discussed the markets and process for bringing transferware into a major port during the turbulent times of the late 1700s – early 1800s.



Louise brought numerous examples to illustrate her presentation.

The conference then got down to Club Business with President Loren Zeller, Membership Chair Judie Siddall, Bulletin Editor Michael Weinberg, Internet Programs Manager David Hoexter, Database General Editor Connie Rogers and Treasurer Klaus Zech bringing us up to date on the successes and challenges the club faced last year, as well as projections for 2014. We were pleased to hear that membership continued to increase during the past year (contrary to the experience of most collector groups), and that our finances are in good order! The new Board was elected including several new faces with a number of Board members retiring and passing the baton to the new team. President Zeller, on behalf of all members, thanked retiring board members and presented each with a Certificate of Appreciation for their Service.

Loren made special note of the contributions of Peggy Sutor, a long time Board Member who among her other contributions, led the team that put together our conferences for as long as I can remember. Also acknowledged was Connie Rogers who has made the Database not only possible but the best in class reference source it is.



Loren Zeller assists Connie Rogers in demonstrating a cup and saucer. Connie is the TCC Pattern and Source Print Database editor; the DB is approaching 11,000 entries.

Saturday evening we were treated to dinner at the Hilltop Steak House, with a friendly bartender and a delicious buffet of steak, fish, chicken and other goodies. Conversation was robust and a good time was had by all. We were saddened to learn that our dinner occurred on the last night this iconic restaurant was in business, following a more than 50 year run. Despite it being the last night, the staff treated us as if their run would continue for another 50 years; except for the 5 hour wait on line downstairs for those wishing a nostalgic last meal, one would never have known the Hilltop was closing!

Sitting down for another delicious breakfast on Sunday, I realized that this was the final day and the conference was flying by. Where did the time go?

There were two good speakers on Sunday Morning – Royce Walters’ talk titled: “Westward HO! And the Transferware Market in the Early Midwest” cited archeological evidence uncovered from several sites that dispelled any notion that this was a product made for city folk or that it was distributed only along the eastern seaboard.



Royce Walters (above) and Terry Woolliscroft (right)

The lecture segment of the Conference was wrapped up by Terry Woolliscroft (yes, Pam's husband), a British industrial ceramics expert who had spent many years at various English pottery makers. His topic "The Tale of the Toilet" was a very funny and well researched overview of the toilet and its impact on society over thousands of years, starting with Roman public toilets, cruising through the toilets of English castles, featuring the advent of ceramic toilets in the 19th century (many with transfer-printed patterns), and ending with a look at the future of the toilet . Presented with a great deal of humor and a tongue planted firmly in his cheek, he left the crowd pretty much bowl-ed over. There is something about British humor regarding this subject that had the American crowd viewing this ubiquitous necessity in an entirely new light.

One can always count on Judie Siddall (left) and Sue Wagstaff (right), here resplendent in their favorite color! Judie is a former TCC President and our long-time Membership Secretary and a most prolific Database category editor; Sue has helped in so many ways, including service on the TCC Board. Judie and Sue organized the speakers for our meeting (as they have done for previous meetings and will for next year's meeting at Winterthur).



The Raffle, organized by Loren Zeller, Frank and Sue Wagstaff, and Michael Weinberg, was a success and raised more money for the club than it had in prior years. Thanks again to all the contributors who parted with great material for a great cause and everyone who purchased tickets.

After a box lunch and a frenetic burst of activity from the dealers and sellers, the Sunday sale was underway. David Martin was tasked with the jumble table which was run with his eye for detail and organization. I was glad to see it enjoyed many sales and many happy faces. The wares being offered by all the sellers/dealers were very special and everyone seemed to be buying and selling. The recent auction of the Goldberg Brown collection of Historical American Staffordshire was in evidence with many of the best pieces being offered at very reasonable cost. All in all there were many smiling faces, and a lot of paper bags holding the most recent additions to member's collections.

As I drove away from the Conference, I couldn't help but appreciate all the hard work invested by so many members to make this a success. To those who couldn't make it, it was a great show and we'll see you in October 2014 in Mendenhall.



Show and Sale!!!

TRANSFERWARE COLLECTORS CLUB

www.transcollectorsclub.org