

## **In the latest London style: Decorative tile and terracotta exports by British manufacturers, 1840-1940**

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Even before the mid-nineteenth century and the sudden resurgence of the ceramic tile making industry in Britain, an export trade in decorative tiles and architectural ceramics existed, albeit on a small scale. Liverpool-made printed tiles appeared in the houses of colonial America, notably in the areas around Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston, towards the end of the eighteenth century (Bridges 1978); however, many of these tiles may have been privately ordered or personally acquired during trips to Britain. Eleanor Coade's Lambeth works, which manufactured a clay-based stone substitute known as Coade stone, exported statuary, plaques and architectural elements during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Destinations included Canada, America, Brazil and the West Indies; 11 cases of mixed figures and animals, including a bust of Nelson, were shipped to Haiti in 1816 as a speculative venture (Kelly 1990, pp. 440-5).

During the 1830s several British firms attempted to revive the medieval art of encaustic (or inlaid) tile making, one of the most successful being Herbert Minton of the Stoke-on-Trent earthenware manufacturers Minton's, who had exported their wares from the 1790s. The tiles rapidly became fashionable, and mass production became possible with the introduction of dust-pressing, allowing tiles to be made from clay particles rather than plastic clay. By the end of the nineteenth century firms such as Maw & Co and Craven Dunnill (both based in the Ironbridge Gorge), Doulton of Lambeth and the Leeds Fireclay Company, as well as numerous smaller concerns, had become industrial-scale producers of tiles and varying types of terracotta. The growth of this industry and its outcome in terms of surviving British tile and architectural ceramic locations has already been described (Pearson 2005a), but no similar exercise has been carried out for the export trade, apart from a brief summary (Pearson 2005b), due partly to the lack of relevant archival material. However, it has now been possible to gather details on around 200 of the most significant foreign orders fulfilled by British firms during 1840-1940, and this paper outlines the extent of this export trade and describes some of the major architectural commissions carried out.

### **AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND**

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, built in 1846-7 (Moore, G, 1984). In 1855 Herbert Minton made a personal gift of encaustic tiles to a church in Geelong; his firm's tiles also formed the pavement (1857) in the Lady Chapel at Melbourne's St Francis Church, and were used at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney around 1867 (Irvine 1997). Tiles by Minton's and Maw's were being imported regularly by the end of the 1860s, and Minton products were laid in prestigious Parliament House buildings at Brisbane (1868) and 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 (Jones 1993, p. 174).

Maw's tiles eventually appeared in Perth's Parliament House (1902-4), one of the locations mentioned in the company's extensive catalogue issued in 1906 (SA Maw's Tiles 6001/4112). It also listed their work in Melbourne at the catholic Cathedral of St Patrick and the anglican Cathedral of St Paul, the latter being an elaborate nave pavement dating from the 1880s. Minton floor tiles were an element of the lavish decoration of St Dominic's Priory Chapel (1892), North Adelaide, while St Peter's Church at Maitland, to the north of Sydney, has a floor combining Maw tiles in the nave (1904) and Craven Dunnill mosaic work in the chancel (1900).

During the 1870s the upper end of the Australian domestic market still took its cue from England where sophisticated decorative items were concerned, although local importers and agents were crucial in setting styles. Werribee Park (1874-7), the largest domestic residence ever built in Victoria, was equipped with Minton's encaustic floor tiles, and the fashionable Scottish decorators Daniel Cottier and John Lyon opened a branch in Sydney in 1873 and decorated a large number of private houses "in the latest London style" (Donnelly 1999, p. 47). They worked on the Abbey (1881), a gothic revival mansion in the southern Sydney suburb of Annandale, and installed hand-painted Minton tiles by the Scottish designer John Moyr Smith (Stapleton 2002, p. 53). Although Australia had its own iron foundries, plasterworks, wallpaper manufacturers and furniture makers by the 1880s, many products were still imported, including a wide range of encaustic tiles for front steps, verandahs and entrance halls (Forge 1981, pp. 28-9). In turn-of-the-century Sydney tiles were used as external decoration on suburban homes (**fig.1**), their makers including the British firms T. and R. Boote, Sherwin and Cotton, Pilkington's Tile and



Figure 1. Late nineteenth century tiles made by J. H. Barratt and Company of Stoke-on-Trent decorating a house in Sydney

Pottery Company, Campbell Tile Company (who were still exporting their wares to Australia and New Zealand in the 1920s) and Henry Richards Tile Company, as well as Minton's and Maw's; other imported tiles came from America and Germany (Irik 2001).

Doulton's had introduced Australian imagery as early as 1878, in the form of a teaset decorated by the artist Hannah Barlow depicting kangaroos (Eyles and Irvine 2002, p. 68); this was possibly in preparation for the firm's displays at the 1879-80 Sydney International Exhibition and the rival 1880-1 International Exhibition at Melbourne. Louis Bilton, an artist in Doulton's Burslem studio, visited Australia during the 1880s, and designed a circular ceramic plaque and a 12-tile panel both showing the waratah, the floral emblem of New South Wales.



Figure 2. Waratah tile panel by Carter's of Poole on the exterior of a Sydney house

The same flower was shown on a five-tile panel made by Carter's of Poole around 1920; this was used as external decoration on a Sydney house (**fig.2**), as was an early twentieth century two-tile panel showing a kangaroo (**fig.3**); an identical kangaroo motif forms part of a 12-tile plaque probably made by Doulton's. T. and R. Boote produced a series of flower tiles for the Australian market in the early twentieth century, including the wattle, the eucalyptus, the daisy-like flannel flower and Sturt's desert pea, the floral emblem of South Australia.



Figure 3. Pair of tiles showing a kangaroo, probably manufactured by Doulton's, on the gatepost of a Sydney house

Aside from ecclesiastical and domestic work, the bulk of the Australian tiling contracts carried out using British products in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were for civic and commercial buildings, including town halls, law courts, banks, hotels and private clubs. Three of the more notable Melbourne projects to use Maw's tiles were the renovation of the Town Hall (1887), the former English, Scottish and Australian Bank (1880-3, now the ANZ Gothic Bank), and the former Commercial Bank of Australia (1891). Britain was not the only source of architectural ceramics. The mosaic flooring for the grandest of Melbourne's fashionable shopping arcades, the Block Arcade (1892-3), was imported from Italy (Goad 1999, p. 70) and the German firm Villeroy and Boch supplied the ornate 1880s tiled counter in a butcher's shop at Toowoomba, Queensland (Irvine 1997); indeed, imported pictorial tiling often appeared inside or on the facade of butcher's shops.

The overall pattern of late nineteenth century tile usage in New Zealand was similar to that in Australia. Minton tiles were used at the lavishly decorated Larnach Castle (1871-5), a grandiose mansion near Dunedin, and Maw's supplied tiles for the floor and walls of the Provincial Council Chambers (1864-5) in Canterbury, and for banks and other public buildings in Wellington and Christchurch. Maw's were also responsible for the series of unusual wall tile panels inside Christ Church Cathedral, Christchurch, which date from 1885. Doulton's provided a set of around 16 pictorial nursery rhyme tile panels for Wellington Children's Hospital in 1912 (after its demolition in 1989 they were moved to Wellington Hospital) and two similar panels - one depicting Little Miss Muffet - for the

children's ward of Christchurch Public Hospital (now at Canterbury Museum's Documentary Research Centre). Terracotta wares were also exported to Australia and New Zealand, notably by Doulton's of Lambeth, whose designer John Broad modelled a large terracotta group intended for Brisbane in 1880. Doulton fountains, all extant in the late 1990s, were installed at the Joanna Walker Memorial Children's Convalescent Hospital (1894) and the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (1911, later transferred to Westmead Children's Hospital), both in Sydney; at Narrandera, New South Wales, where the fountain was a First World War Memorial (1922); and in Fremantle, Western Australia.

### **Australian tile and terracotta manufacturers**

Several British tile manufacturers showed at the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition, including Craven Dunnill, Doulton and Maw, whose display of encaustic tiles was described in the official record, published in 1881 by Thomas Richards of Sydney, as "A most excellent exhibit of tiles, the floral, pictorial, and geometric features being of a clear colour and design; the tiles are also perfect in shape. This is the best exhibit, by far, of its kind in the Exhibition." Also on show was Australian-manufactured ornamental terracotta, although no decorative tiling, despite the fact that home-grown tile makers had begun to emerge during the 1870s. Henry Cawkwell manufactured encaustic tiles in Melbourne from the early 1870s, and the Australian Tessellated Tile Company (ATTC) was established in 1885 by Edgar Edwardes Walker, who had been apprenticed to Cawkwell. Walker's firm, whose works was in the east of Melbourne at Mitcham, was able to produce a full range of tiles by 1887, and they were specified for the Commercial Bank of Australia (1891) building in Melbourne. Maw's tiles were also used at the bank, and were probably supplied by the ATTC, who imported floor tiles from Maw's and wall tiles from other British firms including T. and R. Boote. The ATTC was able to produce glazed wall tiles from 1895. Walker, who obtained his original tile making plant from England, kept in close contact with English manufacturers, visiting them on several occasions. One such trip was around June 1910 when *The British Clayworker* reported that the ATTC was the largest Australian manufacturer of floor and wall tiles.

Other Australian firms included the Hoffman Brick and Tile Company, which was established in 1870 at Brunswick, a northern suburb of Melbourne, and continued in production until taken over in 1959 (Stuart 1995). By 1914 Hoffman's were able to make a wide range of terracotta dragons and other grotesque beasts for use as finials, and following the First World War produced domestic art pottery with distinctive Australian imagery including koalas, kookaburras and possums (O'Hoy 1987). Terracotta was being produced on a small scale by several Australian firms from the 1870s, and by the 1890s was being used extensively in the form of architectural dressings. However, glazed terracotta (or faience) was still being obtained from Britain in the early years of the twentieth century. In New Zealand, Doulton faience formed the facings to the ticket office at Dunedin's railway station (1906), while Burmantofts faience, manufactured by the Leeds Fireclay Company, appeared at Auckland Grammar School (1915) and the AMP Building in Wellington. Of greater significance was the extensive Burmantofts contract for faience decoration on Mark Foy's Sydney department store (1907-8, now the Downing Centre), which included swags 10 feet in length (WYAS WYL/922/3657/2); its

architects, McCredie and Anderson, had previously toured Europe looking at examples of new stores (Jahn 1997, p. 90).

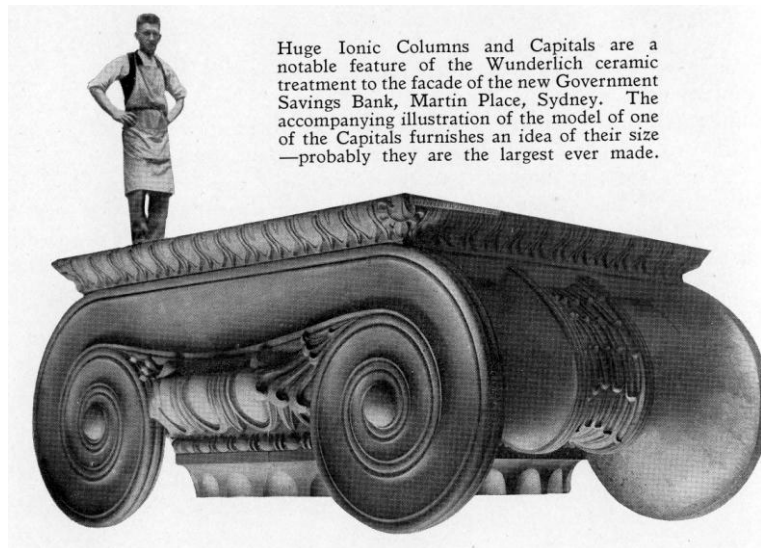


Figure 4. Illustration from a promotional book published by Wunderlich of Sydney (Wunderlich 1927, p. 20)

The use of faience slab panels for cladding became popular just before the First World War in Australia, but British firms did not take advantage of this market, probably due to prohibitive shipping costs. Wunderlich's of Sydney (**fig.4**), who had imported terracotta roof tiles from France since 1892, established their glazed terracotta works in 1924, helped by experts from America (Wunderlich 1927, p. 20). An early example of the firm's Granitex terracotta was on the facade of the Nicholas Building (1925-6) in Melbourne (**fig.5**); its architect Harry Norris explained that he had used the material so that the building would always look "as new as the day that it was erected" (Goad 1999, p. 121). BMA House (1928-20) in Sydney was also clad with Wunderlich faience, its lavish ornament including a pair of koalas. Perhaps the best-known, and for many years the most denigrated, use of ceramic cladding in Australia was for the public houses of the 1930s, once known as "toilet tile pubs", many of which were built by the brewers Tooth's of Sydney and were tiled inside as well as on their facades (Pickett 1989).



Figure 5. The terracotta facade of the Nicholas Building in Melbourne (Wunderlich 1927, p. 139)

## **NORTH AMERICA**

The earliest uses of Minton encaustic tiles in North America resulted from donations of tiles by Herbert Minton to a church in Philadelphia (1847) and to St Anne's (1846-7), a chapel of ease to Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton, New Brunswick, where the lavish tiling includes a representation of the royal arms (Leroux 2001). In 1851 the *Staffordshire Advertiser* reported that Minton tiles had previously been exported to India, Jamaica and other parts of the Empire, and were newly in demand in America (Ewins 1997, p. 28). British-made encaustic tiles were felt to be a fashionable floor covering throughout America from the 1850s. However, their use tended to be confined to public buildings and the homes of the wealthy in east coast cities, as the tiles were initially only available from a few importers situated in Atlantic ports, and rail links were poor (Sims 2003a). 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 in the following year a multicoloured floor of Minton's encaustic tiles was installed in the circular entrance hall of Grace Hill (now Litchfield Villa, 1855-7), Prospect Park, Brooklyn. Maw's supplied a tile pavement for University College, Toronto, in the late 1850s, and another pavement, which included a trade tile, for the nearby Sherborne Villa, built in 1857-8 for an English family (Richardson 1997).

A fine Minton encaustic pavement was installed in the entrance hall of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1872-6), 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; at least 25 tile makers were in business in America by 1885 (Myers 2002). Despite this, British tiles were still exported to North America towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century; 1907 issues of the *Canadian Architect and Builder* carried advertisements for the British firms Craven Dunnill, Wooliscroft's and the Leeds Fireclay Company. However, the wares were generally used in rather less prestigious locations than before - for instance banks, hotels, clubs and restaurants - and complaints about the quality of the imports became more frequent (Pearson 2005b). Immigrants from England played crucial roles in the development of American tile and terracotta manufacture; amongst others, Gilbert Elliott served as general manager of the American Encaustic Tiling Company during 1876-9 (Sims 2003b), Robert Minton Taylor was plant superintendent at the United States Encaustic Tile Company in 1881-3, and James Taylor, who was originally employed by the English terracotta manufacturer John Blashfield, worked for a series of American terracotta makers during 1870-93 (Tunick 1997, pp. 6-14).

Blashfield was an enthusiastic exporter of terracotta, but his work for the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (1870-6) led to the downfall of his firm due to late payments associated with the contract (Stratton 1993, pp. 145-6). By the mid-1880s the American terracotta industry was well established and British products were rarely used thereafter. British firms, notably Doulton's and to a lesser extent the Leeds Fireclay Company, were much more successful in Canada where buildings designed in what became known as the Edwardian Commercial Style featured steel frames clad with glazed terracotta (Kalman

1994, pp. 576-7). The Leeds company went so far as to set up a special branch in 1910 to deal with Canadian orders (WYAS WYL/922/3356/33), and Burmantofts Marmo was used to cover the entire facade of the ten-storey Confederation Life Building (1912) in Toronto (WYAS WYL/922/3657/2).

Doulton's won several important commissions in Canada just before the First World War. Their wares were used on the Bank of Montreal (1909-10), Toronto (Patrick 1993), and the firm supplied 44 strange figures for the facade of the Calgary Herald Building (1912-13), including gargoyle-like depictions of several of the newspaper's staff designed by the sculptor Mark Marshall of Doulton's Lambeth Studio. The Canadian Pacific Railroad Hotel (1913) in Vancouver had similar Doultonware ornament, as did St John's Cathedral (1912-17) in Saskatoon; the Cathedral had some internal facing of Doulton's white glazed Carraraware, which was also used for the facade of the Canada Life Assurance Building (1912-13) in Calgary (Atterbury and Irvine 1979, p. 85). Wooliscroft's were also successful in Canada around 1910, having taken on board complaints that American firms appeared better able to cope with Canadian requirements than British manufacturers. They developed a glazed terracotta known as Pentillicon which was specially adapted for Canadian conditions.

## **INDIA AND SRI LANKA**

Tile making in the far north of India began as early as 1860, when J. Frizzoni and Company was established in Allahabad; the firm eventually had offices in Agra and Cawnpore, where their tiles were used for the floors of many bungalows (Yalland 1994). Their designs were based on European examples, and it appears that Indian art workers generally tended to prefer English motifs rather than traditional designs (Baden-Powell 1886). Early occurrences of British tiles in India include the encaustic tile paving at the Afghan Memorial Church of St John the Baptist (1847-58), Bombay (Davies 1989, p. 441), and tiles donated in 1852 by Herbert Minton to a church in Gwalior, northern India. However, it was well into the 1860s before British tiles came into more general use in India, notably in Bombay.

Minton's supplied tiles for Bombay's Law Courts of 1871-9, as well as the city's David Sassoon Library (1867-73), University Library (1878) and Emmanuel Mission Church (1867-9), where the tiles were a personal gift from its English architect (London 2002). However, 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 (Stratton 1987). Terracotta was also popular in Bombay in the 1860s, when a lavish scheme of terracotta decoration was carried out in the city's Victoria Gardens; this included the Sassoon Clock Tower, which incorporated Minton tiles but was made from terracotta supplied by John Blashfield's Stamford works in Lincolnshire. The London terracotta manufacturer Mark Henry Blanchard had been involved slightly earlier, supplying wares in 1865 for the Horniman Circle, a prestigious development in the centre of Bombay (Dilawari and Cunningham 2003).



Apart from installations in palaces, for instance the late nineteenth century Rao Pragmalji's Palace at Bhuj, Gujarat, the use of British tiles in India was for much the same range of buildings as in Australia and North America: churches, railway stations, post offices and educational buildings. Away from Bombay, the business capital of India, British tiles were also exported to Calcutta, where they were used in the Town Hall, and to Madras, where Maw's tiles were exported in 1913 for use in the new Council Chamber, as their 1912-13 overseas order book records (IGMT D/MAW/3/6). The February 1907 issue of the *Brickbuilder* noted that the Indian government had recently placed an order with Carter's of Poole for floor tiles for the Agricultural College at Poona. Maw's tiles were used at Colombo Cathedral, Sri Lanka, and the same firm were 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 (IGMT D/MAW/12/1-32). The records show that determining the exact design, which included four large panels showing a stylised peacock (**fig.6**), 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 (Kay 1998).



Figure 6. On display at Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, is this exact modern replica of the peacock motif used at the Amba Vilas Palace, Mysore

## **AFRICA**

Although Herbert Minton had donated tiles to St Paul's Episcopal Church, Monrovia, Liberia, in 1855, the vast majority of tiles exported from Britain to Africa went to South Africa around the turn of the century, when Maw's tiles were used at banks, offices and hotels in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. The Leeds Fireclay Company was a significant exporter to South Africa, setting up a branch specifically to deal with this trade in 1904 (WYAS WYL/922/3356/32). The July 1905 issue of the *Brickbuilder* reported that Burmantofts faience had recently been used at the Cape Town offices of the New Zealand Insurance Company and the Bank of Africa at Pietermaritzburg, while wares produced by an associated firm, Cliff and Company, had been supplied for the Exploration Buildings in Johannesburg and a new department store. Even by 1910 the *Rand Daily Mail* felt that Exploration Buildings was the only good example of terracotta work in Johannesburg, and hoped to encourage local manufacturers.

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. 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; the faience arrived undamaged (Hawkins 1980, pp. 111-4).

## **SOUTH AMERICA**

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 Manaus opera house, the Teatro Amazonas, built in 1884-96 (Wood 2004). This was followed around 1907 by the same city's Customs House (WYAS WYL/922/3657/2); by the year ending June 1910, 11 per cent of the Leeds Fireclay Company's trade was being done abroad. Maw's tiles were used in several Buenos Ayres buildings around the turn of the century, while firms exporting tiles to Uruguay in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century included T. and R. Boote, Alfred Meakin, Pilkington's Tile and Pottery Company (Corbett and Corbett 2005), H. and R. Johnson, Mintons China Works and Craven Dunnill (Urioste 2004).

## **MALAYSIA AND HONG KONG**

In 1848 Herbert Minton donated encaustic tiles for the floor of the baptistery in the church which later became St John's Cathedral (1847-9), Hong Kong. Doulton's exported a Queen Victoria memorial fountain, a large terracotta work designed by John Broad, to Malacca in 1904, and the depository hall floor at the new Banque de L'Indo-China in Singapore was floored with Maw's tiles around 1913 (IGMT D/MAW/3/6).

Doulton's were the most successful of the architectural ceramics exporters in the early twentieth century; apart from their substantial terracotta trade, their largest ever tile contract, for around 7 500 tiles in 1935, was for the Keppel Road railway station in east Singapore (completed 1932). 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 (Eyles and Irvine 2002, p. 235); the panels were arranged in groups of three along two walls of the booking hall, and are still extant (**fig.7**).

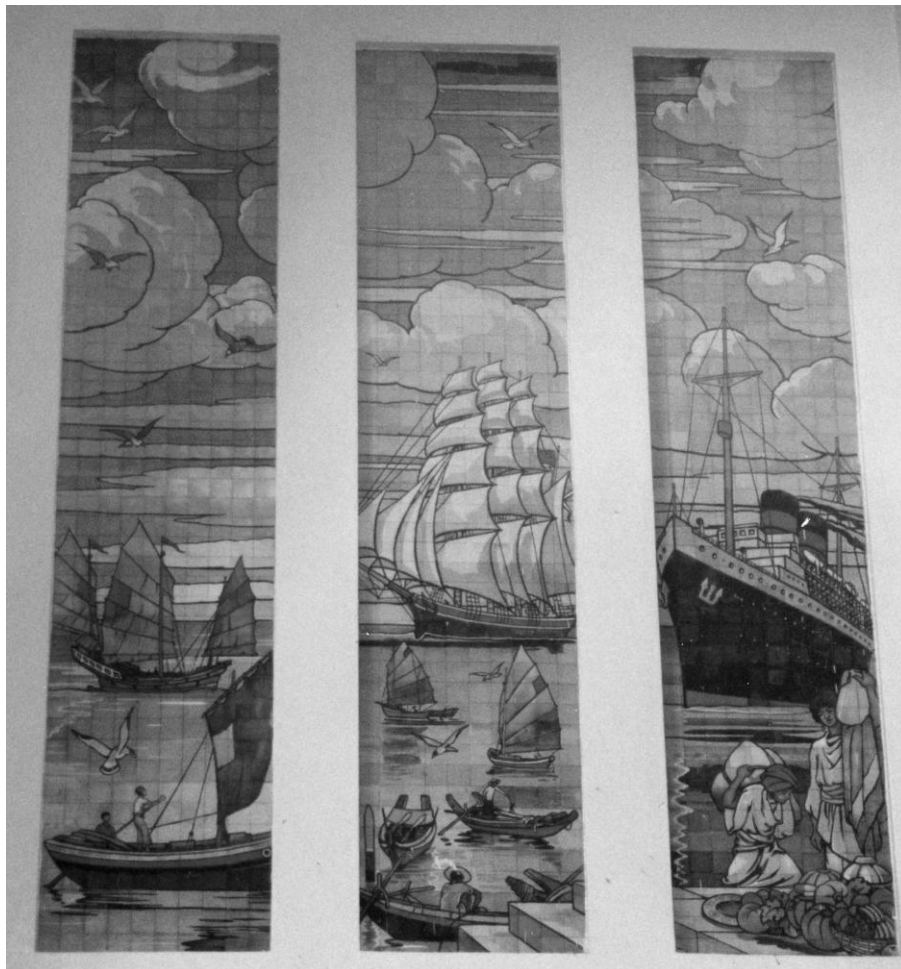


Figure 7. Three of the Doulton tile panels at the Keppel Road railway station, Singapore

## **EUROPE AND RUSSIA**

Because of the thriving indigenous tile industry, British tile and terracotta exports to Europe were not as widespread as to Australia or North America, but notable instances include the Minton encaustic floor tiles used at the Dolmabahce Palace, Istanbul, built for Sultan Abdulmecit in 1844-56 (Jones 1993, p. 174); Belfast's Dunville Fountain (1892), which is probably made of Doultonware (Larmour 1987, p. 56); and the Doulton Carraraware facade of the Ostend Kursaal, dating from around 1907 (Gandy 1908). St Alban's Church (1885-7) 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 were all presented by the firm. In Russia, Maw's tiles were used at Moscow's public baths around the turn of the century, and Doulton's exported a 16 feet high hand-painted polychrome stoneware panel depicting the Madonna and Child to St Petersburg; its installation, at the chapel of the city's new orthopaedic hospital, was reported in the December 1904 issue of the *Brickbuilder*.

### **AGENTS, EXHIBITIONS AND THE EXPORT TRADE**

In 1905 Maw's foreign trade in paving tiles exceeded that of their home market (IGMT D/MAW/1/6). This situation resulted partly from the extensive efforts made by Maw's to sell overseas, including hiring of agents, making extended visits abroad, preparing and mounting displays at international exhibitions, and producing lavish catalogues directed at specific markets; the firm's 1906 catalogue came in Home, Colonial, Indian and Foreign editions. Maw's minute books record that their representative visited America in 1888, and in 1890 one of the directors made a 12-month tour visiting the firm's agents throughout Australia and America. A director visited South Africa in 1903 (IGMT D/MAW/1/4), Canada in 1905 and 1909, South America in 1907 and 1913, India and China in 1911-12 and 1914, each trip occupying several months (GWPM Malkin Papers). Although agents were an essential part of selling abroad, their role was often problematic (Pearson 2005b); they normally acted for several firms all making the same type of product, and were paid a retainer and commission by each of them, thus making the agency economical for the agent but increasing expense for the manufacturers.



Figure 8. Part of the Minton Hollins display at the 1876 Philadelphia Exhibition, later shown at the Smithsonian Arts and Industries Building, Washington

Preparing material for shipment to show at international exhibitions took the tile manufacturers a great deal of time and effort. The pavilions of the larger firms usually resembled a series of rooms lined with ceramic wares, often with a theme related to the country holding the exhibition, and included large pieces of furniture, for instance fire surrounds. At the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, Doulton's showed the massive terracotta group *America* as well as an ornate pulpit and font; *America* reappeared at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. According to *Gems of the Centennial Exhibition*, published in 1877 by Appleton of New York, the Minton Hollins display (**fig.8**) at Philadelphia included "chimneypieces as large as a small town, constructed entirely of tiles"; Craven Dunnill, Maw's and the Leeds Fireclay Company also had large displays, the latter being awarded a bronze medal. One of the most notable exhibits at the 1878 Paris Universal Exhibition was the 6 feet wide Doultonware fountain featuring a series of scriptural subjects related to water. In similar vein, the Minton Hollins display at the 1904 St Louis International Exhibition included a faience drinking fountain and a large pictorial tile panel showing St Louis. Maw's had won at least ten medals in international exhibitions by 1880 (Moore, J 1984), and carried on to compete in many other international shows; one of the firm's best-known exhibits was their pavilion at the 1893 Chicago Exposition, a 20 feet high faience structure whose internal sections included a palatial bathroom and part of a church chancel.

British firms were by no means the only European exporters of tiles. Spanish firms based in Valencia had a widespread export trade, French imports were particularly significant in South America (Guillen 2000, pp. 321-2), and the Zsolnay factory of Pécs in southern Hungary exported architectural ceramics throughout central Europe from the 1880s until the First World War (Mendöl 2002, p. 177). However, British exporters of both tiles and terracotta penetrated a much broader geographical area, resulting in a significant and distinctively British contribution to the decorative elements of buildings throughout the world between the 1850s and the 1930s. The fashion for elaborately decorated tiles and terracotta continued abroad well into the interwar period, long after it had collapsed at home.

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