



Orphan Transferware Patterns and the TCC Assigned Name

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We all like to feel connected to something bigger than ourselves. Few of us have the independence (or the anti-social tendencies) to be comfortable with being awash in the world, without home or anchor, known to few. Consider the case, then, of the Orphan Transferware Pattern. We have all seen them, languishing around the fringes of transferware society, without name or origin. If they are particularly lovely or interesting in some way they may still be taken into our homes, but most of the time we can find out nothing about them. In some ways these poor little tykes irritate us - why isn't there more information available?

The goal of the Transferware Club Database is to include EVERY transfer printed pattern produced in Britain from the very beginning, in the 1750s, to 1900 (the latter boundary being a bit porous, but in general we stay within it). Most of them are named (or at least bear a pattern number). We know who made them, they are well documented and relatively easy to record. But some of them remain mysteries no matter how we search. In the end, if we want to include them in the database, we just have to do the best we can. We scrutinize the borders, the central patterns, and whatever enigmatic marks they might bear, and describe them to the best of our abilities. They're dubbed with a TCC Assigned Name and that's where things end for the time being.

Some of them do make the transition from orphan as we find out more about them, perhaps through finding a reference we hadn't seen before, or a source print. It might surprise you to know how many of these discoveries are completely serendipitous, made while we're looking for something else. But there are so many others! At present we have nearly 1000 orphans in the database; if you enter "TCC assigned name" in the general search and select "Maker Unknown" you can find them. Here we show just a very few of the varied and beautiful patterns awaiting adoption that can be found. The ID number for each pattern is also included; this can be put into the box at the top of each database search page for easier navigation.

Enjoy our orphans!

Angry Rabbits (ID# 6297) (Fig. 1). This is one of ten documented (there could be more) late 19th to early 20th century patterns from several series commonly known as Rabbitware, sometimes featuring rabbits doing human things - playing tennis, driving motorcars, or in this case, being annoyed. We have no idea who made these and they're never titled. The depiction of menacing bunnies brings to mind the movie "Monty Python and The Holy Grail".



Fig. 1: *Angry Rabbits* plate.

Bird Over Arched Bridge (ID# 778) (Fig. 2). A jam packed design. Perhaps the maker thought let's just throw in everything but the kitchen sink and see what we come up with. In fact if you look closely there's probably a kitchen sink somewhere in there too.



Fig. 2: *Bird Over Arched Bridge* plate.

Boy Stealing Apples (ID# 8591) (Fig. 3). Victorian children seem to have been inundated with homilies and improving sentiments - at least this affirmation of the adage "Crime does not pay" is funny!



Fig. 3: *Boy Stealing Apples* plate.

Castle with Conservatory (ID# 14415) (Fig. 4A). A very nice dark blue design of a castle with an attached conservatory. It has all the hallmarks of being a real place but so far no one has been able to identify it. It shares a border with **Birds and Fruit #02** (ID# 15253) (Fig. 4B), a well known pattern usually found with a different border.



Fig. 4A: *Castle with Conservatory* wash bowl. Fig. 4B: *Birds and Fruit #02* wash bowl.

Cattle and Bridge (ID# 7907) (Fig. 5). A very lush and detailed pattern with a probably imaginary British scene. Beautifully done.



Fig. 5: *Cattle and Bridge* platter.



The Chaperone (ID# 8140) (Fig. 6). The course of true love never did run smooth, especially with Grandma around.

Fig. 6: *The Chaperone* plate.

Chinoiserie Harbor Scene (ID# 8705) (Fig. 7). A lovely printed and painted design that does a good job of emulating the look of Chinese Export famille rose pieces.



Fig. 7:
Chinoiserie Harbor Scene platter.

Dahlia, Carnation, and Pomegranate (ID# 12827) (Fig. 8). Not much to say about this one except that it is an example of the many beautifully engraved floral patterns to be found in the database.



Fig. 8: *Dahlia, Carnation, and Pomegranate* bowl with handles.

Dancing in the Meadow (ID# 12987) (Fig. 9). Perhaps meant to be a Spanish scene? A couple dances to the tune of a mandolin or lute. It would be interesting to know if the large house in the background is based on a real place.



Fig. 9: *Dancing in the Meadow* platter.

Feeding the Turkeys (ID# 9504) (Fig. 10). A charming rural scene rendered even more interesting by the central view being repeated in the border. **Homeward Bound** (ID# 15251) (Fig. 11). Another well executed rural scene of farm laborers pausing to chat on their way home from the field.



Fig. 10: *Feeding the Turkeys* bowl.



Fig. 11: *Homeward Bound* plate.

Robin, Holly and Butterfly (ID# 10214) (Fig. 12). An extremely eye-catching and colorful pattern in the aesthetic style popular in the late 19th century.



Fig. 12: *Robin, Holly and Butterfly* tankard / mug with hinged lid.



Turkish Font (ID# 15696) (Fig. 13). Font as in fountain or well, not as in print type. Though at first glance it appears to be a polychrome, Prattware type transfer, this surround pattern featuring various Middle Eastern figures is printed, then painted.

Fig. 13: *Turkish Font* vase.



The Music Critics (ID# 10215) (Fig. 14). A possibly anachronistic pattern in which two young women in Regency garb seem to be looking askance at a young man in classical dress playing a harp. Actually this is an instance in which an unknown, unmarked pattern can be looked at in different ways according to one's viewpoint. It may well be that the young women are supposed to be entranced by the young man's song - but it's more fun to imagine they might not be."

Fig. 14: *The Music Critics* platter.

The Wayside Cross (ID# 11040) (Fig. 15). Another jam packed pattern, this time of a rural British view that is open to several interpretations. The cross of the title is just the most unusual element in the overall design. **Winter Scene** (ID# 15736) (Fig. 16). A well engraved and well colored tile with children in a winter landscape, so typical of illustrations of the Victorian period.



Fig. 15: *The Wayside Cross* plate.



Fig. 16: *Winter Scene* tile.

It goes without saying that if you have information that will help these orphans regain their rightful heritage we would love to be told about it. In the best of all scenarios, this article would in time be rendered not only woefully outdated, but completely superfluous. If you can help this to happen we would be ever so grateful. Please transmit comments or information to me at otlink@aol.com.

Credits

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If you have a suggestion for or would like to contribute to the TCC Database Discoveries series, please contact us at webadmin@transcollectorsclub.org.



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