

Way Beyond Burslem: A journey through British-made ceramic locations abroad

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<http://www.tilesoc.org.uk/conference/exporting-stoke-2011/index.htm>

Please note that this version of the paper has only a few illustrations; the version given at the conference was fully illustrated.

The object of this paper is to explore the where, who, when, why, what and how of the export trade from Britain (mostly from England) of decorative tiles and architectural ceramics over a century - the period from the 1840s to the 1930s - from the gothic revival and the reinvention of encaustic tile making (a process which began during the 1830s) to the Second World War. The emphasis here is on locations outside the British Isles where decorative tiles and terracotta (glazed and unglazed) have been used in an architectural context, from floors, walls and facades to fountains, reredoses and memorials. An earlier paper on this subject included detailed references to archival source material.[1] This paper also aims to consider the design and cultural implications of such an export trade.

A database of 260 significant locations has now been built up; not all these sites are extant, and the installation date may be unknown. Overall, English manufacturers are known to have exported to Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, France, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Italy, Liberia, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Tanzania, Turkey, United States, Uruguay and the West Indies. The export trade in plain tiles was doubtless even broader, to judge by the lists of foreign agents in the catalogues of various manufacturers. A breakdown of location by date is given in Table 1. Although these figures are in no way statistically significant, they may help to give a picture of what was happening in the export trade during the period under consideration.

40s	50s	60s	70s	80s	90s	00s	10s	20s	30s
4	12	14	30	25	19	29	24	4	4

Table 1 Number of dated sites by decade beginning with the 1840s, total 165 (total known dated and undated sites 260)

Stoke-based firms (mostly Minton's and its later offshoots) were responsible for significant locations in Australia, Canada, Cuba, France, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Liberia, New Zealand, South Africa, Turkey and the United States. See Table 2 for a breakdown of all locations by the major firms (Stoke-based, Burmantofts, Maw and Doultton; O/U represents other and unknown makers). The large number of locations in the British Empire - Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa - and former Empire (United States) is notable, but to be expected given trade restrictions.

	Stoke	Burm	Doul	Maw	O/U	
Argentina			1	6		7
Australia	18	1	8	36	10	73
Belgium		1	1	1		3
Brazil		2				2
Canada	5	5	15	7	8	40

Cuba	1					1
Denmark			1			1
France	1		1			2
Hong Kong	1			1	1	3
Hungary					1	1
India	19		1	6	5	31
Italy	1					1
Liberia	1					1
Malaysia			1			1
New Zealand	3	2	6	8	1	20
Russia			1	1		2
Seychelles			1			1
Singapore			1	1		2
South Africa	2	4	1	9	2	18
Sri Lanka			2	1		3
Taiwan					1	1
Tanzania			1			1
Turkey	1					1
United States	10			26	7	43
West Indies				1		1
	63	15	42	104	36	260

Table 2 Locations by the major firms

Table 3 is a simplified version of Table 2, showing only the Empire locations of installations by the major firms Minton's (and offshoots), Doulton and Maw, and whether or not they are extant. The total number of significant extant locations in the database by all manufacturers is 111; there are doubtless more to be found. I'll now look at selected locations country by country.

	Minton	Doulton	Maw	Total	Extant
Australia	18	8	36	62	32
Canada	5	15	7	27	22
India	19	1	6	26	15
New Zealand	2	6	8	16	9
South Africa	2	1	9	12	3
United States	10		26	36	16
	56	31	92	179	97

Table 3 Empire locations by the major exporting firms, and whether extant

AUSTRALIA

Some of the earliest Minton tiles exported to Australia were laid at one of the country's earliest ecclesiologically correct churches, St John the Baptist, Buckland, Tasmania (1847). Werribee Park (1876), the largest domestic residence ever built in Victoria, was equipped with Minton's encaustic floor tiles, and a small area of the floor at Sydney's Great Synagogue (1878) was tiled by Minton Hollins. Minton products were laid in the prestigious Parliament House buildings - the State Parliament of Victoria - in Melbourne, where the new vestibule of 1879, covering an area of 44 square feet, was fitted with a specially designed circular arrangement of tiles which took four months to lay and cost around £2,000; this was Minton's most important encaustic tile commission in Australia. (For a view of the pavement see <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/virtualtour/> accessed 19.12.2011.)

Tiles by Minton's and Maw's were being imported regularly by the end of the 1860s, and early Maw example being the ornate floor at the Melbourne Club, Melbourne (1859). Two of the more notable Melbourne projects to use Maw's tiles were the former English, Scottish and Australian Bank (1887, now the ANZ Gothic Bank), and St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne; in 1905 Maw's foreign trade in paving tiles exceeded that of their home market. St Paul's Church, Murrurundi has a rare Godwin tiled reredos of 1873.

Now displayed at the Museum of Australian Democracy in Old Parliament House, Canberra, is a large terracotta panel entitled *The Greek Mother*. It was designed by George Tinworth for Doulton in 1904-6, and was exhibited at a show of Doultonware in Sydney but not sold. (For photographs see http://www.flickr.com/photos/old_parliament_house/3583807767/in/photostream accessed 19.12.2011.) It remained in Australia - the cost of shipping it home would have been substantial - and some years later it was offered to the Australian government, which accepted the gift in 1927. It then occupied various positions in the Old Parliament House, and is now permanently sited in the Parliamentary Library. These large tile and terracotta showpieces, often made at great expense for highly prestigious international exhibitions, posed problems for the manufacturers as they were rarely sold after doing their duty in impressing potential customers.

CANADA

The earliest use of Minton encaustic tiles in Canada resulted from donations of tiles by Herbert Minton to St Anne's (1847), a chapel of ease to Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton, New Brunswick, where the lavish tiling includes a representation of the royal arms[2]. Later Minton installations included a pavement - in the carriage entrance - at the luxurious mansion Craigdarroch Castle (1890), built by a local shipping and mining magnate at the highest point of Victoria's most prestigious neighbourhood. Also notable is the 1860 Maw pavement at Osgoode Hall in Toronto (for photograph see <http://www.flickr.com/photos/snuffly/3200544968/> accessed 20.12.2011).

Memorial tiles found their way to a number of locations abroad. The 64 at the Church of St Alban the Martyr, Adolphustown, Ontario were ordered from 1889 onwards from the Campbell Tile Company of Stoke-on-Trent.[3] They were commissioned individually by subscription; similar memorial tiles have not been found elsewhere in Canada.[4] (See <http://www.uelac.org/St-Alban/memorial-tiles.php> for details, accessed 20.12.2011.)

Doulton's won several important commissions in Canada just before the First World War, including the extensive contract for St John's Cathedral, Saskatoon (completed 1917). Not only was there much external and internal terracotta, but also a white Carraraware rood screen. They also won a series of contracts for commercial buildings, as did other British firms, notably Burmantofts. A detailed survey of these commissions, in an article by Barbara McMullen for the TACS Journal, is to be published shortly.[5] A few Canadian architects showed an inclination towards large-scale decorative terracotta embellishment: for the facade of the Calgary Herald Building (1913), Doulton's produced 44 strange figures - including gargoyle-like depictions of several of the newspaper's staff - designed by the sculptor Mark Marshall of Doulton's Lambeth Studio, while the Canadian Pacific Railroad's hotel (the Hotel Vancouver) of 1916 in Vancouver had similar Doultonware ornament, including a huge moose head and an even larger bison head. (For photograph see http://vancouver.ca/ArchivesSearch/Results.aspx?AC=GET_RECORD&XC=/ArchivesSearch/Results.aspx&BU=http%3A%2F%2Fvancouver.ca%2FArchivesSearch%2FSearchPhotos.aspx&TN=records&SN=AUTO9594&SE=1946&RN=0&MR=10&TR=0&TX=1000&ES=0&CS=0&XP=&RF=WebRelevance&EF=&DF=WebFullImages&RL=0&EL=0&DL=0&NP=255&ID=&MF=GENERICENGWPMMSG.INI&MQ=&TI=0&DT=&ST=0&IR=138441&NR=0&NB=0&SV=0&SS=0&BG=&FG=&QS=&OEX=ISO-8859-1&OEH=utf-8 accessed 20.12.2011; held by the City of Vancouver Archives.)

The huge terracotta caryatids of the World Building - named after a local newspaper - in Vancouver were supplied in 1911-12 by Gibbs & Canning. They were designed by the Italian-born sculptor Charles Marega (1871-1939) who had moved to the city in 1909. The World Building was a short-lived holder of the title of tallest building in the British Empire.

This much fought over 'title' was part of the building's marketing appeal, and ignored the claims of taller non-commercial structures. The building was later bought by another newspaper, and is now known as the Sun Tower. (For photograph see <http://www.flickr.com/photos/robinthom/5555543/> accessed 20.12.2011.)

The design of the terracotta statue of the Madonna and Child (1907) topping the dome of Dawson College in Quebec was based on a similar statue in Marseilles. The mould was made in France but the statue was fabricated in London - possibly by Doulton? - before its installation at the college. It was taken down, restored and returned to the dome during 2009-10. For photographs see <http://blog.rogeraziz.com/2010/04/dawson-statue-repairs-2/> accessed 20.12.2011.

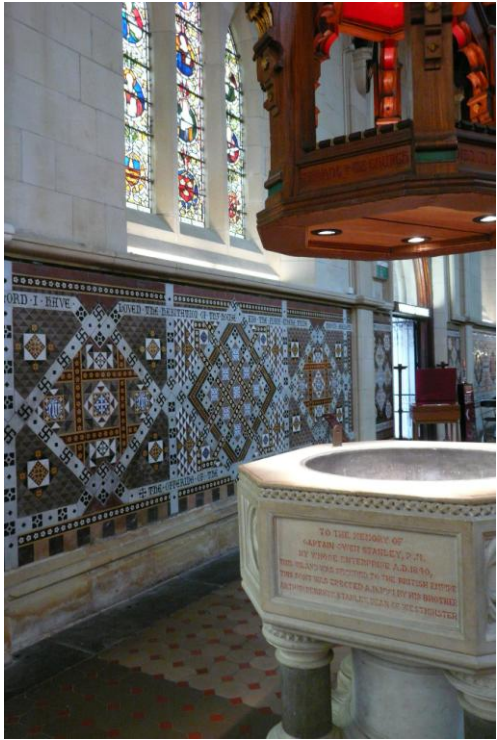
INDIA

It was well into the 1860s before British tiles came into more general use in India, notably in the gothic city of Bombay. Minton's supplied tiles for many buildings including the Royal Alfred Sailors' Home (1876), but the biggest and most prestigious Bombay tile contract went to Maw's; it was for the Victoria Terminus (1878-87), the terminus of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, which had encaustic tiled floors and wall tiling throughout, the two-dimensional flat-pattern of the wall tiling being acceptable in both British and Indian design traditions. [6]

Maw's were also responsible for the 1905-8 scheme for the complex tiled floor of the octagonal Marriage Pavilion in the Amba Vilas Palace (1897-1912), Mysore, southern India; this is a rare example of a well-documented foreign contract. The records show that determining the exact design, which included four large panels showing a stylised peacock, a symbol of fidelity, was a process that took over two years to complete and involved the Maharaja, the architect, the executive engineer and Maw's chief designer. [7]

NEW ZEALAND

Maw's were responsible for the series of unusual wall tile panels inside Christ Church Cathedral, Christchurch, which date from 1885 (see Figs. 1-4). The cathedral's supervising architect was the Birmingham-born Benjamin Mountfort (1825-98), who had also been responsible for the design of the Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings in Christchurch, notably the Stone Chamber of 1865, which has similar Maw panels and also floor tiling. The earthquake of February 2011 seriously damaged both these buildings, which are now on the list of those to be demolished, although there is growing opposition to this course of action.





Figs. 1-4 Maw panels, Christchurch Cathedral

Minton tiles were used in the entrance hall of the lavishly decorated Larnach Castle (1875), a grandiose mansion near Dunedin, while Douulton faience formed the elaborate and colourful facings to the ticket office at Dunedin's railway station (1906).[8] Its mosaic floor, also by Douulton, had to be replaced around 1965 as it had sunk, but the new floor is an exact replica of the original, with assorted railway-related images (Figs. 5-8). (For the station's entry in the New Zealand Historic Places Trust Register see <http://www.historic.org.nz/TheRegister/RegisterSearch/RegisterResults.aspx?RID=59> accessed 20.12.2011.)



Figs. 5-8 Dunedin Railway Station

Doulton's also provided a set of 18 pictorial nursery rhyme tile panels for Wellington Children's Hospital in 1912. Before its demolition in 1989 they were removed; in 1991 eight panels were resited in Wellington's current children's hospital, and in 2008 the remaining ten were installed in the new regional hospital.[9] Two similar panels - one depicting Little Miss Muffet - in the children's ward of Christchurch Public Hospital are now at Canterbury Museum's Documentary Research Centre. A later installation, dating from about 1937, was at Southland General Hospital, Invercargill, where H&G Thynne produced 44 panels, each one foot in height, showing a total of 37 nursery rhyme-type subjects; they formed a double frieze around the ward. Thynne's were so proud of their work at the hospital that they published a brochure outlining and illustrating the commission. The hospital has now been demolished, and only a few panels appear to have survived.

UNITED STATES

British-made encaustic tiles were felt to be a fashionable floor covering throughout America from the 1850s. Minton's plain and encaustic tiles were used in 1856 for the extensive floors of two wings added to the Capitol building in Washington, and a unique Minton tile ceiling was installed at Bethesda Terrace in New York's Central Park around 1860. (See <http://www.centralparknyc.org/visit/things-to-see/south-end/minton-tiles-at-bethesda.html> and for details of its restoration see <http://www.conservationolution.com/publications-and-presentations/publications/restoring-the-minton-tile-ceiling/> accessed 20.12.2011.)

A fine Minton encaustic pavement was installed in the entrance hall of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1876), which opened in Philadelphia just before the start of Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876. The exhibition included elaborate displays of British tiles, notably artist-designed hand-painted tiles, which increased their general popularity in America and paved the way for the development of American tile manufacture.[10] Many of the exhibits were later displayed in Washington at the Smithsonian's Arts and Industries Building, including these two examples of Minton tiles, photographed in 1991 (Figs. 9-10).

Although Maw's were enthusiastic exporters of tiles, as far as records allow us to see their neighbours in the Ironbridge Gorge, Craven Dunnill, rarely bothered with the export trade. An exception was their fine floor for the 16-sided Nott Memorial Building (1876) at Union College, Schenectady, which was restored in 1993. (See <http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/72000912.pdf> accessed 20.12.2011.)



Figs. 9-10 A small part of the Minton display at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, seen in 1991 at the Smithsonian, Washington DC

SOUTH AFRICA

The vast majority of tiles exported from Britain to the African continent went to South Africa around the turn of the nineteenth century, and there were also exports of terracotta, for instance Doulton's 1902 façade of the still-extant Isaac's Building (later Wellington Fruit Growers) in Cape Town, for which some of the original drawings survive.[11] The most unusual export to South Africa was for the massive faience centrepiece of Durban's First World War memorial, commissioned from Carter's of Poole and completed in 1925. The group, comprising two angels and a figure of Christ, was 21 feet in height, 11 feet wide and weighed 14 tons. It was fired in sections then assembled at the works before the pieces were numbered and it was taken apart for shipping.[12]

BRAZIL

The Leeds Fireclay Company built up a worldwide trade in Burmantofts faience and tiles towards the end of the nineteenth century, with markets including Argentina and Brazil, where a major contract was for the Customs Building in Manaus during the early 1900s.[13]

DOULTON FOUNTAINS

Around the turn of the century, celebrations following Queen Victoria's 1897 diamond jubilee resulted in several commissions from abroad for commemorative fountains and statues by Doulton's. The fountains were usually in glazed, coloured Doultonware while the statues, often modelled by John Broad, were normally plain terracotta. A still-extant 1900 example from Victoria, the capital city of Mahé in the Seychelles, combines both, with a tiny terracotta statue of Queen Victoria mounted on top of the mostly green-glazed fountain, itself similar in design to those found in Britain. Doulton's exported a Queen Victoria memorial fountain, a large terracotta work designed by John Broad, to Malacca in 1904.

The large Taylor Memorial Fountain was made by Doulton's in 1905. It was ordered (probably out of Doulton's catalogue) on behalf of the London ship owner John Taylor in memory of his sons Ernest and Peter Taylor, who had both died in Australia. Fremantle Council accepted the gift, which arrived in October 1905; it was packed in six crates, without plans or assembly instructions. Thus only the drinking fountain and horse trough were erected, with several other large faience pieces finding their way to local gardens. By the 1970s the structure had become boarded up and unloved, but a restoration grant was obtained by the City of Fremantle in 1981, and restoration was complete by 1983. A local potter, Joan Campbell, was involved in reproducing the glazes. (For the Heritage Council of Western Australia Register of Historic Places listing details pdf see http://register.heritage.wa.gov.au/PDF_Files/T%20Reg/Taylor%20Memorial%28P%29.PDF accessed 19.12.2011.)

A later example of a Doulton fountain is the 1922 Hankinson Memorial Fountain in Narrandera, New South Wales, presented in honour of the townspeople who served in the First World War. Intriguingly, local information suggests a similar fountain is to be found in Karachi, Pakistan, but this remains unconfirmed. (For a photograph of the fountain see <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bdonald/429606445/> accessed 19.12.2011.)

DOULTON IN DENMARK

The English Church of St Alban (1887) was built to cater for the growing English congregation in the commercial centre of Copenhagen. It was roofed with Broseley tiles from Shropshire, and the Campbell Tile Company presented tiles for the dado and floor; the reredos (designed by George Tinworth), pulpit and font are of Doulton terracotta and faience, and were all presented by the firm. For a description see <http://www.st-albans.dk/about-us/about-the-church-building/> accessed 20.12.2011.

DOULTON IN ARGENTINA

Possibly the most lavish of Doulton's many foreign commissions was for the Water Palace of 1887 in Buenos Aires. Said to contain over 300,000 separate pieces of Doultonware (faience and terracotta), the water pumping and purification facility was built only a few years after the city became the capital of Argentina. In addition, it was sited in a plush residential area, thus its architecture needed to reflect the glory of its immediate surroundings, and of the capital city. Symbols of the then-14 Argentine provinces are picked out in coloured faience across the vast façade. Today, the engineering elements of the structure have been removed, and the building houses water company offices and a museum, the Museo del Patrimonio Histórico at the Palacio de las Aguas Corrientes. For description and photographs see <http://thebuenosairesblog.blogspot.com/2007/12/palace-of-running-water.html> accessed 20.12.2011.

DOULTON IN SINGAPORE

Apart from Doulton's substantial terracotta trade, the firm's largest ever tile contract, for around 7,500 tiles in 1935, was for the former Tanjong Pagar Railway Station (Keppel Road Station) in east Singapore. This comprised 18 hand-painted pictorial tile panels designed by William Rowe, each about 23 feet high by 5 feet wide, showing local primary industries such as rubber, rice, tin mining and copra; the panels were arranged in groups of three along two walls of the booking hall, and are still extant.[14] The station was closed on the 1st July 2011, but is set to become a national monument, Singapore's 64th such monument. For description and photographs see <http://remembersingapore.wordpress.com/tanjong-pagar-railway-station/> accessed 20.12.2011.

CONCLUSION

Doulton's were probably the most successful of the tile and architectural ceramics exporters in the early twentieth century, although Minton's, followed closely by Maw's, were the first to export tiles on an industrial scale. These export activities penetrated a broad geographical area, resulting in a significant and distinctively English contribution to the decorative elements of buildings - particularly high prestige buildings - throughout the world between the 1850s and the 1930s, even when comparable local products became available. Some important factors in choosing English manufacturers were the presence of English-trained architects, the wish to replicate (albeit on a smaller scale) buildings of the homeland throughout the Empire, and the effects of fashion.

In theory the task of locating buildings abroad where English tile and terracotta manufacturers made a significant contribution is straightforward: look at the archives and see what contracts were made. However, in practice, the archives are in general sadly lacking in contractual material (some Burmantofts records apart), and in other cases are non-existent or simply not available for study. This paper sets out the the latest position based on the database as it was in late 2011. It is clear that many more relevant locations exist. The possibility of producing a world gazetteer of buildings with English-made architectural ceramics is a tempting thought - it might make a wonderful website - but the phrase 'more research is necessary' has never been more appropriate.

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