

**‘The Best Teapot Never Designed’:
Re-engineering the Brown Betty**

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**‘The Best Teapot Never Designed’:
Re-engineering the Brown Betty**

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Abstract

This thesis plots a practice-based Collaborative Doctoral Award working in partnership with York Art Gallery, the British Ceramics Biennial, Manchester School of Art and the Stoke-on-Trent ceramics manufacturer Cauldon Ceramics. The project was animated by a central question: 'How can holistic design practices of the individual designer-maker inform and enhance the design aesthetics and design practices of the industrial ceramic manufacturer?' This thesis is an investigation of the phenomenon of the individual designer-maker and their potential to act as a catalyst for industrial ceramic innovation. The centring of practice recognises that the maker's professional skills and expertise produce a specific valuable contribution to knowledge creation. I understand my role within this research as a hybrid 'designer-practitioner-researcher' (Vaughan, 2019).

Cauldon Ceramics is the last remaining producer of the Brown Betty teapot – a traditional design that originated in Stoke-on-Trent in the mid-eighteenth century. Once produced in the millions per year, it has been in decline since the late 1970s. Through a process of primary archival research, literature reviews, site visits, material experimentation and prototyping, as well as public discourse in the form of exhibitions, talks and publications, I identified Cauldon Ceramics as an appropriate manufacturer to test a live case study.

My research ascertained that the Brown Betty should be revitalised for a number of reasons: A Brown Betty made in Staffordshire has cultural significance; There is a lack of historical and contemporary understanding of the object and inconsistencies within the available literature; The design details of the product itself have deteriorated over the last 40 years indicating that the Brown Betty has both evolved and deteriorated; The cultural significance of the object is being lost in the design, manufacture and promotion of both the contemporary Staffordshire made versions and overseas imported versions.

During this practice-based research I have re-discovered a forgotten innovative past, re-defined the cultural significance of the Brown Betty, identified historical precedents in the design and manufacturing of the object, developed new markets, and cultivated and galvanised stakeholders. I have re-engineered and re-launched the object through a process of re-design and the re-introduction of innovative historical patents, contemporary design details and new manufacturing processes. The result is a revitalised object named the 'Re-engineered Brown Betty' teapot.

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0.0 Introduction

Working in partnership with York Art Gallery (YAG) and the British Ceramics Biennial (BCB), Manchester School of Art initiated this Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA) to investigate the phenomenon of the individual designer-maker and their potential to act as a catalyst for industrial ceramic innovation.

Titled 'At The Edge: the designer-maker and industrial innovation', the CDA sought to identify a practice-led case study based on primary research into the ceramic collections of YAG, focussing on the creative interface between artist, designer and manufacturer. Knowledge produced by this research would be applied in an industrial design residency undertaken in the Staffordshire Potteries, facilitated by the British Ceramics Biennial as part of BCB 2017.

In the context of a revival of the UK-based ceramic industry, representing an opportunity for British ceramic manufacturers to regain a position of importance and recognition within the global marketplace, the research was animated by a central question: 'How can holistic design practices of the individual designer-maker inform and enhance the design aesthetics and design practices of the industrial ceramic manufacturer?'

I began this CDA researching the ceramics collections and archives at YAG where I was directed by curator of ceramics Helen Walsh to the work of the mid-twentieth-century 'country potter' Isaac Button in the W.A. Ismay collection. My research on Button became the basis for a body of work that I produced as a case study for the 2015 Jerwood Makers Open, titled 'A Ton of Clay'.

It was, however, while carrying out a residency that same year at AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, to further my research on 'deep design evolution', that I identified the ultimate object of study: the 'Brown Betty' (BB) teapot. After this, the focus of my research shifted as the timeliness of a collaboration with the last remaining producer in Stoke, Cauldon Ceramics (CC), became apparent.

To achieve the aim set out by the CDA (above) I developed a new working relationship with CC who, through this collaboration, produced a new version of this ubiquitous, archetypal object synonymous with The Potteries.

This ongoing collaboration has now spanned a total seven years. During this period I have re-discovered a forgotten innovative past, re-defined the cultural significance of the object, identified historical precedents in the design and manufacturing of the object, developed new markets, cultivated and galvanised stakeholders. I have re-engineered and re-launched the object through a process of re-design and the re-introduction of

historical patents, contemporary design details and new manufacturing processes. The result is a revitalised object named the 'Re-engineered Brown Betty '(RBB) teapot. It has raised both the commercial value and cultural significance of the object and its maker. The project has won awards, received critical acclaim and has been collected by international museums and institutions.

This research has generated a range of commercial, cultural and academic outputs. Within a commercial context a new product has been developed and tested in collaboration with CC, which is now stocked by premium British heritage brands, including Margaret Howell, Labour and Wait, Conran and Selfridges.¹ In addition to AHRC funding, I have applied for and been successful in gaining financial and in-kind support from, among others, Arts Council England (ACE), the BCB, and the Design Roots research project at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU).² Through this research CC has found new marketplaces and investment opportunities as detailed in this thesis.

During this research I have realised a number of exhibitions locally, nationally and internationally that explore the BB's place in popular culture, social history and design history. RBB editions have been acquired for the permanent collections of institutions such as YAG, Manchester Art Gallery, The Design Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London. The RBB has received international press coverage in the mainstream and design press, such as the *Financial Times*, Denmark's daily broadsheet *Politiken*, *Crafts Magazine*, *Ceramic Review* and *Disegno Journal*. It has also been the recipient of several awards, including the Manchester Contemporary Art Fund and a nomination for the Design Museum London's 'Beazley Designs of the Year'.³

Culminating in the commercial launch of the RBB, my CDA research is a practice-based enactment of a revitalisation strategy.⁴ 'Revitalisation 'is an important concept in this thesis and speaks to an emerging field of craft and design discourse and practice elaborated by Amy Twigger Holroyd as: 'Any initiative that brings new life to a culturally significant design, product or practice, while aiming to retain (or even enhance) the values associated with it '(2018:30).

¹ See <https://cauldnceramics.com/>.

² See Design Roots research directory: [http://www.research.lancs.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/-/a65d0495-a0c1-49ef-a325-1292b9b86f2b\).html](http://www.research.lancs.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/-/a65d0495-a0c1-49ef-a325-1292b9b86f2b).html) [Accessed 12 May 2022].

³ A comprehensive account of the RBB in museum collections, the commercial sector and media is given in Field 3.

⁴ I discuss the naming of the product – specifically the idea of 're-engineering – 'in Field 3.

The timely publication of Twigger Holroyd and colleagues 'work (along with co-editors Stuart Walker, Martyn Evans, Tom Cassidy and Jeyon Jung) in *Design Roots: Culturally Significant Designs, Products, and Practices* (2018) occurred midway through this research project. It offered a critical vocabulary to articulate some of the decisions and thinking I had already arrived at while working with CC. This helped to move the research forward with renewed purpose.

0.1 Research Aims and Objectives and Contribution to Knowledge

My research aims and objectives for the research, in line with those of the CDA brief, are as follows:

Aim: 'How can the holistic design practices of the individual designer-maker inform and enhance the design aesthetics and design practices of the industrial ceramic manufacturer?'

Objectives:

1. Develop an overview of the history of the Brown Betty teapot.
2. Identify the defining features and the historical and contemporary methods of manufacturing the object.
3. Ascertain the cultural significance of the Brown Betty teapot in order to propose a case for its revitalisation.
4. Determine the range of existing design-led practices and academic methodologies that engage with revitalisation strategies within traditional ceramics manufacturing industries to explore a range of possible routes for the revitalisation of the Brown Betty teapot.
5. Revitalise the Brown Betty teapot and the processes and practices surrounding its manufacture.
6. Exhibit/launch the results of the major practice-based element at the BCB 2017 & London Design Festival 2018 (fulfilling the collaborative obligations set out in the application for this AHRC funded research).
7. Ascertain the effectiveness of the revitalisation project and draw out elements that may enable others to apply similar principles in new projects.

The combination of original research within this thesis and re-discovered knowledge embodied by the RBB contribute to multiple original contributions to knowledge. These are as follows:

1. Defining what constitutes an original Brown Betty and identifying its cultural significance.
2. Formalising and disseminating a largely unknown history of the Brown Betty teapot to promote a more accurate understanding of the genesis of the object among industry, academia and the general public.
3. Recovering and innovating historic design details within a contemporary context.
4. Applying academic theory through tacit knowledge to develop physical revitalisation strategies that are tested live within the industry.
5. Reflecting upon and making visible nuanced practice-based approaches to implementing successful revitalisation strategies that have the potential to be applied to wider industrial interventions.

In my conclusion I will unpack each element of new knowledge and detail the impact it has already had on the field and the resulting ongoing relationship with CC.

0.2 Thesis Structure

This thesis begins with an overview of the context of the research within The Staffordshire Potteries. This is accompanied by an overview framing the main thrust of the inquiry and its outputs. I then carry out an evaluation of how my practice prior to undertaking the PhD informed and enabled me to develop this research within a professional industrial context. This is followed by a literature review of my methodological approaches.

I detail the developments during the first year of the PhD research as the focus shifted before moving into an exploration of three main 'fields'. The 'fields – 'which provide a core structure for this thesis – detail the three main practice-based periods that have informed the direction of this research. Each field has enabled me to address my research objectives.

In Field 1, a history of the BB was facilitated by a residency culminating in an exhibition that I curated titled 'Icon 'at AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent as part of the BCB, 26 September – 7 November 2015. This history enabled me to situate the cultural significance of the BB and to identify design and production precedents that contributed to a necessary and renewed understanding of the object. This informed the identification of CC as a potential partner.

Field 2 plots a design taxonomy of the most innovative historical versions of the BB. The findings of this taxonomy were presented in expanded form in an exhibition titled 'Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot 'at Vitsoe, London, during the London Design Festival (LDF), 17–25 September 2016. This enabled me to identify the teapot's defining features and its historical and contemporary methods of manufacture. At the exhibition I coordinated a panel discussion of project stakeholders. This significantly informed a feasibility study to expand upon the design and its meanings in order to make a case to CC for the BB's revitalisation.

Field 3 consists of a reflexive account of my working methods and processes, in a placement at CC (2017–2019) and at my own studio, working alone and within a team, in order to realise one of the main objectives of the CDA: the production and launch of the RBB teapot at the BCB 2017 and the LDF 2018. Crucially, this is not just a story of producing an object. I also reflect on how I consciously situated the RBB teapot within the market through careful retail, exhibitions, and the creation of new literature and product packaging in a bid to re-frame the object within both a commercial and cultural context. This re-framing was central to raising the object's perceived value. In this chapter I detail case studies of design-led practices and academic methodologies that

employ revitalisation strategies within traditional ceramics manufacturing industries in order to understand possible routes for the revitalisation of the Brown Betty teapot.

Throughout this thesis literature reviews, case studies and reflective analysis inform historical discourses and contexts, as well as theoretical and design decisions within the practice. Reflexive and practice-based methodologies seek to describe and systematically analyse personal experiences.

Illustrations in the form of primary technical drawings, field photography and secondary research images are referred to throughout the thesis. Technical drawings and diagrams are utilised as a means to interpret, visualise and analyse design versions. Likewise, field photography functions as a form of visual notetaking that is activated throughout the thesis and informs aspects of design. Secondary research images are used as cultural resources to enrich historical accounts. Sequences of images in this thesis are used for the purpose of forming evocative visual essays.

The thesis concludes with a synthesis and evaluation of the significant findings and a summary of the contributions to knowledge generated by the study. An appendix gathers additional information on research outputs through a range of artefacts, including printed matter and transcripts of conversations, to be referenced as the reader progresses. Included here are articles written by others and myself that coincides with the residency at AirSpace, the exhibition at Vitsoe, and the final RBB.

0.3 Context

The Staffordshire ceramics industry is recognised by many modern commentators as one of the notable products of the Industrial Revolution (see Thomas, 1971; Allen, 2009; Hunt, 2021). The industry has a long tradition in the manufacture of ceramic products dating back to at least the late seventeenth century. This was originally due to the region's abundance of clay and coal along with the river transport (and later canal) which were favourable for the production of pottery (Pitelis et al., 2007: 233). At its peak the ceramics industry was seen as the epicentre of industrial ceramics providing long standing employment for generations of the local population (Whipp, 1990). However, between the 1960s and the 1980s the industry suffered a sharp decline. Increased mechanisation, economic recession and outsourcing to East Asia are among the contributory factors (Ewins, 2017).

Writing in the *Guardian* newspaper at the turn of the new millennium, Mian Ridge (2002) estimated that in the last quarter of a century alone some 32,000 jobs had been shed from ceramics factories in Stoke-on-Trent. In 2019, the 'English indices of multiple deprivation' report ranked Stoke-on-Trent as the thirteenth most deprived local authority out of a total of 317 (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019). At the last count in August 2021, some 20.8% of the working age population in Stoke-on-Trent claim unemployment related benefits – a large percentage of which, I learnt during my fieldwork, come from communities traditionally employed within the sector of industrial ceramics (Clark, Francis-Devine and Powell, 2021).⁵

Within Stoke-on-Trent, major regeneration initiatives are being undertaken. When I began this research in 2015 there were signs of a revival of the ceramic industry (*Are we seeing a revival for Stoke-on-Trent pottery companies with China deal?*, 2014). Leading up to this point interest in ceramics was also building in the museums world more broadly in the UK with the new V&A ceramics galleries opening in 2009. Without organisations such as the BCB and the launch of the Contemporary Studio Ceramics Subject Specialist Network and the Centre of Ceramic Art, York Museums Trust, it's likely there would not have been support for this research.

In November 2015, Channel 4 began broadcasting 'The Great Pottery Throw Down', presented by Sara Cox, filmed on location at Middleport Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent. In the style of the hugely successful television format 'The Great British Bake Off', contestants competitively produce pottery which is judged by a panel. A symptom of post-industry economies, Middleport Pottery is managed by Re-form Heritage, a regeneration charity, who support and safeguard key aspects of Middleport's historical production processes

⁵ This figure is a total claimant rate for the constituencies of Stoke-on-Trent Central, North and South. The claimant rate is a proportion of the population aged 16–64 who claim unemployment-related benefits.

and labor force as well as hosting a visitors 'centre to learn about their traditional craft practices.

During this research project Stoke-on-Trent was shortlisted to be the UK City of Culture 2021. In October 2017 the council published a summary of its bid, billing it as 'A city of craft, a city of graft and a city of innovation. A city of collective endeavour' (Stoke-on-Trent City of Culture, 2017). Central to the proposal was a characterisation of the industrious, innovative city – craft capital of the UK and the 'World Capital' of ceramics. To successfully host events £52m of major private developments would transform the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, the city centre and key heritage assets across the six towns.

Stoke-on-Trent ultimately lost the bid to Coventry, yet such initiatives presented an opportunity for traditional manufacturers in the area to regain a position of importance and recognition within the global marketplace. Yet, since 2019 a new wave of job losses and collapses in the sector have reaffirmed the trajectory of decline in this industry. In April that year the historic manufacturer Dudsons went into liquidation. This 200-year-old family business shed 318 jobs from the sector (Andrews, 2019). In March, Fiskars, the parent company of Waterford Wedgwood – an iconic global brand – announced plans to cut 103 jobs – around a third of its workforce – and move some production overseas (James, 2019). In May 2022, the council came under widespread criticism for axing 12 posts at the Gladstone Pottery Museum in order to make savings of £479,000 (Corrigan, 2022).

Despite this contraction, the ceramics industry is still seen as a key sector in Stoke-on-Trent, estimated in the 2019 UK Manufacturing Review to provide 22,200 full-time equivalent jobs (Caldeira-Pereira, 2019). Valuable knowledge has been accumulated over generations to form a strong ceramic skills-base that supports the remaining manufacturers, including the extremely successful companies Steelite and Emma Bridgewater. This has attracted relatively younger specialist ceramic companies to the area, notably Biocomposites and Mantec Technical Ceramics Ltd.⁶

However, as the industry continues to contract so too does the breadth and diversity of skills developed over decades, even centuries. Therefore, strategies to revitalise Stoke-on-Trent's traditional manufacturing industry have the potential to retain the traditional skills base, while contributing to local job creation, and ultimately improving the economic prosperity of the area and wider regeneration initiatives within the city.⁷ There

⁶ Biocomposites engineer calcium compound devices to regenerate and repair bone and soft tissue: <https://www.biocomposites.com>. Mantec produce innovative ceramic-based filtration and refractory systems: <https://mantectechnicalceramics.com/>.

⁷ More than £120 million has been invested in a range of regeneration plans led by the borough council, Staffordshire County Council and other organisations. Initiated in 2009, the BCB is a flagship cultural project for Stoke-on-Trent City Council and is understood as a catalyst for culture-led regeneration.

has also been an increase in ceramics research and the potential for more artist/academic projects and installations at the BCB, the V&A and Wedgwood.

Further, there is both a social and philosophical argument for exploring strategies to revitalise the traditional industries. The evolution of the British ceramics industry and its concentration in the city of Stoke-on-Trent has profoundly shaped the industrial heritage, landscape and social fabric of the region. In turn, the historical developments of both the city and the ceramic industry are intrinsically linked, providing Stoke-on-Trent with a unique regional identity: the city is often referred to as simply 'The Potteries' (Pitelis et al., 2007: 213).

0.4 My practice

This research builds on a decade of experience as a designer and maker of industrial and utilitarian ceramics. Through my practice I have gained a wide experience within the national and international industry, collaborating with design brands, manufacturers and cultural institutions. I hold a 1st class Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Three Dimensional Design from MMU and a Master of Arts in Applied Art from the Royal College of Art (RCA), London. This background in both product design and applied art enables me to employ a blend of industrial design and craft skills within my work to produce one-off objects, batch productions, installations and designs for industrial production.

Within an industrial context this skill set allows me to not only design, but model, prototype, sample and in some cases produce the tooling for a manufacturer if required. This has enabled me to design for brands who have no previous experience in the field of industrial ceramics. I have designed inaugural collections for premium European design brands including Another Country, Hem, HAY and Monoware. The resulting products are manufactured in the UK, Sri Lanka, China and Portugal. This design approach follows a typical pattern in which I find a factory, isolate the most appropriate materials, processes and skills to design a collection that reflects the ethos of the client. It follows an established model of global outsourcing which enables the design brand to access established knowledge and skills and offers greater flexibility over where they manufacture and their target price point.

However, as the designer I have often felt ethically and technically compromised working in this way: Separation from production perpetuates a global supply chain that erodes intangible cultural knowledge and skill. It becomes far more difficult to innovate with a manufacturer's process and material in any great depth, or build close working relationships and emotional investment in the craftspeople who are making the objects. This is partly due to the physical distance between us, but also because this model reduces the role of the manufacturer to that of a supplier with little ownership of a project or its longevity. The manufacturer supplies a brand. Brands, in fact, in my experience, work hard to hide who makes their product. The manufacturer has no control over the continuity of the product, or its communication and distribution.

More broadly, this model has contributed to the decline of Stoke-on-Trent as a key manufacturing base of industrial ceramics as it becomes increasingly difficult for manufacturers to compete with more agile competitors utilising lower-wage economies to make their product. This has in turn resulted in leading manufacturers who have traditionally produced their wares in Stoke-on-Trent (including Wedgwood and Royal Doulton) to pursue a strategy of global outsourcing themselves – utilising production facilities in East Asia. This has perpetuated job losses in the Staffordshire industry, the

displacement of workers, the depreciation of the skill base and an increase in the concentration of economic power among a remote, corporate elite who control these brands and answer to shareholders (Ewins, 2017).

Access to cheaper products has exacerbated consumer lifestyle changes resulting in a much quicker turnover of product launches and subsequent obsolescence and an atmosphere which pushes the designer to continually strive to develop new aesthetic languages in order to create new opportunities. In my experience it is very difficult to break away from this model. For a number of years I have been interested in industrial objects that have endured shifts in taste, fashions and trends, instead undergoing a subtle evolution. This type of everyday object is often more useful and lasts longer and is described by Jasper Morrison as 'Super Normal' (2015), embodied in the design approach of Dieter Rams as 'Less but better' (2016) and echoed in the sentiment of Glenn Adamson's book *Fewer, Better Things* (2018). The enduring nature of the BB fits within this ethos of being both an object of deep design evolution and a counterpoint to superficial aspects of the design industry.

This research is a physical embodiment of this school of thought. The design approach developed during this research has forced me to break the model of design and production that supports my practice. The opportunity has given me the space and time to test ideas and strategies that would otherwise not be viable outside of a funded academic framework. This research has afforded me the time to refine this position over a five-year period, enabling me to develop an ethical standpoint that ultimately advocates for design in response to localised making that can function as a counterculture to globalisation and superficial fashions and trends.

0.41 'A Ton of Clay' and Deep Design Evolution

At the beginning of this CDA I framed my interest in enduring industrial objects as 'deep design evolution'. 'Deep time' is a measure of time given to describe the age of geology on the scale of millions of years. Stoke-on-Trent clay was formed two million years ago in the Quaternary period. Deep time is in tension with the time of humanity, the duration of 'the classic', and, in turn, the global accelerated cycle of ceramics manufacture. The continuous refinement and slow evolution of an object is a counterpoint to seasonal, fashion-driven design.

While researching the ceramics collections and archives at YAG I was directed by curator of ceramics Helen Walsh to the work of the mid-twentieth-century 'country potter' Isaac Button in the W.A. Ismay collection. Based at Soil Hill near Halifax, Button was one of the very last country potters, producing the basic ceramic goods that local cottage industries, farms and semi-rural homes in his community needed: wares for everyday domestic use for local farmers, brewers and merchants to store or transport goods, such as pancheons, jugs, stewpots, bread crocks and vessels, both thrown and slab-built (Lawrence, 1976).



Fig. 2. Isaac Button in his studio, photo by W.A. Ismay or John Anderson, date unknown; courtesy York Art Gallery.

Simple and mostly undecorated, these pots were intended for sheer utility rather than aesthetic display. As Stan W. Stemp put it in a 1963 profile for *Pottery Quarterly*: 'Standard ware produced at Soil Hill are all utilitarian, truly made for the job '(1963: 16). Stemp visited only a matter of years before Button retired but seems to have provided his work with a degree of visibility. The following year, in 1964, the production crew of John Anderson and Robert Fournier made a silent film, *Isaac Button: Country Potter*, that is an enduring document.

In the early twentieth century country potters like Button were widespread but began disappearing after industrialisation transformed mass production. Although country potters worked with a pre-industrial system they were remarkable in the factory-like volumes of goods that they produced and the efficient systems of manufacture that they developed – forms of knowledge, expertise and skills transmitted often across multiple generations.

Stemp notes that the business started with Button's grandfather, a brick maker who turned to pottery: 'The Soil Hill site with its original pottery, now derelict, was purchased in 1876 and the present works were built in 1900 from bricks made on the site from the refractory clays in the hill '(1963: 15). A designer, a manufacturer and a salesman, Button mined and refined the clay on his own land. He sold his wares on the doorstep of his own home, a home constructed from bricks produced on site. This is confirmed by Heather Lawrence writing in *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries* (1974), who states that both red clay for the fabric and white clay for the decoration were mined at the pottery. This was a model of best practice admired by the celebrated potter Bernard Leach.



Fig. 3. Photographer unknown, Isaac Button's ton of clay, c. 1940; courtesy York Art Gallery.

Famously, Button could work a ton of clay per day. In an hour he could turn out up to 120 pots and in a day up to 1200 (Lawrence, 1974: 187). The sheer scale of this kind of output fascinated me. It was this ability, and the skill needed to achieve it, that led to his celebrity as the 'Yorkshire Hercules' and, in turn, enabling him to continue working when many other country potters were surpassed by industry. Amazingly, Stemp recounts that when he visited Button he'd only recently purchased a pyrometer. 'He finds it interesting,' recalls Stemp, 'but he prefers to rely on judgment, or if you like, forty-six years of experience plus the knowledge he inherited from his forebears' (1963: 15). Button worked like this because he understood every area of his production intimately. The designs of his pots and the techniques he used were part of an integrated system determined by constraints and functionality and that is what gives his work such appealing transparency.



Fig. 4. Isaac Button transporting raw materials from Swill Hill, photo by W.A. Ismay or John Anderson, date unknown; courtesy York Art Gallery.



Fig. 5. Isaac Button attending to machinery, photo by W.A. Ismay or John Anderson, date unknown; courtesy York Art Gallery.

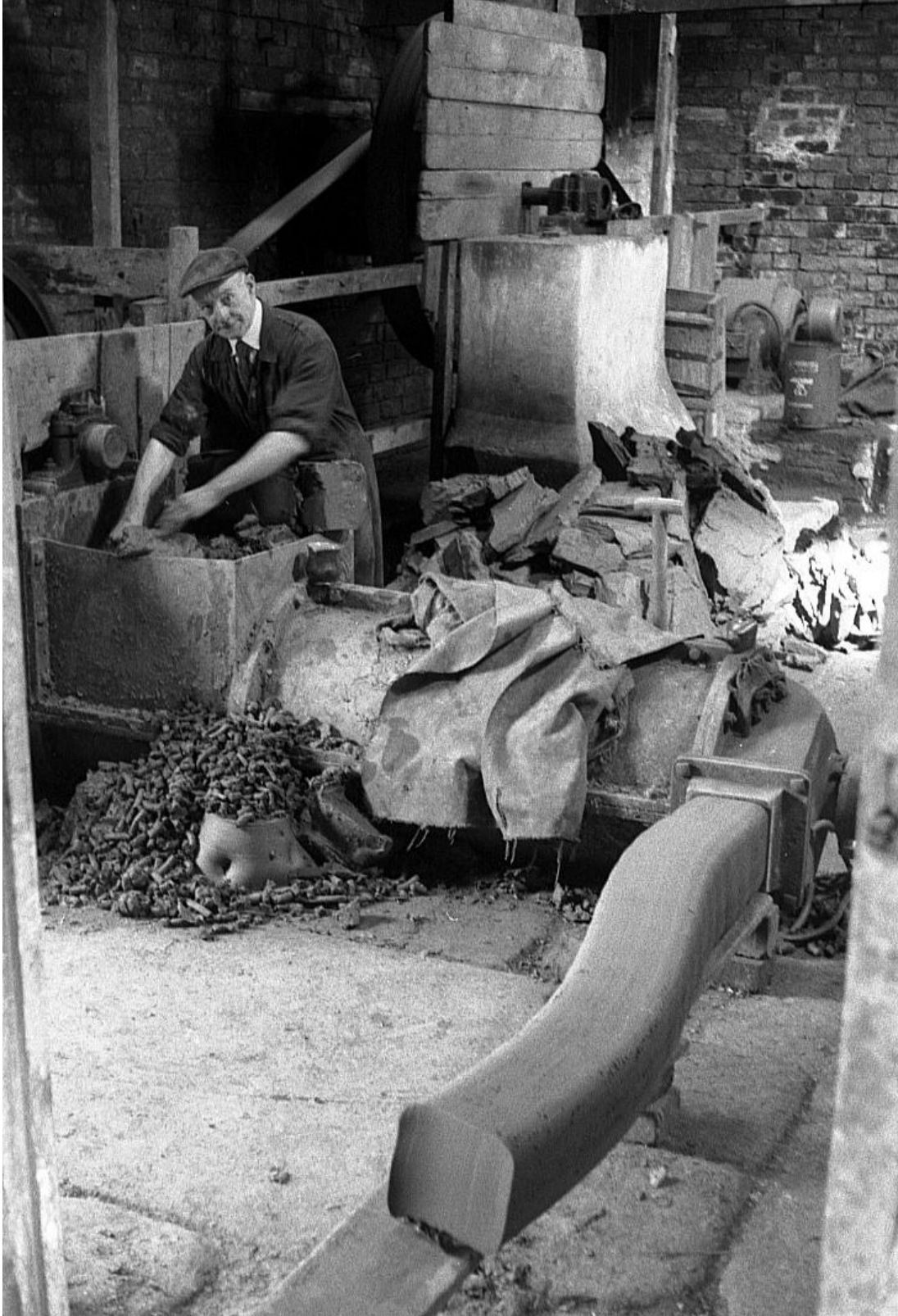


Fig. 6. Isaac Button extruding clay, photo by W.A. Ismay or John Anderson, date unknown; courtesy York Art Gallery.

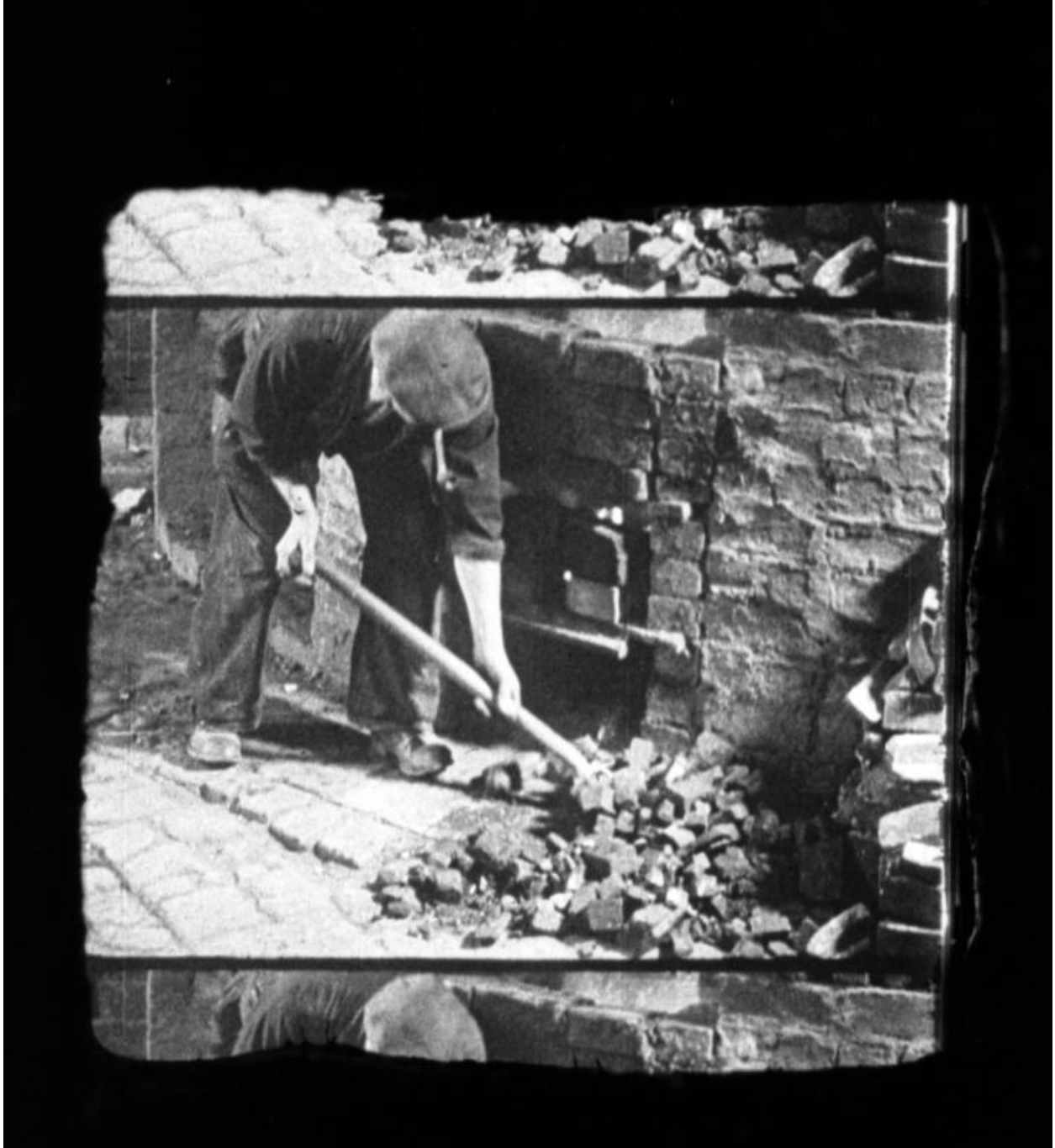


Fig. 7. John Anderson and Robert Fournier, *Isaac Button: Country Potter*, 1964; Film still courtesy Yorkshire Film Archive'. Yorkshirefilmarchive.com.



Fig. 8. John Anderson and Robert Fournier, *Isaac Button: Country Potter*, 1964; Film still courtesy Yorkshire Film Archive'. Yorkshirefilmarchive.com.

When I encountered items from the W.A. Ismay Collection brisk handling marks were evident: smears where Button missed the glaze or had been unable or unwilling to correct a small error. Handling the heavy garlic pot from the museum's stores, it is evident that for him there was little reverence. It struck me that this truly unselfconscious handling was a rare aesthetic in European ceramics. Today, potters deliberately, carefully add character to wares or, alternatively, produce pots that are hardworking yet sterile and anonymous. Button's work had anonymity but also 'personality'.



Fig. 9. Pancheon bearing Button's finger marks; courtesy York Art Gallery.

The production is intimately linked to economy and aesthetics. Although working by hand, it is evident in Anderson's film that the vast quantities of pots Button produced, were a regular size and thickness. This would have required a formidable tacit memory. He used just one firing to maximise efficient output so he would apply slip and raw glaze to the pots by pouring and swilling around the interior of one unfired pot to another. These decisions based on economy and speed affected the appearance of the objects he made; they had to be a certain thickness in order to remain stable during glazing.



Fig. 10. Isaac Button applying slip, photo by W.A. Ismay or John Anderson, date unknown; courtesy York Art Gallery.

I am interested in his designs in relation to this PhD research, how they are the result of continuous refinement of a core range of shapes made by previous generations, adapted and improved by Button according to market and making constraints. Despite it being one of the things that gives work integrity, slow evolution is something we don't see much of in today's design. You might say that the opposite is true: we see new ceramic shapes and ranges launched and discontinued at alarming rates.

'Fad "isms" and the exploits of some of those who make pots not intended for a job of work, 'Stemp writes, 'have no influence on this man... If it does its job the pot will look all right and if it was considered a good shape fifty years ago it is still a good shape today ' (Stemp, 1963: 16). When Bernard Leach came to visit Soil Hill he was already an acclaimed studio potter, revered for his critical writing about craft, in particular *A Potter's Book* (1940). Leach had spent a career trying to disseminate the essence of what he was doing and why it was so; he saw pottery as an intellectual pursuit. The two men could not have been further apart in their attitudes. Leach was said to have asked Button how much grog (grit) he added to his clay. Button replied: 'I have enough trouble getting the bloody stuff out of the clay '(Correspondence of the W.A. Ismay Collection, York Art Gallery).

Button represents a point at which the disciplines of design and making were a single profession – his work reflecting a continuous refinement of details, born out of utilitarian constraints. Despite the transformations wrought by industrial manufacture, and the specialisation of fine art studio ceramics, Button crafted a sustainable ecology intimately bound to place.



Fig. 11. Isaac Button's wares in his studio, photo by W.A. Ismay or John Anderson, date unknown; courtesy York Art Gallery.

0.42 Jerwood Makers Award

Considered as a model for 'deep design evolution', Button's work at the intersection of craft and industry raised fascinating questions of economy, value and tradition. From this I developed a way of thinking about how design had split from its sites of making. With this split came a disruption of ethical, sustainable ways of working. My research on Button, carried out at YAG, became the basis for a body of work that I produced for the 2015 Jerwood Makers Open, titled 'A Ton of Clay'⁸.

Considered as a first case study for my Collaborative Doctoral Award, 'A Ton of Clay' was an attempt at finding an equivalent expedient process. I worked for four months to produce 900 white ceramic bowls and plates from a ton of clay. Using ex-industrial jigger-jolly machines – purchased from a liquidation sale in Stoke – in my studio, I disrupted the typical moulding process by not using enough clay causing the material to never fully fill the mould. This gave a sense of unfinished endlessness. This suggestion of expediency and imperfection was expressed by the display in the exhibition installation of towering, stacked columns.



Fig. 12. Ian McIntyre, custom former used in the production of 'A Ton of Clay', Jerwood Makers Open, 2015.

⁸ See: <https://jerwoodarts.org/exhibitionsandevents/projects/jerwood-makers-open-2015/>.

Through an embodied, practice-based approach 'A Ton of Clay' enabled me to reflect on repetitious practices of making. Operating in the shadow of the unselfconscious work of Button, I understood the project as belonging to a conceptual art tradition of absurdism, where artists have set out to realise knowingly impossible tasks (Le Feuvre, 2010). I could never match the heroic output of Button but my installation drew attention to a significant figure who bridged the country potter and high modernism.

After 'A Ton of Clay' was exhibited at the Jerwood Space, London, I was invited to carry out a residency and exhibition at AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, to further my research on 'deep design evolution'.⁹ It was during this residency that I found my ultimate object of study and the focus of my research shifted. This is where Field 1 of my thesis begins.

⁹ This work was acquired for the permanent collection of York Art Gallery in 2016 (accession number YORAG: 2016.35).

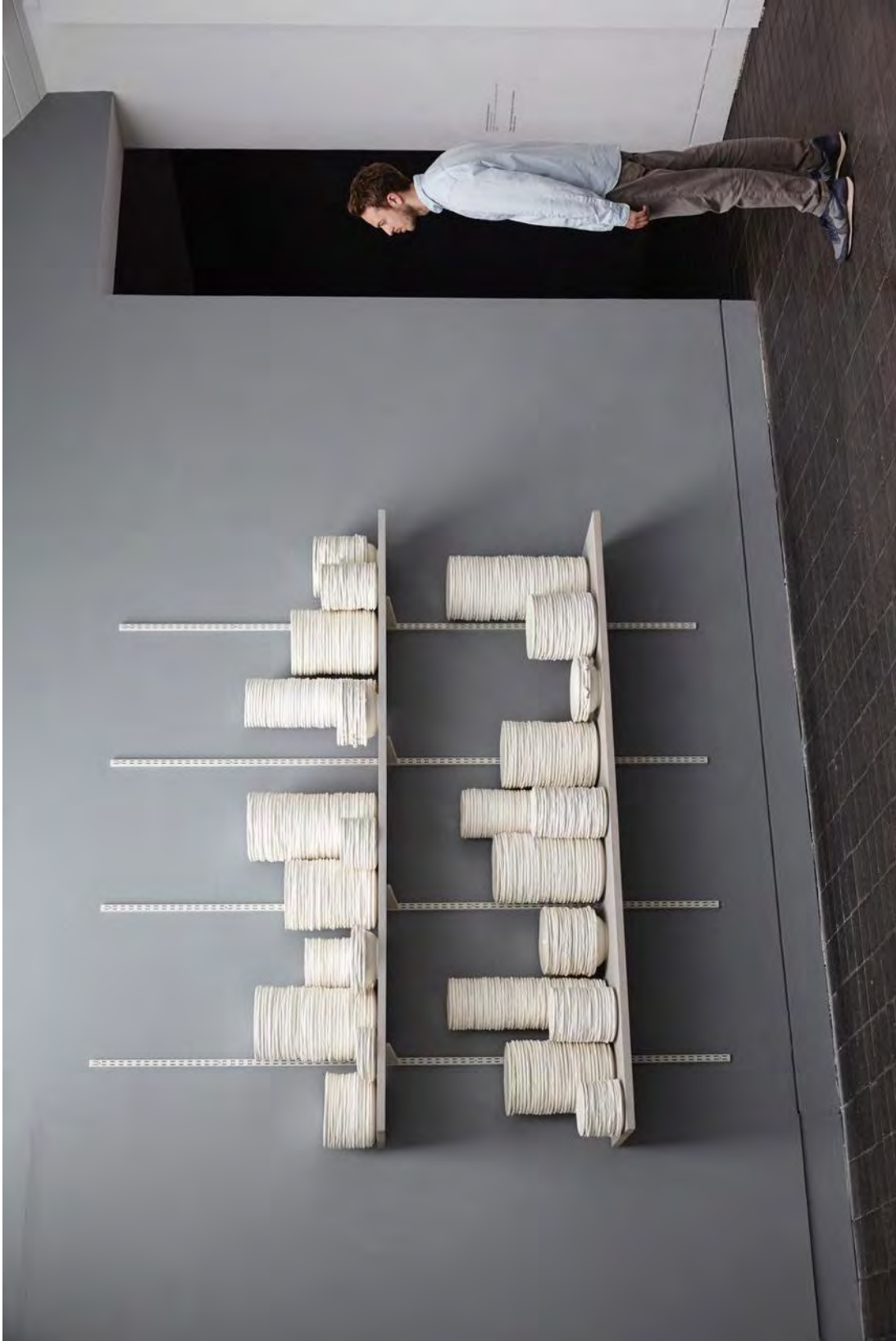


Fig. 13. Ian McIntyre, 'A Ton of Clay', Jerwood Makers Open, 2015, installation view; Phot. Jake Curtis.



Fig. 14. Ian McIntyre, 'A Ton of Clay', Jerwood Makers Open, 2015, installation view; Phot. Rebecca Jane Callaby.

0.5 Methodologies

Designer-practitioner-researcher

This research used a range of overlapping methodological approaches to explore its questions through practice-based design research, supported by theoretical forms of academic research. The centring of practice recognises that the maker's professional skills and expertise produce a specific valuable contribution to knowledge creation. I understand my role within this research as what Laurene Vaughan in *Practice-based Design Research* (2019) calls 'Designer-practitioner-researcher', which is:

The title or description of an individual, their work role, or their understanding of the integration of these various aspects of their professional work. Like a molecule chain, this title can be read left-to-right or right-to-left, but at the centre of 'designer 'and 'researcher 'is, in effect, practice (10).

My practice moves fluidly between design, craft and commercial contexts in such a way that I am able to produce knowledge unavailable to the theorist, as I will expand below.

Tacit Knowledge

Over the past two decades important questions have been raised within design and craft regarding the role and format of knowledge created in research and practice-based projects. Kristina Niedderer (2007) notes that historically in the UK the implicit prioritisation of propositional knowledge – characteristic of traditional academic knowledge ' –seems to exclude certain kinds or formats of knowledge associated with practice, which are often called practical, experiential, personal, or tacit knowledge and which evade verbal articulation '(1). Niedderer continues, 'knowledge creation has been assumed by (design) research. However developments of using practice within research have pointed to knowledge creation within and through practice '(1)

'Tacit knowledge 'has become a guiding principle in contemporary practice-based research (Mareis, 2012: 61) so that, as Neidderer observes:

[...] tacit knowledge plays an important role both in the research process and in evaluating and communicating research outcomes [...] tacit knowledge seems important for the generation of research and its results, and for creating new experiences, abilities, and knowledge (2007: 6).

Recognition of tacit, non-propositional knowledge has its theoretical basis in the work of the philosopher Michael Polanyi who, in *The Tacit Dimension* (1967), identified practical expertise and skills as forms of knowledge that cannot always be articulated or

verbalised. Donald Schön, writing in 1983, suggested that the practical knowledge of designers can be understood using the concept of 'reflection-in-action'. Mareis, however, cautions that there is a 'romantic idealization' of tacit knowledge that goes unexamined and that we have to find a way to critically reflect on and express experience and knowledge-in-practice (2012: 71).

In carrying out this practice-based research project I decipher historical manufacturing methods through examining makers' marks; I develop and test prototypes; I challenge what is possible within the factory through my own understanding and capabilities as a designer, model maker and product developer. As a practicing ceramicist I am able to understand and articulate the value and challenges of technical acts, while acknowledging historical precedents and innovative contemporary design solutions to situate the product in broader socio-cultural, technical and economic contexts (Vaughan, 2019). The task for me, then, becomes finding modes of public communication – writing or exhibition – that seek to avoid committing a 'romantic idealization' of tacit knowledge.

Reflexivity

In the process of developing and documenting a constructive dialogue between myself and CC – culminating in the design and production of the RBB – I have produced field photographs and notes, semi-structured interviews, technical drawings, sketches, material samples and product prototypes. These are incorporated into the thesis applying a reflexive writing methodology which demonstrates 'an awareness that the researcher and the object of study exist in a mutual relationship with one another. Thus, reflexivity calls for attention to how thinking comes to be, how it is shaped by preexisting knowledge, and how research claims are made' (Whitaker & Atkinson, SAGE Research Methods online, 2019). In describing field trips carried out in The Potteries, in places my prose style becomes less formal and more allusive in an attempt to convey the affective intensity of factories, quarries and brownfield sites and the immediacy of field research.

Thinking Through Making

Early on in the research I developed a practice-based taxonomy to physically isolate and analyse the design details of historical examples of the BB. This methodology – an exploded view – is applied to argue that CCs' BB, along with its processes and practices is an ideal object for revitalisation. Significantly, this taxonomy, alongside technical patent drawings, provided the basis for early prototypes of the RBB. This research proceeds by deconstructing, drawing, moulding, modeling and reconstructing to produce a prototype and, finally, master mould.

Prototyping in engineering is an iterative process of testing a product in order to determine if it can be built and to ascertain operating anomalies. Prototypes, as the designer Pieter Jan Stappers has written, are 'objects made for purposes of exploration and testing':

... prototypes are things we make, things which allow us to see how something new might be or might not be through the processes of making and testing. Prototypes are as much about failing and changing course as they are about demonstrating and proving. In that sense, they can be seen as research instruments, both for exploring new directions and for validating expectations (2013: 85).

As a practice-based research activity to find out things in pursuit of realising and sharing new knowledge, prototyping finds an analogy in iterative drawing as a process of research; as Sarah Casey and Gerry Davies write in *Drawing Investigations*, citing the anthropologist Tim Ingold: 'to research, is to *re-search*, to look again' (Ingold in Casey and Davies, 2020: 7). For them, drawing is a tool to investigate and analyse. In Fields 2 and 3 iterative drawing and re-drawing come to the fore as tools for analysing the form, function and production of the BB and RBB.

Revitalisation

The timely publication of Twigger Holroyd and colleagues' work (along with co-editors Stuart Walker, Martyn Evans, Tom Cassidy and Jeyon Jung) in *Design Roots: Culturally Significant Designs, Products, and Practices* (2018) part way through the research offered a critical vocabulary to more clearly articulate some of the decisions and thinking I had already arrived at while working with CC.

Design Roots gathers international contributions from theorists and designer-makers to develop an overview of culturally significant design, products, and practices that are rooted in particular communities through tradition and a sense of place. Much knowledge embodied by significant designs, products, and practices, often evolving organically across generations, have been lost and damaged in the wake of disruptive global outsourcing, free markets and international trade. Such Western growth-based economic systems have led to a very significant flattening and homogenizing of cultures (Walker, 2018: 1). However, in the face of such destructive forces, remaining long-established culturally significant designs can offer this contemporary post-industrial moment valuable insights into issues of sustainability, identity, and well-being bound up with place. Of particular concern to the volume's authors are:

[...] creative roots, place-based creative ecologies, and deep understandings of cultural significance, not only in terms of history and tradition but also in terms of locale, social interactions, innovation, and change – change that is respectful and supportive of culturally significant practices and material productions, their longevity, their embodied knowledge and local wisdoms, and their contributions in creating a better future. Importantly, these practices are not locked in time by sentimentality and nostalgia, but are innovative, adaptive to new technologies and changing circumstances, and in a continual state of becoming (Walker, 2018: 3).

I contend that the specific place-based character of the BB has been severed and devalued by outsourcing of its production to Asia. The BB, likewise, is captured by a post-industrial sentimentality and nostalgia that inhibits its development. As I will go on to demonstrate in Field 1, the BB is heavily marketed and, I believe, marred by a largely imagined nostalgic Englishness that occludes its complicated hybrid history that is the result of global transfers of people, knowledge, skills and commodities. While its cultural significance as a quintessentially English icon is often touted, it is not the full picture.

Defining Cultural Significance

The BB's identity is tied to Stoke-on-Trent (expanded in Field 1) and the very beginnings of its ceramics industry, yet it was clear at the outset of this research that the product is undervalued and devolved compared to earlier historical versions and contemporary inauthentic versions produced overseas and imported into Britain. Its cultural significance was not recognised.

To describe something as having 'cultural significance' is to evoke a host of unspoken values. Such values, where they are linked to place, cannot easily be separated from ideas of authenticity and assumptions of tradition and origin (Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 26). Values are not absolute: they are always moving and shifting in relation to their environment and must be critically examined.

Writing in *Design Roots* Twigger Holroyd develops a typology that could be applied to identify the cultural significance of designs, products, and practices. These categories assess social value, historical value, and aesthetic value. To be deemed culturally significant, designs, products, and practices would fall across each part of Twigger Holroyd's taxonomy:

Social value refers to the associations that a design, product or practice has for a particular cultural group and the social, cultural or spiritual

meanings that it holds for them. Social value may reflect a sense of identity, distinctiveness, and social interaction.

Historical value derives from the ways in which aspects of life from the past can be connected to the present through designs, products, and practices. It may be based on the length of time a tradition has developed, its association with specific people or events, or its rarity or uniqueness.

Aesthetic value refers to the visual, sensory, and perceptual experience of a design, product or practice. It includes artifacts and patterns with uncommonly attractive or distinctive qualities that evoke strong feelings or special meanings (2018, 27).

Authenticity

Frequently, in the marketing of traditional goods there is an appeal to authenticity and historical continuity. Yet, as the so-called 'heritage baiting' historians, among them Eric Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), Patrick Wright (1985) and Raphael Samuel (1994), have shown, traditions and origins on which authenticity is based are often far from straightforward. In Britain, traditions that are widely understood as deeply historical often prove to be little more than Victorian inventions. As a ceramicist I have been surprised to learn that techniques that I thought had a deep history were more modern.

Tradition, like values, tends to be understood as static: it has remained and it will continue to remain. Yet, it is precisely adaptability that allows traditions to remain relevant in the long term (Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 31). This has important implications for me approaching the BB teapot and developing principles that may enable others to apply similar principles in new projects – and potentially other – manufacturing industries. Traditions move and adapt with the times. The BB teapot embodies a deep tradition of established methods of manufacture, but many of its most innovative design and production details have devolved as I will go on to analyse in Field 2. Its manufacture, I assert, needed to be innovated to both improve its functionality and reconnect it to an earlier innovative history in order to redefine its market position.

Modernity and Tradition

Many culturally significant designs, products, and practices can be traced back to pre-modern times.¹⁰ While in some cases craft traditions have been sustained outside of a market economy, in most instances culturally significant products and practices have been forced to adapt to consumer society as it has emerged unevenly around the world.

¹⁰ Pre-modern times is dated as the era before the widespread transformation of society by consumer capitalism and industrialisation.

There are, according to Twigger Holroyd (2018), three main implications for this. Firstly, traditional craft is forced to compete with mass-produced goods, whether they be imported or produced regionally. Competition between manufacturers leads to higher wages, better working conditions and standards in other sectors that can deplete traditional knowledge.

Secondly, modernisation carries with it an ideology of progress which may cause communities to break away from traditions, including local crafts and vernacular design, 'which come to be seen as old-fashioned and backwards-looking '(Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 28).

Thirdly, the changes of modernisation bring about significant changes in lifestyle. As traditional ways that have been a part of everyday life become obsolete so particular products associated with them stop being used. Particular motifs and patterns on the items and deeper, underpinning meanings of designs are lost to the next generation (Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 28).

Finally, in a globalized modern world where existing structures of identity are fluid and mobile, tradition can offer a sense of continuity to individuals and societies (Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 29). Twigger Holroyd continues: 'tradition [...] can be of great use in a liquid modern world, a questioning, solidifying force, and a reminder that society cannot spend its entire time in the fast lane '(Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 29). Globalization, which breaks down borders, collapses distance and appears to combine us into one homogenous 'world 'culture, simultaneously increases the significance of place:

Hence, it can be argued that modernization and globalization unexpectedly, and paradoxically, *fuel* our appetite for the tradition and sense of place associated with culturally significant designs, products, and practices (Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 30).

Walker, writing in *Design Roots*, believes that the myriad of distractions and trivia of consumer society has led in recent years to 'renewed interest in ways of doing, ways of making, and in the creation and use of artifacts that are representative of what we might refer to as "non-modern" or "after-modern" outlooks '(Walker, 2018: 43). Walker is particularly interested in the implications of this for sustainability in all forms. 'Non-modern 'or 'after-modern 'outlooks emerge, he writes, from a different way of thinking, which 'represents or perhaps strives to achieve a more balanced outlook (Walker, 2018: 43).

Revitalisation Strategies

For Twigger Holroyd, revitalisation is: ‘Any initiative that brings new life to a culturally significant design, product or practice, while aiming to retain (or even enhance) the values associated with it ’(2018, 30). Revitalisation strategies might include the redesign of products, the use of traditional patterns and forms in new contexts, or new uses for traditional craft practices. Likewise, revitalisation strategies may address existing production processes by exploring materials, promotion and branding, routes to market, enterprise and business models, and the transfer and development of relevant skills (Twigger Holroyd, 2018). I have arrived at many of these approaches of my own volition in this research.

Typically, revitalisation projects involve a range of stakeholders: ‘While some projects are initiated by individuals, communities or commercial businesses, in many cases governmental or non-governmental organisations have played an instrumental role ’ role ’(Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 31). Designers involved in such projects bring their skills to bear on specific tasks such as developing new product designs or branding, as well as applying their design thinking – defined as ‘the designer’s sensibility and methods to match people’s needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity ’(Brown in Huppertz, 2016: 169) – to address the challenges faced by culturally significant designs, products, and practices. Designer-maker insights in revitalization projects, then, are not necessarily limited to the manufacture of a product, but may be applied more widely.

I believe it is the responsibility of the designer to contribute to the development of new ways forward for culturally significant designs, products, and practices, ‘keeping the past in mind but looking towards the future ’(Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 35). The design and production of culturally significant artifacts in or close to their location of use can be seen as a positive, restitutive route for creating good work, alleviating social disparity, and reducing waste and environmental degradation (Walker, 2018: 44). Revitalisation has the potential to make meaningful contributions to practical, social, personal and economic sustainability. Below I offer a deeper context in which I developed the RBB teapot in the Stoke Potteries.

The broader set of concerns of revitalisation scholarship offers powerful insights for critically analysing the complicated legacies of Stoke’s transition into the post-industrial era. Emblematic of this transition, specific to this research, I take to be the liquidation of the largest BB teapot manufacturer Alcock, Lindley and Bloore (ALB) by Royal Doulton in 1979, as I will go on to detail in Field 1, and the story of the BB in general.

Through the BB the interrelationship between the local and the global, tradition and innovation in Stoke-on-Trent is played out in complex ways. While revitalisation

strategies can be seen to bring new life to culturally significant designs as a counter to globalisation, it is in the context of Brexit that my research has taken place.¹¹ In as far as Brexit has been understood as a reaction to fluid globalised monetary systems of exchange, it has given rise to kneejerk nationalistic characterisations of English exceptionalism and superiority.

Stoke-on-Trent became known as a 'Brexit bellwether' (Politico, 2017) and in the vacuum left by Tristram Hunt, Stoke-on-Trent Central Labour MP, standing down to take up the Directorship of the V&A, London, the leader of the Eurosceptic right-wing populist party UKIP Paul Nuttall made significant gains, naming the town the 'Brexit capital' of Britain (MacLeod, 2018). I discuss the nationalistic branding of the BB in Field 1.

Thinking Through Exhibiting

Throughout the course of this research I have designed and produced exhibition installations in galleries and commercial retail spaces. I am interested in how these techniques of practice-based research methodologies can be displayed adjacent to academic and commercial settings. In doing so I acknowledge the specific contemplative encounters facilitated by display (Bjerregaard, 2021). Exhibition displays convey knowledge (narrowly understood) and affective, phenomenal knowledge in a space that is dialogical, uncertain and open – with affordance distinct from, for example, the trade fair, academic journal or museum.

A desire to exhibit expanded design in the museum and gallery has become a characteristic of much 'Design Art' of the early twenty-first century. As Damon Taylor writes in 'Gallery Envy and Contingent Autonomy: Exhibiting Design Art', the white cube gallery space, with its careful lighting, white walls, and display cases, 'suggest that the design on show can be experienced as a form of art, as it is liberated from the need to be "merely" functional in a utilitarian sense' (2016: 92). In being liberated from utility, the items take on the aura of meaningful objects for contemplation:

They cease to be chairs and tables and actually appear to become artworks that appear to consider 'chairness' and 'tableness'. This happens because the cultural context of the gallery means that certain codes of reading or protocols of relation and interpretation kick in as soon as an object is exhibited in this way; this also has the effect of historicizing the objects as they appear to take their place in a broad discourse of 'important' design (Taylor, 2016: 94).

¹¹ Brexit was the contentious withdrawal of Britain from the European Union 31 January 2020.

Recent practice has also seen a growing awareness of what Alun Graves, borrowing from the art historian Rosalind Krauss, has called the 'expanded field of design'. Writing specifically about exhibitions, events and residences at the V&A, Graves notes that the proximity of sites of making during residencies alongside exhibition spaces can function as an important opportunity for makers to reflect on site, scale and institutional setting, inviting 'engagement of an institution or the interaction of an audience' (Graves, 2012). This situational, discursive space is important for this research in the early stages.

Taylor, however, expresses some reservation about 'Design Art' in the gallery that becomes almost unrecognisable as design and which, ultimately, despite its utility, has to 'stand or fall' as an art object. As a commercial project, I seek to navigate a space between the contemplative autonomy of 'Design Art', the expanded field of design in the gallery and the premium shop space. By co-ordinating exhibitions in gallery and commercial spaces I want to leverage qualities to consider the typological 'teapotness' of the BB, open up a space for attentive contemplation, including the display of research and making processes, and establish a link with the artfulness of this design classic.

In their examination of the 'Store/Museum' relationship in *Exhibiting Craft and Design: Transgressing the White Cube Paradigm, 1930–Present*, Jen Hutton and Sarah Nasby have identified the model of the 'store as museum' (2020). Case studies for them are Toronto's Mjolk and New York's Kiosk, but equally we could point to UK examples that I have engaged with in this research such as Margaret Howell and Vitsoe. Rather than operate as purely commercial retail venues, Mjolk and Kiosk, so the authors write, 'focus their energy on edifying a paying or browsing public on what is good design via a selection of objects consistent with that category' (Hutton and Nasby, 2020: 130). The proprietors of these stores identify as 'curators first' and 'retailers second'. In exemplifying 'the museum effect', they simultaneously negate the conventions of the museum through the permissions and exceptions a retail space can allow (Hutton and Nasby, 2020: 130).

During this project exhibition-making alongside historic research, prototyping, industry placement, collaboration and my own pre-existing tacit knowledge have been in a dynamic relationship. Insights gained through periodic reflexive analysis have fed back into the inquiry to inform its direction. This is an adoption of the 'action research' methodology which, according to Carr and Kemmis, is a 'form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which practices are carried out' (1986: 162).

In the Field

At the beginning of this section on methodologies I identified myself as a 'designer-practitioner-researcher' in order to acknowledge the way that being a practitioner influences the way I am also a designer and a researcher. Vaughan's term builds on the figure of the 'practitioner-researcher' defined by educationalist Peter Jarvis in his 1999 book *Practitioner-Researcher: developing theory from practice*. Throughout this text, Jarvis argues that both industry and the educational academy should rethink notions of expertise.

Jarvis emphasises, Vaughan explains, 'that expertise acquired outside a field is not necessarily superior to, or even relevant to, the expertise of the practitioner inside the field' (Vaughan, 2019: 9). The field here is the dynamic situation of everyday practice, including the actual physical location where action happens (in my case the archive, the studio or the factory), or it may be the systems, materials or people that practitioners work with (Erturia Marl or CC). As Jarvis states, 'practicing is situated and is itself a unique and ever-changing performance' (1999).

It is this sense of situatedness that I seek to convey, particularly when encountering the CC factory in Field 3, with a mode of writing that the design critic Jane Rendell calls 'site-writing' (2010: 1). Site-writing is a situated practice of writing that opens up 'new ways of knowing and being... articulated through spatial terms, developing conceptual and critical tools such as "situated knowledge" and "standpoint theory"' (Rendell, 2010: 3).

Throughout this thesis I attempt to balance the delicate, situational quality of constructive dialogue that developed between myself and CC, while keeping in mind the broader aim to seek out opportunities to enhance the design aesthetics and details of the BB teapot and the manufacturing practices at CC that may enable others to apply similar principles in new projects.



Fig. 15. 'Icon', AirSpace Gallery exhibition poster, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, 26 September – 7 November 2015.



Fig. 16. 'Icon', AirSpace Gallery window display, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, 26 September – 7 November 2015.

Field 1, Defining an Icon ('There's many a lesson to be learned from that little brown pot'¹²)

In this chapter a genealogy of the BB is established by drawing on substantial research undertaken as artist-in-residence at AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, in 2015. In partnership with the BCB, the residency – awarded every two years – culminated in the exhibition 'Icon' at AirSpace Gallery, 26 September – 7 November 2015.

My interest, building on my work for the Jerwood Makers Open 2015, was in exploring processes of deep design evolution. This underpinned AirSpace Gallery's recent 'Spode China Rose' project (2013), which saw the gallery work collaboratively with the rose breeder Gareth Fryer to develop and bring to market a new rose for a community garden attached to the historic Spode China Hall, Kingsway, Stoke.¹³ Fryer's methodologies, outlined in his text titled 'Hybridising the Process', explores approaches

¹² Royal Doulton. (c.1978-80) 'Little Brown Pot'. *Royal Doulton Tableware Bulletin*. Public relations department.

¹³ See 'The Spode Rose Garden: History', Spring 2013 – Present on the AirSpace Gallery website: https://www.airspacegallery.org/index.php/2020/project_entry/history.

to research, experimentation and development of rose breeding, and lent its name to my residency. Like Fryer, my intention was to work collaboratively with aspects of the city's ceramics heritage – in my case an extant ceramics manufacturer.

Under the guise of 'Hybridising the Process', I identified the BB as an emblematic object with a deep design evolution. Emerging in Stoke-on-Trent, facilitated by the development of craft traditions in the late seventeenth century, the teapot's form derives not from an aesthetic attitude, but from continual refinement of its functions and changes to local production processes. These production processes have been historically determined by the availability of raw materials in Stoke. As a product of evolution, the BB is not a work of singular authorship, but has been refined over generations.

During the residency I carried out a literature review of the BB teapot in the Stoke-on-Trent Central Library and accessed the City Archives. Sources include early travel books on the area, Trade and Industry catalogues, local history texts and local newspapers, including the *Stoke Sentinel*. This material informs a narrative history of the BB teapot that opens this chapter.

In this chapter the origins of the BB teapot are mapped onto the historic tea trade routes of the Dutch and British East India companies to understand their influence on the emergence of redware teapots and their fabrication from Etruria Marl clay in Staffordshire. This research identifies red Etruria Marl clay – from which the BB is historically made – as a characteristic of the manufacturing traditions of Stoke-on-Trent.

My literature research led me to undertake empirical research in the form of site visits to gain insight into stages of the BB production process. Initially, this was carried out in form of participant observation at Knutton Quarry in Newcastle-under-Lyme, an open quarry source of Erturia Marl, and at Valentines Clays Ltd., an historic supplier of clay and ceramics who refine the Erturia Marl for redware. Throughout my AirSpace residency I made enquiries as to whether redware pots continued to be produced in Stoke-on-Trent. It was through a contact at the BCB, Iain Cartwright, that I discovered CC – the single largest remaining manufacturer of the BB teapot in Stoke-on-Trent. Through a series of site visits I was able to develop a relationship with the sole owner, Zamir Shaikh.

Reflexive writing on these site visits structure the chapter, which culminates in a critical analysis of the exhibition 'Icon' at AirSpace Gallery. While the residency readied me for this exhibition, it also generated a sense of possibility and opportunity for further research and collaboration. Surprisingly, I discovered that, contrary to the accolades

granted the BB by designers such as Robin Levien and Tim Parsons, this product was devolved (Levien, 1992; Parsons, 2006). And there are many examples of inaccurate histories of this object, which this chapter seeks to address by developing concrete research and terminology. Significantly, the establishment of a professional relationship with Shaikh at CC throughout 2015–16 enabled me to propose an industrial collaboration from 2017–19 that led to the major practice-based element of this research outlined in Field 3.

1.1 Defining A Brown Betty Teapot

Surprisingly, the earliest use of 'Brown Betty' to name the familiar bulbous, brown teapot is as recent as 1978. In 1974, Royal Doulton, recently acquired by the Pearson industrial conglomerate, absorbed ALB., until that point the largest manufacturer of the teapot. For the next five years, from 1974–9, Royal Doulton continued its manufacture, referring to it in public relations material as 'Brown Betty' (Royal Doulton, 1978). Using this name to access archives and libraries is, therefore, of limited use to gain a fuller historic perspective on its genesis. This was a significant discovery in my research that enabled me to identify a lineage with previous Rockingham and teapots.

Intriguingly, there is no single identifiable originator of these teapots. Trade catalogues list numerous manufacturers, each with their own minor variations on form, functionality, and methods of manufacture. Names for similar products include 'redware teapots' and 'jet', 'Samian' and 'Rockingham ware'. Throughout the early twentieth century, these names appear regularly in advertisements by a range of other manufacturers of redware teapots in industry trade catalogues. *Cox's Pottery Annual and Glass Trade Year Book* of 1926, for example, refers to over a dozen (Emery, 1926: 42).

As the architecture critic Hugh Pearman has written, these teapots have 'no single definitive version', with 'endless little detail differences' (Pearman, 2001). Although the names vary, they designate an archetypal teapot with common characteristics: the red clay material from which they are made and the transparent (Samian or Rockingham) glaze with which they are coated. Rockingham, made of manganese dioxide and red iron oxide, traditionally in a lead base, produces a rich brown glaze applied to earthenware. Although Samian ware is traditionally a fine slip that produces a glaze-like finish, more recent manufactures of the Brown Betty, including ALB, used the name to describe a clear lead-based glaze on a red earthenware teapot.

Today, these teapots, with minor variations in designs, fall under the colloquial name 'Brown Betty'. In a 1929 trade catalogue of The British Pottery Manufacturers (Figs. 17–18), the typologies of redware glazed teapots from Staffordshire could all be subsumed

under its affectionate name. A recent marketing invention, 'Brown Betty 'conceals a deep history of variegated forms around a set of design and production characteristics.

GIBSON & SONS, LTD.

Albany and Harvey Potteries, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, England.

Telegrams: "GIBSON'S, BURSLEM."

Telephones: BURSLEM 336; LONDON CITY 875.



Fig. 17. The British Pottery Manufacturers Federation Standard Exporter, 1929.

JET, ROCKINGHAM, ETC., SECTION.
Section Jais, Rockingham, Etc.
Sección Azabache, Rockingham, Etc.

TEA POTS, ETC.
Théières, Etc.
Teteras, Etc.

145

ISIK—TAIM

THE CANNING POTTERY COMPANY FENTON, STAFFORDSHIRE, ENGLAND.

TELEGRAMS : "PLANTED, LONGTON."

TELEPHONE : 271 LONGTON.

CODE : BENTLEY'S.



Fig. 18. *The British Pottery Manufacturers Federation Standard Exporter*, 1929.

1.2 The Invention of Tea Drinking

Writing in *A Social History of Tea*, the master brewer Jane Pettigrew and historian Bruce Richardson observe that it is generally accepted that tea was first officially imported into Europe in the year 1610 (2014:11). Tea did not immediately take off: it would not be until the late 1630s that a significant market for tea as a recreational drink was created by the Dutch.

Tea's popularisation as a luxury item – alongside sugar – was uniquely linked to the expansion of colonial markets and the construction of a global economy.¹⁴ In a letter dated 2 January 1637, directors of the Dutch East India Company, who monopolized the tea trade at the time, wrote to the Governor General of Netherlandish East India at Batavia, 'As the tea begins to come into use with some people, we expect some jars of Chinese as well as Japanese with all ships '(Ukers, 1935/2018: 30).

The English took to tea slower than others. Pettigrew and Richardson note that traders did not receive their first official consignment from Dutch merchants until 1657. In the period dating 1660 until the early 1700s, tea slowly became fashionable among the English and Dutch merchant classes and aristocracy. For example, in 1660, the noted chronicler of everyday life Samuel Pepys, every bit 'fashion-conscious and inquisitive', recorded in his diary that: 'I did send for a cup of tee (a China drink), of which I never drank before '(Eatwell cited in da Silva, 1999: 19).

In 1666, the natural philosopher Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, described tea as a 'mode drink – 'a fashionable drink (Cavendish cited in da Silva, 86). As tea gained popularity among the upper-classes so its various accessories found a market. Oriental porcelain teapots began to be imported by the Dutch. As Eatwell notes, the weight of the porcelain made it an ideal ballast to the lighter tea and when it came to practicality, aesthetic quality and cost it had no rival in the European market (57).

As well as growing numbers of porcelain imports, there were also darker wares imported from China known as Yixing teapots, named after the town in the Eastern province of Jiangsu where they had been made by master potters since the fifteenth century (Valfré, 2000). Yixing teapots, writes the historian Valfré, have always held a privileged role in Chinese cultural life: 'The scholars, who were always the reference point in China for good taste until the cultural revolution, were extremely interested in these products '(96). Yixing stoneware ranges in astonishing tonalities, from light reds to

¹⁴ For a pioneering study of the web of relations between the importers of tea, changing public attitudes to health, conspicuous consumption and social status see Woodruff Smith's *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600–1800*, first published in 2002.

deep purples and browns, produced by naturally occurring iron and manganese oxide in the region's clays and variations in firing temperature.

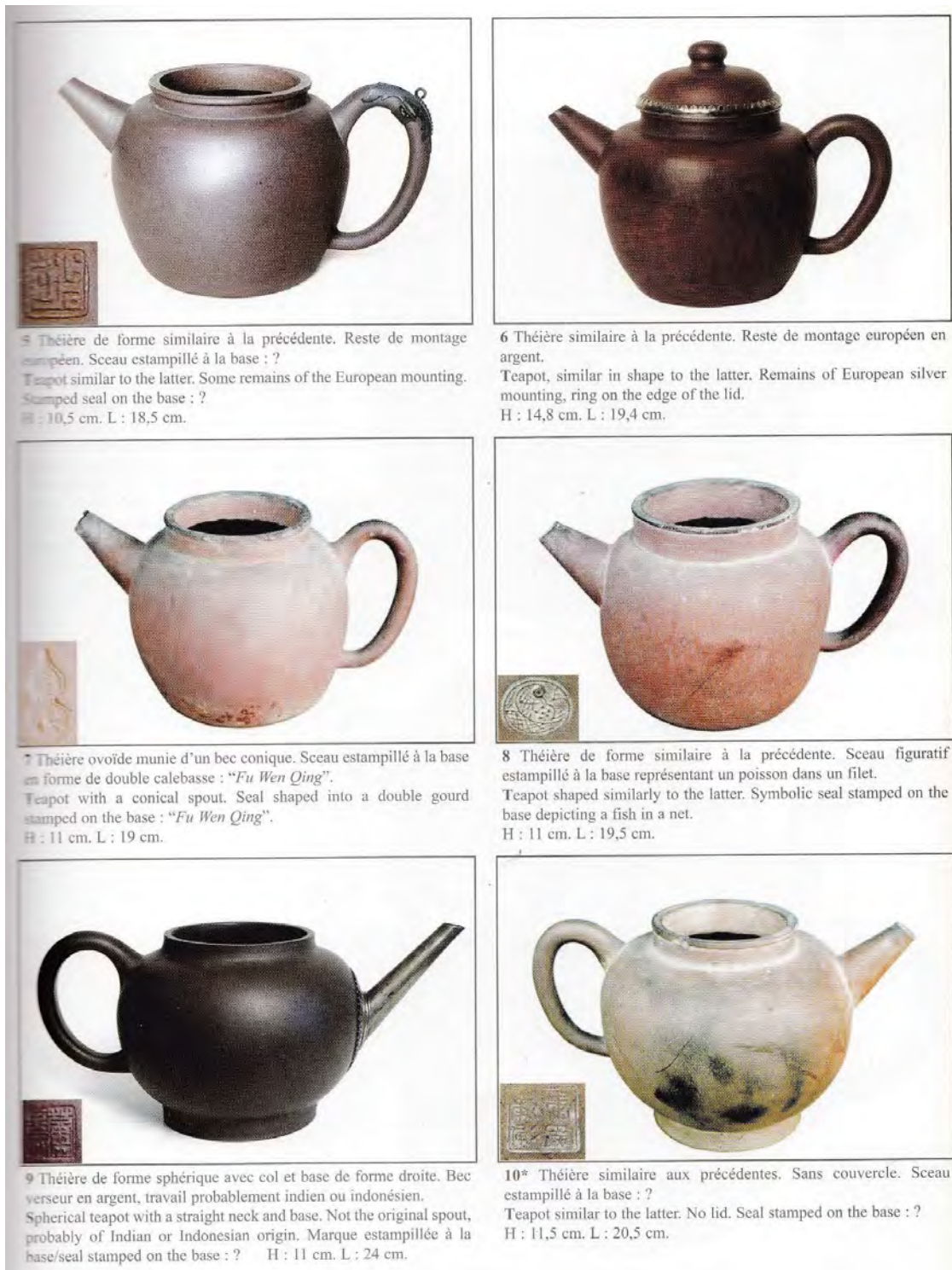


Fig. 19. Valfré, P. (2000) 'Yixing teapots for Europe'. 165. Dated between 1600–1644.



Fig. 20. Valfré, P. (2000) Rococo teapots, 'Yixing teapots for Europe'. 165. Dated between 1690–1740.

As Europeans developed a fascination for teapots, the Dutch East India Company began commissioning Chinese potters to produce designs specifically for European taste. At the time, Valfré writes, Chinese taste was understood to privilege an aesthetic purity inspired by Taoist and Buddhist beliefs (see Figs. 19–20). However, to cater for European Rococo taste many export pots became extremely ornate (see Fig. 21). In this meeting of East and West there was, Valfré reckons, enough of the former 'to fascinate those who dreamed of exoticism' (117). This Dutch innovation Valfré sees as 'the first stage in democratization of these exotic products, which in spite of their relatively high price, were no longer reserved entirely for the closed circles of the royal courts' (117).

This is an example of taste influenced by a global economy. And by the late 1600s Dutch potters, influenced by these imports, had reciprocated and begun making their own Yixing reproduction teapots. In a letter sent to the States of Holland and West Friesland in 1679, two Delft potters, Sammuël Von Eenhoorn and Ary De Milde, requested sole privilege to produce imitation Yixing pots (see Fig. 21): 'we, associates,' the letter reads, 'have discovered production techniques which make it possible to copy the teapots from the East Indies. We request permission to produce these pots for 15 years and to be the only ones to market them' (cited in Van Oostveen, 1987: 68–69).



Fig. 21. De Milde, A. 1678–1724 (made). Teapot. Redware. V&A.

1.3 Innovations of the Elers Brothers

It was not long before potters in England followed suit and began imitating Yixing redwares. In the late 1680s, the Dutch brothers John Philip Elers and David Elers, trained silversmiths, arrived in London from Germany where they began making salt-glazed stoneware called 'White Gorges' in Fulham. When they discovered red clay suitable for manufacturing stoneware in Bradwell Wood, North Staffordshire, around 1690, they established a pottery. It was here that they began to produce redware teapots in imitation of Yixing stoneware (Valfré, 2000). Some decades later, in 1777, Josiah Wedgwood acknowledged their innovations in a letter to his collaborator Thomas Bentley. One of their improvements was, Wedgwood wrote, 'the refining of our common red clay by sifting, etc., and making it into tea and coffee ware in imitation of the Chinese red' (Farrer, 1992).

When the Elers brothers relocated from London to North Staffordshire the region was sparsely populated with small pottery works located along the naturally-occurring clay

and coal seams that proliferated in the area. A typical pottery works was operated by family members and supplied the surrounding areas with largely coarse, utilitarian products intended for domestic use along with vessels for farmers and merchants to store and transport their produce (Greenslade and Jenkins, 1967). Dependent on raw local materials, the North Staffordshire potter made utility articles 'for farmhouses and cottages rather than for the tables of the great houses' (Ibid. 4). Unaesthetic, these wares have been described as 'peasant pottery', embodying a low perceived value.

It was by developing processes of material purification that the Elers brothers elevated the perceived value of the region's red clay: sifting, washing, sieving, blunging and weathering was carried out before throwing blanks on a wheel, turning it on a lathe and firing it at a high enough temperature to vitrify the clay and make it watertight. In doing so, the Elers brothers were able to improve the functionality of the material and its outward appearance to make teapots which were sold to a wealthy clientele in London.

According to the nineteenth-century historian Simeon Shaw, the Elers pots sold for 12s and 24s a piece (1829: 102) – the equivalent of £71.90 and £143.80 today.¹⁵ Though Shaw saw no evidence to support the claim that the Elers were the first to produce this Yixing imitation redware in Staffordshire, the skill and precision that they employed led to them being widely credited as giving an 'impetus to the technical and artistic standards of the area' (Shaw, 1829, archive.org).

In his *Staffordshire Pottery and its History* (1913) J.C. Wedgwood MP argues that: 'What led to the artistic development of pottery in England as a whole was the trading contact with the advancing civilization of Holland and Germany' (23). The arrival of the Elers brothers, Wedgwood writes, 'broke up for ever [sic] the placid uneventful course of the old peasant industry' (26). This is a view shared by other historians of the industry. In the following years after the brothers' departure from the region in 1699, Greenslade and Jenkins write, a succession of intensive experiments and material developments in the area such as 'the composition of bodies, in glazing and in decorative techniques and designs' such that 'the character of local production was completely changed' (1967: 6). The characterization of the brothers' arrival in *The Concise Encyclopedia of English Pottery and Porcelain* (1960) as 'an event of major importance in the history of the (Staffordshire) pottery industry' is today a common understanding (Mankowitz & Haggard, 81–83).

¹⁵ Calculated using The National Archives' 'Currency converter: 1270–2017' [Online] [Accessed 9 October 2021] <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/>



Fig. 22. Elers. D & Elers. J,P. c.1690–1698. Teapot. Redware. V&A.

1.4 Tea's Global Markets

By the early eighteenth century, tea had been introduced across all levels of society. In John Ovington's 1699 *An essay on the nature and qualities of tea* – the first English book devoted to the subject of tea – he records that: 'drinking of it has of late obtain'd here so universally, as to be affected by the scholar and the tradesman, to become both a private regale at court and to be made use of in places of public entertainment, which has greatly raised the character and gained it a singular repute '(2). Ovington, a priest who was hired as a chaplain to the East India Company, provides a fascinating insight into the entanglement of profession, commerce and taste.

The leaf had become available to purchase from coffee houses, India houses, and apothecaries. Servants in England began to receive the drink as part of their wages (Mintz, 1993: 265–6). 'It was the huge surge of demand, 'Eatwell writes, 'from families drinking tea at home in England which turned a fashionable drink amongst the few, to a daily necessity for all levels of society '(2008: 54).

By the 1720s competition between European trading companies drove the price of tea down and in 1745 the excise tax on tea was reduced. By the 1750s the desire for tea wares and hot drink utensils had created such an extensive market that they became commonplace in English homes. Manufacturers in Europe became ever more ambitious to replace Chinese imports with their own products. As the art historian Anne Dulau writes:

The early productions of the manufactories closely copied Chinese prototypes, and it has been estimated that the huge amount of printed and painted decoration on English Porcelains of the 1750s and 1770s featuring oriental figures or landscape scenes (of European invention) account for about a quarter to a third of all surviving designs (Dulau, 2008).



Fig. 23. Hayman, F. (1740) Oil painting 'Jonathan Tyers and his family'. National Portrait Gallery, London 'shows a red stoneware teapot with faceted sides and a lion finial which was copied in Staffordshire 'ref, Delau, A. (2008).

1.5 Staffordshire Redware

By 1750 a series of innovations had taken place in the wake of the Elers brothers' arrival in Staffordshire. A potter named John Astbury had discovered the secrets of producing redware teapots (possibly from the Elers brothers) and set up a manufactory in Shelton. While lead glazing was an earlier invention, the importation of flints and West Country clays by Astbury and Joshua Twyford contributed to the development of both lead and salt glazing in the region (Shaw, 1900: 126, 416). If, as I have already claimed with reference to Figs. 17–18, a BB is a teapot made of red Staffordshire clay with a transparent Samian or Rockingham glazed surface, then I propose that it is in the wake of the invention of lead glazing that they first begin to resemble the BB as we know it today.

In 1750, the travel writer Richard Pococke journeyed through Staffordshire; his observations of the different specialisms of towns are recorded in *The Travels Through England of Dr. Richard Pcocke* (1989). The town of Shelton (the home of Astbury ware from 1725) is, he notes, famous for 'red china – 'a name widely used to describe redware teapots in the mid-eighteenth century (Royal Doulton, 1978–80). After this early record it becomes difficult to trace the history of red china. This is because, I argue, in 1760 Josiah Wedgwood made an outstanding improvement to the production of cream coloured earthenware for which he obtained Royal Warrant of Approval in 1765, and called 'Queensware'.

Queensware used materials in its composition that were imported from the West Country and soon became the standard earthenware of the Staffordshire pottery industry. This clay was followed by a succession of celebrated innovations by Wedgwood, including unglazed black basalt, jasper ware, a fine white porcelainous stoneware, chocolate-red *rosso-antico*, buff caneware, light red terracotta, olive-grey drab ware, and white stoneware (Greenslade, 1967:12). According to Eatwell (2008:5), references to red stoneware pots around this period disappear from paintings and literature and from the 1760s onwards the East Asian trade in ceramics declined. A national market and culture is established: from this point on the industry and literature becomes dominated by the figure of Josiah Wedgwood and it seems that developments related to the original local red clay go undocumented.

1.6 The Rationalisation of The Potteries

At the beginning of the nineteenth century clusters of pot works can be seen on local maps and the rural belts begin to disappear between the clusters of six main pottery

making towns: Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton, and Longton (Allbutt, 1800). The development of coal- and steam-powered mechanisation created the conditions for manufacturing. Writing in *The Rise of the Staffordshire Potteries* (1971), John Thomas cites the conversion of agricultural corn mill machinery to grind flint for mixing with clays to improve pottery ware as one of the primary catalysts of industrialisation (3). By 1833 official government documents class the pottery workshops as factories (Thomas, 1971: 3). Collectively these six towns, referred to in shorthand as 'The Potteries', make up the civic unit of the city of Stoke-on-Trent, a notable product of the industrial revolution (Thomas, 1971:3). The identity of the city is entangled in the geology and industry of ceramics.

By the late 1800s there were a number of factories producing glazed redware teapots in a variety of shapes, sizes and styles. Among the more notable firms are household names such as Gibson & Sons Ltd. (established 1875), James Sadler and Sons, Ltd. (est 1882) and Price & Kensington Potteries Ltd. (est 1896 as Price Brothers). Although Staffordshire redware teapots were originally costly (Shaw, 1829) by the early 1900s, improvements in manufacture meant that they had become an affordable everyday utensil for the mass market (see Figs. 24–25).

According to the 1926 *Cox's Pottery Annual and Glass Trade Year Book* the output of Staffordshire redware teapots was estimated at approximately half a million each week (Emery, 43). Volume of production was something that the makers were proud of: the pottery of George Clews & Co. celebrated 'TWENTY MILLION TEAPOTS' as 'the average output each year of the Teapot Industry in North Staffordshire' (see Fig. 24). 'Cheap – but good' was the memorable claim to utility made in a 1926 advert for the teapots of J. Sadler & Sons, Ltd. (see Fig. 25).

Cox's Pottery Annual and Glass Trade Year Book, 1926.

TWENTY MILLION TEAPOTS

Is the average output each year of the Teapot Industry of North Staffordshire.

Each piece made of the rich, red Staffordshire Marl from the Brown Hills pit in which Elvers began his historical Pottery Manufacture.

From the Windows of our factory—the site of Elvers Industrial labour yields us the same red clay to-day.



SAMIAN & ROCKINGHAM WARE

Made in the BROWN HILLS
POTTERY of

GEORGE CLEWS & Co.

LTD.,

is of the same standard of **QUALITY** as the best Staffordshire has ever produced.

Jet, Samian, Cube and Rockingham TEAPOTS.

Fig. 24. Clews, G & Co. (1926) *Cox's Pottery Annual and Glass Trade Year Book*. 40.

Cox's Pottery Annual and Glass Trade Year Book, 1926.

Telephone : Hanley 909
(Two lines) Estab. 1882.

J. Sadler & Sons, Ltd.

Central and Wellington Potteries,
Market Place, BURSLEM.

Manufacturers of all kinds of TEAPOTS, TEAPOT SETS, COTTAGE FIGURES, etc. Sole Makers of the HANDY HEXAGAN SPOUTLESS TEAPOTS. The best of its kind. Made in Six sizes, in many decorations.

Also Proprietors of
St. PAUL'S ART POTTERY, Newport Street, Burslem.

Sole Manufacturers of ROYAL PAULET WARE, in superior Cellulose glazes and colours. Clock Sets, Vases, Lily Bowls, Birds; Long-necked Black Cats, in Seven sizes. Novelties, etc., etc., in brilliant colours and highly decorative effects. Cheap—but good.

Illustrated Catalogues on request.

Fig. 25. Sadler, J & Sons Ltd. (1926) *Cox's Pottery Annual and Glass Trade Year Book*. 42.

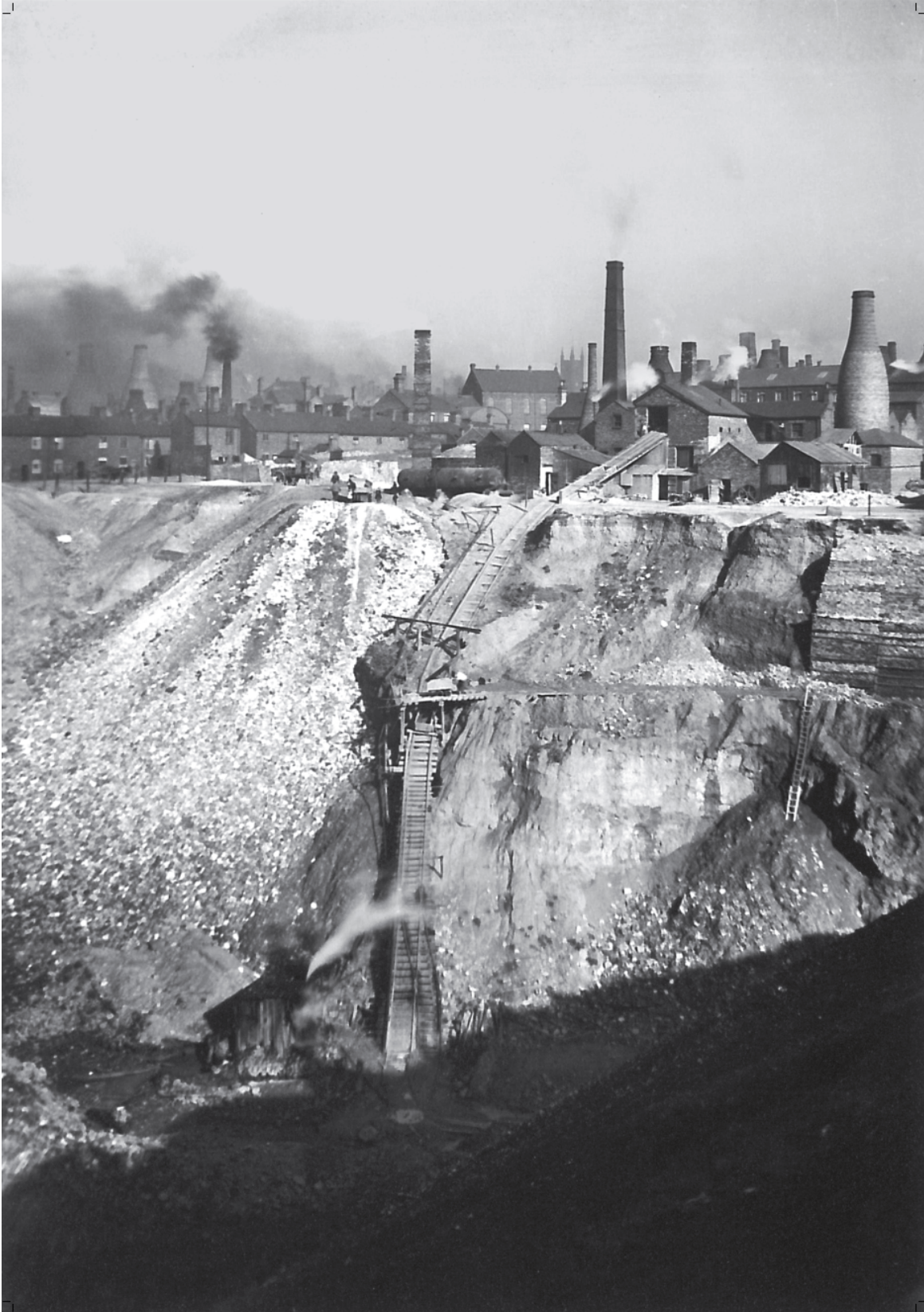


Fig. 26. Daisy Bank Marl Hole Longton. Photographed by William Blake between 1900–1940.

By 1939, the teapot manufacturer ALB of Hanley and Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent claimed to be the largest global manufacturer of redware teapots (see Fig 27. *Stoke Sentinel*, 1939). In the interwar period their distribution covered countries such as North America, Sweden, Denmark, and mapped onto at the time current and historic colonies of the British Empire, including Jamaica, South Africa, Kenya, Canada, New Zealand and Australia (see Fig 30. for list of agents). By 1965 Gibson & Sons Ltd. ceased production of redware teapots in favour of white teapots, while James Sadler and Sons, Ltd. followed suit, ceasing production of redware teapots at some point in the late sixties in favour of the white teapot. In 1974, Royal Doulton, only recently acquired by the Pearson industrial conglomerate, absorbed ALB at a point when well in excess of a million a year were still being sold (Parsons, 2006).¹⁶

In the same year, 1974, ALB's BB teapot was a best seller at Habitat stores, who sold them from the very day they opened (*Daily Mail*, 2004). In 1975, a two-pint teapot retailed for 55p in Habitat (for context, the catalogue itself (above) cost 30p) and over the years was a permanent feature in their 'Basics' collection (Figs. 28–29). Habitat's founder, Sir Terence Conran, describes the pot as 'one of the first, and most successful items sold at Habitat', adding that it 'symbolised Habitat's philosophy – cheap, utilitarian, unpretentious and cheerful' (Lutyens, 2016). When Habitat celebrated its fiftieth anniversary on 4 May 2014 *The Observer* newspaper included the BB teapot as one of its top ten greatest hits.

¹⁶ In 1971, S. Pearson & Son Ltd, a subsidiary of the Pearson industrial conglomerate, acquired Doulton & Co. Pearson & Son owned Allied English Potteries and merged operations into Doulton & Co. All brands from Allied English Potteries and Doulton & Co. Ltd., including Royal Doulton, Minton, Beswick, Dunn Bennett, Booths, Colclough, Royal Albert, Royal Crown Derby, Paragon, Ridgway, Queen Anne, Royal Adderley and Royal Adderley Floral, were moved under the umbrella of Royal Doulton Tableware Ltd.

cycle combination was involved in collision with defendant's car at the junction of the East Lancashire-road with Stonecross-lane, Loxton, near Leigh.

CYCLIST'S EVIDENCE

William Dunn, aged 17, butcher's assistant of West-avenue, Golborne, said he was cycling along the East Lancashire-road about 11.45 on Wednesday morning, November 2nd, and when about 70 yards from the Stonecross-lane crossing he saw a motor car coming out of Stonecross-lane at about 15 miles an hour. The motor car did not stop and went straight across the East Lancashire-road. At that moment a motor cycle combination, which was coming up at a fast speed, struck the car in the centre of the road.

Mr. Dunn said he was certain the motor car did not stop at the crossings and he heard no horn sounded. Mrs. Agnes Lupton, of Old Clough-lane, Widdon, said she was sitting next to her husband in their saloon car going along the East Lancashire road towards Liverpool. When about 50 yards from the crossing she saw two vehicles coming from the Liverpool direction. One was a motor lorry which was on the inside of the road, whilst in the over-taking lane there was a motor-cycle combination near the crest of the road. The vehicles were practically parallel, and appeared to be coming up at a speed from medium to fast.

Mr. Wild said the motor-car was all on the outside, while the motor-cycle combination was extensively damaged.

VIOLENT IMPACT

Mr. Rorlie, for the defence, said Mr. Wild was travelling slowly along Stonecross-lane and, as he came to the crossing he eventually halted at the corner. He looked in both directions and saw a motor lorry coming from the Manchester direction and stopped to allow it to pass. Looking in the Liverpool direction, he saw a motor-cycle combination some distance away and going at a very fast speed. He thought there was ample time for him to get across the East Lancashire-road before the motor-cycle came up but it ran into him at right angles. The impact must have been a very violent one on account of the damage caused.

He submitted that on the facts it was the motor-cycle which caused the accident and that Mr. Wild was not to blame. If there were any doubt, then Mr. Wild was entitled to it. Percy Wild said he was travelling at from 12 to 14 miles an hour along Stonecross-lane. He intended going straight across the East Lancashire-road to Newton and then on to Warrington. There was a "Major Road Ahead, Slow" sign. When the accident, that sign had been moved 150 yards nearer the East Lancashire-road. He was compelled to stop to allow the motor-lorry to go past. He then saw the motor-cycle coming over the top of the hill.

After a two-hours' hearing, the Chairman said they had weighed the evidence very carefully and they could not see that a case had been made out against Wild. They had therefore no alternative but to dismiss the case.

MR. YARDLEY'S MOTOR ACCIDENT

Patient at Infirmary With Severe Injuries

We are sorry to state that Mr. J. Mervyn Yardley, the Manager of the Odéon Theatre, Hanley, met with a motor accident at Newcastle last night, and is now in the North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary suffering from severe injuries. On the conclusion of the film show at the Odéon Theatre last night, Mr. Yardley was driving home by way of King-street, Newcastle, and when just below the railway bridge his car collided with one of the trees which project into the carriageway at that point. The weather was very bad, snow was falling, and the road was in a treacherous condition. His car was overturned, badly damaged, and Mr. Yardley was found unconscious and taken to the Royal Infirmary suffering from injury to the head, concussion, and injuries to the right leg. He regained consciousness this morning, and this afternoon was reported to be fairly comfortable.

Everyone will sympathize with Mr. Yardley in his most unfortunate accident and wish him a speedy restoration to health and strength.

Though receiving only two hours' notice, Mr. Harry Dean, a member of the Potteries and District Amateur Operatic Society, went over to Congleton last evening and sang the tenor songs in the part of Sir Walter Raleigh in "Merrie England," which is being produced by the Congleton British Legion Amateur Operatic Society.

until officially released on January 20th.

DEATH OF MR. WILLIAM BLOORE

OUTSTANDING PERSONALITY IN POTTERY INDUSTRY

We deeply regret to announce the death, at his home, Lynmere, The Avenue, Alsager, early this morning, of Mr. William Bloore, who has been prominently associated with the pottery industry for half-a-century. Mr. Bloore was 73 years of age.

Mr. Bloore's rapid rise from a clerkship to the directorate of important concerns in North Staffordshire is one of the romances of the industry, and is held as an example of business initiative and success.

At the age of 13, Mr. Bloore became a clerk in the solicitor's office of Messrs. Paddock, of Hanley, and he was first associated with the pottery industry ten years later—as a clerk with Messrs. A. J. Wilkinson, Ltd., of Burslem. Mr. Bloore's outstanding ability enabled him to become a Director of that firm.

It was in 1914 that Mr. Bloore joined Messrs. Swinerton's, of Hanley, and played a prominent part in the development of the firm which soon for a lead- ing place in the industry. The firm had started in 1911, when Mr. Walter Lansley

District Council for many years, and a past Chairman of that body. His activities in this part of his public work were concerned mainly with improving the amenities of the village, and he was one of the supporters on the authority of the move to establish a park for Alsager.

During the 26 years he lived at Alsager—where he had lived previously at Cobridge—Mr. Bloore gave valuable support to the Cricket Club, of which he was the founder and a past President. He was also a member of the Bowling and Recreation Club there.

Outside his business interests, Mr. Bloore's chief hobby was angling. He was considered to be one of the most expert fly-fishermen in the district, and he was a member of the Uttoxeter Angling Club.

He maintained close touch with a number of organisations in Stoke-on-Trent. He was a member of the Ancient Corporation of Hanley and of the Burslem Association for the Prosecution of Felons, to which he presented the President's badge in 1927.

While at Cobridge, Mr. Bloore was an active worker for the Providence Chapel, Grace-street, and for some time he was a Trustee. When he removed to Alsager, he continued his association with Methodism at the Wesley Place Church.

Widespread and sincere sympathy is extended to Mr. Bloore's son and three daughters, Mr. Robert Bloore is a partner of Messrs. Swinerton's and of Messrs. Alcock, Lindley and Bloore, and the daughters are Miss J. E. Bloore, Mrs. C. T. Parke, and Mrs. D. W. Eiley.

The funeral is at Alsager on Saturday, the service at Wesley Place being followed by the interment at Christ Church.



MR. WILLIAM BLOORE

entered into partnership with Mr. B. Swinerton, who was a potter's factor in New-street, Hanley. The title of the firm was changed to Swinerton's Ltd., Hanley, and the first making shop was purchased at the Vulcan Works.

Since then, the firm has progressed rapidly. After a time, Mr. V. G. H. Alcock was taken into partnership, and later, Mr. Bloore, an old school friend of Mr. Lindley, became a partner. There are now four factories, and, in addition, a new firm of Messrs. Alcock, Lindley, and Bloore specialises in the manufacture of teapots. In this respect, the firm is claimed to be the largest producers in the world, two factories being kept occupied.

Mr. Bloore was a Managing Director of Messrs. Alcock, Lindley, and Bloore. Apart from playing a leading part in the development of a great and widely-known concern, Mr. Bloore was one of the initiators and a member of the industry's Export Association. He will be sadly missed from North Staffordshire's staple industry, for he was known always as a keen and straight-forward business man. Mr. Bloore's imposing figure was matched by an equally impressive personality.

He had travelled extensively, as a Director of Messrs. Wilkinson and of Messrs. Swinerton's, his business trips taking him frequently to America and Canada. He had also travelled the Continent, and, on cruises, had been round the world.

PUBLIC WORK

Mr. Bloore was a strong supporter of the Liberal cause, but he was always open to conviction. He was a well-informed speaker, and took part in General Election campaigns in the Crewe Division, latterly as a supporter of the National Government.

He was a member of the Alsager Urban

Government, and was a member of the Estremadura front, an operation designed to relieve the insurgent pressure in Catalonia.

Franco's forces have been making counter-attacks on this front, but the Government claim to have made a further advance to within eight miles of the Seville-Saragossa railway, "life-line" of insurgent Spain.

Escaped Leo

The leopard which escaped from Primley Zoo, Paignton, Devon, on Tuesday afternoon is dead.

It was shot in the zoo grounds today by Major S. A. Yorke, of Starcross, Commanding the 452nd Devon Anti-Aircraft Battery, R.A.

Until the animal was located yesterday, some 18 hours after its escape, in a shrubbery dividing the zoo grounds from some botanical gardens, the countryside for miles round had been mobilised in a search for it.

Shortly before 9 a.m. today, the leopard was sighted by a keeper on the top of a hill beyond a hedge bounding the Good- rington end of the zoo grounds.

Sub-inspector W. J. Hutchings, Police-Sergeant Newman, two other police

MONEY STOLEN FROM CHEADLE HOUSES

The "Sentinel" learns that four houses in the Greenhill district of Cheddle were entered by intruders on Sunday evening and that sums of money, totalling more than £11, were missed.

The houses were those of Mr. P. Ratcliffe, Mr. R. Spooner, Mr. R. Robertson and Mr. R. Furze. Entry was apparently made through windows. About a week ago, £13 was missed from a house in The Birches, Cheddle.

CHEF CONSTABLE IN CHASING CAR

Motorist's 65 Miles an Hour

At Stoke Police Court to-day, Mr. Rees Thomas Charles Jones, of Rumba, Barlaston Old-road, Trenham, was summoned for driving a motor-car at a speed which was dangerous to the public. He was also summoned for driving a motor-car at more than 60 m.p.h. in a built-up area.

Defendant, who pleaded guilty in both cases, was fined £10 in the first case and £5 in the second, his licence being endorsed.

The magistrates were Mr. J. Harrison (presiding), Mr. S. Wright, Mr. W. H. Barker and Mrs. Elliott.

Police-Constable Fawcett said that at 7.50 p.m. on December 23rd, he was driving the Chief Constable in a police-car along Lonsdale-street, Stoke, towards Trenham. At the junction with Booths Old-road he slowed down and a car driven by defendant passed him at a very fast speed. Witness accelerated and reached a speed of 65 m.p.h. He maintained this as fast as the Micklin crossing, but was unable to gain on the other car, and he was instructed to abandon the chase on account of the high speed. Witness took the number of the car.

P.C. Fawcett said that Campbell-road, for half-a-mile after defendant passed the police car, was a restricted area. There were six side-turnings, only one of which had a "Half" sign. The road then became unrestricted.

Cross-examined by Mr. Jones, the officer said that defendant's car was under perfect control and there was no question of cutting in. It was just a matter of the speed. "At 65 m.p.h., I was being left behind," he added.

Mr. Jones told the Bench that he was returning home after working late, and was late for dinner. He was in a hurry. His car was particularly powerful, and was extremely silent. It was utterly impossible to tell the speed without watching the speedometer all the time. His headlights were full on and he was watching the road. There was no light on the dashboard.

Mr. Jones said that only the short distance of Campbell-road was restricted. The car was perfectly under control and he would have been in a position to pull up if necessary. The car was so effortless that he had no realisation of the speed. He would be the last person in the world to attempt to pass a police car.

Mr. Jones admitted several previous convictions, and fines were imposed as stated.

BARGAIN WOODS

MONEY SAVING

BACON (all Best Mid)

PLAIN MILD CURED 11d. FINEST IRISH DANISH

FINE TOASTING CHEESE 6d. lb. Lancas Chesh GORG

SELF RAISING FLOUR 3lb. BAG 4d. 1/2 English Refined LA 5d. 1/2

PORAGE OATS 2d. lb. SCOTCH OATMEAL 2d. lb.

BEST RED SALMON TALL TINS 10 1/2 d. MEDIUM TINS 7 d.

FINEST RIPE PEELLED TOMATOES 5d. LARGE TINS

Tontine Sq., HANLEY Phone 2482 Campbell Pcc. STOKE Phone 4344 Queen St BURSLEM Phone 8418

Fig. 27. Stoke Evening Sentinel, Thursday Jan 12 1939.

habitat



Fig. 28. Habitat. Catalogue cover and insert featuring ALB's BB, 1975.

KITCHEN

BASIS Habitat

The Basic Kitchen. The hub of this kitchen are those stainless steel, stainless steel, wooden, stackback chairs. For cooking there are kitchen knives, basins, a pie dish and big mixing bowl. And if you're short of a few spoons and forks, and a mug or crockery on pages 26/27. For want of a wooden spoon to stir the stew, try one of our spoons; wooden spoons come from less than 10p each.

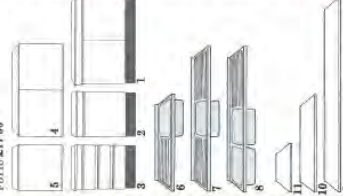
Name: *Cresta.*
Description: All surfaces finished with tough polyester lacquer, very easy to clean. The unit is a standard aluminium strip door and drawer pull.

Single and double wall mounted doors are hung on spring hinges, so they close automatically, inside is an adjustable shelf. The three base chest, a cupboard unit, and a double cupboard which can be fitted with a sink top. Base units are finished in a dark blue-grey and the recessed base is dark blue-grey.

Special features: Durable finish, very functional. Units are self-cleaning. The kitchen is a very well fitted or a family kitchen-cum-dining room.

Details for ordering:

- 1/Double base unit with single door, 33 1/2" x 33 1/2" x 19 1/2". F0116 £21-50
- 2/Single base unit with single door, 33 1/2" x 33 1/2" x 19 1/2". F0116 £24-00
- 3/Single base drawer unit 33 1/2" x 33 1/2" x 19 1/2". F0117 £26-50
- 4/Double wall cupboard 34 1/2" x 19 1/2" x 12". F0116 £17-50
- 5/Single wall cupboard 24 1/2" x 19 1/2" x 12". F0116 £17-50



Sink units, sold without taps. Stainless steel. Single and double wall mounted. To fit into a double wall unit. *Please state whether left or right hand sink is required.* F0120 £24-00

7/Single sink, double drainer. Stainless steel. Heavy duty rimmed cupboard or drainer unit placed side by side. F0121 £29-50

8/Double sink, single drainer. Stainless steel. Heavy duty rimmed cupboard or drainer unit placed side by side. *Please state whether left or right hand drainer is required.* F0122 £24-00

Work tops. White laminate. All 19 1/2" deep. Spans three single units or one double and one single unit and a right angle corner the equivalent of one unit deep. F0123 £21-00

11/19 1/2" long. Spans two single or one double unit. F0124 £11-00

12/Kitchen table. White laminate top, 30" x 48" x 24". Delivered Q.A. F0361 £25-00

13/Stackback chairs. Lacquered beechwood. Clear or white lacquer finish. 31" x 17" x 14 1/2". F0369/white, Each £7-95

14/Padding basins. White earthenware. Use for mixing, making nourishing steamed puddings and as a serving bowl. 11pt. 11pt. F0119 £11-50

15/Pie dish. Cane coloured earthenware. With a good rim to support a crust of puff pastry. 9 1/2" 1 1/2" capacity. **Buy from shops only.** 55p

16/Mixing bowl. Earthenware. Available as a salad or fruit bowl. 10". **Buy from shops only.** 75p

17/Knives. French. Stainless steel. Very sharp serrated blades on vegetable and carving knife. Brass riveted nickel practice handles. F0166/55p

N0764 6" cook's knife £11-00
N0857 8" carving knife £11-45

18/French Chef's saucepans. French. Good quality aluminium. Available in 1 1/2, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000

19/Frying pan. Heavy duty rimmed steel. Black metal handle. 10" diam. N0250 £1-25

20/Bistro casseroles. Dark brown enamel on steel pans. Thick, heavy steel base, suitable for all types of cooker. Conforms to British Standards. (See also pages 70/71). N0850 3pt. £2-75
N0857 6pt. £3-35

21/Teapot. Glossy brown earthenware. 1 1/2pt. **Buy from shops only.** 55p

22/Jug. White earthenware. 1pt. **Buy from shops only.** 55p

23/Spotlights. 50 watt 5 1/2". (Other N0201 white, N2342 yellow, N2360 green) £2-95.

24/Plastic blind. White superfine kerf paper. Thick and opaque. Details for ordering pages 80/81.

25/Stackback chairs. 1 1/2" x 17" x 14 1/2". (Options) N0343 white, N0351 brown, N0378 blue) £3-95. (See pages 102/103).



Fig. 29. Habitat. Catalogue cover and insert featuring ALB's BB, 1975.



Fig. 30. Ceramic and Glass trade gazette, 1953; ALB marketing material exhibited as part of 'Icon', AirSpace Gallery, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, 26 September – 7 November 2015.

No longer considered a viable asset, in 1979 ALB were closed by Royal Doulton. Around this time, as Robin Levien noted in his article on the BB for *Design Magazine*, in 1976 there were only two smaller factories producing 'original' BB teapots that either closed or switched to whiteware production. After 1979 the BB ceased to appear in Habitat catalogues. The cessation of production is mirrored by the object's invisibility in design discourse. This period of the late 1970s into the 1980s describes a shift from the industrial into the post-industrial era, which had been diagnosed in 1973 by the sociologist Daniel Bell in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A venture in social forecasting*.

1.7 Survey of recent writing and representation of the Brown Betty

My research has demonstrated that there is a lack of critical discourse on the BB teapot from designers and academics alike. As I have learnt from material accessed at Stoke City Archives, the name 'Brown Betty' was coined in a 1978 Information Bulletin issued by the public relations department of Royal Doulton Tableware Limited, Stoke-on-Trent. Prior to this the exact same teapots were known simply as Rockingham or Samian. It is a piece of masterful marketing: the bouncing alliteration of 'B' conveys a sense of the teapot's characteristic bulbous form; while it is empirically correct that the teapot is brown, it is the deep glossy brown that is an identifying characteristic of the Rockingham glaze. Because of its relatively recent coinage, the keywords 'Brown Betty' proved of limited use in library and archival searches.

Doulton's Bulletin introduces gender and class to the teapot's identity: 'Betty', a shortening of Elizabeth, was the name of the then British queen and also an archetypal homely 'girl next door'. This gendering is reproduced by the designer Robin Levien who observed in the early nineties that the 'Brown Betty' is so-called because 'its shape conjures up images of rotund ladies' (Levien, 1992: 76). Given tea's integral relation to the British colonies and the emerging post-colonial context of Royal Doulton's naming of the 'Brown Betty', I have found no evidence to suggest a conscious, at least, racialisation of the object.¹⁷

The Royal Doulton Tableware Bulletin charts a history of the teapot's changing names, from 'red porcelain' in the seventeenth century, to 'red china ware' in the mid-eighteenth century. By the 1820s it was described as 'red stoneware'. These names, it notes, offer 'an interesting historical progression [...] which have always caused confusion among


¹⁷ The link between design objects, domestic space, servitude and gender and race has been explored by Olivier Vallerand in *Unplanned Visitors: Queering the Ethics and Aesthetics of Domestic Space*, McGill-Queen's Press, 2020. Several examples come to mind: the 'dumbwaiter', the 'teasmaid' and 'lazy Susan'.

pottery and those who purchase their wares, and which remain muddled to the present day' (*The Royal Doulton Tableware Bulletin*, 1978–1980). The naming of 'Brown Betty' – alongside a schematic history – is intended to end confusion. Aside from aspects of the history I have outlined above, the *Bulletin* works hard to associate the teapot's supreme function, almost 'magical', with necessity and Englishness. Its innovation is born out of competition with overseas producers and therefore confers it a sense of victory and grit:

For nearly 300 years, 'Brown Betty' has produced a better cup of tea than any other device known to man, or so any true-born Englishman will have it... Its supremacy as the medium through which that most subtle and indispensable of English beverages is brewed and conveyed, to the delight of the addict and the convert and the utter mysticism of the uninitiated... [A]ny number of reasons will be adduced for its magic properties, ranging from the nature of the clay used in its making to its roundness and thickness (*The Royal Doulton Tableware Bulletin*, 1978–1980).

While cultural history, as well as a simultaneous egalitarianism and exclusivity, is claimed for the 'Brown Betty', the properties of its history of design evolution are mystified as being 'magic'. My intention is to develop a comprehensive understanding of these properties, rooted in academic and practice-based knowledge. The article concludes in an open-ended, inviting manner: 'There's many a lesson to be learned from that little brown pot...' (*The Royal Doulton Tableware Bulletin*, 1978–1980). As a student of the BB I cannot help but note the bitter irony of the timing of this article. Merely a year later, in 1979, Royal Doulton would close ALB. This closure is the context for the designer Robin Levien's article on the BB.

'I discovered,' Levien writes, 'some of its lesser known qualities in the early eighties when, in the face of its possible extinction through the sale of the then manufacturer Alcock, Lindley and Bloer [sic] by Royal Doulton, I made a drawing of it with a view to getting it made elsewhere' (Levien, 1992: 76). This act of design salvage, however, remained an unrealised project: a local firm, Gem Pottery, bought the machines and moulds and took up its production. Nevertheless, Levien, through repetitive drawing of the object, is able to articulate what makes it work so well when others had attributed it to magic or merely repeated a 'soundbyte' cliché history.



3 pint (1.70 litre) Capacity approximately
7 - 8 cups, in Rockingham.

2 pint (1.13 litre) Capacity approximately
5 cups, in Rockingham.

1.5 pint (0.85 litre) Capacity approximately
4 cups, in Rockingham.

0.8 pint (0.50 litre) Capacity approximately
2 cups in Rockingham.

GEM POTTERY LTD.
Brown Betty Teapot Manufacturers
Newfields, off High Street,
TUNSTALL, STOKE-ON-TRENT, ST6 5ET
TELEPHONE: (0782) 834891

Fig. 31. Robin Levien, Gem Pottery marketing material courtesy of the archive of Studio Levien.

21 February 1992

Marion Hancock
Design Magazine
28 Haymarket
LONDON
SW1Y 4SU

Dear Marion

I enclose my piece on the Brown Betty teapot.

I have gone over the 300 words. Let me know if you want me to cut it back.

There are many very similar pots being made and until 3 months ago Price & Kensington made a 'kosher' one but as far as I can gather only Gem Pottery and another small pottery in Stoke now make the genuine article.

It is important that you photograph the right one.

I enclose a couple of leaflets from Gem Pottery Ltd and also an invoice for the fee of £75.00.

David Q did see some interesting products at Frankfurt and plans to phone you about it.

I look forward to hearing from you.

ROBIN LEVIEN

Fig. 32. Robin Levien, 'The Brown Betty', *Design Magazine* correspondence alongside Gem Pottery marketing material courtesy of the archive of Studio Levien.

As Levien observes, because the handle and spout are separately stuck on by hand, a grid can be perforated in the bowl that traps loose tea leaves. If tea bags are used they settle just below this grid in the bowl of the pot and do not interrupt the flow of liquid. Moving to the lid, Levien notes that it is prevented from tipping forward with pouring because it slips into a handcut groove in the collar of the bowl. The spout's sharp edges minimise drips after being poured, cutting off flow. Any drips and stains would disappear against the brown glaze.

Likewise, the glaze would minimise any small chips that revealed the complimentary earthenware tones beneath. Levien reasons that 'If the patina of use could be seen on these teapots most of them would probably be dumped within days '(Levien, 1992: 76). The ability of intrinsic qualities to hide grime leads to longevity of use. British modernity, as cultural geographers such as David Matless (1998) and Ken Worpole (2009) have shown, was a project of hygiene and cleanliness: the BB, however superficially, concealed imperfections. When it came to production, distribution and storage, the lid could also be inverted so that another pot of the same size may be stacked neatly on top. In the warehouse the stock could be stacked efficiently. On the shop floor the retailer could present the product in 'stack 'em high 'displays. I imagine a stacked wall of BBs as a spectacle of ubiquity.

Levien, writing in the early nineties at a moment of widespread loss of historic family-run Stoke companies to cheaper overseas manufacture, concludes his article by noting that sales figures have dwindled from a million units sold a year by Royal Doulton alone to 200,000 by those remaining producers. Noting a shift, which I will explore more fully shortly, Levien writes that 'people have started buying similar, even cheaper teapots on the market which look like the Brown Betty but do not combine all the assets of the real thing'. 'Beware of imitations,' he concludes.

In 2001, writing in *The Times* newspaper, design critic Hugh Pearman identified the BB as a design classic: 'There are some things,' he begins the article, 'it is pointless trying to improve '(Pearman, 2001: online). The BB 'transcends matters of styling and taste '(ibid.) Recognising its wide appeal, he notes that it is 'as loved by high priests of design such as Habitat's Tom Dixon, as it is by the blokes in the hut on the building site'. Four years later, in 2006, cementing a growing consensus, the BB was compiled in the three volumes of *Phaidon Design Classics* – an attempt at canonising the 'greatest collection ' of industrial design dating back to the seventeenth century. In this book short texts accompanying objects offer contextual and historical accounts. Tim Parsons 'entry on the BB, although conventional in its received origin account, justifies its inclusion as being 'the archetypal teapot form '(Parsons, 2006).

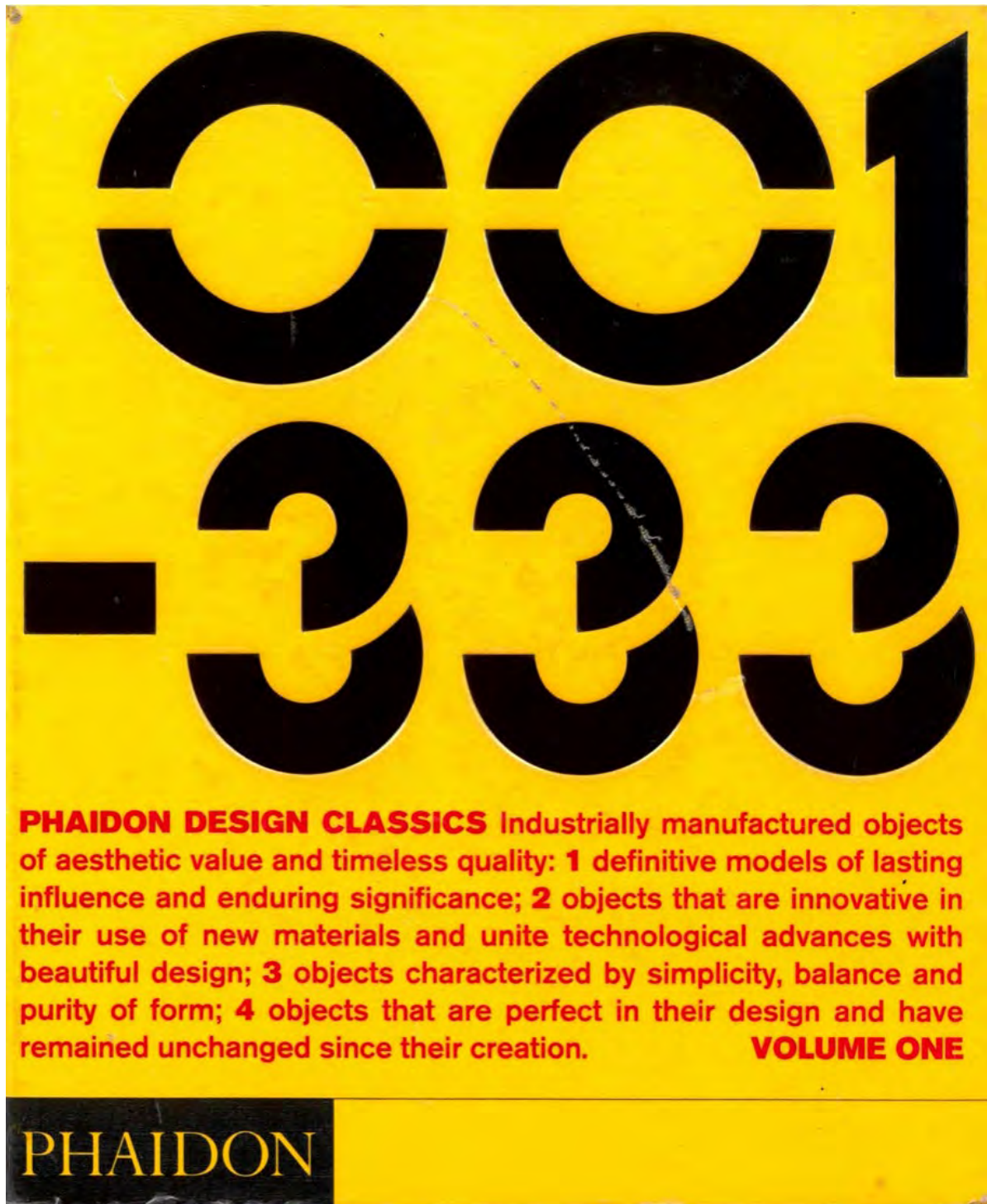


Fig. 33. *Phaidon design classics*. London; New York, Ny: Phaidon Press.

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Brown Betty Teapot (1919)
Designer: Unknown
Vintage 1919 to Present

The Brown Betty has the archetypal teapot form. It originated in the seventeenth century, when British potters copied the spherical designs of teapots imported from China, during the Ming period. It took some time before the formula for bone china, the fine white china that would not crack under repeated exposure to boiling water, was discovered. Prior to this, red clay was a reliable alternative used for such purposes. The Brown Betty evolved from unglazed teapots made from red clay discovered by the Dutch Eilers brothers at Bradwell Wood in Staffordshire. Since then it has become a much-loved icon of the British tea table despite 'finer' china becoming available, and the chubby form and sturdy feel make it charming and dependable as an everyday tool. Alcock, Lindley and Bloore, a small factory in Stoke-on-Trent which employed only 100 people, put the Brown Betty into production from 1919 to 1979, when it closed down. Royal Doulton took over this company in 1974, manufactured a similar version, and well in excess of a million a year were sold. Since then a number of other manufacturers have brought out their own interpretations. Although many claim to make 'the original Brown Betty', not all have the features that have endeared the real thing to generations of consumers. A high-quality Brown Betty has the handle and spout added after the body has been cast rather than being cast in one piece. This allows a grid of holes to be pierced in the body, behind the spout, to catch the tea leaves. The lid does not fall when the pot is poured and the tip of the spout is sharpened to reduce drips. If the deep brown Rockingham glaze is chipped, the red clay body is revealed, which is much easier on the eye than if a white clay had been used. Available in a family of sizes from two to eight cups, the Brown Betty has conquered the mass market by striking a perfect balance between elegance and utility.



Fig. 34. 'The Brown Betty.' In Alderson, S., Ball, R and Barber, E. (eds.) *Phaidon design classics*. London; New York, Ny: Phaidon Press.

The BB, Parsons writes, has become a much-loved icon of the British tea table. For him, its 'chubby' form is what makes it 'charming' and 'dependable' as an everyday tool (notably, he does not gender the teapot). Parsons goes on to repeat, sometimes almost verbatim, Levien's own analysis of the teapot's design qualities: the handle and spout added to the body, rather than being cast, which allows a grid for tea leaves; the locking lid; the sharpened spout to reduce drips; the Rockingham glaze to hide stains and chips. The BB, he concludes, 'has conquered the mass market by striking a perfect balance between elegance and utility' (Parsons, 2006).

Ironically, the BB used by Phaidon to illustrate the entry is a Price & Kensington imported from Thailand, made of white clay and coated with a brown imitation Rockingham glaze. Particularly around the globe's collar it's possible to see the white clay breaking through the glaze. Any chips to the teapot would show immediately. The date, too, is attributed as 1919, which I contend is not accurate. It is the Price & Kensington version that has been previously marketed by leading authorities and retailers of tableware including David Mellor as 'The Original Brown Betty'.

The Royal Doulton Tableware Bulletin, as previously referred to, is an attempt to formalise a heritage for the teapot. The last twenty years has seen the BB enter into the canon of British design classics. However, the superficiality of historical research and its recycling between articles cited above, reveals something telling about journalistic design criticism. Complexity needs to be added to the account. This does not change, however, Parsons' accurate observation that the BB is 'the archetypal teapot'. Its centrality to British consumption of tea in domestic life associates it with profoundly deep emotional and psychological attachments.



Fig. 35. Judith Kerr, *The Tiger Who Came To Tea*, HarperCollins, 1968.



Fig. 36. Janet and Allan Ahlberg, *Peepo!*, Viking Children's Books, 1981.

When the tiger comes to afternoon tea in Judith Kerr's 1968 children's book *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* it holds the teapot aloft and pours directly into its mouth. In the children's book *Peepo!* (1981) by Janet and Allan Ahlberg, the teapot on the table follows the colourway of ALB's BB; father, dressed as though in army slacks, has a caricature victory portrait of Churchill on the wall behind. It is not just in children's books; art and popular culture is full of BB teapots.

The identification of the BB's heritage by Royal Doulton in the late seventies occurred shortly before the liquidation of ALB at a time when increasingly heritage was being recognised as a 'post-industrial' asset. By the early nineties, when Levien wrote his article, heritage had become malleable and applied to products made overseas and re-imported, which the reader is warned of: 'Beware of imitations.' In the wake of millennium celebrations – a state-funded push to revive the 'best of Britishness' – Hugh Pearman touts the BB as a design classic, a status that, merely five years later, is cemented by Phaidon. The past decade has seen the emergence in the UK of commercial retailers, notably Margaret Howell and Labour and Wait, celebrating and marketing premium British design heritage. Howell, in particular, has 'rediscovered' and celebrated designers such as Kenneth Grange and furniture makers such as Ercol in in-store exhibitions.¹⁸

¹⁸ See: <http://midcenturymagazine.com/interviews/margaret-howell-mid-century-design/>

1.8 Brown Betty Production Today

Yet today, despite its centrality in British public life, there are only two remaining makers of the BB teapot in Staffordshire: CC, based in Tunstall, and Adderley Ceramics, in Longton. Adderley are a relatively new producer of the teapot, adding a version to their line after the founders worked for a brief period at CC. CC, established in 2005, is the oldest and largest of the two makers, although production of their BB teapot has been scaled down relative to the early 1900s. Today they produce approximately 40,000 units per year and employ a team of eight people under the Managing Director Stephen Murray (formerly Shaikh). The Directors of AirSpace gallery made an initial introduction to Shaikh. Throughout the residency I visited Shaikh at the factory a number of times. At this point I was interested in defining the history and identity of the object in order to populate a timeline for the AirSpace exhibition.

Born in Pakistan, Shaikh trained as a glaze engineer and came to the UK under sponsorship of a British Council traineeship that placed skilled overseas workers in UK craft industries. Shaikh met Salma Christabell who would become his wife at a British Council event and remained in the country where he worked, initially, for Ascot Pottery. When Ascot Pottery closed, he founded Caledonia Pottery where he transferred the production of the BB teapot and a number of other Ascot wares. In 2004 Shaikh sold Caledonia Pottery and founded CC – acquiring tools through a collapse of another company – to exclusively manufacture BB teapots and accessories. At this point CC was the last remaining producer of BB teapots made from Staffordshire Etruria Marl.

1.9 A Personal Account of the Initial CC Site Visit

Glen Stoker, director of AirSpace, joined me on my initial trip to document the visit. I was not expecting what we found. I had assumed that the operation would be akin to the kind of ceramics factories I'd visited in my profession as a ceramicist or official tours of potteries on offer throughout Stoke and that I had assumed I would be introduced to a marketing director who would mediate the experience, perhaps offering a history before introducing us to operatives.

We entered via a dilapidated ad-hoc outhouse bolted onto a single-storey brick industrial unit. A shonky sign over the door read 'Welcome to Cauldon Ceramics'. In here, to the side, a visitor-facing display of BB products is covered in a thick layer of dust that registers fingerprints where people have handled wares.¹⁹

It is dust and heat that envelops you as you enter the factory. Dust that you taste immediately. You can feel the clay: it blocks your pores as fine dusting is kicked up off

¹⁹ This account draws on personal notes to evoke the factory.

the floor and settles over your shoes. Clay in particulate matter dusting everything. In the corner of the factory, the kitchen is a collection of muddied units arranged around an industrial sink. Tangled electrical wires, retrofitted to electrify the unit, meet in clusters of sockets covered in dust. Tea and coffee pots by the kettle retain their sheen – items replaced frequently enough not to collect dust. Empty cigarette packets and food cartons remain where they were left.



Fig. 37. Dipping teapots in CC. Research gathered at CC during the AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; images Glen Stoker.

Between tattered hanging blue tarpaulins used to partition areas of production, we learn why there is so much dust. Firing kilns that operate all day share the same working space as production.

There are no central extraction units, only ad-hoc ducting arrangements plumbed into critical areas. Skylights let heat in like a greenhouse. Halfway through our first visit Glen's camera stopped working, he found having sent it to be repaired that dust had affected the lens causing it to jam.

The blunger, which mixes clay lump with water into slip, appears like an industrial fossil extracted from a clay quarry. Beneath the cracked and accreted layers of clay I can make out: 'SERVICE ENGINEERS LTD, BURSLEM STAFFS ENGLAND'. Flecks of cracked clay contaminate work moulding benches. Where seconds are stored in the factory they are sprinkled with a thick layer of dust. The dust gets into Shaikh's office, a grimey space warmed by electric heaters. The computer screen is covered in a red haze along with the fax which still receives orders. Stacked folders of paper ledgers record sales.

Shaikh understood the number of units required to be produced daily in order to maintain staff levels and meet costs. Aside from one British national, all staff were casually-employed migrants. None as far as I could ascertain had a ceramics training. There was no excess capital to invest in facilities or indeed a modern factory. The necessity to produce in these circumstances led, I could see, to poor quality control and inefficiency. Old, chewed up moulds produced thick seam lines that required a great deal of heavy fettling to smooth off. Contamination of slip resulted in higher than necessary seconds.

As I grew to know Shaikh through multiple site visits, I became aware of the significant pressures he faced. It was apparent that he was exhausted. In this nineteenth-century warehouse he seemed curiously out of place. Although the working day was 8am – 4pm, Shaikh worked far beyond these hours. A number of times he said that he needed someone young and dynamic to help him move the company in a new direction.

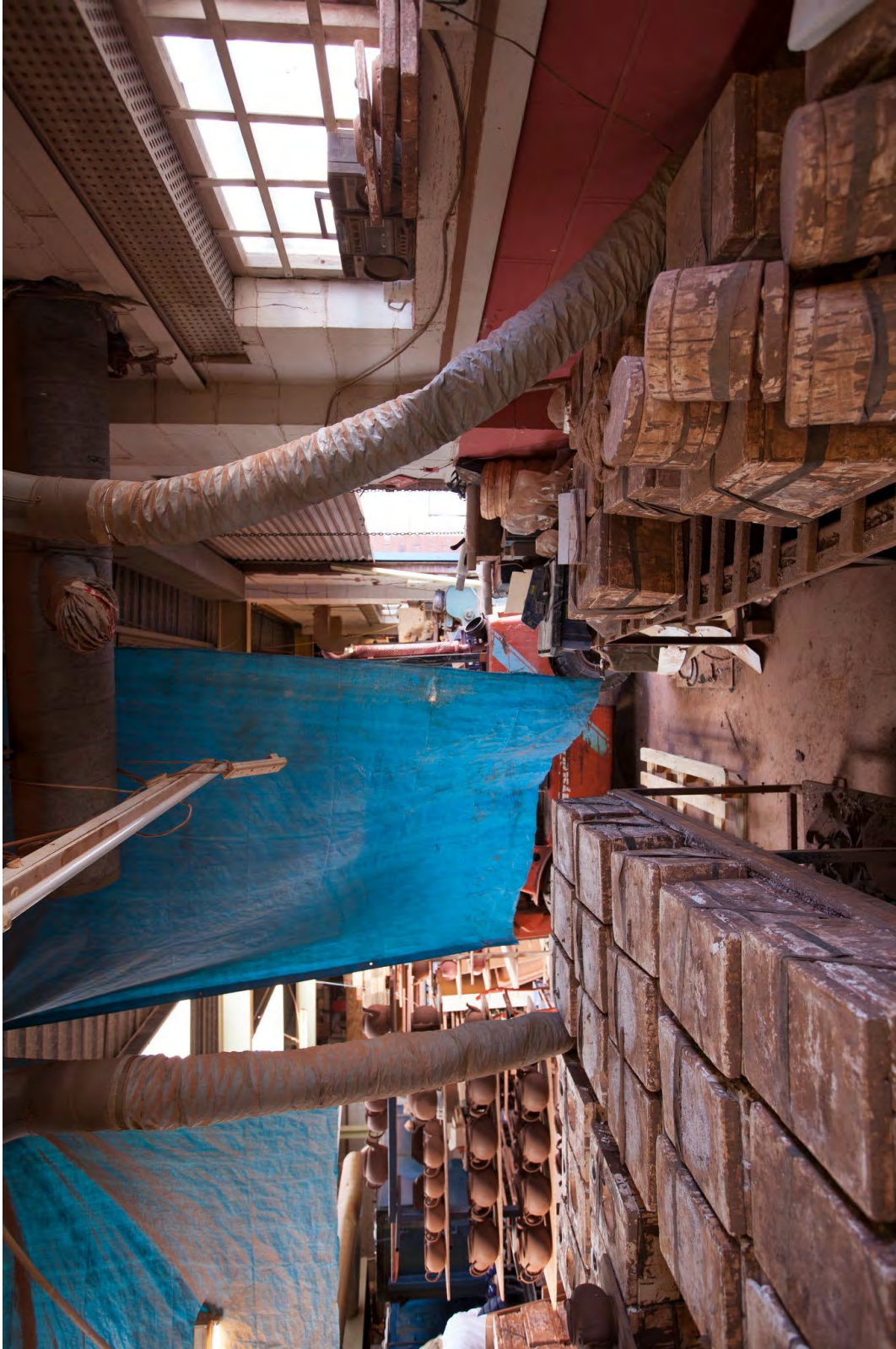


Fig. 38. Moulds drying on casting benches in CC. Research gathered at CC during the AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; images Glen Stoker.



Fig. 39. Caster splitting moulds to remove BB casts. Research gathered at CC during the AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; image Glen Stoker.

The raw material used to manufacture CCs 'teapots is still mined in Staffordshire at Knutton Bank Quarry – an opencast site located in Newcastle-under-Lyme. This is the last working clay seam in Staffordshire and this particular part of the seam has been mined since 1947. Today this material is predominantly used for brick making but a small percentage is processed into a plastic clay body and liquid slip and sold as 'Standard Terracotta 'by Valentine Clays Ltd. Established in 1979, Valentine Clays is a Staffordshire-based family run manufacturer of clay bodies and raw materials. The business supplies British and international ceramicists, the education sector and industry customers. In addition to visiting Knutton Bank Quarry, I also located and visited a former site of ALB, now leveled.



Fig. 40. Research gathered at Valentines clays, during AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; Images: Glen Stoker.



Fig. 41. Research gathered at Valentines clays, during AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; Images: Glen Stoker.

Fig. 42. Research gathered at Valentines clays, during AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; Images: Glen Stoker.





Fig. 43. Research gathered at Valentines clays, during AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; Images: Glen Stoker.



Fig. 44. Research gathered at one of ALB's old sites during the AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; image Glen Stoker.



Fig. 45. View of Knutton Bank Quarry, 2015; Image: Alun Ault.

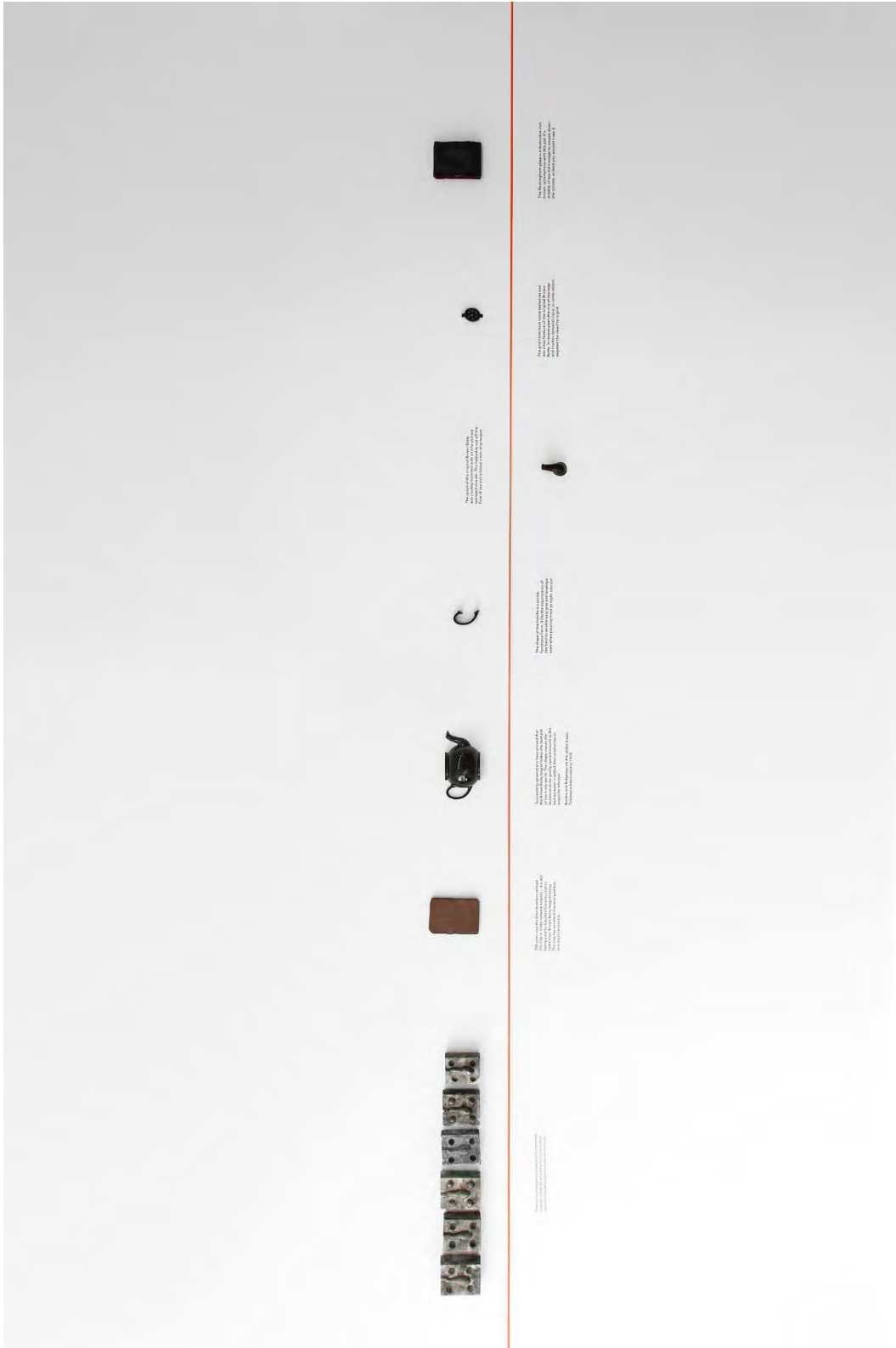


Fig. 46. An early taxonomy of CC products, processes and practices. Presented as part of a Solo exhibition at AirSpace Gallery, 2015; images: Glen Stoker.



Fig. 47. Deconstructed CC BBs. Presented as part of a Solo exhibition at AirSpace Gallery, 2015; images: Glen Stoker.



Fig. 48. Casting CC BBs, to understand CCs 'moulding capabilities in Airspace Gallery. Presented as part of a Solo exhibition at AirSpace Gallery, 2015; images: Glen Stoker.



Fig. 49. Casting benches displaying research into CCs 'products, processes and practices. Presented as part of a Solo exhibition at AirSpace Gallery, 2015; images: Glen Stoker



Fig. 50. CC BB packaging; Image Cauldon Website, accessed 2015.

1.91 Analysis of CC Packaging

The genealogy I have carried out in this chapter demonstrates that, despite the heavily-marketed Britishness of CCs' product, the BB has a more complicated hybrid history that is the result of global transfers of people, knowledge, skills and commodities. These complexities – and motivations – are most obviously occluded by CCs' packaging and marketing that centres a strong association with the union jack flag and Britishness/Englishness (a difference that is confused, which I will return to).

CCs' current packaging (see Fig. 50) repeats the red, white and blue of the union jack flag on a sticker that is applied to the teapot's body, a tag that hangs from the lid, and on the box (which has a letterbox window onto the product inside). Running along the red horizontal bar of the flag, the sticker reads: 'Original Brown Betty from Cauldon Ceramics Made in England'. The tag attached to the lid notes that the teapot is 'Made in Britain' and claims that it was popularised by Queen Victoria. A misspelling refers to the innovations of the 'Elders' brothers.



Fig. 51. Inaccurate history with misspellings of BB narrated by CC.

Throughout my research I have found no evidence of Queen Victoria's preference for the BB; the 'Elders 'brothers are, in fact, the 'Elders 'brothers. To my astonishment, these very same inaccuracies were present in the marketing material of Adderley Ceramics ' account of the BB. In the absence of substantial historic understanding of the BB, misinformation and cliches are copied and circulated even among producers. Where CC claims their product to be 'original', David Mellor also claims the Price & Kensington BB that it stocks, manufactured in Thailand from a white bodied clay, as 'The Original Brown Betty Teapot'. Claims to originality suggest that this is an important asset.

Delicately textured Japanese-style teapot with stainless steel infuser.

0.9lt 1621206 £34.00



G The Real 'Brown Betty' Teapot

Traditional Staffordshire pattern.

Rockingham gloss glaze.

2 cup 2171014 £6.00

6 cup 2171023 £10.00

10 cup 2171036 £14.00

Fig. 52. David Mellor printed catalogue, 2017.

In my review of revitalisation strategies I explored the complications that can arise with the presentation of particular designs, products and practices as 'traditional' and 'local'. Twigger Holroyd urges readers to be aware that such portrayals can be 'deceptively

overblown or even entirely invented' (2018: 33). As a counter to global forces, the 'traditional' is often associated with 'authenticity'. Frequently, as I have written, it is an appeal to authenticity, place and historical continuity that is a key aspect of the marketing of traditional goods.

This is affirmed by Neil Ewins' writing in the book *Ceramics and Globalization* where he gives the example of the defunct Stoke pottery Adams' bogus claim in a 1970s catalogue to have been established as early as 1657. Referring to the work of Weinberger et al., Ewins writes: "it's not uncommon for purportedly authentic marketing campaigns to be based on history that never really existed" (Weinberger in Ewins, 2017: 153). Ewins cites the work of DeFanti, Bird and Caldwell who have established how marketing – specifically with reference to the luxury fashion brand Gucci – can be based on simply "a partially borrowed heritage" (2018: 14 cited in Ewins, 2017: 153).

Historically, the union jack motif, alongside 'Made in England', has been used with ceramics as an assurance of quality British manufacture – a symbol of heritage that has market value employed by UK and Staffordshire companies that, as Ewins observes, have chiefly avoided outsourcing production overseas. It is a mark of distinction. In 2009, Royal Stafford produced the Britannia range, incorporating images of Britannia, a crown, and the statement 'Made in Britain'. The emotive backstamp read 'Made in the Heart of the Potteries England'. Royal Stafford's then Artistic Director Norman Tempest had decided not to outsource to China at a time when overseas white ware was rife in the UK market. Royal Stafford's marketing and design, Tempest said, was an attempt to "try and squeeze the absolute ultimate out of them because 'Made in England' isn't enough, I want it 'The Heart of the Potteries' so it was trying to run the last ounce of benefit, if you like" (Ewins, 2017: 118).

The Heron Cross Pottery of Stoke-on-Trent introduced the phrase 'Made in Staffordshire, England' in 2008 to the 'scattered blue heart' range. As the sales manager Tracie Shaw explains, cited in Ewins:

Up until then the need to have the words 'Made In' hadn't been so important for us, but it became more relevant as more manufacturers were importing under English company names and using the word England or 'of England' on their backstamps that it became more confusing for consumers to know where the products were being manufactured and for many, many years customers were duped into thinking products being made in the Far East were still made in England if they had the English companies name on the backstamp. The quality of the product wasn't as

good either which further damaged England's reputation as having the skills to manufacture a quality product (125).

Going beyond merely backstamping, there are producers who have incorporated 'Made in England' and the union jack flag itself into the surface design. Repeat Repeat of Fenton introduced the 'Britannia' range in 2009 with teapots bearing the slogan 'Made in England/Bone China'. Their products stress Staffordshire origins by use of packaging and attached labels. Emma Bridgewater Ltd., a company that I will return to as a case study in Field 3, has made use of sponged motifs, including the union jack, alongside backstamps that read 'Hand Made in Stoke-on-Trent, England'. According to Ewins, Bridgewater introduced this phrase in 2010, replacing simply 'Hand Made in England'. This was to 'amplify how their ceramic products are thoroughly crafted in Stoke-on-Trent' (Ewins, 2017: 107).

As I have noted, David Mellor claims Price & Kensington teapots as 'original' despite their manufacture overseas. When James Sadler & Sons of Burslem, a large historic manufacturer of the BB, went into administration in March 2000, it was revealed that one chairman of the company had been importing ceramics from Indonesia as James Sadler Imports Ltd. As *The Sentinel* reported, citing a former employee, this had 'been instrumental in digging the grave of not only Sadler's Burslem production but other Potteries' firms' (18 March 2000). Cashing in on the symbolism of Britishness in the short-term would undermine production in the longer term. As the article goes on to state:

Indonesian teapots arrive at the factory by juggernaut from the ports. They are then backstamped with the Union Jack—Sadler's trademark—and distributed to retailers all over the country, such as Woolworth's [sic]. Nothing is on them to indicate that they were manufactured in the Far East. The teapots are designed at the Burslem headquarters and the moulds then flown to Indonesia. Three years ago Peter Sadler said James Sadler and Sons had been outsourcing teapots for four years—and China before that (The Sentinel, March 18, 2000).

The union jack is used today to give distinction to products *actually* produced in the UK. Stamping imported whiteware with British symbols is deceptive and controversial but it is not – as far as I can tell – a protected status. By choosing to be even more specific about place of production, as Emma Bridgewater Ltd. did, a perception of Stoke is instrumentalised that in turn continues to have a purchase on the consumer. CC, for example, export many BBs to a US market for whom the union jack is a particular signifier. Identifications with the flag are complicated. To buy British – and more

specifically to buy Staffordshire – is to support a historic craft-based industry. In an age of increased awareness of sustainability, for UK buyers, buying local from within the UK also reduces the carbon footprints involved in distribution chains.

Englishness is not the same as Britishness, although they are often conflated, more or less intensely at different times. As I have noted, during my time in Stoke the Eurosceptic right-wing populist party UKIP, under Paul Nuttall, made significant gains, naming the town the ‘Brexit capital’ of Britain (MacLeod, 2018). The union jack motif is an amalgam of three older national flags: the red cross of St George for the Kingdom of England, the white saltire of St Andrew for Scotland and the red saltire of St Patrick to represent Ireland.



Fig. 53. Examining quality checked teapots and Union jack branding in CC, gathered during the AirSpace Gallery residency, 2015; images Glen Stoker.

If the union jack is a benign symbol of conservative-party Englishness, the St George’s cross has been politicised and racialised by nationalistic groups such as the English Defence League and UKIP as an ethnocentric (white) symbol of Englishness. In a report titled ‘This Sceptred Isle’, published by the thinktank British Future in 2012, 24% of people interviewed considered the St George’s flag a racist symbol. Debates about

whether the flag is a symbol of patriotism or racism are ongoing. Only recently, the Tory party has seized upon the scarcity of union jack flags at the BBC in what appears as a politicised attack on their perceived 'wokeism' (Lunz, 2022).

The application of a St George's flag applied to a product would be, I suspect, unpalatable, although it does seem acceptable to use written slogans that advertise 'Made in England'. This points to the power of the symbolic image.

Commentary tends to focus on the toxic aspects of Englishness but what if, as Stuart Jeffries wrote in *the Guardian*, we recognise what being English, at best, might mean (Jeffries, 2006). It is clear to me that marketing for a project to re-engineer the BB would need to recover the depth of its history beyond the merely recent imperialistic idea of Queen Victoria. It would need to root itself in the specific regional characteristics from which it emerged and which give it the distinction of being a culturally significant design. Such marketing would convey and celebrate the deep place-based heritage of the object without deference to the conflicted and volatile symbolism of the flag.

Finally, at the time of on-site visits with Glen Stoker to CC and examining the product, the quality that the union jack is assumed to symbolise was – frankly – lacking. Product quality, and the moulds they were produced from, is inconsistent when compared to older versions of the BB by historic producers. It is vital to stress here that poor quality is not endemic. Rather, I think, it is the result of the volume of product required to merely continue British production in an extremely competitive global market. This relentless pressure to produce has blocked CCs 'own perception of their product's singular cultural significance. Few concessions are made to such independent producers, which creates a difficult paradox: the public want to buy British, specifically Staffordshire, but producers are struggling. The BB is perceived as being a humble and affordable product, but I believe it is necessary for CC to understand the deep significance of their product. Changing their perception was as much a part of this research.

The exhibition 'Icon 'at Airspace Gallery, 25 September to 7 November 2015, was an attempt to show both the public and CC what makes their object significant. The exhibition generated considerable PR and marketing. Labour and Wait got in touch, as did Margaret Howell. This was a welcome validation. The exhibition, an expanded form, I believe, was key to producing interest and new knowledge. Up until this point, still interested in design evolution, I was concerned with defining the history and identity of the object. Ironically, the exhibition revealed to me the extent to which the object had also 'devolved'. A shift occurred from my interest in merely telling a story to, at the end

of the residency, thinking that there was potential for CC and the BB to be at the centre of the PhD research.

In the following chapter, Field 2, I develop a taxonomy of historic versions of the BB and carry out experimental production of examples using moulds that I developed. This taxonomy, among other things, was undertaken to enable me to develop a deeper understanding of the production standards of earlier versions of the teapot. My intention was also to identify historic variations of its design morphology. If the teapot had 'devolved', how?

Field 2, Taxonomy: An exploded view of the Brown Betty



Fig. 54. Street view of the Vitsoe exhibition, 3–5 Duke Street, Central London; Phot: Geoff Howe.

Insight from Field 1 provided material for the second major practice-based outcome of this CDA research, the exhibition 'Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot' at Vitsoe, London, which I designed and curated as part of the LDF 17–25 September 2016.²⁰ This exhibition built on key knowledge produced through a literature review, engagement with primary archive sources and site visits undertaken as artist-in-residence at AirSpace Gallery the previous year. The Vitsoe venue is a shift from the gallery setting of a residency and exhibition to a retail space that foregrounds curated display, an example of what Hutton and Nasby call 'the museum effect' (Hutton and Nasby, 2020: 130). The curation of the taxonomy display is translated to the page to structure parts of this chapter.

²⁰ Vitsoe is a British furniture company that manufactures and retails furniture designed by the German industrial designer Dieter Rams. <http://www.vitsoe.com>. The LDF is an annual event made up of over 400 events and exhibitions across London: <http://www.londondesignfestival.com/>. The Brown Betty featured in 'Vitsoe Voice' magazine, issue 3.

According to *Phaidon Design Classics*, published in 2006, the BB is a design icon, finding company with, among other products, the Vitsoe 606 Universal Shelving System. The alignment with Vitsoe provided a useful 'frame' for thinking through my ambitions for what would become the RBB.²¹ Vitsoe has, since 1960, continuously produced the 606 Universal Shelving System designed by Dieter Rams – perhaps the most influential industrial designer of the twentieth century. While Vitsoe embraces the accolade of producing furniture 'classics', their attitude is 'constantly evolving' (Design by Vitsoe, n.d.). They pride themselves on not merely preserving but continuously improving their products and processes – countering tendencies of disposable fast fashion.

Similarly, I propose that the BB is also a product of design evolution – its form and function having been refined by generations of makers. It is not, Artemis Yagou writes of evolutionary design, an 'ideal form' but a fitting form which has evolved through adaptation processes with particular social, economic and technological contexts (2015). I also propose that, like Vitsoe shelving, the early ALB BB is a modernist object where form follows function. By presenting the teapot at Vitsoe, I intended to highlight the ethos of the early makers of the BB teapot in a way that acknowledged the object's history while focussing on the evolutionary nature of its design and manufacture. Vitsoe – whose mission statement is 'unravelling the conundrum that is living better with less that lasts longer' (Design by Vitsoe, 'Ethos', n.d.) – were fascinated by this conceptual link and subsequently dedicated the majority of their central London showroom to the exhibition.

With a comprehensive understanding of the breadth of BB manufacturers, I was able to draw on my findings to explore historical precedents in the design, production and marketing of the object. This material enabled me to evaluate and identify the most economic and socially innovative maker, which I understand to be ALB. Their BB provided a case study for a literature search and taxonomy of its materials, design, production processes, and distribution. During this exhibition I coordinated and chaired a public panel discussion about the BB teapot with the industrial designer Robin Levien and the tea trader Timothy d'Offay. I will give an outline of this event below and draw on insights in Field 3. A transcript of the conversation is included in the Appendix.

A wide range of written reviews and literature was generated in response to the exhibition 'Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot' which fed back into my understanding of the public interest and cultural significance of the object. These, alongside the panel discussion, elicited a range of perspectives from researchers, designers, manufacturers, retailers and the public on the design details, target audience and meaning of the

²¹ My relationship with Vitsoe dates back to 2013 as an employee at their Camden workshop.

object. Within this field, these viewpoints are synthesised with my contextual research and allow me to narrow down on potential revitalisation strategies to employ in field 3 such as 'reworking the design to meet contemporary needs '(Walker et al., 2017: 62).

My research led me to propose that while there is no singular definitive author of the BB, ALB were responsible for innovating notable design features of the BB teapot and production processes. The research reveals that ALB were one of the most commercially successful and innovative makers of the object. The findings are used to identify historical precedents and best practice in the design and manufacturing of this teapot. These practices are compared to the product, processes and practices of present-day makers across the globe, including but not limited to CC, in order to assess the current health of the industry.

The findings from the contextual study and taxonomy are analysed in order to explore and expand upon our understanding of the design and its meanings. This forms one component within a 'revitalization strategy 'proposed by Walker et al in which they speculate that 'before they can be re-introduced, (these) designs, and their meanings, first need to be researched and understood by the designer '(Walker et al., 2017: 62). The contextual study, taxonomy and analysis make a new contribution to knowledge through formalising the unrecorded history of this teapot within an academic framework.

I propose that although the BB is celebrated as a design classic there is a lack of historical understanding surrounding the object and its significance to the UK ceramics industry (Parsons, 2006: 116). I propose that there are inconsistencies within the limited literature available, which allows inauthentic imports to be freely marketed as 'Originals ' by reputable retailers.

2.1 Collecting Brown Betties

The exhibition 'Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot 'was curated around a taxonomy of materials, design, production processes, and distribution elements of thirty original ALB. teapots, with accompanying textual information. The basis of this chapter follows a process and strategy of identifying, collecting, categorising, listing, handling, making and finally displaying BB teapots.

These teapots were collected from a range of sources, including private collections and acquisitions from eBay, markets and junk shops. In this process of accumulating teapots – of beginning my own collection of BB teapots – I visited the granddaughter of William Bloore, Amanda Bloore. I was also greatly assisted in my research by a US-based web forum for enthusiasts of the BB, operated by Sheri Murphy-Hughes (<https://albcollectors.blogspot.com/>). This networked interactive space proved a

valuable resource, demonstrating that the internet presents new opportunities for identities and communities to form around niche interests of traditional crafts and place-based designs (Twigger Holroyd, 2018: 29).²²

In their introduction to the classic anthology *The Cultures of Collecting* (1994), John Elsner and Roger Cardinal claim that 'the collection is the unique bastion against the deluge of time '(1994: 1). The first collector was the biblical figure Noah who collected pairs of all earthly life forms from which the world could be reconstructed after the Biblical flood. Noah, who is conscious of salvaging species from extinction, creates a collection as a form of salvation. Elsner and Cardinal recognise how the myth of Noah resonates with all the themes of collecting itself: 'desire and nostalgia, saving and loss, the urge to erect a permanent and complete system against the destructiveness of time '(1994: 1).

This is poignant for my research. My field trips to the Stoke on Trent City Archives made clear to me the gaps in archival material relating to the BB teapot and there are no institutional collections of the variations of all BBs produced. If there is no collection there is no salvation. To be collected the BB would need to be valued. While the BB has not been valued by institutions it is and has been valued by consumers and certain communities of individuals as anonymous design. Interacting with web forums impressed upon me the significant specialist knowledge held by enthusiasts and fans who both sell and collect BBs.

There is a growing body of design and material cultures scholarship that draws upon and recognises eBay as a bellwether of material culture, taste and value – for example, *Everyday eBay: Culture, Collecting, and Desire*, edited by Michael Petit, Ken Hillis and Nathan Scott Epley, published in 2006. This volume, among other topics, suggests that eBay organises and helps produce 'a vast range of collecting communities 'which, with the vast quantity of information available in eBay categories and discussion forums (on and off eBay), is changing the knowledge practices of collectors '(160). eBay listings

²² Twigger Holroyd is not alone in claiming that a limit has been reached with globalisation and modernisation that has stimulated a desire for tradition, diversity and local distinctiveness: 'the gloss is starting to wear off mass-produced, globalized products '(29). The rise of the internet has played a significant part, too. Besides an anxiety about progress and change, the internet presents new opportunities for identities and communities to form around niche interests of traditional crafts and place-based designs. Direct relationships can be formed to allow individual makers and micro-enterprises to connect directly with customers, making older, less flexible processes of production, distribution and consumption obsolete.

and forums become spaces, according to Rebecca M. Ellis and Anna Haywood, writing in *Everyday eBay*, for users to ‘perform their collecting knowledges’ (50).²³

At the heart of the BB is a fascinating contradiction. Taxonomising the BB is an attempt to define, as Tim Parsons has called it, the ‘archetypal teapot form’ (2006). While the design is lodged in the everyday national unconscious as the very image of a teapot, its history is not understood and it is not valued by institutions to be collected in its multiple forms. It hides in plain sight.

In being both ‘normal’ and ‘exceptional’, grafted to everyday life, the BB also falls into the category of what the designers Jasper Morrison and Naoto Fukasawa defined as ‘super normal’. In a series of exhibitions that culminated in the book *Super Normal: Sensations of the Ordinary* (2010), Morrison and Fukasawa identified 204 everyday objects, including anonymous design and design classics, such as milk bottles, spanners and coffee pots, that have developed unselfconsciously over the years and that are normal but transcend normality. As Fukasawa writes, such designs’ ‘pre-eminent quality consists in the capacity to conceal its features until they become virtually invisible’ (21). Their special kind of normality is the result of a long design evolution:

The Super Normal object is the result of a long tradition of evolutionary advancement in the shape of everyday things, not attempting to break with the history of form but rather trying to summarize it, knowing its place in the society of things (29).

This design evolution, because it is slow, cannot be easily replaced. In a world of increasingly spectacular design, plugged into global supply chains, it endures. Super Normal, Morrison writes, is less concerned with designing beauty than seemingly homely but memorable elements of everyday life (2010). The problem of collecting the super normal is precisely its withdrawn quality. I will return to some of these points later in this Field when I discuss Intellectual Property and authorship.

2.2 Outlining a Taxonomy of Design Elements: Synthesising an Archetypal Teapot

Collections are always preceded by a scheme of classification – a taxonomy (Elsner and Cardinal, 1994). There is a reciprocal relation between identifying objects, collecting

²³ The exhibition as a stage for the ‘performance of collecting knowledges’ is a curatorial strategy that I would later go on to employ with the finished RBB, displaying it alongside existing examples. Here the collection is a ground for the RBB and situates it within an historic design canon, suggesting a lineage. I will return to this in my Conclusion.

them, and classifying them: 'In effect, the plenitude of taxonomy opens up the space for collectables to be identified, but at the same time the plenitude of that which is to be collected hastens the need to classify...' (Elsner and Cardinal, 1994: 1). In identifying objects for collection, we simultaneously refine our taxonomy and in turn what it is that we collect. Memorably, Elsner and Cardinal define collecting as 'classification lived, experienced in three dimensions '(2). 'The history of collecting, 'they continue: 'is thus the narrative of how human beings have striven to accommodate, to appropriate and to extend the taxonomies and systems of knowledge they have inherited '(2).

Writing from the field of organisational management, sociologist Kenneth D. Bailey defines a taxonomy as 'a classification of cases according to their measurable similarity of observable variables '(1994). The term taxonomy, according to Lambe, means in general 'the rules or conventions of order or arrangement'. 'Classification schemes, ' Bailey continues, 'are designed to group related things together, so that if you find one thing within a category, it is easy to find other related things in that category '(5).

An effective taxonomy, then, is an analytical tool for organising knowledge. As Bailey writes, 'One basic secret to successful classification... is the ability to ascertain the key or fundamental characteristics on which the classification is based '(1994: 6). My own taxonomy developed in stages: building on knowledge gained from historical analysis in Field 1, a literature review and then through tactile engagement with the actual collection sample of teapots. I have already demonstrated that the Stoke clay and glaze are defining place-based material properties of the BB.

These static factors are the basic characteristic of this collection. The other fixed criteria is that each pot collected should be marked according to the back stamp of ALB – a manufacturer my research has led me to understand was the most productively and socially innovative. I disregarded teapots that did not have a globe-shape bowl and any that were hand-painted with representational imagery. As ALB teapots are no longer in production, the sample range is static: while the collection may not be exhaustive, new items are not being brought into circulation by the manufacturer.

Assembled, a teapot's primary function is to brew, contain and serve tea. But this is no guarantee of good design. A good teapot opens onto other considerations: for example, a teapot should effectively retain heat; we might expect it to not block up with leaves or bags; we might expect a teapot to pour with minimum leakage. My taxonomy of ALB. teapots was organised around fundamental observable functional characteristics of a teapot. I identified these as the following:

Spout, Handle, Lid, Glaze, Globe, Clay.

These are discussed in concert with exhibition documentation in Section 2.3. Here, I will discuss the process of establishing categories. By examining a sample of twenty eight teapots I synthesised a set of characteristic features arrived at through a consideration of functionality and aesthetics. During the process of developing the taxonomy I was alert to functional and aesthetic elements that may be easily overlooked and that would, in turn, feed back into and refine the taxonomy. This forensic quality of attention led to unexpected insights in the production and use of the teapot.

2.3 Exhibition Display

The modularity of the Vitsoe 606 Universal Shelving System lends itself to flexible display. Throughout the exhibition at Vitsoe physical 3D objects – a range of existing historic teapots, my own moulding of details and sculptural illustrations of material properties – were accompanied by archival material and text. Jennie Moncur, creative director of Vitsoe, discussed my ideas with me. These texts form the structure of this section – signaled in italics – but are enriched with more scholarly precision and detail. The shift in writerly register is necessary as the purpose of the exhibition was to engage a broad audience, from academics to the ceramic manufacturing industry and members of the public, with the aim to begin to cultivate a wider audience and appreciation of the object and its history.



Fig. 55. Installation view of the main exhibition at Vitsoe; Photo. Geof Howe.



Fig. 56. An original ALB teapot typifying the archetypal shape and character of a BB Teapot is used to illustrate the introduction and character panel; Photo. Geof Howe.

Character

The chances are, if I asked you to draw a tea pot from memory, you'd think of a shape not too dissimilar from the Brown Betty. That's because it's one of the most manufactured teapots in British history. – 'Ian McIntyre'²⁴

Despite its popularity, surprisingly little is known about the Brown Betty or its original makers. It was a cheap, utilitarian pot for the working classes and disappeared into the fabric of everyday life.

It is also a product of evolution rather than the authorship of any single designer – form and function refined over generations. The most innovative maker was Alcock, Lindley & Bloore who operated through the 20th century. The company pioneered Brown Betty's development, creating one of the most recognisable shapes in British ceramics.

My basic criteria for collecting BBs is that it should be produced by ALB. Over a period of six months I acquired as many examples in different size sets as I could and began to organise them around basic categories.

Fig. 57 shows a range of sizes of the non-drip spout version. Top right, common on the secondhand market, shows the 'Rockingham' version with what I call the 'classic spout'. Top left on Fig. 57, less common, shows, again, the classic spout version but here finished in a transparent glaze, known as 'Samian'. Finally, bottom left on Fig. 57 shows a non-drip version with a mottled glaze. This latter type is less common but I was able to find a range of sizes. The mottled effects were less common still. Fairly common were BBs finished with hand-painted flowers but I decided to omit these because their ornamentation diverts from modernist utility. During the process of collecting BBs I did encounter what I call 'Specials' – 'scarcer versions of unusual finish, detailed below.

²⁴ As stated above, the text in italics that follows was used in the exhibition display. It is represented here to be elaborated on.



Fig.57. ALB BBs organised by size, glaze type and spout; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



LOCK LID



The characteristic features of our teapots are the specially designed locking lid and non-drip spout. The lock lid will not fall out when the teapot is tilted at an acute angle. The non-drip spout eliminates all drip and ensures straight pouring.

NON-DRIP SPOUT



ALCOCK, LINDLEY & BLOORE LTD
MANUFACTURERS OF SAMIAN AND ROCKINGHAM TEAPOTS
HANLEY · STAFFORDSHIRE

OVERSEAS AGENTS. Australia: F. R. Barlow & Sons Pty., Ltd., 328 Flinders Street, Melbourne. New Zealand: F. O. & H. S. Hart, Ltd., 20-22 Victoria Street, Wellington. Canada: Pottery and Glass Agencies, 441 St. Peter Street, Montreal. South Africa: Johnson & Jorgensen, F. G., Ltd., Oswald Franck, Box 5600, Vancouver House, President Street, Johannesburg. East Africa: Johnson & Jorgensen, F. G., Ltd., Phillips & Co., Box 588, Victoria Street, Nairobi. Palestine: E. E. Aschheim, Rames Street, 8, Tel-Aviv. Jamaica: Johnson & Jorgensen, F. G., Ltd., K. A. Davidson, Box 236, 8 Church Street, Kingston. Belgium: S.A.C.O., 15, Meir, Antwerp.

ALLIED HOUSE · SWINNERTONS LTD · HANLEY · STAFFORDSHIRE

Fig. 58. Advert for Alcock Lindley and Bloore Ltd, Pottery and Glass Gazette, April 1953.



Fig. 59. Archive evidence to support exhibition introduction to ALB as the most innovative maker of the BB; Photo. Geof Howe.

Components of the teapots, such as the red clay, Rockingham glaze and 'Globe' form, can be found in versions made prior to ALB's era. These details are not attributed to any one specific maker, but they gradually emerged and were adopted by different firms over the years. In this way, the form and function of an historic ALB teapot was itself a synthesis of both new and tried and tested production methods and design details, resulting in an optimised teapot built on refinements made by generations of craftspeople.

Despite the lack of clarity on the originator of the BB, it is ALB's version that is cited as a classic by Tim Parsons in the book *Phaidon Design Classics* and as 'the definitive teapot' by the Royal Designer for Industry, Robin Levien (1992:76). ALB certainly dominated redware manufacturing in the latter part of the twentieth century (claiming to be the biggest manufacturer in the world), outlasting their UK competitors Gibson & Sons Ltd, James Sadler and Sons, Ltd. and Price & Kensington Potteries Ltd. (*Staffordshire Evening Sentinel*, 1939). It is ALB's teapot which has cemented the archetypal form of the BB as we know it today, appearing in the majority of contemporary literature.



Fig. 60. An extrusion of raw unfired Etruria Marl clay taken off the production line at Valentines is used to illustrate the raw material and provenance of an authentic BB Teapot; Photo. Geof Howe.

The Clay

'I think it's safe to say that a Brown Betty that isn't made of Staffordshire red clay, isn't an original Brown Betty at all. ' – Ian McIntyre

The very character of the pot comes from the quality of the clay, which has been mined in Staffordshire for red-ware teapots for over 300 years.

This clay – Etruria Marl – was first refined in about 1695 by two Dutch brothers, John Philip Elers and David Elers, in Bradwell Woods, North Staffordshire. Prior to this the potteries which existed were small family-run outfits, producing crude wares like butter pots for farmers to transport their produce to market.



Fig. 61. Unglazed objects in both unrefined and refined state: made using Staffordshire red clay and cast from a mould taken from an original ALB teapot. Image by Geof Howe.

Refinement

The brothers used this clay to make teapots to emulate and compete with the expensive red stoneware Yixing teapots, which were being imported from China by the East India Company.

It is widely agreed that the refinement of this clay, which could reliably withstand the temperature of boiling water without cracking, gave rise to new technological experiment in Staffordshire, and became a key catalyst for the industrialisation of the six towns that make up Stoke-on-Trent.



Fig. 62. Object accompanying The globe text panel: Globe made by me using Staffordshire red clay and cast from a mould he has taken from an original ALB teapot. Image by Geof Howe.

The Globe

The Brown Betty is a purely rational design, stripped of anything superfluous to its function and production methods. Over the years its form has migrated into a globe, which was seen as the best shape to infuse the loose-leaf tea as water is added. The shape and the wall-thickness combine to keep the tea warm.

The body of an ALB teapot was made by a process called 'jigger jollyng', in which plastic clay is dropped into a rotating plaster mould and spread up against the side of the mould walls by a flat tool. Jigger jollyng produced a thick wall that improved the strength of the earthenware Etruria Marl clay while improving insulation, keeping its contents warmer for longer.



Fig. 63. Object accompanying *The grid* text panel: Half a pot showing the grid, spout and handle detached. Made by me using Staffordshire red clay and cast from a mould he has taken from an original ALB teapot. Image by Geof Howe.

The Grid

The body of an ALB teapot was made in three parts. The globe was pressed before the handle and spout were applied. This enabled a potter to crudely punch a grid of holes into the globe before attaching the spout.

The grid holds the tea-leaves in the globe when pouring. (It is a detail sadly lost from today's Brown Betty teapots, which are cast in one-piece moulds to reduce manufacturing costs.)

The handle and spout of an ALB teapot were stuck on with slip by hand once the body had been pressed. Today's BB teapots are made by the process of slip casting in which the handle and spout of the teapot can be cast into the same mould rather than being hand applied afterwards. This process comes at a functional cost, as the cast thickness of the pot has to be thinner to avoid casting the spout solid. The resulting teapot is weaker and offers less insulation, however the factory yield is higher and requires less skilled labour. There is now no grid to prevent loose leaf tea escaping out of the spout and both the handle and spout are more vulnerable to breaking.



Fig. 64. Object accompanying *The spout* text panel: Three spouts at different phases of the firing process. Made by me using Staffordshire red clay and moulded from an original ALB teapot. Image by Geof Howe.

The Spout

At first sight the spout of an ALB teapot looks poorly finished, but it was rough-cut deliberately by a craftsman. The sharp edges at the opening – and just underneath the lip – cut the flow of water, preventing tea from dribbling back down the outside of the pot. If a dribble did make it down, at least it would be masked due to the combination of the Rockingham glaze and the dark colour of the clay.

A sample of fourteen vintage ALB teapots with classic spouts were examined in order to support the theory that the roughly-cut spout was a deliberate and constant feature of this teapot – although cut crudely, each spout featured a sharp edge in the same place on every pot. The functional theory of this detail is supported by a text on the BB teapot by Robin Levien in which he writes: ‘drips are minimised by the sharp edges at the end of the crudely hand-trimmed spout ’(1992:76). The spout of BB teapots being made today are sponged smooth, which increases dripping but looks more aesthetically refined.

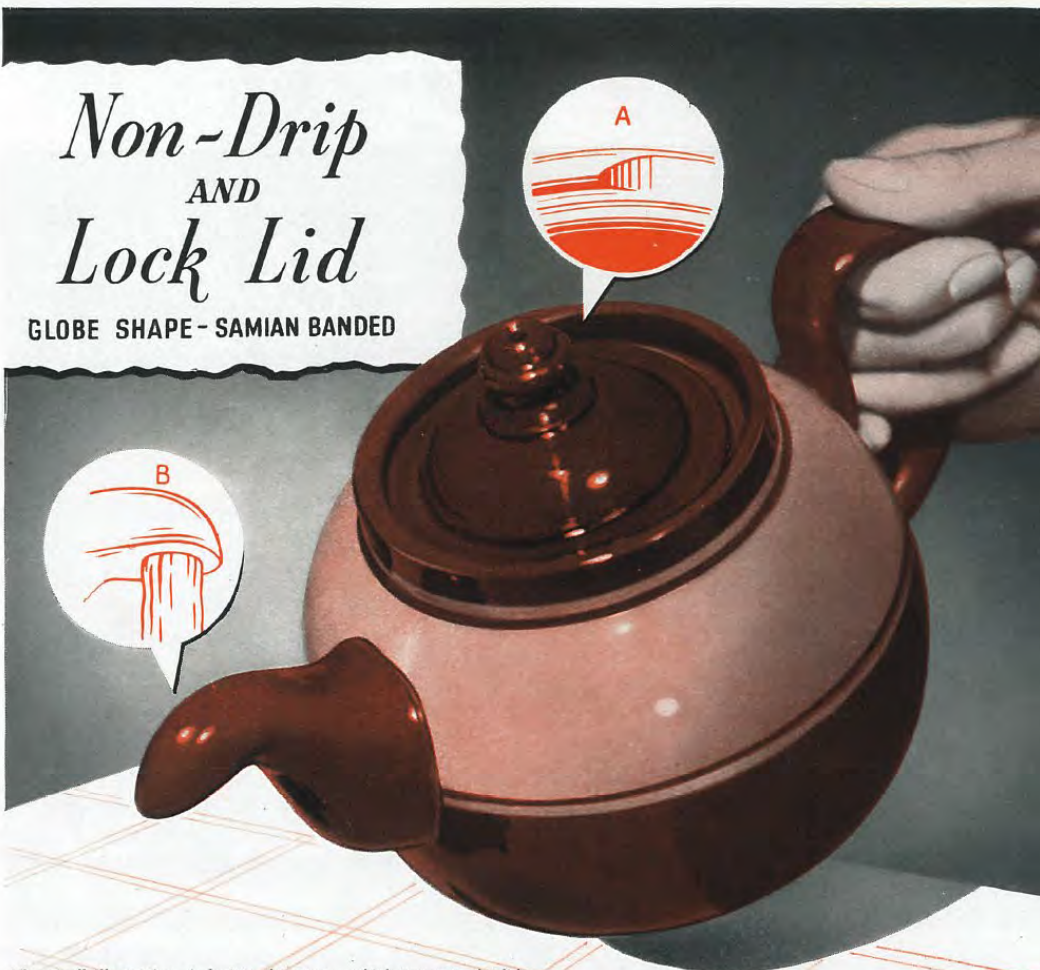
The Non-drip Spout

To be certain that tea would not dribble the patented non-drip spout was introduced as an optional feature. Functioning like a tap the spout ensures a straight pour and almost magically eliminates drip.

The non-drip spout design is highly functional. Tests that I undertook with 13 ALB teapots with non-drip spouts revealed perfect pouring results (Fig. 127). Yet these teapots are much harder to find in vintage shops or online sales platforms. I surmise that either they were less popular in the market and ALB sold far fewer or they work so well that their owners tend to keep them rather than sell them on. I suspect it was the former. The non-drip BB does not feature in any of the Habitat catalogues and Robin Levien had never seen one until I introduced it to him.

Non-Drip AND Lock Lid

GLOBE SHAPE - SAMIAN BANDED



The small illustration A depicts the groove which prevents the lid from falling out even when the teapot is tilted at an acute angle, and illustration B shows the specially designed spout which ensures a straight pour and eliminates "drip." This design can be supplied in a variety of coloured bands including blue, green, etc.

Patent Nos. 477613 and 358746



ALCOCK, LINDLEY & BLOORE LTD

Manufacturers of Samian and Rockingham Teapots

HANLEY, STAFFORDSHIRE

OVERSEAS AGENTS. Sweden: Aug Eklow, Brunkebergstorg 11, Stockholm. Belgium: S.A.C.O., 15 Meir, Antwerp. Denmark: Aage Møller, Stormgade 20, Copenhagen. Australia: F. R. Barlow & Sons Pty. Ltd., 328, Flinders Street, Melbourne. Canada: Pottery & Glass Agencies, 441, St. Peter Street, Montreal. Holland: W. Werner & Co., Paleisstraat 23, Amsterdam. Palestine: E. E. Aschheim, Reines Street, 8, Tel Aviv. New Zealand: F. O. & H. S. Hart, Ltd., 20/22, Victoria Street, Wellington, C.I. South Africa: Johnsen & Jorgensen, F. G., Ltd., Oswald Franck, Box 5600, Vancouver House, President Street, Johannesburg. East Africa: Johnsen & Jorgensen, F. G., Ltd., Phillips & Co., Box 588, Victoria Street, Nairobi. Jamaica: Johnsen & Jorgensen, F. G., Ltd., L. Keble Davidson, P.O. Box 84, Kingston.

Allied House: SWINNERTONS LTD., Hanley, Staffordshire
Manufacturers of Earthenware, Dinner and Tea Sets, etc.



Fig. 65. ALB marketing material illustrating the Non-Drip spout and Locking Lid text panels Citation- A advertisement for Alcock, Lindley & Bloore Ltd. in the Pottery Gazette & Glass Trade Review April 1953; page 512.



Fig. 66. ALB BBs, classic spout, left, showing signs of wear and seam line still evident; classic spout, right, showing the sharp, internal cut where the excess cast has been removed. Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Levien describes the classic spout as being roughly cut. On closer inspection of multiple versions, the makers leave part of the seam line at the top of the spout and sponge it away further down (Fig. 66). The inner circumference of the spout is finished with a clean and sharp line where the potter's knife cuts away the excess cast. That sharp line cuts the flow of liquid in both directions. There are no seams on the non-drip spout.

Handling multiple BBs led to fascinating and suggestive comparative insights into its material culture. Overwhelmingly, on my sample of teapots the classic spout lasts longer. There is weathering down where the underside of the spout meets the cup in daily use but this area never seems to chip. The non-drip spouts, however, are vulnerable where the spout meets the cup and as such chip much more readily. In fact, it is harder to find BBs without superficial chips around the non-drip spout on the secondhand market.



Fig. 67. Classic Samian ALB BB teapot upturned. The spout never extends higher than the top collar of the bowl. Image by Geof Howe.

The Locking Lid

To prevent the lid falling out of the pot while pouring, an ingenious solution was reached: the lid in the tilted pot slides forward into a groove in its collar, locking it in position. When the pot is restored to horizontal, the lid releases. A more discreet feature of this patented design enables pots to be stacked for storage by placing the lid upside down in the pot. To support this feature, the spout and the handle stay below the collar of the pot, which also means the pot can drain upside-down after washing (image above).



Fig. 68. Illustration of the lid sliding forward in the collar of an ALB BB, locking into a groove (illustration A). Detail from *Ceramic and Glass trade gazette*, 1953.

Bibliographic data: GB358746 (A) — 1931-10-15

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 Print

Improvements in teapots, coffee pots and like pouring vessels provided with loose lids or covers

Page bookmark [GB358746 \(A\) - Improvements in teapots, coffee pots and like pouring vessels provided with loose lids or covers](#)

Inventor(s):

Applicant(s): VICTOR GEORGE HARRIS ALCOCK; WALTER LINDLEY; WILLIAM BLOORE ±

Classification: - international: [A47G19/14](#)


 - cooperative: [A47G19/14](#)

Application number: [GB](#)19300032103 19301025

Priority number(s): GB19300032103 19301025

Abstract of GB358746 (A)

Translate this text into 

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358,746. Teapots &c. ALCOCK, V. G. H., LINDLEY, W., and BLOORE, W., (trading as ALCOCK, LINDLEY, & BLOORE), Raymond Street, Hanley, Stokeon-Trent. Oct. 25, 1930, No. 32103. [Class 66.] Teapots, coffee-pots, &c., of the kind provided with an extra flange extending approximately half-way around the upstanding flange of the mouth to prevent the loose lid falling off during pouring, have the extra flange in the form of a comparatively small bead or swelling f which is set back so as not to extend as far as the inner edge of the flange e which supports the lid d.



Fig. 69. (1930) ALB 'Locking lid' international patent registration. [online]



Fig. 70. 'Little Brown Pot'. *Royal Doulton Tableware Bulletin*. Public relations department, c.1978–80.

The above image illustrates how useful the locking lid feature was for both the factory and the customer. This feature enabled ALB to invert the lid into the pot enabling the pots to be stacked together in huge quantities with the lids stored inside the body of the pot. Levien's writing on the teapot supports this theory: 'With the lid inverted, another pot of the same size stacks perfectly on top; not a feature of much use to the customer, but very useful for the manufacturer in production and warehousing and for the retailer in 'stack 'em high displays '(Levien, 1992: 96).

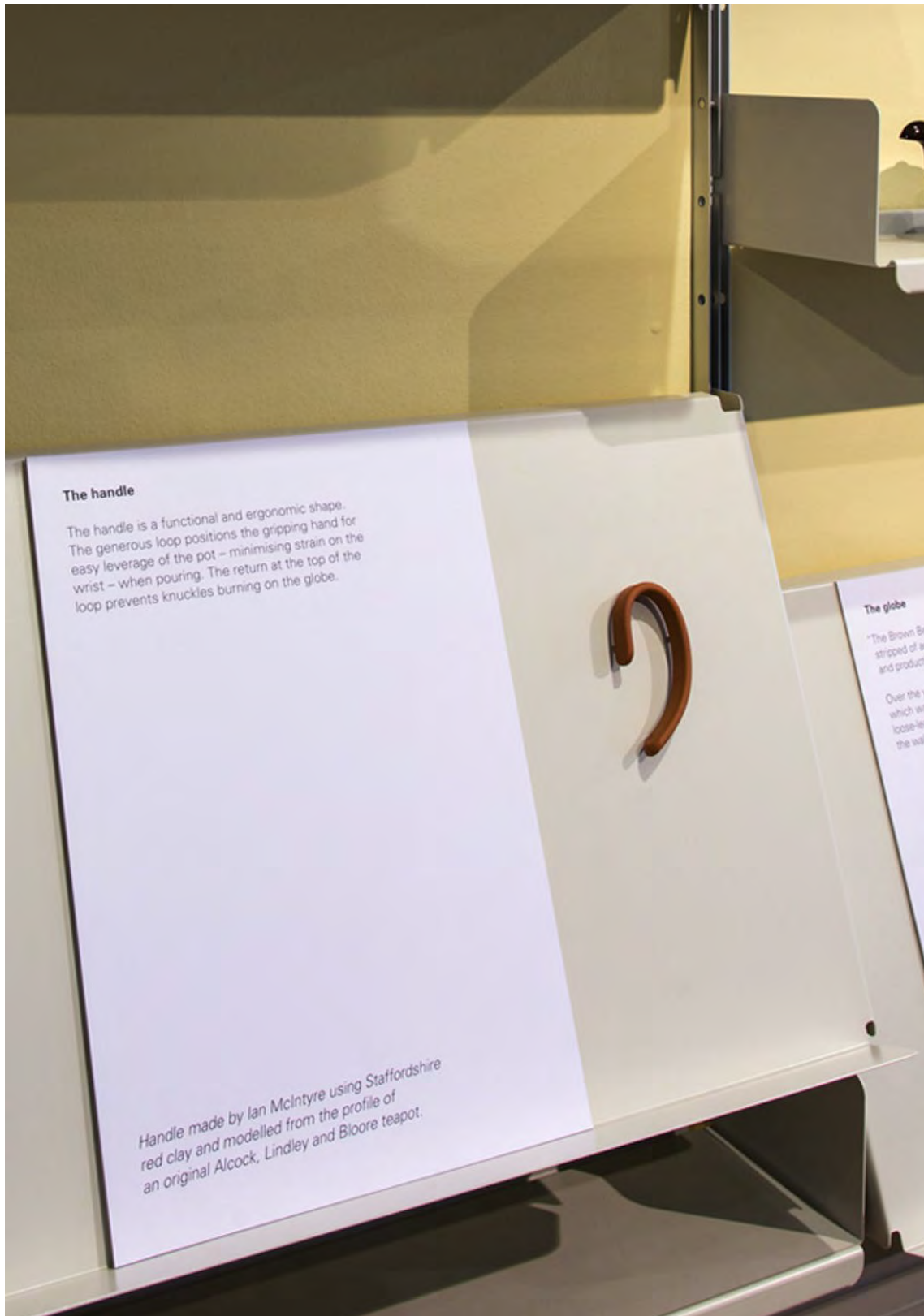


Fig. 71. Object accompanying *The handle* text panel: A detached loop shaped handle. Made by me using Staffordshire red clay and modelled from the profile of an original ALB teapot. Image by Geof Howe.

The Handle

The handle of an ALB teapot is a functional and ergonomic shape. The generous loop positions the gripping hand for easy leverage of the pot – minimising strain on the wrist – when pouring. The return at the top of the loop prevents knuckles burning on the globe.



Fig. 72. Illustration of knuckles clearing the globe of an ALB BB. Detail from *Ceramic and Glass trade gazette*, 1953.

Across the sample of ALB teapots the shape and quality varies between handles. Often they are warped or unevenly applied. In these cases it is likely that the moulds didn't locate properly during the casting process or integrity was lost in the process of applying the fragile clay handles to the globe. This is evidence of a range of standards across the master moulds and brisk handling on the production line. The handle seems to have been less of an aesthetic than pragmatic concern. The CC BB teapot has lost the return on the handle, resulting in the knuckle coming closer to the hot body of the teapot in use.



Fig. 73. ALB BB showing variation in handle shapes; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



Fig. 74. Object illustrating the red clay and Rockingham glaze: Extrusion, taken from the production line at Valentines Clays and dipped in Rockingham glaze. Image by Geof Howe.



Fig. 75. Objects accompanying *The glaze* text panel: Extrusion of Staffordshire red clay dipped in Rockingham glaze. Transparent and Rockingham glazed ALB teapots. Image by Geof Howe.

The Glaze

An ALB Brown Betty would be glazed in either the rich brown Rockingham glaze, or a transparent glaze that reveals the natural colour of the clay. Both have the advantage of masking any tea stains on the teapot. If the glaze were chipped, the red colour of the clay would be revealed – favourable to a contrasting clay – allowing a characteristic patina to lengthen the life of the pot.

It is Levien who has speculated on the camouflage-like combination of redware, glaze and tea: 'the red clay and Rockingham glaze make the inevitable tea stains and small chips almost invisible. If the patina of use could be seen on these teapots, most of them would probably be dumped within days' (1992:76). The glaze masks wear and tear of use but even before that its function is to mask any number of imperfections in the process, from moulding to glazing.

Masking imperfections

Looking at and handling the teapots, I was surprised to learn the variety and extent of production imperfections of the teapots. It is evident that Rockingham, dense and opaque, conceals some surface imperfections, whereas Samian, light and transparent, shows them. Generally, however, imperfections are evident in both versions and the glazes have a bearing on the visibility of wear and tear through use.

Pins

Generally, on closer inspection of the sample there are bumps at three points on the base (Fig. 76). These are where the pot would be sat on small pins during the firing. The pins ensure that the foot ring can be entirely glazed. After firing, the pins are snapped off and given a light sanding to remove any sharp edges. If left unglazed, water would slowly leach into the exposed ceramic footring and watermarks would slowly bleed into the glaze. The finish quality of these pin points varies greatly between teapots – more or less visible according to whether Rockingham or Samian.



Fig. 76. ALB BBs, bumps remain on the base where firing pins have been snapped off; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Drips, veins and stains

In Fig. 77 the handle has been applied with wet clay and not wiped. Likewise, veins show through the Samian glaze caused by pressing clay that is not wet enough. In parts of the lid the pressure applied has caused cracks large enough not to be covered fully by glaze. Fig. 77 also shows staining on the bowl where tea has passed through unglazed parts; over many years this can lead to further discolouration by salts bleeding out of the glazes.



Fig. 77. ALB BBs, various finishing imperfections; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Crazing

Samian teapots sometimes show 'crazing', where glaze applied doesn't 'fit' the ceramic surface causing fine hairline cracks. This is a common issue in ceramics and can be caused by a number of variables including changes in the constitution of either the clay or glaze and the uneven application of glaze. It is much more difficult to spot crazing over a Rockingham glazed teapot because the deep brown colour hides the hairline cracks much more effectively.



Fig. 78. A Samian glazed BB base showing clear signs of crazing; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



Fig. 79. A Rockingham glazed lid that is crazed on close inspection yet hidden almost perfectly by the depth of colour in the glaze; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



Fig. 80. ALB BBs, discolouration is visible in the clay body which has occurred due to porosity in the glazed surface and is therefore visible due to clear (Samian) glaze finish; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Seams

In Fig. 81 the strata is revealed around the circumference of the Samian globe where the maker has fettled away a seam line. This provides useful insight into production processes, indicating that a split mould was used to manufacture the globe shape.



Fig. 81. ALB BBs, visible seam lines on the body of the teapot reveal the split mould manufacture; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



Fig. 82. ALB BBs, variations in precision of handle application, Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

In these illustrations above you can see how the handles are askew and the seam is better concealed by the Rockingham glaze. In the illustrations below you can see, dents, unfettled seam lines and inclusions are not completely concealed by the Rockingham glaze yet these pots left the factory. Again demonstrating aspects of the object that are less of an aesthetic than pragmatic concern.



Fig. 83. ALB BBs above, imperfections remain in the teapot, such as a seam line on the finial of the lid and cracking on the internal surface (top and bottom left) and dents, flecks and inclusions of clay in the body of the pot (top and bottom right); Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Below you can see how effective the Rockingham glaze can be in concealing these defects. These two images are of the same pot. Note in the left hand image between both tabs of the handle and just to the right. This large defect occurred before glazing and is almost completely concealed unless held under direct light as demonstrated in the image on the right.



Fig. 84. The same teapot is photographed here at a different angle of light; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Briskness of Handling

A lack of preciousness towards production of the BB is expressed by these imperfections (see Fig. 83). These all point to a low value object with the primary concern being functionality. As with Button's ceramics, the brisk handling of materials demonstrates a lack of self-consciousness. Quality control is not a rigorous process; the threshold for rejection is evidently high. This is in stark contrast to contemporary standards of production where even tiny blemishes are rejected. Each BB teapot has singular qualities that nonetheless are not about authorship, rather production volume and pressure.



Fig. 85. An arrangement I made to reflect the idea of evolution of the BB Teapot; Photo. Geof Howe.

Back stamps



Fig. 86. ALB BBs, variations in back stamp variations; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Across the different versions of the BBs there are a number of different backstamps used. Backstamps do not contain dating information and I have not been able to periodise them according to backstamp type. However, there are some observable differences. Backstamps of 'Specials' tend to be atypical and include the word 'patented'. Samian teapots always feature a black motif, while Rockingham always have a cream motif. This is to create contrast and legibility. Backstamps tend to be 'bomb printed' – a technique that uses a rubber blob for application. The blob picks up the image from an etching plate and then stamps the back of the unglazed pot, transferring the ink onto the base. The pot is then glazed. However, several of the "specials" teapots that I collected appear to have hand-painted elements such as patent numbers.

The only other identificatory markings that appear are embossed on the lid. Typically, this reads 'Made in England' alongside a serial number. The detail of the emboss indicates that the lid is pressed, perhaps by a ram press or Jigger or jolly. Ascot marketing material from the archive of Cauldon Ceramics (Fig. 96), described these 'heavy pressed' lids as a 'key product feature'. The serial numbers do not appear to correspond to patents and I suspect that they may be, instead, a tooling number.



Fig. 87. ALB 'Heavy pressed lid'; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Specials



Fig. 88. Non-drip spout version with a yellow band Samian glaze (shown in the advertising poster, Fig. 65); Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



Fig. 89. This is similar to the yellow band Samian glaze version shown in Fig. 88; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



Fig. 90. BB with a metal spout and an angled handle; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



Fig. 91. Non-drip spout version with a marbled glaze; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.



Fig. 92. Non-drip spout with a marbled glaze and a flat, recessed lid that allows another pot to stack directly on top as described by Levien in *Design Magazine*; Ian McIntyre collection photographed in studio.

Conclusion

As a product of evolution the Brown Betty's form and function have been refined over generations. It was this gradual process that resulted in a teapot that was modest in appearance yet perfect for the task in hand: brewing and pouring tea. By quietly performing its job so well it has endeared itself to generations.

There is a collectors 'club, run by Sheri Murphy-Hughes, in North America whose members live around the world. Today Cauldon Ceramics are exporting over 80% of product to North America and Japan, who seem to have a better understanding of its legacy than the UK.

"On a personal note I feel that the Brown Betty is a counterpoint to the seemingly unending barrage of new products being launched and discontinued daily in the design industry. I feel that this story reflects a dedication to a material, or a design, and the refinement of a process that has given rise to a classic, not because of nostalgia, but because it's the best at what it does". Ian McIntyre

2.4 Findings of Taxonomy and Making-as-Research

While the BB is itself an archetypal teapot, there are a variety of small differences in the design features that make up its totality. From here, further analysis of the design elements of the pots was undertaken through moulding and re-making design elements of the originals in order to understand their characteristics and features. This describes a movement from the organisation of empirically observable knowledge to a tactile, embodied knowledge, accessed through craft. These 3D objects were displayed alongside the exhibition text at Vitsoe and constructed in my London studio from Staffordshire Etruria Marl – the same material that the early makers of BB teapots used and which CC still use today. These combined strategies – from literature research to tactile making-as-research – enabled me to identify – and discover – the defining features of ALB's BB teapot.

Through examination and iterative making I was able to identify unrecorded historical production processes and techniques. I followed seamlines revealed in the transparent (Samian) glazed pots to ascertain that the body of an ALB teapot was made in three parts. The globe was pressed in a two-part mould, before the handle and spout were applied. This enabled a potter to crudely punch a grid of holes into the globe before attaching the spout. The grid holds the tea-leaves in the globe when pouring. Tacit knowledge was essential to producing knowledge.

I initially started to mould the external surfaces of a selection of the teapots. However, I found that as the plaster sets it expands and compacts the ceramics, leading to cracking. In this process I broke a few of the originals from the sample. Through a laborious process I began to model the characteristic features by hand, starting with a block of plaster and a riffler tool. The necessity to work with a modeler soon became apparent. I was referred to Ed Bentley, a master model maker. I discuss making in more detail in Field 3.

2.5 Overview of Panel Discussion Event

During the Vitsoe exhibition Robin Levien, who has been a mentor in this research, gave a presentation on the characteristic design of the BB. Studio Levien is a product design company based in Southwark, London with over 50 years experience in industrial ceramics. Levien is a Royal Designer for Industry. He became fascinated by the BB, so he recalls, in the wake of the closure of ALB in 1979. 'I was given a project as a [young] designer... to keep it going,' recalls Levien, 'so I got hold of a Brown Betty and started drawing it and drawing it was an amazing process of discovery' (see Appendix i). During his presentation, Levien applied Dieter Rams's 'ten principles for good design', written in 1970 against a backdrop of growing consumer culture. The Brown Betty satisfied all of the criteria.

For his presentation, Timothy d'Offay offered tastings of teas that would have been brewed at the various historic stages of the BB and its predecessors, thus extending the historic account into the realm of the senses, notably taste and smell.²⁵

Present, too, was the clothes designer Margaret Howell and the directors of Labour and Wait, both now among the biggest UK retailers of the Staffordshire BB. In addition to representatives of the British Council, we were joined by the Director of CC, Shaikh. CC (established 2005) were at the time the last remaining manufacturer of the Staffordshire BB teapot.²⁶

The Vitsoe panel discussion served as a means to connect potential stakeholders and generate interest in the research. It was also a way that I could demonstrate to Shaikh the value of his product by taking him out of CC offices into a leading design store. Shaikh participated in the panel discussion event.

²⁵ d'Offay owns Postcard Teas in Mayfair, London. He is Wedgwood's master tea brewer and has worked with the BBC, NHK and Fuji television on documentaries about tea.

²⁶ Margaret Howell is a contemporary British clothing designer and a Royal Designer for Industry with shops in London, Paris and Tokyo with a £60million annual turnover. Labour and Wait offer a range of timeless and functional products for daily life. They have over 30 concessions in London and Japan.

2.6 Critical Engagement with the Vitsoe Exhibition

Although there is limited literature concerning the BB, response to the research conducted indicates that there is considerable interest. Initial research carried out for the Vitsoe exhibition has generated reviews (see, for example, Figs. 93–94 and the section ‘Articles and Reviews of the Re-engineered Brown Betty’) in specialist and mainstream publications, for example, *Disegno Journal*, *Crafts magazine*, *Cfile* ceramics journal, *Elle Decoration*, *House & Garden*, *World of Interiors* and *Pen*. The production of critical discourse has fed back in to inform my understanding of the BB teapot. The pot was written about by Vitsoe who described it as a completely familiar, rational design. American art critic Garth Clark in *Cfile* reviewed the exhibition, describing BB as a ‘vindication of working class common sense’ (Clark, 2016). The research also featured on the cover and in detail in *Disegno Journal* who took an interest in the global origins of the object (Lawrence, 2016). I authored an article in *Crafts*, in which I described the BB as an object of design evolution (McIntyre, 2016).

Disegno

The Quarterly Journal of Design #12
Autumn 2016

This issue includes:

Interdisciplinary practice with *Roksanda Ilinčić* and *David Adjaye*; Iran's design community after the sanctions; OMA's Venetian department store; nine techniques for contemporary toasting; *Italian Limes* and the permutations of a glacial border within post-Schengen Europe; *Studio Swine's* expedition to the Amazonian model town of *Henry Ford*; the secrets of UNESCO's world heritage list; an ode to styrene by *Raymond Queneau*; and the forgotten history of the people's teapot.



Teapot Genealogy

It is one of the most functional teapots ever designed, yet the British Brown Betty is an authorless object – one developed over time by countless makers. The designer Ian McIntyre's PhD is focused on the ongoing evolution of the Brown Betty, a process he discusses below.

The Brown Betty is the archetypal teapot. Its original design is purely rational, stripped of anything superfluous to its function and production methods. It has always been the cheapest teapot you can buy and became one of the most-manufactured in British history. Yet, because the Brown Betty is so utilitarian and disappears into the fabric of everyday life, its history is hard to trace.

One defining element of the Brown Betty is that it is formed out of Etruria marl, a red clay native to Staffordshire. The clay was originally used to make butter and milk pots but it had an incredibly low perceived value. Around 1693, however, the Dutch potters John Philip Elers and David Elers refined this clay, removing its impurities to make wares of a far superior technical and artistic standard. Soon after this, the Elers brothers began making teapots. At that point, tea was expensive – like gold dust – so naturally teapots were expensive too. The Elers brothers sold their designs to the luxury London market and often imitated and competed with wares imported from China. This was a defining point in the history of red clay: the Elers brothers had completely flipped perceptions of the material. Today, the refinement of Etruria marl is seen as a key catalyst for the proliferation of industry in Stoke-on-Trent.

The design of the Brown Betty evolved over time at the hands of multiple makers and the fact that it is authorless partly explains why it hasn't been written into the history books in the same way as other objects. It works as an early example of open-source: it has been in the hands of multiple makers, each of whom has made their mark on the object. The Brown Betty is in a continual state of evolution and each evolution is attached to a different point in cultural history. So nobody knows who its first maker was, although Alcock, Lindley and Bloore was certainly the most innovative. The company started producing the Brown Betty in 1919, when tea had



1
An extrusion of Etruria marl clay about to be bagged up by Valentine Clays in Stoke-on-Trent. (Photograph Glen Stoker)

2
Dipped in Rockingham glaze, an eight-cup Brown Betty is left to dry. (Photograph Glen Stoker)

3
A Brown Betty still soft in its open mould. (Photograph Ian McIntyre)

4
At Cauldon Ceramics, a teapot is fettled to remove rough edges before firing. (Photograph Glen Stoker)





3

The Brown Betty works as an example of open-source: it has been in the hands of multiple makers, each of whom made their mark.



4

Anatomy



5

Because the teapot is so utilitarian and disappears into the fabric of everyday life, its history is hard to trace.



6

dramatically dropped in price. Whereas the Elers brothers had designed for a high-end market, Alcock, Lindley and Bloore created an affordable, mass-market object: the people's teapot. It was cheap to produce, efficiently made and functional.

The Brown Betty's popularity is mainly due to it being the most functional teapot that you could buy – every detail had a functional consideration. One example is the spout. The Brown Betty had two different spouts: a classic design and the patented non-drip design. They were made in the same way and sold concurrently, so the variation was simply marketed as a refinement. The beautiful detail on the classic spout is that it has a slight roughness under its lip, which cuts the flow of water into a drip rather than a dribble. The non-drip design evolved this feature further such that the problem was eliminated.

The locking lid is further evidence of how the Brown Betty's design was almost exclusively led by function. The height of the pot's collar may look clumsy but it's there to allow an undercut, which manifests in a ridge that the lid slides into, preventing it from falling out. The lid also inverts, which is one of the reasons its manufacturers managed to make so many teapots: it made it possible to stack them in factories. The Brown Betty wasn't just designed to be efficient for the end consumer, it was efficient across the entire approach.

Shifting cultural norms, such as the decline in loose-leaf-tea consumption, have also dictated the evolution of the design. The original teapot featured a grid that was pierced into its body to stop loose-leaf tea flowing out of the spout. But today the Brown Betty is made without the grid, a result of the proliferation of teabags. Given the globular shape of the pot, the teabag would sometimes slip up and block the flow of tea through that grid. So there is this wider significance within the Brown Betty: it is a cultural object and not just a design object.

Today, most teapots are aesthetic judgments rather than being driven by functionality. Cauldon Ceramics, one of two remaining makers of the Brown Betty in Staffordshire, does little marketing and yet there is always demand. Approximately 80 per cent of what they produce is exported to America and Japan because the Brown Betty is seen as



7

5
Rejected Brown Betty teapots gather dust beside the kiln at Cauldon Ceramics. (Photograph Ian McIntyre)

6
Cauldon Ceramics in Stoke-on-Trent still produces the Brown Betty. (Photograph Glen Stoker)

7
An Alcock, Lindley and Bloore advertisement in the Pottery Gazette, April 1953.

8
The artist and set designer Leslie Hurry reflected in the glaze of a Brown Betty teapot. (Photograph courtesy of the Lee Miller Archives)



8

Anatomy

quintessentially British. There is a hazy line where the Brown Betty has shifted from being an icon of pioneering innovation to a symbol of heritage and nostalgia. This is something of a burden because there's a balance to strike between the familiar aesthetics of the teapot, the history of its evolution and the fact that its underlying success was essentially due to its cheapness and functionality. As the Brown Betty's history is vague, there is nothing to say what defines a fake. Our nostalgia for the design is what allows it to remain relevant: it is this that demands the Brown Betty should be made in Staffordshire and which dictates why an imported model is not authentic. There are highly regarded design shops selling teapots made of white clay and shipped from east Asia as "the original Brown Betty". But to my mind, because of the history of red clay, they cannot be the real article.

My project involves creating a new evolution of the Brown Betty that acknowledges this history. I'm designing around Cauldon Ceramics' skill set while trying to understand the constraints of the cultural idea of what the Brown Betty is. The last thing I want to do is create a design-led object that alienates traditional consumers. It is about taking the DNA from past iterations and translating that into a product that works today. The project hinges on the idea that this pot is affordable, accessible and a great design, but I also want to elevate the perceived value of the object as well as that of the red clay. It's about articulating what makes it special.

Now that the UK has voted to leave the EU, the project feels a little inward-looking, but that's why it's important to tell the wider story of the Brown Betty: what makes it British is not actually British. The pot evolved from the work of two Dutch brothers who moved from Germany to Staffordshire to refine a British clay that they were trying to use to emulate teapots produced in China. END

Based on an interview by Anya Lawrence.



9



10

9
Ian McIntyre opening a new mould for
a two-cup Brown Betty.

10
The same teapot before being
fettled and fired.
(Photographs courtesy of Ian McIntyre)

Around this time *Designo* published 'Teapot genealogy', based on an interview I gave to Anya Lawrence, that defined the BB as 'one of the most functional teapots ever designed' (2016). Summarising my findings presented at the Vitsoe exhibition, the article ended on a poignant reflection on Brexit. As a corrective to the potentially inward-looking nature of the project, I noted that the pot, the most British of pots, in fact developed out of the work of the Dutch Elers brothers emulating Chinese redware.

2.7 Design Evolution and Patents

The traditional BB teapot is the archetypal teapot. As 'anonymous design', without a definitive author, but with many manufacturers, I have claimed that it is a product of deep design evolution. While I have pointed to historic originating precedents, it is not possible to locate a specific moment when the design characteristics of the archetypal BB were formalised. A slow process of evolution through continual iterative processes of minor changes occurs over a long duration. The final form of its archetypal 'teapotness' has been arrived at by improvements – both inclusions and exclusions – determined by many contributing factors, not least functional optimisation.

The evolutionary analogy in design is rooted in the Darwinian idea of natural evolution and natural selection over extended periods of time. David Pye, writing on the role of evolution in design in the late seventies, noted that:

The best designs have always resulted from an evolutionary process, by making successive slight modifications over a long period of time, not through a feverish insistence on making frequent obvious changes for the sake of offering something which looks 'really new and different' (Pye, 1978: 52).

More recently, Artemis Yagou – cited at the opening of this chapter – has proposed a rethinking of design history from an evolutionary perspective to accommodate a wider, more collaborative conception of the nature and role of things broadly (2005). Some, however, such as Petroski and Mayr, have urged caution about the use of this evolutionary metaphor. As Petroski summarises in *The Evolution of Useful Things*:

Natural things arise out of random natural processes, made things come out of purposeful human activity. Such activity, manifested in psychological, economic, and other social and cultural factors, is what creates the milieu in which novelty appears among continuously evolving artifacts (Petroski, 1994 via archive.org).

If designers intentionally select from memory and nature changes as a result of random mutation, then the evolutionary metaphor therefore suggests that design is a response to the given conditions that allows some variants to fail and others to succeed. Yagou affirms something similar:

The ideal of formal perfectibility is incompatible with a Darwinian evolutionary perspective because evolution brings about change and adaptation, but it does not necessarily lead to progress and it never leads to perfection (2005: 51–52).

Yagou couples the design evolution perspective with two complimentary challenges to design authorship – the ‘anti-star approach’ and the ‘Open Source’ model. The anti-star approach, a ‘humbler, non-genius attitude’, is akin to the ‘anonymous designer’, whose work is not elevated above the multidisciplinary design teams employed in realising products. ‘Anonymous design’ has been understood as ‘a corrective to the engagement with designer names, styles, and movements that are generally seen as an integral part of design culture’ (Yagou, 2005: 56). Many standard everyday objects – indeed many ‘super normal’ objects – have been produced by unknown creators and yet their endurance as standards of good design means they have value.²⁷

Sigfried Giedion’s celebrated work of 1948, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to an Anonymous History*, is a story of design told through the examination of ‘humble things, things not usually granted earnest consideration, or at least not valued for their historical import’ (3). These humble objects, taken together, have, so Giedion writes, ‘shaken our mode of living to its very roots’. For Giedion it is not merely the ‘explosions of history’ that are of interest but the ‘[t]he slow shaping of daily life’ by anonymous objects.

Giedion’s notion of the slow development of humble things chimes with the BB, and more recently has, for example, informed designer Fabien Cappello’s ‘Objetos De Resistencia’ collection of anonymous design. Although not explicitly acknowledged, it is the ‘humble object’ that animates the ‘super normal’. Indeed, Rams’ principles of good design are concerned with longevity and quality.

Yagou’s advocacy of ‘Open Source’ can, too, I think, be applied to the BB. Open Source is a digitally-enabled process of creation that is collective, collaborative, and evolutionary. Open Source, mainly associated with software, sees many individuals collaborate to realise different projects. The central principle is that the software remains

²⁷ Earlier in this chapter I discussed the way manufacturers sometimes conceal suppliers. Typically this is to protect value in supply chains. Clearly a lack of attribution denies design authorship.

free. No one owns it. As Yagou writes, in the case of Open Source we see a new mode of production termed 'commons-based peer-production' to distinguish it from property and contract-based models of corporates and markets (2005: 57). The BB, in being an 'anonymous design', rooted in place, free of design ownership, evolved among many makers over long durations, is akin to Open Source. It has been in the hands of multiple makers, each of whom made their mark.

There is an historic understanding – emerging with industrial capitalism – that the patenting of design features stops the continuing evolution of a product. The licensing of intellectual property rights inhibits development of a product. Petroski paraphrases Isambard Kingdom Brunel who gave evidence to the House of Lords on the Patent Laws 1851 to this effect:

'really good improvements are not the result of inspiration, 'but 'more or less the results of an observing mind, brought to bear upon circumstances as they arise, 'he believed that 'most good things are being thought of by many persons at the same time. 'The patent system obstructs real progress, according to Brunel, because when someone 'thinks he has invented something, he immediately dreams of a patent, and of a fortune to be made by it.'(Petroski, 1994 via archive.org)

Brunel goes on to acknowledge that the poor man has more to lose than the rich man who may not hedge their fortune on innovation. Prior to patents, designers operated secretly, employing devices to thwart industrial espionage (see Field 1). These complex questions of ownership and authorship are useful to remember because despite the archetypal quality of the BB, contemporary versions being made today, are devolved. It is this devolution that opens the space for innovation, even if that means revisiting historic patents, such as ALB's lock-lid and non-drip spout. There is a certain irony here: the contemporary development of the teapot requires the purchase of historic patents long out of production.

It is precisely because the patent protection had expired that I was able to use and develop these features. Historically, the absence of intellectual property around the BB is what has permitted its multitude of variations and is what permits me to proceed with my design interventions. The taxonomy and exhibition at Vitsoe compresses and schematises a long evolutionary design duration to inform these interventions which, although not drastic, might seem revolutionary on the teapot's own terms. I find myself returning to Jasper Morrison on the Super Normal:

Super normal refers to the normal – in the sense of adopting a familiar form and aesthetic – without being ‘normal ’itself and merely availing itself of traditional shapes, materials or production techniques. It is precisely the conscious distance the Super Normal object maintains from its precursors that can become a subtle signal (2007: 9).

In re-engineering the BB teapot it was imperative that I did not appropriate the accumulated labour of previous anonymous designers under my own name as an authorial ‘star ’designer.

2.8 Lineage of Brown Betty

I believe that CCs ‘BB can, in fact, be tracked back to the manufacturer ALB. After Royal Doulton liquidated ALB in 1979, the version passed through at least three manufacturers, including Gem Pottery, Ascot Pottery and Caledonia Pottery, before ending up under the ownership of CC. This has been ascertained through correspondence and marketing material found in the archives of Studio Levien and CC (below).

It is evident in Levien’s letter to the editor of *Design Magazine* in 1992 (Fig. 32) and the corresponding advertisement from Gem pottery marketing material (Fig. 32) that at this date ALB’s version is still being made. Marketing material from the manufacturer Ascot Pottery found in CCs ‘archive (Fig. 95) also details a number of distinctive features of ALB’s teapot including ‘Jollied production’, ‘Full strainer grid ’and ‘heavy pressed lid’. It can therefore be assumed that Ascot’s version also retained the same design features. This pottery could be the other ‘small pottery ’that Levien mentions in his letter.

Ascot Pottery Ltd.

Manufacturers of Traditional English "Brown Betty" Teapots

1 Lytton Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs. ST4 2AG, England
Telephone: (0782) 746010 Fax: (0782) 746040

WHOLESALE PRICE LIST

Trade Size	Capacity		Cup size	Price Each	
	Pints	Litres		Rockingham	Banded
24's	3	1.7	8 cup	£2.56	£2.75
36's	2	1.2	6 cup	£2.20	£2.37
42's	1.5	0.8	4 cup	£1.98	£2.13
54's	0.8	0.5	2 cup	£1.60	£1.72

1. The above prices are inclusive of packing & delivery in printed cartons of 6 teapots per carton per size.
2. Minimum order of 48 cartons of assorted teapots.
3. Separate Quotes can be given for smaller quantities.
4. Terms of payment; strictly 28 days from date of invoice.
5. Delivery : four to six weeks, unless agreed otherwise.

Key Product Features

- A. ORIGINAL TERRACOTTA PRODUCTION "BROWN BETTY" TEAPOTS.
- B. "JOLLIED" PRODUCTION OF TEAPOT BODY.
- C. HIGH DENSITY BROWN ROCKINGHAM GLAZE.
- D. THERMAL HEAT RETENTION.
- E. FULL STRAINER GRID.
- F. HEAVY PRESSED TEAPOT LID.
- G. A UNION JACK LABEL & SWING TICKET WITH HISTORY & ORIGIN OF TEAPOT IS INCLUDED.

Fig. 95. Ascot Pottery. Wholesale price list from the archive of CC.



Fig. 96. Caledonia Pottery *Original BB Range* (c. 1992–2004); Marketing material from the archive of CC.

Shaikh, before becoming Managing Director of CC 2005–2017, worked for Ascot pottery until its closure. Following this he founded Caledonia Pottery where he transferred the production of the BB teapot and a number of other Ascot products. In 2004 Shaikh sold Caledonia Pottery and founded CC in 2005 to exclusively manufacture BB teapots and accessories.

At this point CC was the last remaining maker of BB teapots made from Staffordshire Etruria Marl. However, it is evident from CCs 'version that at an unknown point between 1992 and 2004, some of the design features and manufacturing processes of ALB's design changed. Within this period contemporary makers of ALB's version, including CC, sought to preserve the aesthetics of the design while many of the functional details and manufacturing innovations developed by ALB were lost.

The devolution of design can be affected by many complex contributing factors. My conviction is that the liquidations of Doulton allowed a centuries-old manufacturing process and knowledge-base to be lost. This destructive loss of knowledge linked to place is recounted in Christopher Alexander's book *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (1973) in which he observes that 'We can often recognize the correct "Bad Fit" of a form to its context, but we usually cannot describe the rules by which we find a fit bad or recognize the corrected form to be good.' 'Traditional artifacts, 'he continues, 'evolve culturally through successive detections and corrections of bad fit until the resulting forms are good. '

Alexander gives the example of generations of Slovakian artisans who made shawls woven of yarns which had been dipped in homemade dyes. When synthetic Aniline dyes were made available to the artisans the glory of the shawls was spoiled:

The shawl makers had no innate ability to make good shawls, but were simply able, as many of us are, to recognize bad shawls and their own mistakes. Over the generations, whenever a bad shawl was made, it was recognized as such, and therefore not repeated. The introduction of Aniline dyes disrupted the cultural process of design, for the shawl makers could not produce wholly new designs of high quality; they could only recognize "Bad Fit" within a familiar pattern (1973: 53).

My argument is that the BB has gone through an analogous process. As the manufacturing processes of the BB have opened up to globalised systems and processes, innovation has stilted. In fact, there has been a functional deterioration of the product that cannot be recognised as ‘bad fit’. When I first visited the mould room at CC, it was evident to me that poor master objects and badly set moulds were constraining the craftspeople and making the objects appear badly made.

2.9 The Case for Revitalisation

The form and function of the BB teapot has been refined over generations. However, the name BB is a relatively new invention which originated, as I have shown in Field 1, with Royal Doulton marketing material. There is no single definitive version and this is why its history is hard to trace. It is also what makes the object so special. The BB may also be considered an early example of open source design: over the years it has been in the hands of countless makers, each of whom have made their own mark on the object. It is the product of evolution rather than the authorship of any single designer. This type of evolution has resulted in a completely familiar, rational design, modest in appearance yet perfect for the task in hand: brewing and pouring tea.

This is, undoubtedly, the reason for its invisibility. Jasper Morrison, reflecting on the super normal, notes that those man-made objects in our lives and homes that ‘perform their true purpose without any glitches in functionality or the need for constant intervention tend to be the ones we rarely notice.’ ‘When things work well, Morrison concludes, ‘we generally take them for granted’ (2007, 28). A recent implementation of this principle in Morrison’s design is the Evo-C chair.

Although redware teapots made in Staffordshire were originally costly, during the nineteenth century the BB became an accessible and affordable utensil for the mass market and thus became synonymous with the working class. In a review of the Vitsoe exhibition, Garth Clark, slightly romantically, described the pot as a:

‘working class icon ’and ‘perhaps fancifully, as growing organically from the ubiquitous small brick worker’s (sic) row houses in Stoke-on-Trent where, early on, weak tea was brewed from the costly but spent leaves passed down by their employers. In the homes of the wealthy the Betty would be downstairs for the staff, while bone-china teapots would be used upstairs” (2016).

The readily available Etruria Marl clay may have contributed to the BB’s perceived low value status due to its ubiquity, which in turn reflected in its cost and use among a wide demographic.

My findings in Fields 1 & 2 highlight the relatively recent deterioration of the BB teapot and propose a case for the revitalization of both the object and the processes and practices surrounding its manufacture. The following outlines its fitness.

It falls within Twigger Holroyd's taxonomy of culturally significant designs, products, and practices outlined earlier in this thesis: it has social value, historical value and aesthetic value. The geological and geographical features of North Staffordshire conditioned the rise of the pottery industry in Stoke-on-Trent. The red clay – now known as Etruria marl – is attributed as a key component to the proliferation of industry in Staffordshire. CC is the oldest remaining maker of the pot in Stoke and still make their wares from the same seam of red clay that the Elers Brothers first refined in 1695. CC are a living link to 326 years of evolution: this manufacturer maintains some of the oldest traditions in the Staffordshire ceramics industry and in doing so contributes to the local identity of the area. The refinement of this clay and the design details of the BB by generations of subsequent makers in Staffordshire has shaped the character of this teapot. Because of this, I would argue that a BB that isn't made of Etruria Marl, cannot be deemed original.

This inconsistency enables teapots such as Price & Kensington's, which are imported from Thailand, made of white clay and coated with a brown imitation Rockingham glaze, to be marketed by leading authorities and retailers of tableware including David Mellor who describes it as 'The Original Brown Betty'. CC is currently trying to compete with the lower wholesale price of these imported products which is having a negative effect on the quality of the product.

Early makers – up to and including the manufacturer ALB – produced both highly functional and innovative versions. This position is supported by Clark who describes the pot as an example of 'proto-modernism' (2016). Following the closure of ALB in 1979 their version was produced by at least two different makers. Over this period many of the defining features including the patented 'lock-lid' and the grid which stops loose leaf tea being poured out of the spout have been lost.

As a result of these lost features the lid of CCs' version is less functional (as detailed in field 3), the spouts drip more easily and there is no loose-leaf strainer. At a point in this teapot's history, the manufacturing ecology and the cultural significance of the BB changed. As production processes moved on, contemporary makers, including CC sought to preserve the aesthetics of the BB in an attempt preserve the 'heritage' of the object, rather than respond to the changing industrial constraints by producing new and innovative design solutions. Cost saving measures and lost knowledge have impacted on the quality and functionality of contemporary versions.

While increased scrutiny on carbon footprints and global supply chains have arguably created conditions conducive to localised production, cheaper overseas imports have forced CC to implement cost saving measures which in turn have lowered the quality and value of their product. Increases in labour costs and a declining workforce have seen the steady demise of craft knowledge and an inability to adapt to consumer markets. Refinement and innovation typified the rise of the Potteries 'in eighteenth and nineteenth century Staffordshire and the subsequent rise of giants like Wedgwood. Unfortunately, the current manifestation of the BB reflects a wider theme of stagnation and overreliance on heritage and nostalgia in the industry as detailed in Field 1.

The popularity of the BB can be attributed to the sheer quantity in which it has been produced and purchased. In 1926, the output of redware teapots in the pottery industry in Staffordshire was approximately half a million per week (Emery, 1926:43). In 1919, ALB owned three factories, one dedicated solely to redware teapot production. This particular factory, located in Hanley, was designed with a linear layout: materials entered at one end, passing through their constituent processes, before emerging as a finished product at the other end.

This system of so-called 'flow production' was described by the *Staffordshire Evening Sentinel* in 1931 as 'up-to-the-minute' – 'an important development in the industry'. Aside from the development of production line optimisation, some of which the *Sentinel* claimed as the first of their kind in the UK, ALB also pioneered the form and function of their BB, which featured a number of innovative designs that they patented, including the 'non-drip spout' and the 'locking lid'.

In summary, the following four key points underpin the case for revitalising the BB:

1. A Brown Betty made in Staffordshire has cultural significance.
2. There is a lack of historical and contemporary understanding of the object and inconsistencies within the available literature.
3. The design details of the product itself have deteriorated over the last 40 years indicating that the Brown Betty has both evolved and deteriorated.
4. The cultural significance of the object is being lost in the design, manufacture and promotion of both the contemporary Staffordshire made versions and overseas imported versions.

Field 3, Re-engineering: Or, how to redesign a classic

Field 3 consists of a reflexive account of the application of research findings and skills in a two-year industrial collaboration with CC (2017–2019) to re-engineer the BB teapot.

Within this chapter I will reflect on case studies of design-led practices that employ revitalisation strategies within traditional British-based ceramics manufacturing industries to propose, develop and evaluate further strategies used in my research. Field 3 also gives an account of the working methods and processes developed in the CC placement and at my own studio, working alone and within a team, to develop, produce and launch the RBB teapot at the BCB 2017 and the LDF 2018.

This is not just a story of producing an object. I also reflect on how, by implementing 'design thinking' informed by research, I situated the RBB teapot through the creation of new literature and product packaging within both commercial and cultural contexts. Significantly, as well as brokering commercial stockists of the item for essential commercial success, it is significant that I have been able to generate intellectual discourse within craft and design criticism, academia and gallery/museums. This raises questions around the perceived cultural and historic values of the object in relation to production cost.

As successful as the research has been there have been challenges. The RBB product did not launch at the BCB in 2017; instead, I presented a rich, expanded installation display of my research. This was due to problems with the re-introduction of the non-drip spout. There were other complicating factors. During the lead-in to my placement at CC, in 2016, the director, Shaikh, died suddenly. In the wake of his death it was not clear who would, or indeed whether anyone would, take on the management of the factory. The future of the research seemed uncertain, and this uncertainty meant that I had to make quick strategic decisions in order for the product to launch. I will reflect upon these challenges later in this chapter.

3.1 Review of Design-led Revitalisation Strategies

A range of revitalisation strategies have been explored through primary and secondary research into the independent design practice of Queensberry Hunt, as well as in-house practices, such as the designer and manufacturer Emma Bridgewater and a localised outsourcing model of Emily Johnston at 1882 Ltd. Their approaches to, for example, collaboration and uses of remixing and reintroducing designs linked to traditional making practices inform my research. In turn, these approaches can be mapped onto a taxonomy of characteristic attributes of revitalization strategies outlined by Walker et al.:

Sustain Through Design – combine traditional making or use practice with new or reimagined design.

Transpose Tradition – take traditional design or making practice into a new context.

Value of Place – foreground the value of place and provenance.

Production Processes – employ appropriate and effective methods of making.

Skills – employ targeted approaches to embed and enhance skills (Walker et al., 2018: 343).

In addition to these characteristics, Walker et al. identify a series of interrelated conducive factors which promote and inform how design can reconnect traditions, values and beliefs with sustainable contemporary living:

(1) *Promotion* – spread awareness and appreciation via effective promotion, (2) *Enterprise* – employ effective business, organization, and finance models, (3) *Research and Education* – learn about traditions, meanings, and contemporary relevance (2018: 344).

I will elaborate on these characteristics and enabling factors in relation to this research and the case studies below.

Case Study 1: Queensberry Hunt



Fig. 97. From Left to right, John Horler, David Queensberry, Martin Hunt and Robin Levien. From the book *Creativity and Industry*, Susannah Walker, Published, Fourth Estate and Wordsearch Ltd, 1992.

Since forming at the RCA in 1966, Queensberry Hunt, a partnership between David Queensberry and Martin Hunt, later including Robin Levien and John Horler, have worked with leading British ceramics brands, including Wedgwood, Crown Staffordshire, Hornsea Pottery, Midwinter, and Royal Doulton, and globally with prestigious brands such as Rosenthal, Guizzini, and Thomas. Their products retail globally and were sold in large quantities in Habitat during the same period that Alcock, Lindley and Bloore Ltd.'s teapot was a bestseller for the retailer.

The publication of Susannah Walker's book *Creativity and Industry* accompanied the exhibition 'Creativity and Industry: 25 years of the Queensberry Hunt Design Group' at the V&A in 1992.²⁸ I was given the book *Creativity and Industry* as a student by Levien – somewhat overlooked as a critical account of the practice. In light of my practice-based research, I recognise that Queensberry Hunt practiced 'revitalisation strategies' years before it was identified and valued within academic discourse by Walker et al (2018).

Of particular relevance to my research are a number of factors: a deep interest in past techniques and the history of ceramics, including studio pottery techniques, as a part of a wider knowledge of all aspects of production; a willingness to remix, repackage and update traditional designs through innovative (and cost effective) techniques; and an

²⁸ Queensberry Hunt subsequently exhibited at the V&A in 2012, an exhibition curated by Alun Graves.

insistence on the centering of craft. 'We introduce ceramic qualities that are in the province of the studio potter,' Martin Hunt told Alun Graves in *Ceramic Review* in 2012, 'and try to bring these techniques struggling and screaming into industry, which I might say is really quite difficult '(38).

Susannah Walker believes that this detailed understanding of the industry is something that is vital to their approach. As knowledgeable designers, when dealing with large factories they shared an acute awareness of whether or not it would be possible to put a design into mass production (63). David Queensberry has talked about how their deep understanding means that they know what factories can and cannot, perhaps because they are unwilling, achieve in production.

As Graves, curator of the 2012 V&A exhibition, writes, Queensberry Hunt's practice spans a period of great change in the ceramic industry, from 1966 to the present. Not only did changing lifestyles demand new products, but Queensberry Hunt actively participated in the huge shift in ceramics production from the United Kingdom to East Asia, for which they have not been immune from criticism. As the critic Charles Holland claimed in a 1992 review of their exhibition at the V&A, their reasons for outsourcing were as much because of the unwillingness of the UK ceramics industry:

What a pity for the UK that this earning power could not have been channeled through our own ceramics industry in Stoke on Trent! Most of the group's work has been for companies overseas, despite their efforts to find willing partners among the traditional producers of Stoke (Holland, 1992).

This points to the conservatism of some traditional producers who are unwilling to innovate production processes in order to find new markets.

Queensberry Hunt has been a significant inspiration for my practice. There are many Queensberry Hunt products that speak to my research, for example, 'Trend' tableware for Thomas Rosenthal. This best-selling line exemplifies a craft-based knowledge in industry. The surface quality across the forms were achieved by Levien hand modeling on the lathe. Fine ridges cut in the plaster models (see Fig. 98), when translated into ceramic, fill with glaze, creating a completely flat surface, a defining feature that could only have been achieved by a skilled maker with a deep understanding of the materiality of porcelain (see Fig. 99).



Fig. 98. 'Trend 'plaster models made by Robin Levien; Image courtesy of studio Levien.



Fig. 99. Queensberry Hunt, 'Trend 'for Thomas Rosenthal, 1983; Image courtesy of Studio Levien.

There are three Queensberry Hunt products in particular that speak to specific aspects of my research: candlestick holders and Ashtrays in collaboration with Doulton Insulators; identity development and shape design for Henry Watson Pottery; and craft practice exemplified in the Tournee teapot.



Fig. 100. Designs developed for Habitat – Ashtrays and stacking candlesticks produced by Doulton insulators. *Creativity and Industry*, p.48.

Based in Tamworth, Staffordshire, Doulton Insulators manufactured electric insulator components for power stations and overhead powerlines. In the seventies they approached Queensberry Hunt to help them diversify their production into domestic consumer objects. Components were produced in the Tamworth factory by turning clay blocks which were then fired for two to three days (Walker, 1992: 50). Based on this technique, using the tools available, Queensberry Hunt designed two very successful ranges of Victorian-style candlestick holders and ashtrays. Nowhere else in the industry had such items been produced using these techniques. Later, lamp bases were also produced. In a simple gesture of reframing, Queensberry Hunt elevated the perceived value of the process and aesthetics associated with electrical insulators – low objects – while finding new markets and contributing to the sustainability of specific skill sets developed within the industry.

In the 1960s, Queensberry Hunt developed ceramic items for Habitat that were produced by Henry Watson's Pottery, Suffolk – a family-run pottery established in the early nineteenth century. In the manner of the country potter, Henry Watson produced cheap redware vessels. However, by the end of the seventies, in an industry dominated by Wedgwood and Doulton, they faced financial difficulty. 'Their product was good, 'as Walker writes, 'but their prices made them uncompetitive '(Walker, 1992: 51).

Working with the then current owner Mike Watson, David Queensberry devised a scheme for firing and decorating their terracotta in one single process instead of two successive stages. This would be called the 'Suffolk Original 'range. As Walker

observes, 'A great deal of technical experimentation was required to get this into production, but once the technique was put into operation the savings made were significant '(Walker, 1992: 51).

Once this technique had been innovated, Queensberry Hunt set about designing a logo for the product derived from a 1911 Army and Navy Stores catalogue. Watson was at first sceptical: 'I thought it was crazy – it was really corny. I honestly didn't think it would bail us out of the problems that we were in.' But as Walker writes, Queensberry Hunt's 'commercial antennae' had anticipated exactly a demand of the period for nostalgic styles. Throughout the eighties the 'Original Suffolk' sold so well in the UK and overseas that the company was, according to Walker, unable to produce any other ranges. This approach taps into strategies instrumentalising provenance and tradition (in this case nostalgia) characteristic of a key revitalisation strategy.



Fig. 101. Henry Watson's 'Original Suffolk range'; Image credit unknown.

Finally, I want to explore Queensberry Hunt's attitude to remixing traditional design as embodied by a detail – the 'Tournée' handle used on products for Thomas and Rosenthal. The handle that twists along its length has a sculptural quality that Hunt ascribes to the importance of modelmaking; it is a form, he believes, that designers who are not modelmakers themselves would not put the effort into making (54). As Walker notes:

the partnerships 'technique of modelmaking comes originally from the ceramics industry, where moulds for new shapes have always been produced from models rather than technical drawings. Projects go directly from a model stage into mass production, and so modelmaking is still a skilled profession within the industry (1992: 54).

Design is so often led by conventions of form. As Hunt has observed, teacups are dimensionally similar anywhere (cited in Walker, 1992). If you redesign the teacup too drastically you risk alienating consumers. And so the role of the designer is of fine tuning to give design distinction. The Tournee, first produced in 1989, achieved by articulating twisted hexagon, square, circle and elliptical rods in silicon before making models, is, according to Rosenthal's design director, Henk Staal, 'different – but not too different. If a shape is too unadventurous or too distinctive it will fail. The handle twist gives distinction to a very understandable shape '(Walker, 1992: 60).

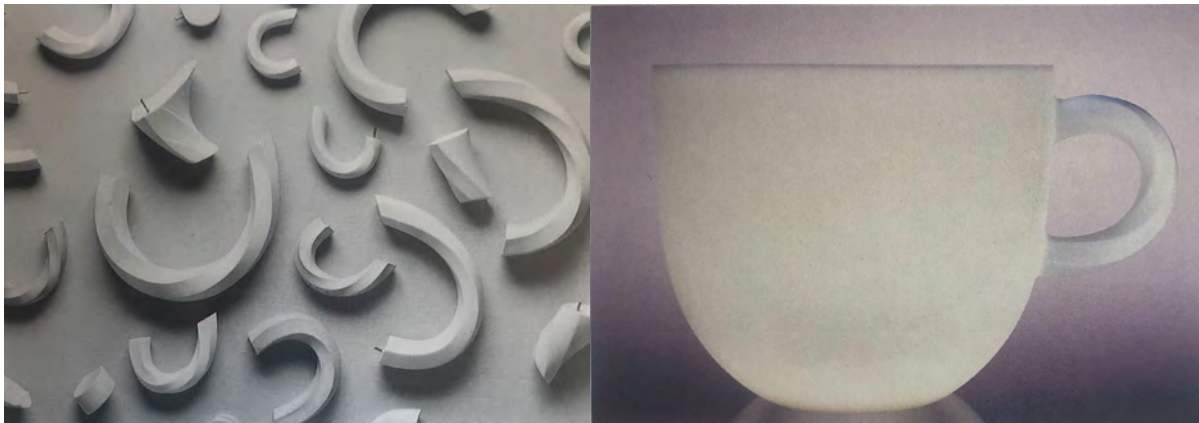


Fig. 102. Queensberry Hunt, 'Tournee', Thomas China, Germany, 1989. Creativity and Industry P.55 and P.60.

Queensberry Hunt have referred to this detail as the “trick” – the distinctive touch which livens up a design... [I]ndeed the initial idea for Tournee came from precisely this intention of creating a modern design “with a twist” (Walker, 1992: 60). The twist or the trick is something that Robin Levien anecdotally talks about in the work of the designer Charles Eames, who said that he always liked to slip an ugly detail into his design to give distinction.

The design practice of Queensberry Hunt draws on historical techniques and narratives as part of a wider recognition of the value that this has within the context of industrial production. This is embodied in the ashtrays and candlesticks designed for Doulton which enabled the manufacturer to diversify their portfolio and market while embodying core skills and aesthetics traditionally associated with the history of the company. The Henry Watson project demonstrates entrepreneurial opportunism through the

development of innovative techniques and cost effective designs to revitalise traditional methods of making while tapping into emotive narratives of provenance and tradition. The centering of craft skill and expertise as embodied in Tournee and, in fact, each of these examples enables Queensberry Hunt to produce design detailing that taps into specific and localised skillsets and narratives within the modelmaking, manufacturing or market positioning of their products.

Case Study 2: 1882 Ltd, Stoke-on-Trent



Fig. 103. 1882 Ltd. Workshop; Photographer unknown.

Another key reference for my approach to working with industry is the design-driven ceramics brand 1882 Ltd, 'made with heart,' reads its website, 'in Stoke-on-Trent' (1882 Ltd). Its relationship to the heart of the British ceramics industry, Stoke-on-Trent, is central: working with innovative designers and artists, the wealth of industrial techniques and craftsmanship present in the city is applied to the production of functional and non-functional artworks and tableware.

Although established in 2011 by father and daughter Emily Johnson and Christopher Johnson, the family's links to the city's ceramics industry dates back to 1882, when the Johnson Brothers first began producing ceramics. In 1968, the Wedgwood Group bought the family business (as they would later do with ALB) and made it a subsidiary. Christopher was employed as head of production, where he remained in post until retirement in 2002. Christopher Johnson was the fourth generation of Johnsons and

followed his father ‘ –an outstanding potter of his generation – ’into the manufacturing side of the business (Bertoli, Hole & Corner website, 2021).

After eight years working in television sales on the West Coast of America, Emily returned to the UK. She initially enrolled at the Inchbald school of design to study interior design where she developed a series of bone china lights that launched as the first 1882 Ltd at the London Design Festival 2011. ‘I was inspired to start the company,’ she told the Crafts Council in an interview, ‘because the pottery industry was moving overseas to China, Thailand and Sri Lanka ’(*How Emily Johnson Became a Creative Director*, n.d.). Most recently she has moved her business into the Barlaston factory at Waterfords Wedgwood and set up a production facility called Number 6 employing 12 members of staff – where all new 1882 designs will be produced (Material Matters, n.d.). The heritage craft skills and knowledge required to produce 1882 Ltd’s ceramics have been developed in the city over centuries: ‘I believe passionately,’ she continues, ‘that we have some of the best industrial craft skills in the world and that coupled with innovative design should mean that we have a strong story and incredible product to sell ’(*How Emily Johnson Became a Creative Director*, n.d.).

Chris Johnson is clear about the impact that the consolidation and rationalisation of mainly family-run businesses in the 1950s and 1960s has had. It has had a ‘profound (and negative) effect on the Potteries – including considerable cost reductions, low cost manufacturing from the Far East and dramatic changes in lifestyle ’(Jarvis, n.d.). The British Potteries, he believes, contrary to popular belief, ‘still have much to offer – if you have the right business model and connections’. A business model was key for my research too – I needed to tap into the heritage industry and traditional client bases for the object while appealing to a modern audience to raise its perceived value.

Emily Johnson’s background in advertising is key in her astute awareness of changing business models and the importance of connections, relationships and communications. Emily goes as far to state that relationships are as important as design itself. ‘I am the bridge/conduit/communicator,’ she has said, ‘between the designer who we have asked to collaborate with us and the factories that produce their designs ’(*How Emily Johnson Became a Creative Director*, n.d.). This is certainly something that I agree with. From early on in the research I have cultivated key relationships with Margaret Howell, Labour and Wait, and David Mellor.

Emily recognises the importance of clear communication between the local potters and the designers (some of whom have not worked with ceramics on an industrial scale before). The common thread of these creative collaborations, Emily has said, is the brand’s craftspeople (Bertoli, 2021).

Although working with heritage manufacturers within the Potteries, 1882 Ltd occupies a distinctly more contemporary market position. Emily believes that factories in The Potteries have often not been as receptive to shifts in contemporary taste as they might have been (Material Matters, n.d.). What interests me about 1882 Ltd's model in relation to this research is a determination to draw out a wide breadth of culturally significant skills within the industry; collections are made through engaging small scale manufacturers and allowing the project to develop around their skillsets, enabling the company to work with the most appropriate manufacturer at any given time.

Emily Johnson states that, in fact, it is an industry of craftspeople and they work with different companies depending on the expertise needed. Although I believe there are issues around the sustainability of this model – essentially an outsourcing model that reduces the maker to supplier – a redeeming feature is an avowed passion for safeguarding skills. Emily's determination to draw out the heritage craft skills within the industry and support the industrial craftsperson by designing collections around specific skillsets can be seen as a key revitalisation strategy that overlaps with my collaboration with CC.

However, 1882 Ltd, unlike CC, can operate with a breadth of skills across the industry, enabling them to develop a portfolio of distinctly different designs and materials that spread the brand across a range of markets and activities. In my research I have had to identify the right designs for CC, taking into consideration a much more localised set of technical capabilities and aesthetic values linked to a single maker and its history. The principle of identifying the right objects for the right skillset at any given time remains the same.

Case Study 3: Emma Bridgewater



Fig. 104. Bridgewater promotional image.

Today, Emma Bridgewater is perhaps the best-known ceramicist in the UK. Her colourful, homely, mismatched wares are seen as the embodiment of a kind of traditional, yet modern English quirkiness. Bridgewater is also celebrated as the embodiment of an entrepreneurial zeal that, as one recent article put it, is single-handedly responsible for reviving the British ceramics industry in Stoke-on-Trent (Hedges, 2019). Earlier in 2021, Bridgewater announced plans for a new expansive warehouse – its third in the city (Watson, 2021). Founded in 1985, today the company employs more than 350 staff and has an annual turnover of around £23.7 million (*Who is Emma Bridgewater? Everything you need to know*, n.d.).

Bridgewater started the company when she was trying to buy a gift for her mother. Unable to find it, she decided to produce it herself. Her model was her mother's kitchen: if it could find a place there then it was acceptable. Bridgewater arrived in Stoke-on-Trent to meet a manufacturer at the point when everyone else was leaving or outsourcing to China (TedEx, Bridgewater, 2017). Bridgewater recalls her astonishment

and sadness at the mess that had been wrought on the historic ceramics industry and its wider community.

This entrepreneurialism, aligned with its conspicuous celebration of Britishness and family values, resonates with the nostalgia-tinged conservatism of middle England. The Union Jack Mug, for example, is a best seller. In 2019, Bridgewater collaborated with the premium country-wear brand Barbour and at the time of the marriage of Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex and Meghan Markle a 'Free Spirits' mug series went into production. It is English heritage, however much invented, as we've seen with CC, that has commercial and popular appeal in North America.



Fig. 105. Emma Bridgewater factory view.

Like 1882 Ltd. and Queensberry Hunt, Bridgewater recognised the breadth of skills, expertise and knowledge that were embodied by long-held traditions of manufacturing: 'The people of Stoke are the holders of this astonishing tradition,' she has said (Bridgewater, 2017). Early on, Bridgewater established a working relationship with a small-scale manufacturer in Stoke-on-Trent. Being an outsider, not just to the town but to the industry itself, allowed Bridgewater to recognise the possibilities of manufacturing in the way that being an outsider has enabled me to recognise value within CC that perhaps they have not. When the small-scale factory that Bridgewater first used went into receivership five years later she and her partners purchased the business in order to retain the skills.

It is Bridgewater's recognition of tradition and willingness to remix and reintroduce designs linked to traditional making practices that shares a common methodology with my own research. In addition to litho decals, Bridgewater also produces a sponge-ware line that is a decorative technique first developed in the nineteenth century. At the time, the cut root of a natural sponge was used to create patterns on chinaware where today the factory uses synthetic sponges. The process is basic. Patterns produced in the

studio are brought to the factory to be cut into the sponges by hand using a soldering iron. Craftspeople use the sponges to apply designs. Because the biscuit is so absorbent the design can only be applied in one application. Polka dot patterns use five different colours and therefore five different sponges. The Helibor range uses four sponges. While the Egg and Feather range is the most time consuming, employing six different colours and over a dozen sponges (Bridgewater Ltd, 2009).

The use of sponges is a technique that mediates between the skills of the studio potter – the presence of the hand, singularity of product – and industry – quantity and standardisation of production. Each Bridgewater decorator signs their work. The maker's mark gives the item authorial value. This is also reflected in the price of the item. As Bridgewater has explained, early on in the business people were shocked by her prices, approximately twice that of any other manufacturer in the industry. The item's markup was necessary to enable the business to continue, but it also signals, for Bridgewater, a sense of the immaterial value of the product. Throughout the 2008 economic recession Bridgewater believes that the company prospered because: 'When people feel insecure they do nesting. We come in with cosy stuff to make life nicer. When the economy roars people are bold enough to be minimal, which is not good for us '(Bridgewater Ltd, 2009).

I have identified the use of the sponge technique as a characteristic revitalisation strategy. Bridgewater has been successful in identifying where there is potential to elevate the perceived value of a technique by foregrounding the authorial value of the maker and the idea of uniqueness within industry.

Summary of Case Studies

The complicated relationship between industry, heritage, craft and place in Stoke-on-Trent provides a lens to view these issues as they arise in my research on the RBB. 1882 Ltd reminds us of the centrality of collaboration in the intersection of craft and industry. The model offers agility and a certain freedom in the ability to explore a wide range of aesthetics and markets, but continues a model in which the factory is reduced to supplier and the associated smaller margins and profitability that we have seen can be unsustainable in higher wage economies such as the UK. Perhaps this model will change now that 1882 Ltd has become a manufacturer in its own right.

Bridgewater began when Queensberry Hunt had already started outsourcing to East Asia. The practice moved away from working in Stoke-on-Trent as they developed closer relationships with European design-led manufacturers willing to embrace more modernist outlooks that, as Johnson has also pointed out, The Potteries seemed to overlook. The history of 1882 Ltd is also marked by the widespread transformations to

the ceramics industry in Stoke-on-Trent but is a much more recent case study of a manufacturer who, while celebrating the city's heritage, refuses nostalgia. Through my research I have aimed to tread a fine line between celebrating modernism and using a more accurate form of nostalgia in order to appeal to the established markets and fixed parameters that I must work with in order for the project to be a success for CC.

Conclusions From Case Studies

The design practice of Queensberry Hunt draws on historical techniques and narratives as part of a wider recognition of the value that this has within the context of industrial production. This is an approach that establishes and celebrates the singularity of cultural significance. The practice demonstrates an entrepreneurial opportunism through the development of innovative techniques and cost effective designs to revitalise traditional methods of making while tapping into emotive narratives of provenance and tradition. Their centering of craft skill and expertise taps into specific and localised skillsets.

Emily Johnson's work at 1882 Ltd makes clear the importance of agility to changing business models and connections, relationships and communications. Johnson goes as far to state that relationships are as important as design itself. Likewise, Johnson recognises the importance of clear communication between the local potters and the designers. Johnson's determination to draw out the heritage craft skills within the industry and support the industrial craftsperson by designing collections around specific skillsets can be seen as a key revitalisation strategy that overlaps with my collaboration with CC. Likewise, it is Bridgewater's recognition of tradition and willingness to remix and reintroduce designs linked to traditional making practices that shares a common methodology with my own research. Techniques and specific skillsets are used by Bridgewater to mediate between the individual crafts person and the standardisation of manufacture.

3.2 Organising the Placement / Making a Proposal

It became apparent very early on that it would be essential to develop a trusting working relationship with Shaikh, director of CC. At the point when I began production work on the RBB teapot I had known Shaikh for three years. I had carried out my initial field trip to the factory, as detailed in Field 1, back in 2015 and Shaikh had visited the exhibition at AirSpace Gallery. He was impressed, so he wrote to me in an email dated 3 December 2015, by the 'demonstration and the professional style' of the show. It was evident that Shaikh had not understood the full value of his product in relation to its

deep history and meaning. My research contributed to a shift in Shaikh's perception of my research and the teapot.²⁹



Fig. 106. Zamir Shaikh: Managing Director Cauldon Ceramics; Image courtesy Cauldon Ceramics.

I had met with Shaikh, accompanied by Barney Hare-Duke, then Director of the BCB Ltd, to request access and use of master moulds to cast details of CCs 'BB'. Shaikh subsequently sent me Rockingham glaze, Etruria Marl clay, and items from his marketing archive, including product lists from Caledonian Pottery and Ascot Pottery. Through my research, detailed in Fields 1 and 2, and in developing the taxonomy, I established that there were a number of precedents missing from Cauldon's portfolio and that the likelihood was that they were part of the lineage of ALB. It was around this time, in September 2016, that I first proposed to Shaikh to redesign the BB teapot.

At the Vitsoe exhibition Shaikh participated in the panel discussion event, detailed in Field 2 and transcribed in the appendix. Subsequently, on 7 October 2016, he followed up by email to say that 'Vitsoe was absolute (sic) fantastic... Myself, I felt I was among my kind of people and I wish there was more time to get acquainted with them.' Two months passed in which I brokered meetings between the BCB, the British Council and ACE to secure funding and resources to re-engineer the BB.³⁰ I also confirmed pre-

²⁹ Historically, Staffordshire ceramics industries have been reluctant to work with contemporary designers because, in my experience, their biggest market lies in producing traditional items, instead of short-run experimental items. The reluctance of Stoke manufacturers is evident in Charles Holland's review of Queensberry Hunt, earlier in this chapter.

³⁰ To support the project Vicky Richardson, director of architecture, design and fashion at the British Council, who I had met at the Jerwood Makers Open exhibition in 2015, sought a notional order of one RBB for every British Council office in the world. This arrangement collapsed when Richardson left her post following organisational restructure. Subsequently it was Richardson who nominated the teapot for the 2018 Beazley Design of the Year award.

orders from premium retailers, including Labour and Wait and Margaret Howell. To commit to this in advance of seeing a design required tremendous groundwork and demonstrated their commitment to my project.

Shaikh and I shared email correspondence as press emerged around the Vitsoe exhibition.³¹ Shaikh was delighted with the platform and updated image that this afforded CC. Around this time, in October, I was invited to the factory to discuss in more depth the working relationship. At this meeting CCs 'biggest buyer, Stephen Murray, entered the picture for the first time. Murray, who retails 'traditional English 'brands to the North American market, pointedly inserted himself between mine and Shaikh's negotiations. Murray had, as I understand it, expressed an interest in purchasing CC and, on reflection, I might have appeared as a threat. Shaikh, who was receptive to the research from the outset, had suggested to me that I might be exactly what CC needed to lead them into the twenty-first century.

Then, on 29 November 2016, in an ongoing email exchange with Shaikh about a potential opportunity to produce a film on the BB, his wife Christabel replied to inform me that her husband had suddenly and unexpectedly died. Only days later, 1 December 2016, I learnt that I had been awarded £10,000 ACE funding and £2,500 in-kind support from the BCB to realise the industrial collaboration. Ironically enough, as funding was secured for my BB project the future of CC was thrown into uncertainty. Shaikh and I had not yet formalised a working contract: this had only recently started to take shape. Verbally, CC had offered a cash investment and in-kind support calculated at £9,000 through the use of machinery, staff and facilities for the production of an initial limited edition run of one thousand units.

With funding in place, and in consultation with the BCB, I decided to continue with the research to develop prototypes and make the item production ready, with or without CC. In December 2016 I began re-engineering the BB teapot, constructing briefs for packaging, and contacting designers and modelmakers. I kept all the retailers who had expressed an interest in stocking the item – including Labour and Wait, Margaret Howell and David Mellor – informed of developments. I began to make models in my studio.

It was a sad and difficult circumstance in which to begin work. If Stephen Murray intended to purchase CC then I would find a way to work productively with him. However, if production were to cease at CC I considered the possibility of establishing a new site of production, either setting one up from scratch, or, at a push, approaching another manufacturer. Not only was there no other object that so clearly encapsulated my research, but at that point in the practice-based PhD there was simply not enough

³¹ Detailed in Field 2.

time to establish a new relationship with another manufacturer, for example, Wedgwood. Early in the research process there had been an opportunity to work with Wedgwood which, however, I had declined because much of their production happens overseas: in working with CC I was trying to shift my practice away from a global outsourcing system. I had already carried out research and development work to understand the marketplace and potential for the RBB.

On 18 January 2017 I received an email from Murray to inform me that he had taken ownership of CC and to request a meeting. At this point I was a third of the way through the design and development process. Shaikh's death led to a re-negotiation of the terms of CCs' involvement in the project. Murray, who began financially rationalising the business immediately, withdrew a cash investment in the research (in the wake of this I negotiated £5,000 funding from the *Design Roots* research fund). To continue with the research, Murray requested a fully-specified design brief. I set about building a new relationship with CC and determining how to navigate a potentially contrary viewpoint around branding and image. Murray's model appeared to be based on the resale value of Englishness to a North American market, whereas my research had led me to develop a more complex image.

Brief / Costings

I was considering re-introducing two historic patented features discovered during my residency at AirSpace Gallery to establish a lineage to the ALB BB: the non-drip spout and the locking lid. While I remained uncertain about the aesthetic quality of the former for some time, as detailed below, I was certain the latter would feature in my version. The inclusion of certain design features was contingent upon costs and were also weighed up against one another for the distinctive, characteristic values they imbued the teapot.

Typically, as a designer who has worked with producers in East Asia, the relationship between design and a deep understanding of production methods (how something is going to be made) is not of primary concern. Prototyping is a typical part of the design process, but there are fewer opportunities for exchange between the modelmakers and the producers. However, at CC this interrelationship was unavoidable within the intimacy of the relationship and the limited economic means available.

After submitting my proposal to Murray, negotiation of the final product's costings required further exploration. A balance needed to be struck between reintroducing elements to the teapot, achieving production quality (increased labour) and the object remaining affordable. During the Vitsoe panel discussion Levien was unambiguous in his insistence that a key aspect of the BB's historic identity has been its affordability. As

a 'democratic object', it needed to remain as accessible as possible, without becoming an elite design object. However, during the conversation Timothy d'Offay expressed a contrary position, arguing that 'people should aspire to have a Brown Betty because it is a connection to the British tea culture '(see appendix i). Aspiration, in my view, is pointless if the item is prohibitively unaffordable.

As a broker for the product's placement in retail, I spoke with interested retailers to understand attitudes to price. Margaret Howell told me that their clients 'wouldn't blink ' at a retail price of £50. However, Labour and Wait, though sympathetic to the costs of British manufacture, felt strongly that it needed to be cheaper. These discussions took place during visits. Persuasive, in-person conversations were preferable to the impersonality of email.

By examining CCs 'wholesale prices I was able to identify that the most popular size – which I would redesign – was the four-cup teapot. This was a financial and strategic decision. If possible, I wanted to increase the profit margins for CC, while sustaining quality of design and production standards.

3.3 Craft Production on the Factory Floor

The CC factory is organised according to 'the factory system – 'a method of manufacturing that incorporates machinery alongside workers organised around a clear division of labour. Workers specialise in their specific area as part of this organisational system. This is a centuries-old system. According to the *Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, the factory system is often regarded as the archetypal symbol of Britain's industrial revolution (McCalman 2001). Developed for the mechanisation of textiles production, factories, as centralised locations of manufacturing, diverse in both scale and function, were common to many industries. Specifically, ALB developed 'flow production', as noted in Field 2, in 1931 where a single discrete unit of product flows from process to process.

Commentators contemporary to the early factory system, such as Charles Babbage, argued that it 'offered efficiency through intensive use of machinery and an extreme division of labour and skill', whereas critics, most notably Karl Marx, understood it to produce a 'miserable routine of endless drudgery and toil in which the same mechanical process is gone through over and over again '(*Economic Manuscripts: Capital Vol. I — Chapter Fifteen*, n.d.). Divided labour has important implications for the breadth of a worker's skill. The economist Adam Smith, writing in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) contrasted the factory system with earlier craft production in which each craftsperson performed all the necessary operations to make the item, whereas in the factory system and flow production the unit of product is divided into distinct operations by as many

individual pairs of hands. In craft production labour was 'undivided' (Leijonhufvud, 1986: 207).

The transition from craft to factory production created new economies and divisions of labour, the individual producer being replaced by the team. This led, as the economic historian Axel Leijonhufvud notes, to the necessity of a standardisation of product within teams. 'Under crafts production, in contrast, 'he writes, 'the skills and care of individual artisans will be reflected in non-standard output' (1986: 209) This meant that serial production according to divisions of labour required coordination of activities 'in the sense of the time-phasing of the inputs of individual workers (Leijonhufvud, 1986: 209). Subsequently, the labour of individual workers became complementary inputs so that 'if one work-station on an assembly line is unmanned, total product goes to zero' (Leijonhufvud, 1986: 209). One of the implications of the division of labour is that individual workers performing a specific task with a narrow skillset could be quickly replaced to ensure the continuation of the assembly line.

This brief summary of the transition of craft production into factory production is a useful context to frame my relationship as a craft ceramicist on placement within CC, still organised around a centuries-old manufacture system.³² At CC there is only one person on each process in the factory: one person is responsible for fettling; one person is responsible for casting; another for moulds; and another person is responsible for quality control. It became apparent to me early on in my visits that, due to financial constraints, Shaikh understood very precisely the required daily production of units in order to keep the business afloat.

To understand the specialised nuances of processes in the manufacturing chain required that I spend time shadowing the necessary person at their work station. This was negotiated by my point-of-contact, factory manager Philip Pennell. Prior to me meeting the staff, Pennell was instrumental in relaying my project requirements. It was Pennell, too, who decided when I could shadow individuals – presumably mindful of the required numbers of units that day. For the production process to be successful it was essential that I had his cooperation.

3.4 The Studio and the Factory

Although I refer to a 'placement' in industry, much of the early design, development and innovation of the RBB did not occur at CC. Instead, my studio in London became a primary site of work, with regular trips to the product developer Felix dePass's London studio and the modelmaker Ed Bentley's studio in Stoke-on-Trent (these roles are

³² Earlier still, we can link this to the economy of the country potter, and the persistence of Isaac Button.

detailed in the next subchapter). From the time I first worked with the moulds from CC during the AirSpace Gallery residency it was apparent that they were lacking in quality. Spending further time with the model and mould store at CC it quickly became apparent that I would need to employ a more skilled modelmaker. There was little consistency to the block and case moulds due to different jobbing modelmakers being brought in as and when necessary. CC do not have an in-house modelmaker; instead, they employ freelance model makers – often made redundant from large factories – and as with any craft-based occupation, skill sets can vary.

Bentley's studio was a place to test model, mouldmaking and production techniques once the design of the RBB had been reasoned out. Prior to production, visits to CC occurred in order to understand specialist processes (as detailed above), and to collect glazes, clay and existing casting slips from Pennel to be used in my studio. The majority of the shape development and functional testing of the design occurred at my studio. Between modeling in the studio, mouldmaking at Bentley's and sampling production in at CC we made numerous revisions to proportions, design details and functionality in order to refine the final object.



Fig. 107. Top, Ian McIntyre studio, image, Jake Curtis; Bottom, Cauldon Ceramics factory, image Gareth Gardner, both 2016. The comparison illustrates the differences in working environment between the designer-maker's studio and the industry factory.



Fig. 108. Ed Bentley in his Stoke-on-Trent Studio.

3.5 The Team

The realisation of the RBB employed not only the specialist knowledge of the CC team (albeit divided) as it interfaced with my own expertise and knowledge, but a complimentary extended multidisciplinary network of professionals, including a model maker, product developer, graphic designer, and industrial designer. Flow production in the factory system interfaces with an external team of specialist workers mediated by my role as an individual creative director, project manager, designer and craftsperson.

My role is not just that of maker, but coordinator and communicator with a synoptic overview of the situation. Importantly, part of this role is about interpreting, communicating and valuing the tacit knowledge of staff at CC (and sometimes reconciling the discrepancy found between their negative perception of the object and my own enthusiasm). Dr. Brownsword has insisted on the importance of acknowledging potentially 'overlooked forms of intelligence' among artists still working in Stoke-on-Trent '(Brownsword, 2017: 6).

As a reflexive 'designer-practitioner-researcher' I have the skills and expertise in the actions of the field to be able to undertake situated research within it, and take those insights back to the studio and my collaborators. As the research moved into production, I regularly discussed decisions with the workforce, factory manager Pennell, and Jane Dulson, who is responsible for customer-facing enquiries.

This model of collaborative working '–co-design –' a sharing of resources – follows the changing role of the traditional individual designer as identified by the scholar Sarah Vaughan in *Practice-Based Design Research*: 'professional designers,' she writes, 'should no longer automatically be in charge, with other participants merely offering support.' In complex situations the aim 'should be rather to create a situation where all stakeholders have a role in the analytical and creative work as far as possible on equal terms, and sharing the responsibility' (Vaughan, 2019: 80).

Others, too, have recognised and raised the value of collaboration. Amanda Ravetz, Alice Kettle and Helen Felcey's *Collaboration through Craft* (Bloomsbury, 2017) argues that through collaboration boundaries of sociality are understood, offering up a space between certitude and risk, and in turn opening up knowledge held by the makers. Glenn Adamson has written in *Thinking Through Craft* (Berg Publishers, 2007) that in sharing resources craft is an active process of working towards broader understandings. Elizabeth B.N. Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers make a useful distinction between 'co-design' and 'co-creation', arguing that 'co-design is a specific instance of co-creation' (2016: 42). For them, co-creation refers to 'any act of collective creativity, i.e. creativity that is shared by two or more people'. However, co-design indicates collective creativity 'as it is applied across the whole span of a design process':

Co-design refers, for some people, to the collective creativity of collaborating designers. We use co-design in a broader sense to refer to the creativity of designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process (Sanders and Stappers, 2016: 42).

This inclusive sense of 'co-design' encompasses the range of specialist and non-specialist skills and knowledge gathered for this research. It also characterises the hybridised role of the designer necessary for the realisation of the RBB.

To produce the RBB I assembled a team (aside from the workers at CC) to provide specialist support. The extended team was as follows: Bentley, master modelmaker with over 25 years industrial ceramics experience at Wedgwood, Steelite and Dudson in Staffordshire. Ed supported the development of the master pattern for the edition. Michael Montgomery, multi-disciplinary graphic artist. I worked with Mike to devise the narrative and interpretation concept for the packaging of the new edition. Felix dePass, designer and product developer for international brands including HAY, Established & Sons and Joseph Joseph. Felix assisted with the technical development of the teapot, including the locking lid and the design of a metal loose-leaf tea infuser.

In assembling this team I also formalised my relationship with Robin Levien, Royal Designer for Industry as a mentor from whom I received invaluable feedback.



Fig. 109. Left to right: Robin Levien, Felix DePass, Mike Montgomery.

3.6 Design Innovation Details

In what follows I will provide a detailed written account, accompanied by drawings, diagrams and photographic illustrations, of the production processes for key design features introduced to the RBB. My own approach of drawing as a way to think through the object parallels Robin Levien's methodology of 'drawing-as-thinking' (see Appendix i), who recalled during the Vitsoe panel discussion how, as a young designer, he was tasked to redesign the BB following the closure of Royal Doulton: 'So I got hold of a Brown Betty and started drawing it and drawing it was an amazing process of discovery because I was finding out all sorts of things about it that I didn't know and which were really quite interesting' (Appendix i).

I had already produced many models and moulds of different versions of design details of BB teapots for the Vitsoe taxonomy. Now, at this stage, the project was about realising a master model incorporating key design details that could be put into production. As an object with a long design evolution, it was important for me to change the perception of it without drastically changing the object, so as not to alienate the consumer. This involved making a highly iterative series of models. I understand iterative drawing, modeling and making through Peter Jan Stappers' framing of the prototype (see Methodologies) as being:

as much about failing and changing course as they are about demonstrating and proving. In that sense, they can be seen as research instruments, both for exploring new directions and for validating expectations (2013: 85).

Between iterative drawing, modeling and making there is a reciprocal relation that searches to understand and prove in the process of realising the final product.



Fig. 110. Iterative models, moulds and material tests laid out in my studio.

The locking lid and the Infuser

At the Vitsoe panel discussion a conversation was raised regarding the intergenerational use of loose-leaf tea versus the use of teabags. It became evident that a loose-leaf tea facility would increase the perceived value of the pot and help bring the object into the 21st century. The inclusion of a punched grid in the body of my my RBB to prevent loose leaf tea escaping through the spout proved too expensive, requiring three-part assembly of the pressed teapot (made in the manner of ALB's teapot) in order to precision punch holes into the bowl, followed by the application of the spout. Ultimately, this meant that a separate infuser unit was required in order to keep production costs at a reasonable level. However, 'off the peg' infusers proved expensive. I approached a designer in the UK who holds a patented infuser, 'The Chatsford Infuser', to lease a license. This infuser incorporates a recess to accommodate the notch of a teapot lid.



Fig. 111. A London teapot company white 4 cup teapot and the red Chatsford infuser.

The unit cost for licensing would have been £2.60, an amount Robin Levien felt would drastically begin to limit the affordability of the teapot. Subsequently, I designed an infuser and discussed with CC the possibility of sharing the cost of tooling to produce it. I sent this design to a metal spinner based in the UK who could form and punch holes into the container, the cost proved to be yet more expensive at £3.90.

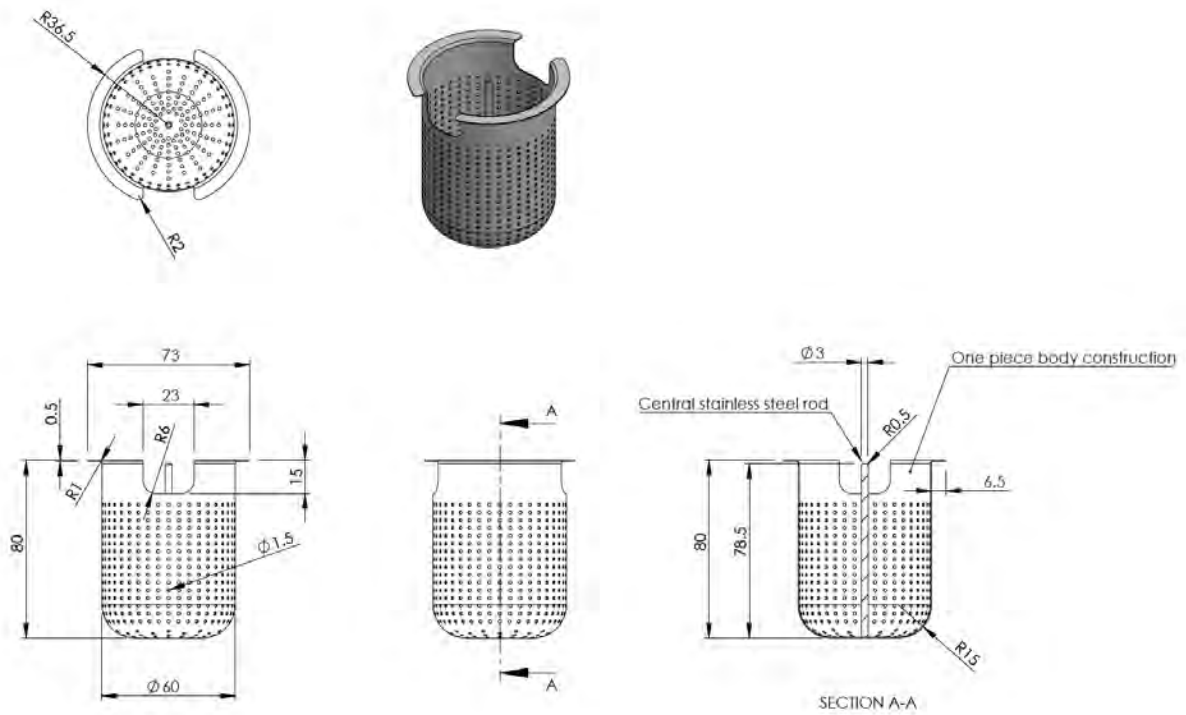


Fig. 112. An early proposal for a spun and punched metal infuser to be made in the UK.

Finally, having tried various options, I concluded, somewhat reluctantly, it would be necessary to source production of the infuser overseas in a bid to keep the pot at a reasonable price point.

I had been aware of the existence of the locking lid, developed by ALB since my internship at Studio Levien in 2009. This patented design differs from typical notched locking lids in that when the pot is tilted, the lid slides forward into an undercut in the neck of the pot to prevent it falling out.

Bibliographic data: GB358746 (A) — 1931-10-15

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 Print

Improvements in teapots, coffee pots and like pouring vessels provided with loose lids or covers

Page bookmark [GB358746 \(A\) - Improvements in teapots, coffee pots and like pouring vessels provided with loose lids or covers](#)

Inventor(s):

Applicant(s): VICTOR GEORGE HARRIS ALCOCK; WALTER LINDLEY; WILLIAM BLOORE ±


Classification: - international: **A47G19/14**


- cooperative: **A47G19/14**

Application number: **GB**19300032103 19301025

Priority number(s): GB19300032103 19301025

Abstract of GB358746 (A)

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358,746. Teapots &c. ALCOCK, V. G. H., LINDLEY, W., and BLOORE, W., (trading as ALCOCK, LINDLEY, & BLOORE), Raymond Street, Hanley, Stokeon-Trent. Oct. 25, 1930, No. 32103. [Class 66.] Teapots, coffee-pots, &c., of the kind provided with an extra flange extending approximately half-way around the upstanding flange of the mouth to prevent the loose lid falling off during pouring, have the extra flange in the form of a comparatively small bead or swelling f which is set back so as not to extend as far as the inner edge of the flange e which supports the lid d.



Fig. 113. Patent registration for ALB's locking lid design.

I had steered clear of considering this detail because I knew there would be a number of mould-making and casting issues to overcome and that its inclusion could potentially constrain my ability to explore new aesthetics in form that might make the object feel more contemporary. However, it gradually became evident that in re-visiting this patent I would solve a number of cost issues while significantly improving the functionality of the object. Aside from preventing the lid tipping off the teapot, the design also enables the lid to be inverted to allow the teapot to be stacked and for an 'off the peg' infuser to be incorporated.

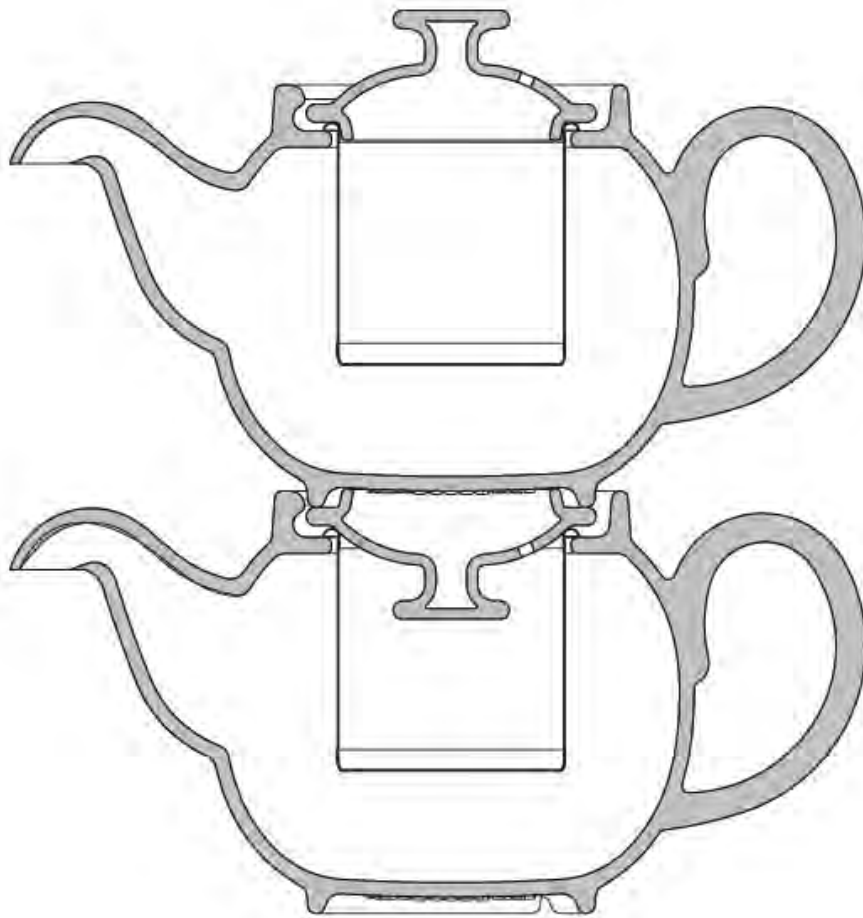


Fig. 114. Technical drawing of the stacking facility achieved by re-introducing the locking lid feature, used to propose the re-introduction of the patent to CC.



Fig. 115. RBB nesting detail; Image Angela Moore.

This development simplified the design of the infuser significantly as it didn't need to have a notch cut into its side. I was able to locate the production of the infuser in East Asia – a compromise to keep the pot at a reasonable retail price point. Using Qinhong Plastic and Metal Factory in Dongguan City, China, the infuser, including shipping, packaging and taxes, totalled US\$1.15 (£0.93) based on 500 units. This was the only aspect of the design that required outsourcing and in being cost effective helped counter the increased cost of labour – additional time in meeting my exacting standards on the factory floor.

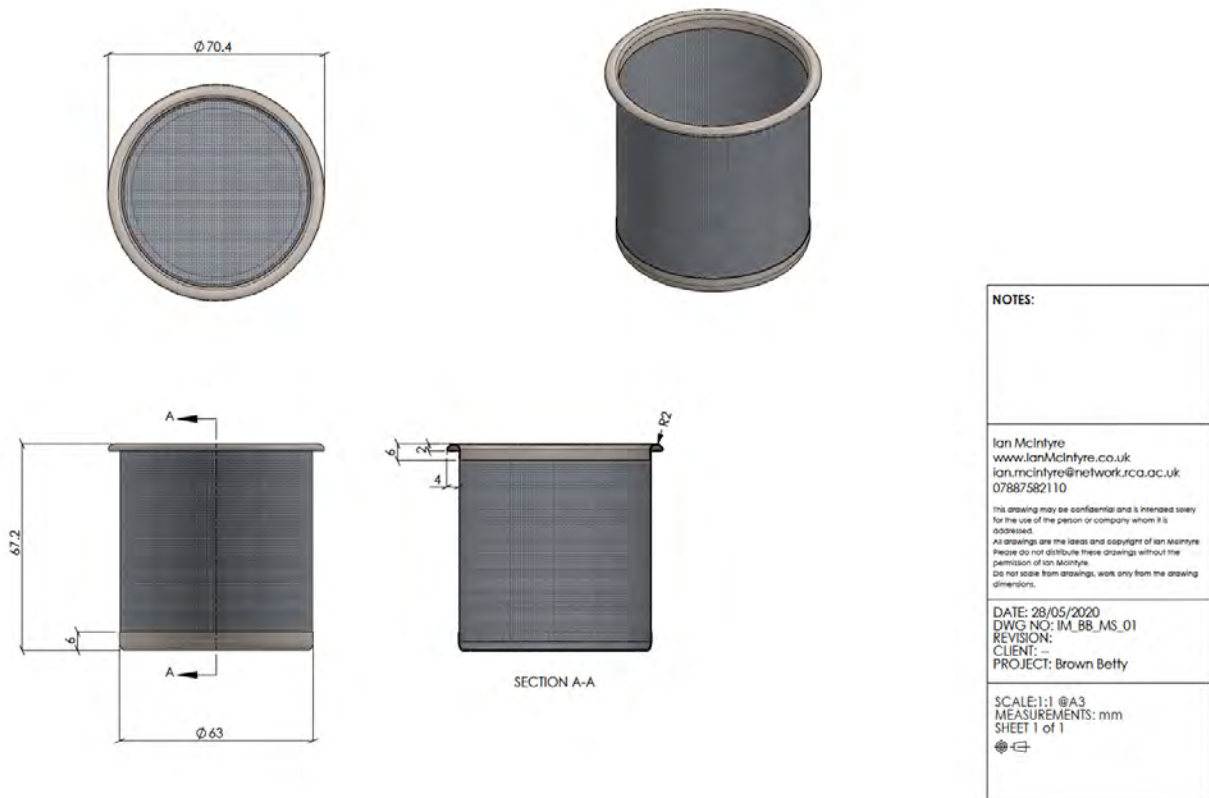


Fig. 116. Technical drawing of a low cost stainless steel mesh infuser sourced from QinHong Plastic and Metal Factory in Dongguan City, China.

With careful consideration of the depth of the lid, the infuser foot and collar of the teapot we were able to produce a design that could be inverted so the RBB and its components could be stacked together. The immediate benefits of this are two-fold: in the factory the items can be stacked efficiently prior to packaging; in cafes the teapot could be stacked neatly. The potential for large-scale sales to cafes seemed to me to be a missed opportunity by CC. Large quantities could be sold directly from the warehouse at the registered retail price.



Fig. 117. RBBs stacked in a catering scenario; Image Angela Moore.

Sourcing a cost-effective infuser helped set the constraints for the design details of the locking lid mechanism. Historical ALB teapots had been produced by pressing the globe on a jigger jolly machine, allowing a ridge for the locking lid to be formed in the neck of the pot, but the established manufacturing method of slip-casting at CC would make this detail harder to achieve. It was not immediately apparent how it could be recovered using slip casting moulds. Together with Felix de Pass we developed and tested a 3D model of the body and neck of the pot using the programme Solidworks to test the principal of the locking lid virtually. Once we were convinced that it could work we supplied Ed with a milled prototype of the body of the pot in order to realise a mould; I decided to avoid fine edges and design details that would become lost in the Rockingham glaze or damaged as the moulds are disassembled in CC.



Fig. 118. Technical drawing of the re-engineered locking lid detail demonstrating how a low cost infuser could be incorporated into the design.

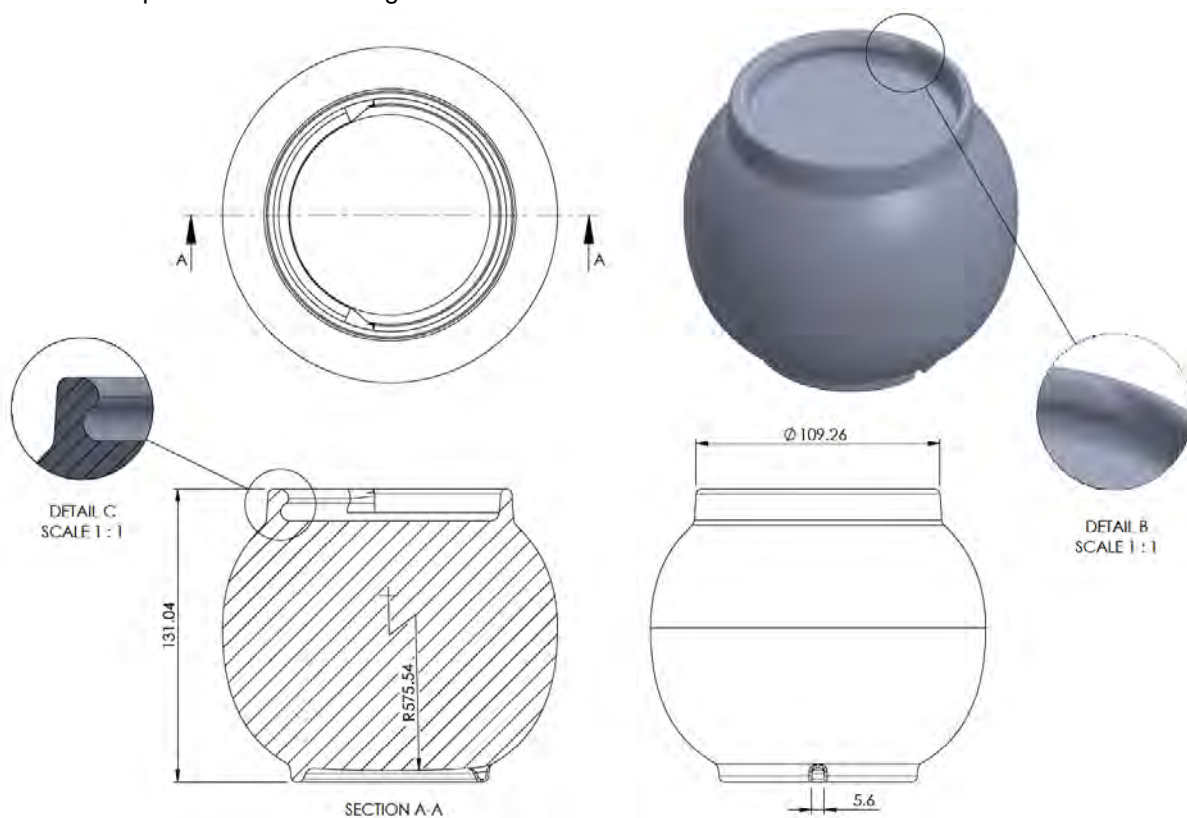


Fig. 119. CAD drawing of globe shape and lock lid detail used to test the principal of the locking lid and later to be printed and taken to Ed Bentley in order to explore if the shape could be feasibly moulded.

We knew that it would be difficult to create the undercut (detail C) in the pot's collar to prevent both the lid and infuser from dropping off the pot when tilted. Working with Ed, we made a significant innovation to develop a 'loose lump'. This moulding detail is repurposed from the sanitation ceramics industry where a moving part of the mould slides in and out to form the ridge. When the mould, made of five parts, is assembled and filled with slip, an undercut is created in the form which is vulnerable to being knocked off as the mould is disassembled. As the clay begins to dry and pull away from the wall of the mould, the loose part of the mould can be slid out of the neck of the pot and away from the undercut allowing the ridge to be preserved. Although no different in appearance or functionality to the ALB pot, this innovative technique enables an important characteristic function to be reintroduced using CCs 'favoured manufacturing technique of slip casting while enabling the inclusion of a low cost steel mesh infuser.



Fig. 120. The loose lump moulding detail that myself and Ed Bentley developed in his workshop. The small part slides out along the two ridges preserving the clay ridge before the main body of the mould is split in two.



Fig. 121. A cross section of the globe, neck and locking lid detail with nesting infuser and lid; Photo Angela Moore.



Fig. 122. RBB teapot in use; Photo Angela Moore.

Non-Drip Spout

It was during the AirSpace Gallery residency that I discovered the existence of the non-drip spout on versions of ALB's BB. This was absent from CCs' portfolio of products.

My research led me to understand that this obsolete detail was an innovation of ALB. – confirmed when I sourced the original 1931 patent (see Fig. 69). Its purpose, as detailed in Field 2, is to allow a straight pour which is stopped, as if a tap, when returned to its horizontal position. The discovery of this historic obsolete feature first reassured me of the validity of the project to re-engineer the BB.



Fig. 123. Modeling and moulding both the non drip and classic spout at Ed Bentley's studio.



Fig. 124. First casts from the completed handles, globe with locking lid detail and both non-drip and classic spout. Cast in my studio from Etruria Marl clay in moulds made with Ed Bentley.

While initially I pursued the development of both a conventional shaped spout and a non-drip spout, I began to gravitate towards the latter for the following reasons. ALB's BBs featuring the non-drip spout are scarce on the secondhand market. Aside from its brilliant functionality, aesthetically the non-drip spout is what Queensberry Hunt calls 'the twist'. Or Levien, citing Eames, the 'ugly' feature. Levien, as he revealed in the Vitsoe panel discussion, had never seen the non-drip design before and felt that, aside from its distinctiveness, which I knew would polarise consumers, the recovery of this lost feature was valuable in its own right. Whether ugly or not (a matter of taste), the inclusion of the non-drip spout enabled an important discussion about optimal functionality. As an historical cue it also pointed to the innovative – modernist form – phase of the object that I wanted to recover. It could also act as a totem to build a narrative around its reintroduction, which would sell the story. Finally, if I had used the conventional spout it may not have distinguished my intervention sufficiently from the traditional BB.

Engineering the non-drip spout was the reason the finished item was not launched at the BCB in 2017. This was the most intensive part of the research, and it took ten months to resolve. The patent is notional and protects the design, but does not detail specifically how it works: something that was once routinely produced in the factories of Stoke-on-Trent took a tremendous effort to recover having been lost.

In total, I produced in excess of thirty different iterations before resolving the design of the non-drip spout. This process involved correspondence between the modelmaker, Bentley, iterative versions in my studio, and in-depth conversations with craftspeople on Cauldon's factory floor. I also benefited from consultation with Levien – particularly when the non-drip spout did not function as expected.

After the initial model had been produced I took it back to the studio to remodel and remould it a further five times. If it was not the shape of the spout that cut off drips, then perhaps, we deduced, it could be the thickness of the slip-cast walls. Perhaps there was a difference between the thickness of the body and the thickness of the spout? We changed the aperture size and made the spout thinner. We experimented with a shallower and steeper curve in the spouts profile, nothing seemed to work. Finally, we considered whether the bowl at the bottom of the spout affected water flow. Still, we were unable to identify the solution.

We were able to achieve the effect of the tap, but there would always be a slight dribble that ran down the outside of the spout, and onto the table. At Levien's studio we took it in turn to use my prototype alongside an original ALB non-drip pot and observe closely. Looking into the spout of my prototype after pouring, Levien observed a meniscus

formed across the aperture of the spout as the pot was tilted back. A dribble followed when the meniscus popped. We agreed that the size and shape of the aperture may cause a meniscus to form. I returned to the studio buoyant and began testing a range of different aperture shapes but had little luck over the next month. Finally, talking with Levien, we realised that the fettling³³ of the aperture of the spout needed to finish with a pointed edge to prevent the meniscus forming. This development enabled me to resolve the issue and ultimately re-introduce the design detail.

A similar finishing technique is applied to existing BB spouts by the fettler at CC and it's possible that if the initial mould had gone directly to the factory it may not have been an issue. However, if we had gone straight into production and encountered functional issues later the quality of the product would be compromised and the resources may not have been available to trace and resolve the issue. Despite leading to significant delays, this process of inquiry has led to specific, practice-based knowledge – and the recovery of knowledge – of the spout's finishing.

³³ To 'fettle' is to trim and clean the rough edges of a casting before firing.

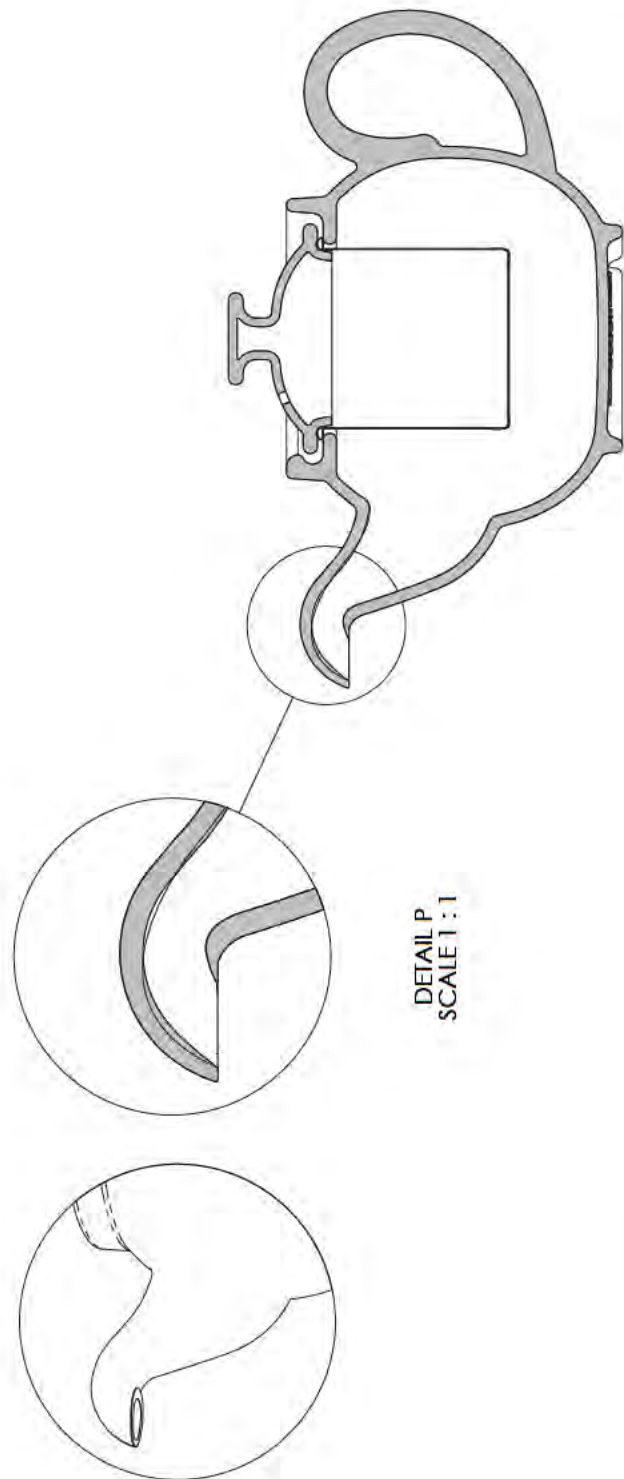


Fig. 125. Technical drawing of the resolved detailing of the non-drip spout showing a point on the short side of the aperture of the spout. Used to describe the finish needed to the fettleers on the CC factory floor.



Fig. 126. Troubleshooting the tolerance of variation in the finishing details of the aperture of the non-drip spout in CC with the fettler.



Fig. 127. The final non-drip design; Image Angela Moore.

Innovation within the moulds

Implementation of the 'loose lump' method was not the only innovation of the mould. Working with the factory casters, we found that early casts led to trapped air bubbles gathering in the neck of the pot in the undercut associated with the locking lid feature. These air bubbles result in a higher likelihood of deficiencies (below image) during casting and cracks during firing. To alleviate this, the master mould was sent back to Bentley who scribed a series of channels in the mould to allow air to escape, minimising the risk of bubble formation under the surface of the slip. These channels allowed any trapped air caught in the undercut created by the locking lid feature to be pushed out by the casting slip as it filled the mould.



Fig. 128. Airbubbles trapped in the mould on the casting bench in CC.



Fig. 129. Air channels allow air to be pushed out of the mould as the slip is poured in; Image Jake Curtis.

Handle

The handle of CCs 'teapot is close to the bowl and does not feature a return at the top. The return is a detail we reintroduced, inspired by ALB.'s design, which prevented the pot slipping and burning the knuckles in use. This functional decision also offered a technical solution to issues raised by the contemporary manufacture of the teapot. Where earlier BBs were pressed on a jigger-jolly, leading to thick walls and efficient insulation, the contemporary slipcast technique produces thinner walls that heat more quickly – slipcast production means the teapot is not as well insulated and the risk of burning is higher. The return on the re-introduced handle, positions the hand slightly further away from the body of the pot in comparison to CCs 'design (Fig. 72).



Fig. 130. Working with model maker and historic details and CAD sketch, templates; plaster handle (moving between 2d/3d), to test optimum section thicknesses for handle.

Base Inscription and Cut

CCs 'BB, as with many other historic versions, features a maker's mark and location. To create this Bentley scribed a deboss backstamp into the master mould by hand. This in turn enables the text to appear as an emboss in the cast. I felt strongly that I did not want to have my name on the base of the teapot, nor CCs 'name. Instead, I used simply: 'RE-ENGINEERED BROWN BETTY, STOKE-ON-TRENT'. Initially, CC were confused by the omission of their name and my name, concerned that it might prevent identification. In as much as the makers 'mark is a signature of producer or designer, the omission attempted to locate the teapot within the generic historic category of 'Brown Betty 'from Stoke-on-Trent. I believed that the teapot's image and the narrative we were developing was strong enough to distinguish it from that of other designers and producers.



Fig. 131. Ed Bentley scribing a debossed orientation of the makers mark into the master mould in his studio.



Fig. 132. The embossed makers mark revealed in the cast as it comes out of a new mould at CC; Image Glen Stoker.

The notion of 'Re-engineering' conveyed, I felt, a sense of precision design that aspired to use, durability and continuity – slow, developmental design – instead of 'newness'. This was an extension of the idea expressed in the Vitsoe exhibition. An ethos of researching, remixing, reappropriating and reproducing, countered the gimmickry of fast fashion that characterises much of commercial design. I wanted to acknowledge the history but also bring it in line with current functional detailing. In addition to this text, we introduced a notch into the foot ring of the teapot. This allowed liquid that would otherwise gather in the upturned teapot after washing to run off, instead of pooling on the pot.

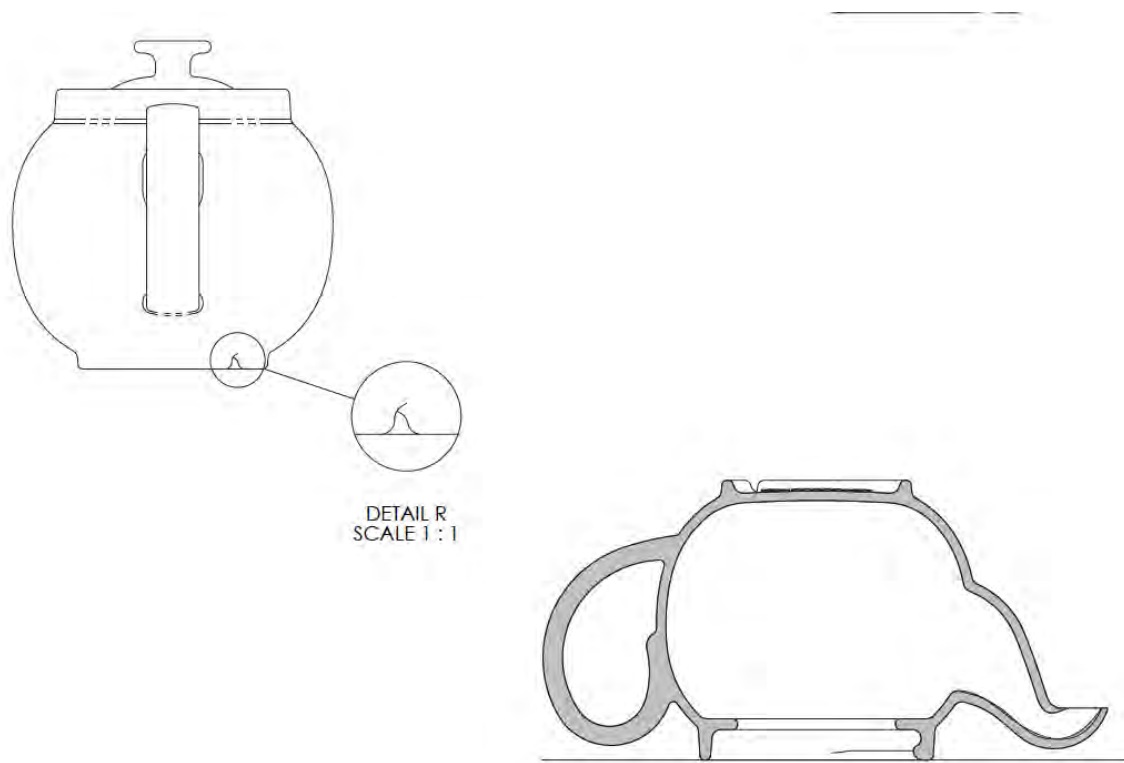


Fig. 133. Technical drawing of the notch in the footing of the teapot that allows water to run out of the depression when draining after washing.



Fig. 134. Upturned RBB on a draining board; Image Angela Moore.

Packaging / Graphic Design

With the re-engineering underway, I shifted my focus to consider how research, design and production insights might suggest an image, approach or identity for the product's packaging. As a designer, my overwhelming attention had been directed to the design detailing of the object in production and use. However, packaging, factored into the final wholesale cost, is an important component for displaying the identity of the product on the shop floor, as well as protecting it in transit. Marketing and promoting are part of my revitalisation methodology. Existing CC packaging, analysed in Field 1, provided a model to react against, even though I wanted to retain a strong sense of place in my design.

In the lead-in to the BCB, Dr. Neil Brownsword recommended a photographer he had worked with, Bjarte Bjørkum. Bjørkum had carried out several field trips to photograph the landscapes of Stoke. At Bradwell Woods, where the Elers Brothers had refined clay in about 1695, Etruria Marl can be seen bleeding through the ground. Fragments of smashed redware pots become indistinguishable with this ground, suggesting cyclical ecologies. This seam was the backbone of The Potteries and an important element of the area's distinct local identity. Photographic images became signposts to pause and reflect on place, geology and industry. Bjørkum kindly allowed me to use a number of his archival photographs.



Fig. 135. Surface outcrops of Etruria Marl, Bradwell Wood, North Staffordshire; Image Bjarte Bjørkum.

With these photographs, I returned to the graphic designers, Depass Montgomery, to storyboard the item. There was relatively little budget for the packaging; no money was received initially from CC towards marketing or packaging. I had to steer the graphic designers to produce packaging that was affordable and quick to assemble. They were effective at conceptually bringing the packaging into line with the history of the object. As Isaac Button's ceramics are an embodiment of the physical landscape from which they came, so the BB is an embodiment of a specific physical place-based landscape.

The solution was to produce a plain box with a technical drawing of the teapot and a simple orange and black monochrome poster wrap. The poster would fold out to detail the object's history. When stacked, each item's packaging would align to convey the sense of quantity in the truism: 'Stack'em high sell 'em cheap.' The poster, which could be kept, could provide a visual history of the BB, locating it in place and geology.



Fig. 136. Box and internal face of the poster wrap containing licensed images of the BB in a range of historical contexts; Image Angela Moore.



Fig. 137. Box and external face of the poster detailing pre folded layout to guide easy assembly in CC; Image Angela Moore.



Fig. 138. Box and poster assembled detailing key attributes of the object that can be rotated to convey a different message on each face; Image Angela Moore.



Fig. 139. A stack of the packaged teapots used to convey the potential of displays for retailers; Image Angela Moore.

A certain amount of the budget was allocated to product photography and to purchase image licenses that would extend to 1000 limited edition posters: I commissioned photographer Angela Moore to produce both photographs of the final edition and its packaging that would be used to target press and retailers in the build-up to the BCB launch. The addition of the poster meant that this discourse travelled with the product: the research would find a thoughtfully-designed vehicle to condense its insights. Framing the object as a cultural artefact was an effective way, I found, to garner interest in the product. A combination of the poster, an effective piece of design in itself, and commissioned images alluding to the process of re-engineering the pot did a lot to generate press attention.



Fig. 140. RBB limited edition poster for the limited edition RBB.



Fig. 141. Models, moulds, material samples and casts laid out as a visual representation of the re-engineering process.

3.7 Launch

The RBB was launched at the exhibition 'Brown Betty: An Everyday Archetype' at the BCB, Stoke-on-Trent in the former Spode Factory in 2017 – one of four major co-commissioned works with the BCB. The exhibition took place but there were no physical items available to be purchased. This was due to the ongoing problems with the non-drip spout, as detailed above. Instead, I presented a palette of flat-lay prints displaying the poster that would wrap the packaging of the finished product alongside many prototypes – deconstructed and stacked – not for sale. Where the exhibition at AirSpace Gallery and Vitsoe presented taxonomies of CCs' and ALB.'s teapots, the BCB featured a taxonomy of my own design. The exhibition used archival images and raw marl to communicate the sense of place and geology.

Archival photographs accompanied reproductions of the BB in illustrations of iconic and ubiquitous children's books such as Judith Kerr's *The Tiger Who Came For Tea* (Harper Collins, 1968) and Janet and Allan Ahlbery's *Peepo!* (Puffin, 1981). I commissioned a writer, Bethan Lloyd-Worthington, to produce a poetic reflection on the object (see Appendix ii). 'If you close your eyes and see a teapot,' the text begins, 'odds-on it's this one.' Yet, it is the surface of the teapot that Lloyd-Worthington identified as a device for time traveling: The teapot's globe, Lloyd-Worthington writes, 'reflects back its setting, and we can see our own daft face in it. The light bouncing back off the Rockingham glaze contains the image of wherever it is placed, at whatever time. See it. See what's reflected by it.' This commission introduced an external creative-critical perspective to the project.



Fig. 142. British Ceramics Biennial 2017, installation view.



Fig. 143. British Ceramics Biennial 2017, installation view.



Fig. 144. British Ceramics Biennial 2017, product packaging featuring a history of the BB.

The absence of the finished edition heightened anticipation amongst those who had pre-ordered, and the BCB, CC, Labour and Wait and Margaret Howell, became very protective of their allocation. ACE funding had been granted on the condition that the production run be limited to distinguish the editioned object from a mass produced object. Later, the physical launch of the finished edition took place the following year at Labour and Wait's East London store.



Fig. 145. Launching RBB edition for purchase at Labour and Wait during the LDF 2018.

The edition was small and garnered widespread press but I felt that something that could be continued, something sustainable, would be most valuable. This was a tentative step. It was clearly based on the uptake that CC were keen on producing more than a thousand. After the initial limited edition was sold, together with CC we took the decision to put the RBB into permanent production. The production RBB was necessarily distinct from the ACE-funded in a number of ways: We took out the defining features of the limited edition which was the poster and limited edition packaging, and ACE logo. We re-designed the box and commissioned enough new moulds for an ongoing production run.

Initially, Stephen Murrery at CC understood orders of the permanent production from Margaret Howell and Labour and Wait as small. It took a number of discussions with Stephen to reassure him that although relatively small, these retailers were crucial to position the pot alongside other iconic objects and expose it to a discerning design audience that Caudon didn't have access to. I was sure that this would allow us to raise both the perceived and retail value of the object and that in time these retailers would place larger orders through their subsidiaries in Japan. Over the subsequent months I built close relationships with these retailers. They would come to me before placing

large orders. As these orders came in I would travel to the factory to quality control their orders. While exhausting, I viewed this as essential that any teething issues in the early stages of bedding in production were identified before they reached the customer.



Fig. 146. Quality checking and rejecting RBB teapots in CC workshop.



Fig. 147. Quality checking the pour of RBB teapots in the toilets of a key retailer.

3.8 Outcomes

For the purpose of the thesis I am unable to include breakdowns of production costs due to confidentiality obligations to CC. However I can substantiate the commercial impact of this research by including extracts from a statement of support (see appendix) from Murray which points toward a number of indicators of its success. Murray is conscious that this research has not only raised the perceived value of CC and their wares but also increased profit margins. As he writes in the statement:

We started out with the idea that the narrative developed through Ian's research and his Re-Engineered Brown Betty could elevate the history and narrative surrounding our company and authenticate Cauldon and the rest of the collection. This has been achieved - Ian's edition sells at a premium to the rest of our collection and probably will go on to do so, it has opened up new premium markets such as retailers like Selfridges and Conran but it has also enabled us to increase the price of the rest of our products, driving higher profit margins across our collection (appendix, iii).

I have a licensing agreement in place for the RBB teapot granting CC continuous production of the design with no cut-off or review date. This open-endedness is intended so that they don't feel under pressure or that I will relocate production given their history and considerable investment in the project. The agreement is in place to ensure that the RBB is not (legally) their property in the event that Cauldon ceases to exist or is taken under new ownership. In this event I would be able to safeguard the RBB if required.

Within a commercial context a new product has been developed in collaboration with CC. The RBB incorporates historical precedents in the history of the object including the re-introduction of forgotten patented design details. Design details new to CC have also been introduced such as the incorporation of a loose-leaf infuser in order to bring the BB in line with contemporary consumer needs. The development of production processes new to CC have been employed in order to overcome a range of production challenges associated with the new design. Dissemination of the research, which occurred across the phases of research, development, production, and subsequent launch is detailed below.

Exhibitions

Within a cultural context a number of exhibitions have been produced locally, nationally and internationally exploring the BB's place in popular culture, social history and design history. This has contributed to the development of a renewed understanding of the cultural value of the BB teapot among a wider audience. This has been achieved

through a number of solo presentations of aspects of this research in AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent in 2016, the BCB in 2018 and subsequent exhibits in the V&A, London; The Design Museum, London; Compton Verney, Warwickshire; the Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts, China; CAFA Art Museum, Beijing; Morocco Pavilion in Dubai Expo 2020; Margaret Howell stores in Paris and Tokyo; Vitsoe, London and Labour and Wait, London.

In 2018, the V&A commissioned an online film about my research on the occasion of the RBB's inclusion in the exhibition 'FOOD: Bigger than the plate'.³⁴ When launched this film broke their highest online viewing figures for their previous films.³⁵ The involvement of the V&A provided leverage to access the Knutton Quarry seam where Valentine Clays Ltd. sources its material. This video has become an important tool for CC to sell its products and appears on its website homepage.

³⁴ Open from 18 May – 20 October 2019, this exhibition brought together the politics and pleasure of food to ask 'how the collective choices we make can lead to a more sustainable, just and delicious food future'.

³⁵ As of July 2022, the video had 73,338 views on the V&A's YouTube channel and has been 'Liked' by 2,600 viewers. The museum has turned off the Comments thread: this may have been a useful tool for collecting qualitative online research. The film can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeDZUq9WIEQ>



Fig. 148. RBB teapots and packaging sharing a display case with original Elersware and Yixing teapots in the V&A's exhibition 'Food: Bigger than the plate'.



Fig. 149. RBB mounted over a backdrop of historical redware teapots as part of 'A tea Journey' at Compton Verney 2019.



Fig. 150. RBB mounted over a backdrop of historical redware teapots as part of 'A tea Journey' at Compton Verney 2019, installation view.



Fig. 151. RBB included in 'Material Tales': *The Life of Things*. CAFA Art Museum, Beijing. Touring exhibition developed by Design Museum, London.



Fig. 152. RBB included in 'Material Tales': *The Life of Things*. Art Museum of Nanjing University of the Arts, China. Touring exhibition developed by Design Museum, London.

Commercial Stockists

A range of 'point of sale' materials have been developed to communicate a renewed understanding of the object and its history. Where the exhibition at AirSpace Gallery and Vitsoe presented taxonomies of CCs' and ALB.'s teapots, these point of sale materials feature a taxonomy of my own design as detailed in the images below. These materials enable the re-positioning of the teapot within a design context in order to align it with premium quality British heritage brands including Margaret Howell, David Mellor, Conran, Labour and Wait, and Selfridges who now retail the product. The RBB is also available from outlets in the museums sector, such as YAG gift shop.



Fig. 153. Boxed RBB display in Margaret Howell Jinnan, Japan, 2020.



Fig. 154. RBB window display and signage in Margaret Howell Jinnan, Japan, 2020.



Fig. 155. RBB counter display in Margaret Howell Jinnan, Japan, 2020.



Fig. 156. RBB Vitsoe display in Margaret Howell Jinnan, Japan, 2020.



Fig. 157. RBB Vitsoe window display and signage in Margaret Howell Tokyo, Japan, 2021.



Fig. 158. RBB display across entire store in Margaret Howell Tokyo, Japan, 2021.



Fig. 159. Archival BB images in Margaret Howell cafe Tokyo, Japan, 2021.



'Ian McIntyre has delicately and subtly brought the Brown Betty into the 21st century, whilst maintaining the characteristic shape and familiar appeal.'
—MARGARET HOWELL

「イアン・マッキンタイヤはブラウンベティの特徴的なシェイプや馴染み深い魅力を損なうことなく、繊細かつ巧みな方法で21世紀に復活させました」
—マーガレット・ハウエル

Fig. 160. RBBs displayed on Ercol furniture in front of Margaret Howell quote. Margaret Howell Tokyo, Japan, 2021.

David Mellor has re-named the Price & Kensington version of the BB that features in their product range in light of my research (this version featured in Phaidon Design Classics and was claimed as the The Real 'Brown Betty' Teapot in previous marketing material including this 2013–14 catalogue). It is now described as 'Traditional Round Rockingham Gloss Teapot' by the retailer. This year only Cauldon's RBB features in their printed catalogue and both versions feature online. It is evident comparing these two products on the David Mellor website, that the selling point for the Price & Kensington version is price and the selling point for the Re-engineered version is place.



Fig. 161. Price and Kensington's version of the BB teapot described by David Mellor as 'The Real Brown Betty Teapot' in their 2013–14 catalogue.

DAVID MELLOR

David Mellor cutlery Our designs Kitchen knives and boards Tableware Glassware Craft pottery and woodware Cooking and baking Kitchen essential

HOME / TRADITIONAL ROUND ROCKINGHAM GLOSS TEAPOT 6 CUP / 1.1LT



Traditional round Rockingham gloss teapot 6 cup / 1.1lt
£15.00

Traditional Staffordshire pattern.
Rockingham gloss glaze.

PRODUCT CODE 2171023

Fig. 162. Price and Kensington's version of the BB described by David Mellor as 'Traditional round Rockingham Gloss Teapot' online (2022).

DAVID MELLOR

David Mellor cutlery Our designs Kitchen knives and boards Tableware Glassware Craft pottery and woodware Cooking and baking Kitchen essentials

HOME / BROWN BETTY TEAPOT 4 CUP



Brown Betty teapot 4 cup
£45.00

Made in Stoke-on-Trent by Cauldon Ceramics, the oldest remaining maker of this iconic British design.

Working with ceramicist Ian McIntyre, Cauldon have re-engineered this classic teapot. Original design features gradually lost over time have been re-introduced including the patented locking lid and non-drip spout. Subtle design changes allow the lid to be

Fig. 163. The RBB described by David Mellor as 'Brown Betty Teapot' online (2022).

Media and Press Coverage

The research has received national and international coverage across specialist and broadsheet publications including features in the *Financial Times*, Denmark's daily broadsheet *Politiken*, and *Disegno Journal*. Critical reviews of the research have been written by leading subject specialists including Garth Clarke, Grant Gibson and Tim Parsons; the RBB has been the subject of cover stories of both *Crafts* magazine in September/October 2017 and *Ceramic Review*, March/April 2018 (see Figs. 166–169 and Figs. 172–175). This demonstrates the renewed cultural significance of the object across print and museum settings of art, design and craft. Press coverage has occurred at different stages of the research, initially in response to the AirSpace exhibition, then the Vitsoe exhibition, and after the launch of the finished product.

CRAFTS

THE MAGAZINE FOR CONTEMPORARY CRAFT



IAN McINTYRE, THE BROWN BETTY, 2017

Fig. 164. Front cover, *Crafts: the magazine for contemporary craft*, issue 268 September/October 2017



It may be quiet but the new, limited-edition Brown Betty is rather brilliant

In praise of the Super Normal

Grant Gibson

Design should celebrate and refine everyday objects

In 2006 the designers Jasper Morrison and Naoto Fukasawa launched an exhibition and accompanying manifesto entitled *Super Normal*. It was a howl against the way the industry was moving, with the combination of glossy lifestyle magazines and the exponential growth of design festivals around the globe creating a new breed of superstar designers, brought in by marketing teams to sprinkle their magic dust on any number of products. As Morrison pointed out: 'It's become a competition to make things as noticeable as possible by means of colour, shape and surprise. The virus has already infected the everyday environment. The need for businesses to attract attention provides the perfect carrier for the disease. Design makes things seem special, and who wants normal if they can have special?'

Instead, they argued, design should celebrate and refine everyday objects. I mention this because it seems to me that the Brown Betty teapot (as seen on our cover) is the apotheosis of Super Normal. Its globe shape, for instance, helps the tea to infuse; the Etrurian Marl it's made from retains heat so tea stays warmer longer; while its Rockingham glaze hides stains. Yet the products's ubiquity has had the effect of masking its cultural import, while the fact that it's so inexpensive means margins for the maker are small, which has encouraged reproductions from overseas.

PORTRAIT BY MAREN CALDWORTH

On page 44 we discover this is something Ian McIntyre is about to change. Working with one of the last British manufacturers of the teapot, Cauldon Ceramics, the designer has spent years investigating the product's history and created a new Brown Betty, re-instating features that had disappeared as it moved from manufacturer to manufacturer.

Importantly, the project isn't centred around his desire to stamp a particular aesthetic on the product. Instead it's about finding the most effective way to re-introduce key functional elements and make manufacture ever-so-slightly more efficient, while ensuring it remains affordable. The finished piece is smart, a little reserved, but somehow feels just right. Which is exactly what good design is all about.

While I have your attention it would be remiss of me not to point out that this is a bumper issue – containing a special supplement devoted to the Woman's Hour Craft Prize as the shortlisted makers go on display at the V&A. Regular readers will also notice a few other changes: we bid a fond farewell to columnists Patricia van den Akker (our Design Doctor) and Jane Norris, but usher in a new slot from one of the craft world's leading writers, Glenn Adamson, who will be keeping us up-to-date with developments over the pond in his Letter from America. I hope you enjoy.



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Fig. 165. Editorial on REBB by Grant Gibson. *Crafts: the magazine for contemporary craft*, issue 268 September/October 2017

'IT SUMS UP SO MUCH ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE CERAMICS INDUSTRY, OUR CULTURE, THE WAY THAT EVERYTHING COMES FROM LOADS OF DIFFERENT PLACES BUT IS QUINTESSENTIALLY BRITISH. IT'S SO RATIONAL AND UNASSUMING AND UN-STYLED. IT'S TIMELESS. IT'S A REALLY BEAUTIFUL OBJECT,' DESIGNER IAN McINTYRE AND I ARE STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF CAULDON CERAMICS' FACTORY FLOOR IN STOKE-ON-TRENT AS HE RHAPSODISES OVER THE BROWN BETTY



Text: Grant Gibson. Still photography: Tom Harford. Styling: Sandy Saffold. Location photography: Gareth Gardner

Fig. 166. Crafts: the magazine for contemporary craft, issue 268 September/October 2017. Pages 44/45.

We are surrounded by pots in various stages of manufacture. In front of us are a cluster of moulds full of red Etruria Marl slip; to our right unfinished teapots wait to go into the kiln; on the other side pieces are being trimmed and tidied (or fettled), while behind us the finished product is stacked on shelves, with trays of lids sitting nearby. It might all seem a little bit ramshackle; however, McIntyre is keen to point out that production is more organised than it looks. 'Because it's such a small space and they're pushing out such a volume [Cauldon makes around 300 pots a day], it looks slightly chaotic but everything is quite streamlined,' he tells me. 'All the moulds dry around the kilns during the evening. Everything runs into the kilns then out the back for glazing.'

That said, the factory's most striking feature is the film of red dust that envelops everything, from the pile of glazed butter dishes to the office printer. You can see it hanging in the air as the sun streams through the rooflights, and hours after I've left it's still catching in my throat. You sense this is a business in need of a shot in the arm, which, in part, is why the 33-year-old is here.

'I've never designed a teapot before - I just didn't see the point'
IAN McINTYRE



McIntyre designs his production at the Stoke-on-Trent factory. Right: Ian McIntyre

is that makes the product so special? Well, for a start there's the globe-shaped body, which is the perfect shape to allow the tea to infuse; the Etruria Marl earthenware retains heat, so the tea will stay warmer for longer; the brown Rockingham glaze covers stains as well as potential imperfections in manufacture; it's inexpensive, functional and pretty elegant to boot - less a classic and more an archetype, in fact. Yet its sheer simplicity (as well as the fact that it rapidly established itself as the teapot for the working classes) has often led to it being overlooked. And the fact that it retails so cheaply means margins are necessarily tight, with reproductions often coming from overseas where labour costs can be kept low.

The designer's research into the product began with an exhibition at AirSpace Gallery during the British Ceramics Biennial in 2015 and has since blossomed into a PhD, sponsored by the V&A, York Art Gallery, Manchester School of Art and, latterly, Cauldon, as well as uncovering the product's history, he has also set about creating a new, limited-edition version which, he believes, re-instates and refines the best elements from its past.



Fig. 167. Crafts: the magazine for contemporary craft, issue 268 September/October 2017. Pages 46/47.



Fig. 168. Crafts: *the magazine for contemporary craft*, issue 268 September/October 2017. Pages 48/49.

face of the wrapper has a different caption that captures defining moments in the product's history: the idea is that unfolded it becomes a poster, not a wrapper for a moment. 'First and foremost, the success is to expose the Brown Betty as a culturally significant object. But ultimately it's dictated by sales. Almost immediately, though, where near the volume, the classic spout would for Caudon. It's really about communicating to people what makes the Brown Betty so special.'

Do Caudon and McIntyre have a hit on their hands? It seems so: one that fills a smart, subtle niche. The Brown Betty is a smart, subtle, unlikely to break the bank and will provide much-deserved attention to an under-valued product. It's likely to bring Caudon to an entirely new audience, which can only be a good thing.

Brown Betty: The Anecdotal Topsoil at the British Ceramics Biennial, Stoke-on Trent, 23 September - 5 November. <http://britishceramicsbiennial.com>

that's part of its charm, but it's also part of the demise of the companies that have made it. There needs to be a sweet spot where it's still accessible to the mass market, where it's still profitable, where it's still profitable, where it's still profitable to be manufactured here.

He very deliberately describes the process as re-engineering, rather than re-designing. 'We spent ages thinking about that,' he says. 'It started with a new thing. Instead, it's about re-appraising the object.'

While Caudon (and others) sell its Brown Betty with a Union Jack sticker attached, the designer is keen on using the product's anecdotal history to be rooted in the clay because 'overseas,' he explains. 'Its features evolved out of being burnt. Finally, a small cut-away on the clear foot of the pots lets water run away and keep the original rounded shape but bring back the packaging is simple: created with Mike Montgomery and Felix de Pass, the teapot will come in a box wrapped in brown paper, suitable for postage to encourage more direct sales. Each

It's communicating to people what makes the Brown Betty so special!

DAK MCINTYRE



VERA ASHLEIGH PHOTO / BARANIDINNYA / SHUTTERSTOCK / SHUTTERSTOCK

the hinked spout that Alcock, Lindley & Bloore created in the 1920s, which prevents drips from running down the pot's side. 'What happens par-ticularly is that the lid is a smart, subtle, unlikely to break the bank and will provide much-deserved attention to an under-valued product. It's likely to bring Caudon to an entirely new audience, which can only be a good thing.'

McIntyre's new Brown Betty, developed using 3D printing and hand moulding, keeps the original rounded shape but brings back

Non-Drip AND Look Lid
GLOBE SHAPED - SAMAN BANGRO

ALCOCK, LINDLEY & BLOORE LTD
Manufacturers of Saman and Biddingham Teapots
BANKLEY, STAFFORDSHIRE

Checklist from left:
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle

Chickster from left:
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle

Blower Lid only thing
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle

Opposite component
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle
- The pot has a lid with a handle

point in McIntyre's studio

Fig. 169. Crafts: the magazine for contemporary craft, issue 268 September/October 2017. Pages 50/51



punkt for socialt samvær og symbolet på afslapning og komfort, uanset om du var rig eller fattig. Man kan sige, at det understøtter hele vores sociale livs fortæller tehistorikeren.

Faktisk kom kaffen til London, for teen gjorde, og omkring år 1700 var der etableret omkring 500 *coffee houses* i byen. Så hvorfor er den engelske kultur bygget så stærkt op omkring te, når de fleste omkringliggende lande bygger på en kaffekultur?

Der finde sandsynligvis ikke ét enkelt svar på det spørgsmål, men ifølge Jane Pettigrew skal hovedforklaringen findes i det faktum, at te blev transporteret til havs fra såvel Kina som fra de tedrykkende kolonier. Kaffen derimod blev primært transporteret via landjorden op gennem Europa.

»Man kunne relativt sikkert og uforstyrret sejle teen via Atlanterhavet og gennem kanalen ind til London. Men på grund af alle de krige, der hærjede Europa, var det meget mere kompliceret at få kaffen fragtet fra det europæiske fastland og videre til England. Så mens det meste af Europa gradvist gik fra primært at drikke te til kaffe, fortsatte vi med at drikke te,» siger den engelske tehistoriker.

Te var for de belæste

Zommer vi ind på Danmark, fremstår vores kulturhistorie i forhold til varme

drikke »stik modsat englændernes, fortæller Annette Hoff, der er historiker og forfatter til bøgerne 'Den danske tehistorie' og 'Den danske kaffehistorie'.

»Danmark blev født som tedrikkerland i 1600-årene, men omkring år 1800 bliver vi for alvor et kaffedrikkerland, konstaterer hun.

»Teen har historisk set været knyttet til belæste mennesker, de første tedrukkere var præster, og i Holberg-tiden var det en populær drik i de finere saloner. Men teen slår aldrig nogenstinde igennem på landet og blandt den brede befolkning. Blønderne har for det første ikke råd til te, og på landet har man desuden tradition for at koge urter som kamille og salvie, så hvorfor i alverden skulle man pludselig til at betale i dyre domme for en håndfuld kinesiske teblade, når man kan købe en hel hest for samme pris?»

Kaffen kommer til Europa i 1615, og de følgende årtier breder den sig langsomt, inden den kommer til Danmark omkring 1660. Til at begynde med er det en kostbar vare, men det bliver den ikke ved med at være.

»Bønderne slår sig altså på kaffen, der modsat teen har en hurtigt opvikkende effekt. Det er noget nyt, stærkt noget, som er godt at vågne på, når man har sovet middagslur. Og da bønderne vandrer ind til byerne i 1850'erne og bliver industrarbejdere, tager de kaffen med sig. Fordi bønderne og industrarbej-

FORSKNING.

Designer Ian McIntyre opkøbte gamle Brown Betty-tepotter, som han skilte ad for at finde inspiration til sin egen, nutidige udgave af designklassikeren.

Foto: Angela Moore



Teen har historisk set været knyttet til belæste mennesker, de første tedrukkere var præster, og i Holberg-tiden var det en populær drik i de finere saloner
Annette Hoff, historiker

ne er mange flere end de embedsmænd, der har siddet og sippet te i byerne, bliver Danmark altoverskyende en kaffedrikkeration,» fortæller Annette Hoff.

Tepotte til tiden

På mange måder er Englands storhedstid i dag overstået, hvilket også gælder storhedstiden som stolt tedrikkeration. I hvert fald overladisk set.

»Flerparten af folk drikker primært sort te fra billige teposer, og de fleste mennesker har ingen anelse om, hvor deres te kommer fra, eller hvad den egentlig indeholder. Samtidig har vi i de seneste 5-10 år set alle de store researchvirksomheder rapportere, at teforbruget i Storbritannien er for nedadgåendes, lyder det fra Jane Pettigrew.

Men der er håb at spore, bedyrer hun. Mens salgstatistikkerne er domineret af supermarkederne billige tebevere, stiger salget af de dyrere teblade og specialblandinger. Tehistorikeren sammenligner det med den udviking, som vin har været igennem over de seneste 40 år.

»Da jeg var barn, var det meget få mennesker, der vidste noget om vin. Du drak enten bare rødvin eller hvidvin, og hvis du var fin på den, drak du rosé. Men i dag interesserer de fleste af os for vin i en eller anden udstrækning. Vi ved, hvilke druer og distrikter vi foretrakket, og hvad vi vil drikke til forskellige typer mad. Det skyldes både reklame, oplys-

ning og tilgængelighed i forhold til kvalitetsvine, og jeg ser i høj grad interessen for te være på vej i samme retning».

Ganske som viden og oplysning skal være med til at holde den gode teoplevelse i live, skal viden og oplysning bruges til at sikre Brown Bettys overlevelse, fortæller Ian McIntyre.

»Det er det mest genkendelige objekt inden for britisk keramik. Folk genkender tepotten, selv om de ikke nødvendigvis ved noget om den - og det er jo faktisk det, godt design skal kunne, altså være genkendeligt uden at lyde eller larme for meget. Men samtidig synes jeg, at det er vigtigt, at folk forstår, hvorfor Brown Betty er så specielt, og hvad der skal til, for at den forbliver et ikon, siger designeren.

»Da jeg begyndte at arbejde med Brown Betty opdagede jeg, hvor meget nostalgisk og projektionisme mange mennesker forsøgte at pakke den ind i, nærmest som en slags brexitmentalitet: Lad os smække et Union Jack-flag på indpakningen, så sælger den sig selv. Men det var afgørende for mig at fremme en anden fortælling, nemlig at det er den kontinuerlige forandring, som har gjort Brown Betty ikonisk, for det har gjort, at den til alle tider har været tilgængelig og hyperfunktionel. I sidste ende er det jo de mest funktionelle ting, der lever længst».

ianm@ppl.dk

Fig. 171. Politiken, Design supplement, Friday 26, February, 2021. Page 22

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THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL CERAMIC ART

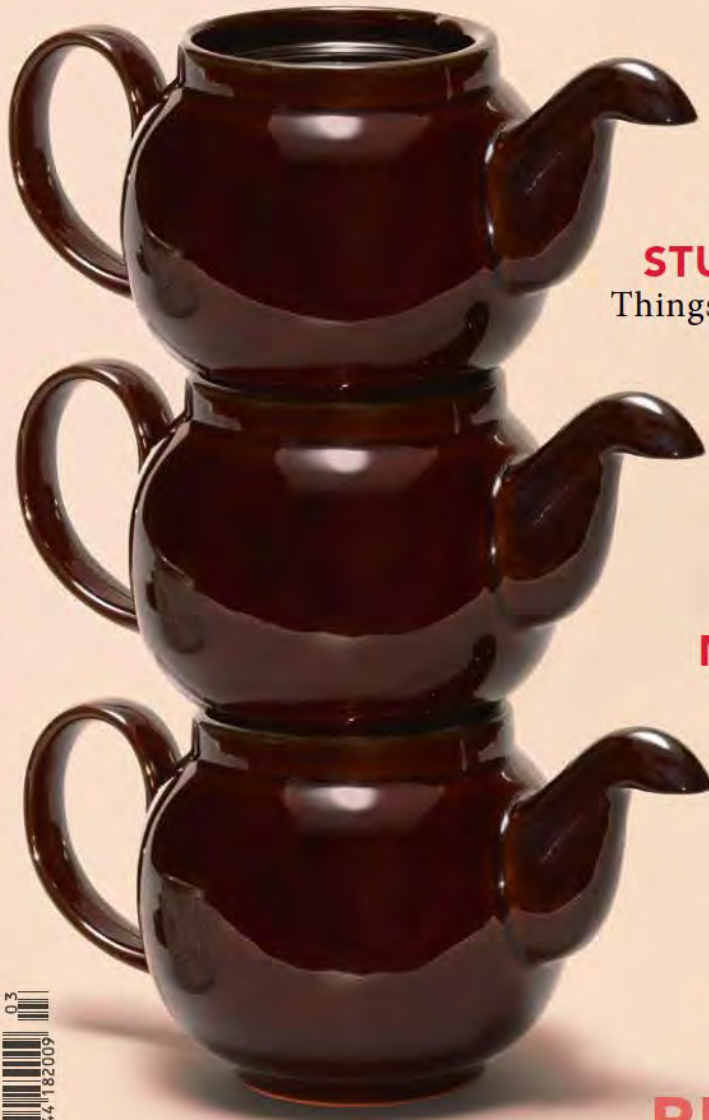
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THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL CERAMIC ART

March/April 2018



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**CELEBRATING
STUDIO POTTERY**
Things of Beauty Growing

**MIDORI
TAKAKI**
Storytelling
sculptures

MASTERCLASS
Ruthanne Tudball's
soda-glazed pots

**THE
BROWN
BETTY
REVISITED**

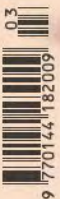


Fig. 172. Front Cover *Ceramic Review*, Issue 290, March/April 2018. Tim Parsons.

BELOW: caption:caption



EVOLVING HISTORY

This is no easy task for an object that has no known designer. Rather than coming from the hand of a single maker, the Brown Betty has evolved from pots made over 300 years ago. Its origin story begins with the Dutch Elers brothers who, in 1693, refined Etruria Marl clay from Bradwell Wood in Staffordshire. Previously unusable for fine wares, once it was sifted, washed, sieved, blunged and weathared, the brothers had a quality material from which they produced high-end products for wealthy clientele. Among the many objects they made with this material were unglazed red clay copies of spherical designs of teapots imported from Ming period China.

With the ensuing industrialisation of Stoke-on-Trent, and developments in glaze technology, over the years, subtle mutations developed the pot into what became known as the Brown Betty. The globe shape and Rockingham glaze are the most obvious features but closer inspection should reveal others. A pot made in four parts with the spout added to the body over a series of punched holes to stop loose leaf tea from escaping. A rough-cut spout that cuts the flow and prevents drips. A handle with sufficient clay touching the body to protect the user from scalded knuckles. Alcock, Lindley and Bloore (ALB), the company who, during their 60 years of business were responsible for producing and championing what we know as the Brown Betty today, added further, patented, innovations: a locking lid that wedges itself in and won't fall when the pot is tipped, and an even more efficient non-drip spout shaped like a tap.

DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

Such was the Brown Betty's success, by 1926 Staffordshire was producing half a million pots a week and in 1974 still produced one million a year (it was Fabiat's best-selling product). McIntyre's research has revealed its recent lineage, from ALB, who were taken over, then liquidated, by Royal Doulton, through Gem Pottery, Ascot Pottery, Caledonia Pottery and finally to Cauldon Ceramics – the oldest remaining producer of the Brown Betty. McIntyre tells me, 'at an unknown point between 1979 and 2004, some of the design features and manufacturing processes of ALB's design changed. Within this period contemporary makers of the original version, including Cauldon Ceramics

Images: Ian McIntyre

Non-Drip AND Lock Lid
GLOBE SHAPE - SAMIAN BANNED

The small illustration of a teapot which prevents the lid from falling and even when the teapot is tilted at an acute angle, the lid remains locked in position. This design is a result of a number of patents. The design is a result of a number of patents, including those, given, etc.

ALCOCK, LINDLEY & BLOORE LTD
Manufacturers of Samian and Rockingham Teapots

Agents for various regions: NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, AUSTRALIA, etc.



'The new edition is a re-inspiring of historical precedents in the history of the object rather than me imposing my own aesthetic.'
Ian McIntyre

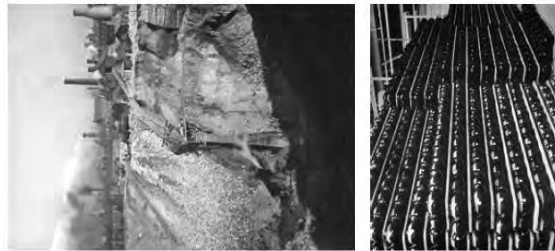


Fig. 174. Ceramic Review, Issue 290, March/April 2018. Pages 28/29. Tim Parsons.



IAN'S CAREER PATH

- 2007: BDes 3D Design, first class honours, Manchester School of Art
- 2010: MA Ceramics and Glass, Royal College of Art
- 2012: Pottery series for Another Country, best selling collection of tableware ceramics for the British furniture brand
- 2014: Candela, Victoria and Albert Museum, site-specific installation commissioned by The London Design Festival/Officine Panerai
- 2014: Selected by... Limoncello gallery, group exhibition curated by Michael Marriott and Jesse Wine
- 2015: Icon, solo exhibition at Air-Space Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent
- 2015: Many a Slip, Marsden Woo summer show, guest curated by Alison Britton
- 2015: A Ton of Clay, awarded the Jerwood Makers Commission and UK tour
- 2016: Brown Betty, the archetypal teapot, an exhibition designed and curated with Vitca London
- 2017: Brown Betty, the archetypal teapot at British Ceramics Biennial

As well as providing a solution, the project raises questions. Are designers the new guardians of our object heritage? How can industry be encouraged to value the culturally significant objects they make instead of diluting them or overlooking them in pursuit of the new and the novel? Ultimately, the role of protecting culturally significant designs, products and practices does not lie in the hands of one discipline but many. Progress will be made, as is intimated by McIntyre's project, by the bringing together of multiple stakeholders from culture, industry and academia, to collectively understand, define, produce and champion what we want to protect. Rather than seeing design as a means of eclipsing the past, McIntyre's project has shown it has a central role in safeguarding it for future generations. ■

For more information visit iammcintyre.co.uk; cauldronceramics.com

optimised for production without sacrificing the vital features that make it what it is. He also made sure the pots could stack (the lid inverts and accepts the base of the next pot), an essential feature for the catering industry where stacked pots save vital kitchen space. A loose-leaf diffuser replaces the need for the pierced body behind the spout, and a gap in the foot ring facilitates drainage, making it dishwasher-friendly.

DESIGN HERITAGE

All throughout this painstaking work, supported by funding from the Arts Council, McIntyre resisted the desire to restyle the object, aware that the biggest market was among those looking for a traditional Brown Betty and not a fancy iteration. Instead he doubled down on perfecting the details and turned to the packaging to help tell the story. A bold exploded view adorns the box and a poster designed by Mike Montgomery and Felix de Pass wraps it, reminding potential purchasers of the essential elements of the design and providing a potted history culled from McIntyre's research. I have yet to hold one in my hands but I feel confident McIntyre's pot will be successful, not just in sales terms but in fulfilling the cultural role of bringing back into focus a maligned archetype.

Listener entitled *The Meaning and Purpose of Design*, Pick taught his audience to identify the signs of good design in everyday household objects. Regarding poorly designed objects, he scolded them: 'If you would not buy them, they would not be made.' And yet we snap up these cheap Brown Betty imposters without stopping to ask what a real Brown Betty is, where it comes from, who makes it and how? As McIntyre puts it 'No-one has been the guardian of it, it has been neglected.'

REAPPRAISING A CLASSIC

Righting this wrong has been the essence of McIntyre's mission. His PhD thesis, supported by Manchester School of Art, the *British Ceramics Biennial* and York Art Gallery is an in-depth case study exploring strategies for the revitalisation of the Brown Betty. Specifically, it positions the Brown Betty as a culturally significant product and explores how McIntyre can use his design practice to support a reappraisal of it. He tells me: 'At the moment I'm exploring revitalisation strategies for the oldest maker of the object [Cauldon Ceramics] and also trying to define the object and what constitutes an original in order to better position the maker against cheaper imports, which are lowering the value of their work. The new edition I've just launched is a re-instating of historical precedents in the history of the object rather than me imposing my own aesthetic.'

The project, which McIntyre is loath to call a redesign, preferring a re-engineering, began with an extensive taxonomy of the details of the pot. He discovered ALB's lost attributes – the locking lid and non-drip spout – and brought them back. Acknowledging that the pot had to remain affordable he refrained from pushing the traditional multi-piece construction. However, the locking lid requires an undercut – something not achievable with a conventional slip mould. McIntyre's answer was to create a 'loose lump' in the mould that would slide to make the undercut possible. Touches like this are where the real design has happened. The new pot strikes a delicate balance of being



BELOW: caption-caption

Fig. 175. *Ceramic Review*, Issue 290, March/April 2018. Page 30. Tim Parsons

VITSOE Voice

Issue three, 2020

Unravelling the conundrum that is living better with less that lasts longer



Fig. 176. Vitsoe Voice, issue 3 2020.

The refreshing detail of a perfectly comfortable pour

Brown Betty



Photograph by
Angela Moore

"The chances are, if I asked you to draw a teapot from memory, you'd think of a shape not too dissimilar from the Brown Betty. That's because it's one of the most manufactured teapots in British history." So says ceramicist Ian McIntyre who, as part of his Collaborative Doctoral Award with Manchester School of Art, York Art Gallery and the British Ceramics Biennial, set about examining the origins of this noble pot.

Brown Betty is a product of evolution, with form and function refined over decades, rather than the authorship of any single designer. It emerged as a cheap, utilitarian pot for the working classes, absorbed into the fabric of everyday life. This evolution resulted in a teapot modest in appearance yet perfect for the task in hand: brewing and pouring tea. By quietly performing its job so well it has endeared itself to generations.

Despite its popularity however, surprisingly little is known about the teapot's original makers.

The very character of the pot comes from the quality of the clay, which has been mined in Staffordshire for red-ware teapots for over 300 years. "I think it's safe to say that a Brown Betty that isn't made of Staffordshire red clay, isn't an original Brown Betty at all" states Ian. This clay – Etruria Marl – was first refined around 1695 by two Dutch brothers, John Philip Elers and David Elers, in Bradwell Woods, North Staffordshire. Prior to this the potteries which existed were small family-run outfits, producing crude wares like butter pots for farmers to transport their produce to market.

The brothers used this clay to make teapots to emulate and compete with the expensive red stoneware Yixing teapots, which were being imported from China by the East

Fig. 177. Vitsoe Voice, issue 3 2020. Page 32/33

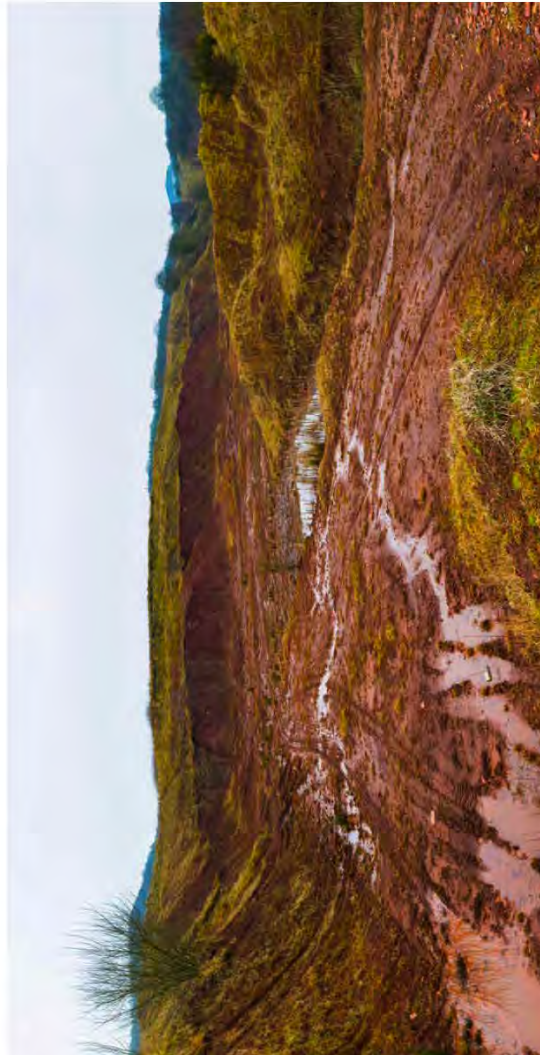
India Company. It is widely agreed that the refinement of this clay, which could reliably withstand the temperature of boiling water without cracking, gave rise to new technological experiment in Staffordshire, and became a key catalyst for the industrialisation of the six towns that make up Stoke-on-Trent.

"The Brown Betty is a purely rational design, stripped of anything superfluous to its function and production methods" explains Ian, who over the course of his studies sourced multiple Brown Bettys of various shapes, dates and manufacturer to evaluate the principles behind the design transformation. He discovered that over the years the Brown Betty form migrated into a globe, which

was seen as the best shape to infuse the loose-leaf tea when water was added. The shape and the wall-thickness combine to keep the tea warm.

The most innovative maker of Brown Betty was Alcock, Lindley and Bloore, who operated through the 20th century. The body of an Alcock, Lindley and Bloore teapot was made in three parts. The globe was pressed before the handle and spout were applied. This enabled a potter to crudely punch a grid of holes into the globe before attaching the spout. The grid held the tea leaves in the globe when pouring. These are details which the Brown Betty sadly lost over the years, as they were cast in one-piece moulds to reduce manufacturing costs. Ian, however, saw these details as fundamental to

Right: Photos in his studio showing the mould from a prototype Brown Betty
Below: Brown Betty clay seen. Photo by Steve Spinks



the authenticity of Brown Betty and set about making pots of his own to further understand the delicacy of the design detail.

He discovered that the handle presented a functional and ergonomic shape, with the generous loop positioning the gripping hand for easy leverage of the pot. This also minimised the strain on the wrist – when pouring and the return at the top of the loop prevented knuckles burning on the globe. At first sight the spout of the historic pots he analysed appeared poorly finished, but they had been rough-cut deliberately by a craftsman. The sharp edges at the opening – and just underneath the lip – cut the flow of water, preventing tea from dribbling back down the outside of the pot. To be

certain that tea would not dribble a patented non-drip spout had been introduced as an optional feature. Functioning like a tap the spout ensured a straight pour and almost magically eliminated drips.

A classic Brown Betty would have been glazed in either the rich brown Rockingham glaze, or a transparent glaze that reveals the natural colour of the clay. Both have the advantage of masking any tea stains on the teapot. If the glaze were chipped, the red colour of the clay would be revealed – favourable to a contrasting clay – allowing a characteristic patina to lengthen the life of the pot. To prevent the lid falling out of the pot while pouring, an ingenious solution was reached: the lid in the tilted pot slid forward into a groove in its collar, locking

Fig. 178. Vitsoe Voice, issue 3 2020. Page 34/35

it in position. When the pot was restored to horizontal, the lid released. A more discreet feature of this patented design enabled pots to be stacked for storage by placing the lid upside down in the pot. To support this feature, the spout and the handle stay below the collar of the pot, which also means the pot could drain upside-down after washing.

In 2016 Ian's research into the history of Brown Betty and his practical investigations were presented in an exhibition at Vitsoe's London shop. He showed moulds made from an original Alcock, Lindley and Bloore teapot and pots cast using Staffordshire red clay. The culmination of this understanding of the form and function of Brown

Betty led to the development of his first prototype Brown Betty. Following this exhibition, Ian teamed up with Caudon Ceramics of Staffordshire, a small craft manufacturer of traditional redware and the oldest remaining maker of the Brown Betty teapot in the UK. Together they set about remanufacturing this lustrous beauty. Taking great care to respect the traditions and the years of refinement that have gone before, including the patented locking lid and non-drip spout. Using the authentic clay, the collaboration implemented new production processes and design details to reinstate an authentic representation of a classic Brown Betty.



Ian's attention to detail has ensured that the traditions of the pot have been maintained. This latest Brown Betty edition is intended to promote the legacy and value of this everyday object that has transcended fashion but is a beautiful and reliable utility object. Or, as Ian says:

"On a personal note I feel that the Brown Betty is a counterpoint to the seemingly unending barrage of new products being launched and discontinued daily in the design industry. I feel that this story reflects a dedication to a material or a design, and the refinement of a process that has given rise to a

classic, not because of nostalgia, but because it's the best at what it does." ♥

— Ian's latest edition was nominated for the Beazley Design of the Year 2018 at the London Design Museum and is in the permanent collections of London Design Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, Manchester Art Gallery and York Art Gallery.

Brown Betty is available from Labour and Wait

Fig. 179. *Vitsoe Voice*, issue 3 2020. Pages 36/37



Fig. 180. Jasper Morrison instagram post on the RBB.

British designers and institutions such as Jasper Morrison and Margaret Howell, as well as Design Museum London and the Director of the V&A, Tristram Hunt, have posted on social media about the research.

Writing on Instagram, Jasper Morrison wrote: 'This project by Ian McIntyre is a summary of a very traditional English teapot and consists of various practical modifications including details from previous models which make serving tea a simpler process. It was exhibited as part of this years [sic] London Design Festival. How refreshing, amid all the hype, entertainment and marketing, to be reminded of what design is really all about, just a thoughtful process of making things perform better, Bravo!'

Margaret Howell commented that: 'Ian McIntyre has delicately and subtly brought the Brown Betty into the 21st Century, while maintaining the characteristic shape and familiar appeal '(see Fig. 160. Boxed RBBs displayed on Ercol furniture in front of Margaret Howell quote. Margaret Howell Tokyo, Japan, 2021).

Pedagogy and Public Talks

Throughout this research I have coordinated, delivered and participated in lectures, panel discussions and workshops concerning the BB. On 22–25 March 2017, I presented this research at the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts in Portland USA. During the exhibition 'Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot' at Vitsoe, 17–25 September 2016, I coordinated and chaired a public panel discussion about the BB teapot with the industrial designer Robin Levien and the tea trader Timothy d'Offay.

Permanent Collections and Awards

Subsequently, RBB editions were acquired for the permanent collections of institutions spanning the fields of both art and design, including: the Design Museum, London; the V&A, London; YAG (who have edition number of one of the first one thousand); and Manchester Art Gallery. The re-engineered edition was also the recipient of the Manchester Contemporary Art Fund and nominated for the Design Museum London's 'Beazley Designs of the Year', selected by international industry experts and exhibited at the Design Museum in 2018).

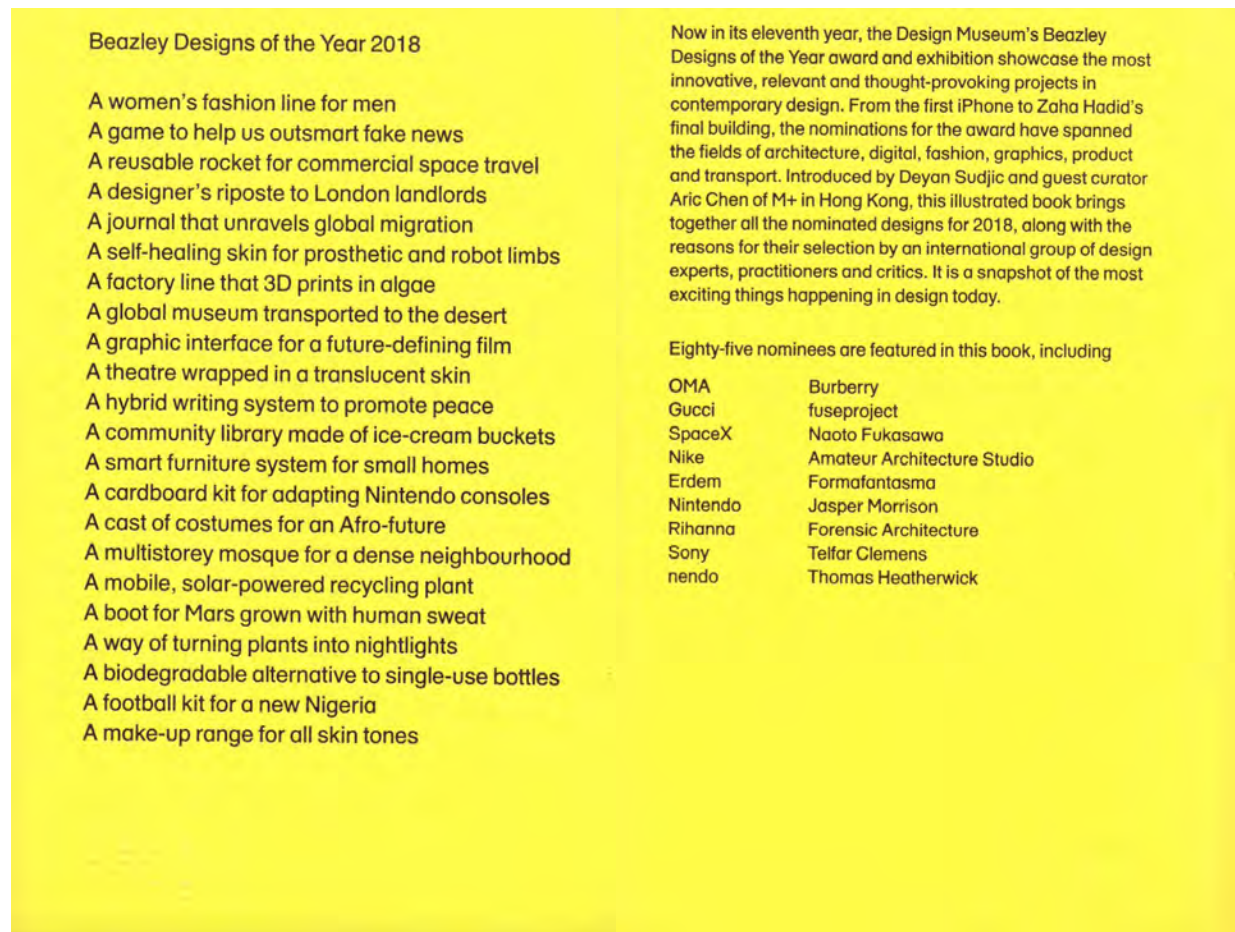


Fig. 181. Front and back cover of Beazley Designs of the Year catalogue 2018. ISBN 9781872005416

Re-engineered Brown Betty teapot

Designed by Ian McIntyre
UK

This nomination is not for a single object, but for a body of work that meticulously uncovers the relationship between design, history, production and place. Ceramicist Ian McIntyre set out to understand how the Brown Betty became ubiquitous in Britain. He worked alongside Cauldon Ceramics, the oldest surviving manufacturer, to re-engineer the design and make it profitable once more. McIntyre found that the design had evolved over centuries to become what he describes as an anonymous and rational object stripped of anything superfluous. His Re-engineered Brown Betty brings back features from the 1920s, such as the 'locking lid' and 'non-drip spout', but tweaks to the pot's foot and neck allow it to be stacked and stored efficiently, and a loose-leaf tea basket has been added in response to contemporary tea-drinking habits. —VR

Nominated by Vicky Richardson

188 Product

An update of a time-honoured teapot

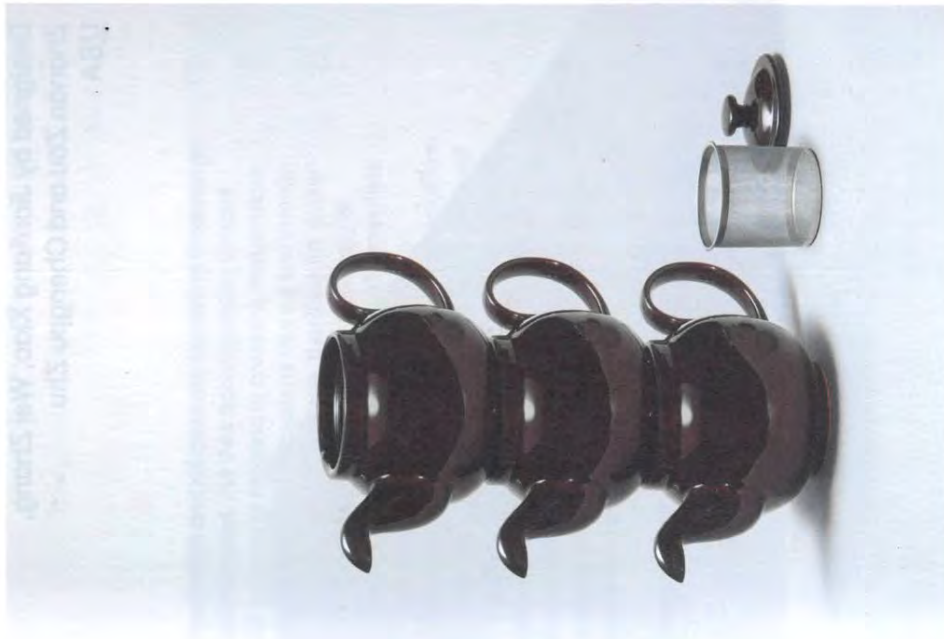


Fig. 182. REBB forward by nominator Vicky Richardson. Beazley Designs of the Year catalogue 2018. ISBN 9781872005416



Fig. 183. Installation View, Design Museum, Beazley Designs of the year; Image Luke Hayes.

Conclusion and contribution to knowledge

My collaboration with Cauldon Ceramics spans a total of seven years, with the Re-engineered Brown Betty (RBB) teapot in continuous production for the last four years. The revitalised RBB is the physical outcome of this research, but inseparable to the physical outcome is new knowledge produced giving insight into how a designer can drive the revitalisation of a declining design icon. The combination of the knowledge held within this thesis and both new and re-discovered knowledge embodied by the RBB contribute to the revitalisation of a declining, long established and largely traditional industry.

During this research I have established a factual history of the teapot and rediscovered aspects of its forgotten innovative past, re-defined the cultural significance of the object, identified historical precedents informing the design and manufacturing of the object, developed, tested and launched a new product on international platforms, developed new markets, and cultivated and galvanised stakeholders. The RBB has raised both the commercial value and cultural significance of the object and its maker. The object has won awards and has been collected by international museums and institutions.

Below, I have addressed each of the project's research objectives in line with the aim of the CDA in order to demonstrate how the holistic design practices of the individual designer-maker can inform and enhance the design aesthetics and design practices of the industrial ceramic manufacturer. What follows is a synthesis and evaluation of the significant findings and a summary of the contributions to knowledge generated by the research. This is further organised according to three sections: 'Principal Findings', 'Conclusions from Findings', 'Contribution to Knowledge'. I reflect on the impact this research has already had on the field and the resulting ongoing relationship with CC.

Principal Findings

Objective 1. Develop an overview of the history of the Brown Betty teapot.

Research undertaken while artist-in-residence at AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent (26 September – 7 November 2015), confirmed a lack of critical discourse on the BB teapot from designers and academics alike. Remaining manufacturers, I discovered, had recycled inaccurate information. I was surprised to learn from material accessed at Stoke City Archives, the name 'Brown Betty' was first used in a 1978 Information Bulletin issued by the public relations department of Royal Doulton Tableware Limited, Stoke-on-Trent. This branding sought to frame the teapot as a British icon. Prior to this the exact same teapots were known simply as Rockingham or Samian. Using these names to access archives and libraries opened up a fuller historic perspective on its

genesis. Through this research I have formalised and disseminated a largely unknown history of the BB teapot and defined what constitutes an original. This history enabled me to situate the cultural significance of the BB and to identify design and production precedents that contributed to a necessary and renewed understanding of the object.

The designer Robin Levien has been an advocate for the BB since first writing on it in the wake of the liquidation of ALB in the late 1970s. In 2006, cementing a growing consensus, the BB was compiled in the three volumes of *Phaidon Design Classics* – an attempt at canonising the ‘greatest collection’ of industrial design dating back to the seventeenth century. Tim Parsons’ entry on the BB, although conventional in its received origin account, justifies its inclusion as being ‘the archetypal teapot form’. However, the image used to represent the object was a Price & Kensington version made of white earthenware clay which I deem as unoriginal.

My research provides a more extensive and nuanced account, while recognising the cultural significance of the object according to its social, historical and aesthetic value. Although there is no definitive version of this object, within this thesis I have proposed that there are a number of key features that make a BB original. An impact of this research is that David Mellor store no longer claims that the Price & Kensington version is the ‘Original Brown Betty’. The exhibition at AirSpace revealed to me the extent to which the object had ‘devolved’. A shift occurred from my interest in merely telling a story to, at the end of the residency, believing that there was potential for CC and the BB to be at the centre of the PhD research.

Objective 2. Identify the defining features and the historical and contemporary methods of manufacturing the object.

An original BB is made from redware clay mined to produce teapots in Stoke-on-Trent for over 300 years. Its place-based origin accounts for several defining characteristics. The exhibition ‘Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot’ at Vitsoe, London, during LDF 2016 unpacked these features. It was curated around a taxonomy of materials, design details, production processes, and distribution elements of thirty original ALB teapots that outline these characteristics. This taxonomy was informed by empirical observations of my collection of ALB BBs and my own skills as a maker to mould, cast and remake details from originals to decipher the production processes used.

I decided to focus on ALB’s teapots because research led me to propose that while there is no singular definitive author of the BB, ALB were responsible for innovating notable design features and production processes. My taxonomy of ALB teapots was

organised around fundamental observable functional characteristics of a teapot. I identified these as the following:

Spout, Handle, Lid, Glaze, Globe, Clay.

While I have pointed to historic originating precedents, it is not possible to locate a specific moment when the design characteristics of the archetypal BB were formalised. A slow process of evolution through continual iterative processes of minor changes has occurred over a long duration.

Through examination and iterative making, as detailed in Field 2, I was able to identify unrecorded historical production processes and techniques. Tacit knowledge was essential to producing knowledge.

Conclusions from Findings

Objective 3. Ascertain the cultural significance of the Brown Betty teapot in order to propose a case for its revitalisation.

In formalising a history of the BB and identifying the defining features and the historical and contemporary methods of manufacturing the object, I was able to demonstrate its cultural significance and note the extent to which its design had devolved. Twigger Holroyd defines a design product as having cultural significance if it has social value, historical value and aesthetic value (2018). These were the basis by which I promoted a more accurate understanding of the genesis of the object among industry, academia, CC and the general public in order to build a case for revitalisation.

Despite the vaunted iconic quality of the BB, the CC product, the last in production, was missing a number of its most innovative features. This devolution opened up the space for innovation enabled through revisiting historic patents, such as ALB's lock-lid and non-drip spout. There is a certain irony here: the contemporary development of the teapot required revisiting historic patents long out of production. It is precisely because the patent protection had expired that I was able to reintroduce and develop these features.

My proposal to re-engineer the BB hinged on four factors:

- A BB made in Staffordshire has cultural significance;

- There is a lack of historical and contemporary understanding of the object and inconsistencies within the available literature;
- The design details of the product itself have deteriorated over the last 40 years indicating that the BB has both evolved and deteriorated;
- The cultural significance of the object is being lost in the design, manufacture and promotion of both the contemporary Staffordshire made versions and overseas imported versions.

The revitalisation and preservation of the BB is crucial to raising the perceived economic and social value of the object, along with improving the future prospects of the manufacturing communities associated with its production.

Objective 4. Determine the range of existing design-led practices and academic methodologies that engage with revitalisation strategies within traditional ceramics manufacturing industries to explore a range of possible routes for the revitalisation of the Brown Betty teapot.

A study of design-led practices and academic methodologies informed my application of theory through tacit knowledge to develop physical revitalisation strategies that were tested live within the industry. This research enacts a practice-based application of the theoretical approach of a revitalisation strategy and in doing so makes a new contribution to knowledge. Where scholars such as Brownsword (2017) have curated meditations that re-evaluate know-how in Stoke-on-Trent, I understand this research as an active intervention.

Contributions to Knowledge

Objective 5. Revitalise the Brown Betty teapot and the processes and practices surrounding its manufacture.

I have recovered and innovated historic design details within a contemporary context, implementing new manufacturing techniques on the factory floor to improve the object's functionality and raise its perceived value. In Field 3 I have detailed the development of processes and practices in the manufacture of the RBB teapot. New moulding techniques were developed in order to accommodate the re-introduction of the non-drip spout and the locking lid. I have reintroduced the stacking facility, which, in theory, saves space on kiln shelves and thus firing costs and also saves on storage space on the CC workshop floor. These techniques were required to ensure the teapot could be manufactured affordably. Revitalisation in this research has also extended beyond

object design and production into the realm of branding. I have shifted the place-based character of the BB away from nationalistic identity towards localised narratives that foreground defining characteristics of the teapot. I consciously situated the RBB teapot within the market through careful retail, exhibitions, and the creation of new literature and product packaging in a bid to re-frame the object within both a commercial and cultural context.

Objective 6. Exhibit/launch the results of the major practice-based element at the BCB 2017 & London Design Festival 2018 (fulfilling the collaborative obligations set out in the application for this AHRC funded research).

While launching the teapot at the BCB 2017 & LDF 2018, it became evident to me the significance of curation, exhibition-making and the affordances of expanded display forms in museum, gallery and commercial spaces. Quality by association – with, for example, Labour and Wait or Margaret Howell – and the ‘museum effect’ develops new audiences and raises the perceived value of the object. I believe that my placement of the RBB in these spaces, in addition to critical journalism, have been vital for reframing the product within a deeper historical lineage and producing interest and new knowledge.

The RBB has found audiences through a range of more mainstream outlets, including a film on YouTube and panel discussions. Of particular significance regarding the latter was the panel discussion at Vitsoe (17–25 September 2016) where I was able to draw Shaikh out of the factory to meet a range of key stakeholders, including key retailers. This open, discursive space staged a transparent dialogue about the historic value of the BB and its potential for revitalisation. These other skills – communications and networking – might be understood as post-industrial skills applied to an historic object of the industrial era.

Objective 7. Ascertain the effectiveness of the revitalisation project and draw out elements that may enable others to apply similar principles in new projects.

This PhD research has plotted the development and implementation of strategies to revitalise the processes and practices of design and manufacture traditionally associated with the production of the BB. The effectiveness of the revitalisation project can be gauged by a range of positive outcomes, not least, ongoing production and sales of the RBB by CC; extensive critical acclaim from mainstream and design press, as well as celebrated designers in the field; ongoing exhibitions and receipt of design awards; and awards from funding bodies.

Throughout Field 3 I have detailed the nuanced, situational practice-based approaches and design decisions which are informed by contextual research, the needs of the

manufacturer and the market in order to implement successful revitalisation strategies that have the potential to be applied to wider industrial interventions. Some of the most poignant strategies include relationship building and effective communication built on a comprehensive foundation of skills and recognition of cultural significance.

It was apparent to me early on in the research that it would be essential to develop a trusting working relationship with Shaikh. At the point when I began production work on the RBB teapot I had known Shaikh for three years. I had carried out my initial field trips to the factory, as detailed in Field 1, back in 2015 and Shaikh had visited the exhibition at AirSpace Gallery. It was evident that Shaikh had not understood the full value of his product in relation to its deep history and meaning. My research contributed to a shift in Shaikh's perception of my project and the teapot's value.

Likewise, from early on in the research I have cultivated key relationships with Margaret Howell, Labour and Wait and David Mellor, knowing that they will give the object longevity and have the potential to support it for the duration of their existence. I've been less focussed on approaching fashion-led retailers who may place a big order but may not sustain or stand by the product. This is not only a retail strategy, but a design philosophy. However, the object takes on a life of its own once it is in production and the manufacturer sells to whoever wants to buy. It has been exciting to see that CC have since supplied other prestigious retailers including Selfridges, Conran Shop and SCP.

The effectiveness of the revitalisation project to enable others to apply similar principles in new projects within declining ceramic manufacturing industries is a complex question. Without imposing the destructive practices of neoliberal 'efficiency', the success of this project is determined to a large extent by the quality of the relationship with the manufacturer. The significance of negotiated relationships in the collaborations needed to execute the design, production and retail of the object is a major insight in this research.

Throughout the research the often friendly nature of engagement with partners has occurred in an informal capacity. It has been necessary for me to pursue and formalise in writing offers of support from, for example, the British Council and CC.

Almost seven years on since the research began, the RBB teapot is still in production with the highest profit margin in CC portfolio. The interruption of goods and trade caused by Brexit has affected supplies of materials and led to shortages of glaze materials. Throughout 2021 there have been quality control issues due to inconsistencies in the supply chain. It has also been necessary for me to regularly carry out spot checks on the quality of the RBB. On CCs' marketing it is – despite my own insistence – my name attached to the product.

CC has, for so long, focussed on production in order to merely keep afloat. As such, strategic innovations (whether in production, design, or mediation of product) could not be prioritised. My role as a designer-maker has not only been to fill this gap as an outsider but also to attract new opportunities and funding sources.

The RBB has plugged the BB into an earlier forgotten ethos as a product of deep design evolution, situating it as a counterpoint to the more superficial aspects of the contemporary design industry. The design philosophy and approach developed during this research has shifted my practice and enabled me to explore wider histories, deep design values and ethical positions. This in turn enables me to advocate for design in response to localised making with the view that it can function as a counterculture to globalisation and superficial fashions and trends. I believe the designer-maker can make powerful contributions to the development of new ways forward for culturally significant designs, products and practices in traditional manufacturing industries. I hope that the research presented within this thesis and embodied within the RBB go some way to enabling others to do the same.

Beyond the PhD

My role in developing new opportunities and strategies with CC has extended beyond the PhD. The visibility of this research led to the then current Labour MP Ruth Smeeth referring it to the Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce who encouraged me to apply to Staffordshire Business Innovation Centre for the factory to purchase a bomb printer and a jigger jolly machine and employ a new specialist member of staff. CC received £20,000 for new machinery on the basis that they employ a new operative. Working with these new resources I have designed a new product line and identity titled 'Cauldon Redware England' for CC which the RBB will ultimately fall under. With The University of Keele, Staffordshire, I have coordinated an undergraduate placement with CC to research concepts of heritage and identify new marketplaces. This placement culminates in a student presentation identifying areas of investment. This has extended an ongoing and close relationship with CC along with wider stakeholders within this project and is an indication of the potential ongoing impact that this research has on the field.

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Archives and Collections

Cauldon Ceramics, Stoke-on-Trent.

Isaac Button in the W.A. Ismay collection, York Art Gallery

Stoke City Archives

Patents Sourced

Patent registration for ALB's locking lid design, GB358746 (A).

Appendix

i.

Transcription of panel discussion held as part of the exhibition ‘Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot’, Vitsoe, London, during the London Design Festival, 17–25 September 2016

Ian McIntyre: The exhibit comprises of a snapshot of the history and evolution of the Brown Betty teapot, specifically focussing on Alcock, Lindley and Bloor who were operating from 1920–79 and I see them as one of the most innovative makers of the Brown Betty, but they’re no longer operating. In terms of my background, I am a ceramicist and a researcher. I hold a Collaborative Doctoral Award with Manchester School of Art in collaboration with York Art Gallery and the British Ceramics Biennial. Really this exhibition is a case study within my research. At the moment my research examines the role of craft practice within manufacturing.

We’re really lucky to be joined by Timothy D’Offay and Robin Levien. Tim is founder of Postcard Teas and aside from having a great deal of knowledge on the production and consumption of tea he also has a great deal of knowledge on the social history and culture of tea drinking. He is also, in my opinion – or he seems to be – incredibly passionate about the provenance of the tea that he sources in terms of its sustainability but also the craft practices that surround teamaking and tea drinking. He often collaborates with master craftspeople in Postcard Teas and he works with a few different craftspeople who he also stocks in Postcard Teas. He’s brought three teas tonight for a tasting and these teas will reflect some different points in the 300 year history of the evolution of the Brown Betty teapot.

Robin Levien is a partner at Studio Levien, which is a product design company near the Tate. I’ve heard Robin describe a lot of the work Studio Levien does as ‘design through making’ or ‘design through modeling’, so there’s also a real attention to craft practice within Robin’s work. He’s also a really big fan of the Brown Betty teapot and actually first introduced me to the object when I was an intern at his studio probably eight years ago. Robin is going to talk later through some of his favourite details about the pot.

We’re also really lucky to have Zamir here, who is the current and longest remaining maker of the Brown Betty teapot in Stoke-on-Trent. Thank you very much for coming. Hopefully you don’t mind if I field a few questions to you later.

A quick note about why it’s in Vitsoe. I used to work for Vitsoe from 2010–13. I built cabinets in the Camden workshop at Vitsoe. It was evident to me from the start that they didn’t operate as what I assumed a normal design company would do – it wasn’t about designing and launching products at the beginning of each new season. At Vitsoe the process is very much about refining and streamlining the systems that were already in

place and in that sense I feel that Vitsoe fits really nicely with the Brown Betty along with this sense of evolution. The Vitsoe system is permanently being tweaked and honed and refined and the Brown Betty as you will see throughout this talk is an object of evolution too.

Because it's an object of evolution and it's completely unauthored it's very unclear as to who the first makers of the pot were so when I talk about the Brown Betty I'm kind of referring to a typology. There were a number of different makers making it at any one time and each of them made their own mark on the object over the years.

This exhibition focusses, as I've said, on Alcock, Lindley & Bloore, but the story really goes right back to the refinement of the red clay in Stoke-on-Trent. This clay was refined from 1693–95 by two Dutch brothers who had moved from Germany to Staffordshire who actually had silversmithing backgrounds. God knows what they were doing in Staffordshire with the red clay! They started working in an area in North Staffordshire called Bradwell Woods and prior to their emergence in Staffordshire the local potteries were family run, making very crude articles like butter pots and milk pots for farmers to transport their wares to market. The emergence of the Elers brothers' refinement was really seen as a key catalyst for the proliferation of industry in Stoke. There were new technological and artistic developments that preceded the industrial catalyst of using red clay which was predominantly the material that would compete against teapots that were coming in from China.

Once the Elers brothers started making pots from this clay it was seen as being one of the few clays in the UK that would reliably withstand the thermal shock of boiling water. They started making teapots in competition with the Chinese wares and also in imitation of the Chinese wares. So initially the redware teapots looked very different to the Brown Betty as we know it today. I'm going to hand over to Tim now who is going to give us a little more background on tea and a brief mention of some of the first pots to emerge from Yixing.

Tim: I'll try. I'm here to speak a little bit about tea. Please ask me any questions or interrupt me at any time. I have brought an accomplice. This is a rather strange pot. This is a Yixing pot made just off Bond Street by a Chinese Yixing tea master in about two hours. It's slab built.

Robin: I can't get my head around that. It looks like a moulded or a thrown one.

Tim: It's made like in a band. He hammered it out on our table and then put it together. Then it was fired in St Ives. Obviously you can see similarities that we may talk about

later. If I take the lid off do feel free to pass it around as I talk about tea in China. This form of tea comes quite late. Loose leaf tea only really comes into being *en masse* in the Ming period. The first Ming emperor decrees that tea should be loose leaf. Before that a lot of the tea was made and pressed into cakes. So about the time this teapot comes into being there were – about 1500 or so – the first real large examples that come from this town called Yixing, which is also one of the names of the clay of 1550–1530. That was sparked off by that first Ming dynasty emperor decreeing that tea shouldn't be sold in cakes, then ground up and whisked, a little like in the Japanese tea style, but it should be sold loose, possibly for the aromatic qualities of the tea because when it was pressed before it had wax on it – it was known as wax tea – things like camphor wax – so that scented the tea and possible when they pressed the tea they put better quality leaves on the outside and not so good ones on the inside. Therefore, they were cheating people. If you could see it loose you could see the quality of the tea and determine what you really wanted to buy.

Anyway, with the invention of this in the 1550s onwards it starts to take off in China and it starts to be transported. And that's how we get it. I guess by early 1600 or so tea starts to reach Europe. It reaches Portugal first and then it reaches us around about 1640 or so. You get lots of references to it in the 1660s. In 1660 Samuel Pepys mentions it. He says he had a cup of China Tea. He's drinking mainly green tea and that is how they refer to it. Slightly later than that there is a dark tea which everyone here refers to as a black tea, but it's probably not black tea as we know it. The tea that they most talk about is a Wuyi tea and that is the tea that Anna has kindly made for us. Great timing! And so this is a roasted Oolong tea. This comes from a very famous cliff in China in the Wuyi mountains by a great maker called Master Xu. This is a roasted Oolong tea called [inaudible].

All the descriptions we have of black tea around that period, there's a chaplain called John Ovington who was chaplain to the East India Company, he describes this tea as being 'roasty', 'dark', and he describes it has having medicinal effects, which is something the Chinese associate with this tea. So we're pretty sure we're talking about the same thing. The other reason why we think that this is the first prototype black tea is that the other teas of this area of Wuyi are like Lapsang. We only have definite dating of those in about the mid-nineteenth century so much, much later than the seventeenth century when these teas first arrives. I think milk first comes in, it seems to be a French custom, there is a lady of letters in the 17th century, I think her name is Madame de Sevillier, and another woman writes about her that she put a little bit of milk in her tea just to soften it. Ten years later it becomes *de rigueur* in London, probably more with the black than the green, although we know there are instances when they drank it with the green too. The English had a taste for all things Chinese. Later on in the nineteenth

century they get a taste for all things Japanese. Really in the seventeenth and particularly in the eighteenth century we go China mad. You see it in the design of Chippendale and this real interest in Chinoiserie. This is partly to do with a very big economic boom. We're booming so we have the money to an extent to buy the tea. This exoticism of the Chinese things is what we're after. We import lots of Yixing tableware, we import lots of beautiful porcelain, which we try and copy. We try to gild it and do other things from here, export it.

Ian: Was it the case that the teapots coming in were packed with tea?

Tim: I think they were used as ballast too.

Ian: So the pots weighed down the light ships.

Tim: Absolutely. They were put in the bottom of the ship, so I'm told, and the tea was put on top. It took a long time. One of the reason maybe why this stronger tea became popular was that on a long trip, this tea may have been six months to a year old by the time it got from Wuyin which is in the heart of Fucheng, down the river to Xiamen, before being shipped out to Hong Kong. I think it was more robust and better for the long trip than the more delicate green tea. Even today with modern storage green tea doesn't tend to last much more than a year in modern vacuum packing.

This tea comes. We can't get enough of it. This is a problem. It's costing a lot of money. The currency was silver. The Chinese would only deal in silver. A lot of it came from South America. To get the silver to pay for it the East India Company at the time was running India was trying to sell the Chinese cottons, indigoes, but the Chinese had silks, hems and they had other forms of indigo, so they really weren't interested. They then turned, as you probably know, to selling, very cleverly, through agents, opium.

They took 90% of what their agents sold direct to the Chinese and then they used 90% of the silver and they paid for tea that way. It occurred to them that if they could somehow get the tea out of China which was really the only producer – Japan had some tea but really a small amount compared to China and they weren't exporting – so what they did was send one of the most famous plant hunters, Robert Fortune who is linked with Kew and Chelsea Physick Garden, as well as other plant hunters, to lots of places, but particularly the famous place for black tea, Wuyi, who made three expeditions there disguised as a Chinaman, which sounds a bit strange to us, but probably wasn't that strange because it's such a vast country. I know when I travel in India I never get mistaken for being Indian but some of my European friends that can speak good regional dialect or Hindi when they've lived in India for a couple of years

people don't always see them as European because their mannerisms and their dress looks more Indian. So he spoke a little bit of Mandarin too and he took vast amounts of plant material. He took them in Wardian cases on the ships, a bit like those 1970s sealed glass jars, where you keep things in them, and he kept the seedlings alive. They took them to Calcutta, which was then a part of the British Raj, and from there on they went to Darjeeling.

We're not actually going to try a Darjeeling next, we're going to try an Assam. Assam was the last part of India that the British conquered. It was one of the most resistant parts. The Ahom people who were there were very proud and had ruled, I think, from the fourteenth century and when they conquered there was an Englishman, actually a Scotsman – better get it right – in the early 1820s, who found some local tribes chewing something and then they later found that to be the other major variety of tea which is camellia [inaudible] sasanqua. That was sent to the same botanical gardens that had the Wuyi tea which went up to Darjeeling and worked well but for a long time they considered it didn't look like tea. It had a larger leaf than the smaller leaf variety that had come from China. After some tests they determined it was tea and they found that that variety produced more tea and worked better in the flatter environment of Assam. So what they did was produce really large farms.

If you can deal with political events, at that time they had abolished slavery and the British patted themselves on the back about that but then they introduced indentured labour so they had vast amounts of labour to operate these new estates. They cleared land and forest and then people from places like Arrissa, some from West Bengal, and further afield, were brought to Assam. Sadly in huge amounts, sometimes 8–10% of the workforce, disappeared every year through illness. Lots of British planters died too. Huge amounts of malaria because of the conditions. But they produced a tea which became known as the British tea and that is the tea which Anna is making for us and we will try soon.

This Assam doesn't come from a huge estate. We have tried to change the way that business is done. We're trying to work with small farms. In Assam large farms are still the norm. Two thousand, three thousand acres is very normal, maybe three or four thousand people living on the estates, often in bad conditions. The BBC did an expose last year which we were partly involved with. People are paid about £1.20 a day. The working conditions and housing are less than perfect. Lots of people still speak their local dialect although they have been in Assam for well over one hundred years. So things change but they change very slowly. We work with one small family who have about ten acres under tea. If you think of Trafalgar Square – Trafalgar Square is about two acres, so ten times that. Because they are so small and they are trying to do

something different we work with them to double any occasional hard labour to about £2.40 per day. This tea is not as processed. Probably as the British got bigger and bigger estates they brought in more and more machinery so they could make more and more quantities of tea and deal with it in a different way.

Ian: So is this tea we're tasting now something similar to what might have been used in a Brown Betty teapot?

Tim: This is the tea which would have been very prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century. It 's from about 1850 onwards that British empire tea really starts to take off. By about 1890 or 1900 it is a real trickle of Chinese tea compared to the British-Indian tea, the Sr Lankan tea, then East African tea. It is this tea that then is passed on to other places. This variety becomes the dominant tea taste.

Ian: And that would have been fairly cheap to buy?

Tim: Fairly cheap. Because it wasn't a foreign product the duty levels were very different. That is another reason why it was cheaper. I think, though, they cut the duty anyway on tea when window tax was associated with it. The history of the taxation of tea is another big thing in America, of course.

Robin: The Brown Betty, I think, as we know it is around 1890 so you would think that the lower cost of tea would be happening at the same time as needing an affordable pot?

Tim: Yes, by 1890 when the Chinese tea virtually disappears from English audiences because they're being told to buy British empire tea. Yes. It makes sense. If you look at the size of tea caddies they start, the Georgian tea caddies are tiny with beautiful fruit shapes – apples and pears. They're mainly hollowed out. There is a tiny section with a lock for tea. And by the end of the Victoria time they're huge tabletop masterpieces with a blending bowl in the middle and four big canisters.

The size completely changes and I guess the tea pot sizes from the early Yixing pot to the Brown Betty get bigger and bigger and bigger. Interestingly, in the early twentieth century we get the tea that we're going to try last, which is an English breakfast tea. I think Twinings, an early Richard Twinings, in the early nineteenth century, first came up with the idea of blending for consistency. Tea is made usually in lots in little invoices and you either don't blend them or you do. The idea of blending is to have a consistency so when people come back they go 'Yes, that is a similar tea as before'. But if you look at a place like Darjeeling where they might be making five or six different invoices from

different parts of the farm or estate every day. So one from over there. Twenty pickers from over there would pick 600kg of green leaf, which translates as 150 kilos of dried leaf, and then another team of twenty pickers would do it from another part. They're all quite different. One way to do it is to bulk it up and blend the estate or a tea merchant does it. English breakfast actually comes in and has a little Keemun. Chinese tea tends to be expensive but it was traditionally a blend of Assam, Sri Lankan or Salong tea and then a little bit of Keenum. It was supposed to be a strong tea. It's a strong tea to drink with milk. I think milk comes in and is embraced, sugar when it becomes cheaper too, the British plantations of sugar make it affordable to working people and this idea of blends really takes off and you get all the different labels. Red Label, which people trusted. They used to blend all of them countrywide. So you'd have a countywide blend. Sainsbury Red Label but it would be slightly adjusted for the water in different places.

Robin: How many varieties of tea are there in the average teabag?

Tim: I don't know about that but in this one there are – I don't know the precise number – but in this... You would expect probably around at least twenty and they usually buy by contract rather than by auction. This has South American. Twinings English breakfast has twenty percent South American tea which they don't refer to because it's not what people expect. They expect it to be Indian and maybe Sri Lankan, and maybe African. Kenyan tea is a big producer. I wouldn't know the exact.

Robin: I was thinking when you mentioned the wax around the tea blocks that didn't enable you to get at it and find out what it was like. Things go around in circles, don't they? That's a teabag!

Tim: Absolutely. It is strange. It came in in the fifties but were largely ignored until the end of the sixties. I was born in 1969. Then three percent of English customers drank teabag tea. Ninety-seven percent drank loose leaf as late as the sixties. Now it is the exact opposite. About ninety percent is teabag tea. This is I think the teabag tea. They had to invent a new process to make it brew quickly in teabags. It's not sweepings off the floor. It's a kind of macerated tea leaf to produce something strong and flavourful very quick. It's not bad. CTC tea, crush, tear and curl, can be pretty good. It's never usually as interesting as the whole leaf orthodox teas you tried a little bit earlier. It does satisfy need. I think the marketing of tea has been very responsible for making people very attached to their particular blends or brands. We have people who love PG Tips but then will love really special leaf Japanese or Taiwanese or Chinese teas. I think it's strange that this is often the case.

Ian: Is this CTC?

Tim: CTC.

Ian: Would that have been large leaves when it was early 1900s.

Tim: Yes, early English breakfast would have been. It's only really from the fifties onwards that CTC starts taking over and now there are places in Assam... There are large areas in traditional leaf tea culture which don't produce whole leaf teas anymore. It's not worth them doing it.

Ian: Because most loose leaf tea runs straight through the... ?

Tim: This is another thing to do with the size of the holes in Brown Betties and that. With a whole leaf tea you still may need a strainer but very few leaves would go through but of course you get fortune telling. What would we do without fortune telling? Which we can't do anymore. For me the problem with teabags, apart from the taste, is that you lose your relationship with the tea and it all becomes about brand. So you're not really a connoisseur. You're a connoisseur of brand but not the leaves. You can hardly smell it because it's very small and designed to brew quickly. It's a design problem as well as it's designed for convenience and portability.

Robin: By some fluke the Brown Betty teapot is good for teabags. The round shape, they settle just below the grid and they enable the tea to come out. That was a fluke three hundred years ago or whatever. It's adaptable.

Tim: Please don't tell me you preferred the last one! They're very different and, as I said, people's attachment to certain things, if you give me a cup of PG with milk and sugar, it tastes pretty good and nostalgic.

Ian: Do you want to move onto some of the details on the pot, Robin?

Robin: Yeah I'll give it a go. Ian already mentioned that his interest in the Brown Betty started when he did a placement with us at Studio Levien six or seven, maybe longer, years ago.

Ian: 2007.

Robin: He was at the Royal College at the time. When students arrive I say if you've got a project you want to work on by all means carry on – [inaduble] over there did a similar thing – and then if you haven't got a project and you want me to set you one it's always the same. It's a teapot. Because actually a teapot is one of the hardest things to design

is a teapot and then usually within about ten minutes I go and get my Brown Betty and I say that's a good teapot. If you can design one as good as that you have done well.

That is in a way the beginning in Ian's interest in the Brown Betty and it's lovely to see how it's flowering into this exhibition. And then my early interest in it came in around the late 1970s when Alcock, Lindley & Bloore was bought by, actually it was before then, in the early seventies, it was bought by Doulton, Royal Doulton, and then in about 1979 the news came through to the ceramics world that they were going to close it down. We were horrified because our beloved Alcock, Lindley & Bloore brown teapot was gonna be no more.

I was given a project as a youngish design to design it and try to keep it going. So I got hold of a Brown Betty and started drawing it and drawing it was an amazing process of discovery because I was finding out all sorts of things about it that I didn't know and which were really quite interesting. One thing, for example, if you invert the lid, the handle and the spout don't come up above the lid and you can stack them on boards. So there's a picture here. You see this massive stack of pots. So there are design elements to this – it's a cradle to grave idea. The consumer having one pot would never know and never really need to know. Although because the handle and spout don't come up above the top you can invert it and there is one over there that you can see upside down which is brilliant for draining. When you wash the pot up you flip it over and it drains.

There are other fascinating things about it. The body of the pot on these ones was made on a thing called a jolly. Anyone know what a jolly is? It's a spinning mould and you have a thing called a swing arm jolly. It's a tool that swings in, pushes the clay into the mould and then you get the body of the pot made by a rotating process. That is no longer how the Brown Betty teapot is made. Nowadays they make it in a mould. You can see in the top. That is from Cauldon. That is one of the Cauldon moulds. If you look at that the spout and the handle are part of the mould so when they used to make the Brown Betties they made the body as a completely separate part and then they made the spout. We can actually pass a few spouts around. Ian has done such a clever job – have a spout [laughter]. One for the second row. This is very anoraky. I feel slightly embarrassed. There are things about this that... I love it. Anyway I'm holding the wrong pot.

Ian: I thought you were going to illustrate the locking...

Robin: If you look at that spout it's moulded in two parts and it has a seam running around it.

Ian: There is one running round with the seam line left on.

Robin: There is a process when you make pottery and moulds called fettling where you remove the seam and what they have done on this particular design is that they have left a little bit of the seam at the top delivering what they call non-drip and it's very sharp. This is where I do my lecture on non-drip. This thing is called the non-drip spout but actually you want a teapot to drop, okay. It's much more catchy to talk about a non-drip teapot but you want it to drop because when you pour and stop pouring you want the drip to come off the spout and land in the cup because it's the drip that doesn't that dribbles down and makes a stain on the table. So what the world needs is a non-dribble teapot. It doesn't sound so good but the non-drip, you want them to drip and that little sharp bit on the end of the spout which is normally finished, sponged and smoothed, if you feel it with your thumb under the spout of the Brown Betty teapot it's really sharp and that cuts off the liquid and makes it drip. Dripping is a good thing.

Ian: That's one of the really nice things about the pot because there are lots of details on it that look at the outset that they could be badly made but actually it's a purely rational, functional object.

Robin: Yes, there's something slightly crude. So then the process of making this by spinning you get another possibility which is that you can mould into the collar the groove, okay, and that means that when you start pouring the liquid slides into the groove. Wanna risk it? Everybody does that when they pour. Not like the Brown Betty There is a hole in the knob and that enables the air to go in and the tea comes out.

Ian: Stop it glugging.

Robin: Tipped it forward, doesn't come out. And so that groove in there is unique to this pot. Most teapots there's the little, what would you call it, the little snip, the tag, which hooks underneath. The Brown Betty doesn't have that. It's a machine made pot with little turning on the lid to make a detail. The handle is cast. You've gotta balance up the handle and spout so all the teapots we've ever done – we don't know why it's there but we never break – we always make the top of the spout and the top of the handle on the same level. This particular handle is nice and high so the balance is very, very good and what you mustn't do on a teapot is make the end of the spout too low because you fill it up and then you pick it up and as soon as you pick it up it tips forward and then it starts coming out before you want it to. So you want the spout to be nice and high and the handle. This is the perfect balance. This is the so-called non-drip version of the Brown Betty.

Ian: Yeah, that was patented, the spout and the lid, were patented in 1921.

Robin: Really? What's different about the lid that is patented?

Ian: It was patented as a locking lid in 1921. There's the lock lid.

Robin: We've learnt a lot about this pot. So that came in relatively late.

Ian: Well, Alcock, Lindley & Bloore officially opened in 1921. Then shut in '79.

Robin: I describe this as the best teapot never designed. And I don't think anyone would put their name to having designed it. People talk about the Elers, so it has evolved as a thing and the different factories that made it all made it slightly different.

Ian: There was Sadler. Gibsons. Gibsons have the world record for the biggest teapot. One thousand fifty cups it would make – that was a Brown Betty. Alcock, Lindley & Bloore I think were definitely the most innovative. The nice thing you're describing with the locking lid is the inversion. The thing I really like about those details is I don't think many designers now necessarily think about designing for the factory.

Robin: Correct.

Ian: Because you don't need to. How often do you need to think about when you're designing something for the Far East.

Robin: No, you do. We always worry about making it easy to make.

Ian: But for storage and things that are a bit more...

Robin: I don't know what other aspects of this pot are of particular interest.

Ian: There's the grid.

Robin: Yeah okay. Because you've moulded on the machine the body of the pot the tea has to come out so they hand punched, how many holes six or seven... ?

Ian: It varied.

Robin: They hand punched in the wet clay and then you stick the spout on with more clay over that grid and that grid stops tea coming out. If you opened up a tea bag now

and emptied it into a Brown Betty all the tea would be in the cup so those early days of larger tea leaves, fragments of tea leaves, that would have retained the tea. As I say, teabags now sit just in the bottom there below the spout and they work really well.

And of course the other amazingly obvious thing about the Brown Betty is the Rockingham glaze which is manganese and Iron in like a glass making that lovely colour. Can you imagine how quickly you would chuck away your teapot if it was white. This particular one after years and years of use it would be brown because of the staining of the tea. Rockingham glaze is the perfect glaze for a teapot because you don't notice the staining of the tea. Even if it's chipped a bit the body underneath is the red colour and you don't notice. If you chip something you say this is awful I'm going to throw it away. But you can live with it a bit longer because it's actually red coloured and blends in. I looked earlier today... Stop me if I'm rambling... I looked earlier today at the Dieter Rams ten commandments, and I wondered how many of those would the Brown Betty teapot meet? So they basically go innovative, I'm not so sure how innovative the Brown Betty is...

Ian: Two patents!

Robin: Two patents, tick! Useful, no need to discuss. Aesthetic, well aesthetics are a matter of taste. Someone once said to me that aesthetics is something that other people don't have. Understandable. It's pretty obvious what this thing does. We're on number four, tick. Unobtrusive. Fits into your life doesn't it? You almost don't notice it.

Ian: That's another reason why so little is known about the object. It fits into the fabric of everyday life. It's unauthorised. There is no ownership. There is really very little written about it.

Robin: Sir Hugh Casson who used to run the Royal Academy and was head of one of the departments at the Royal College was known for his definition of good design, and he said design is easy to live with. I've really followed that in my career. This is one of those. It's easy to live with. It's honest. Long lasting. Well providing you don't drop it they just go on and on. All about detail. Well you've heard me going on about the details. It's full of amazing detail. That's eight. Environmentally friendly. Where are we on that?

Ian: Long lasting.

Robin: Long lasting. Tick! As little design as possible. This is his tenth point.

Ian: There's no styling whatsoever.

Robin: It's purely about how it is made, that pot. Every aspect of it is just coming out of how it is made. I think it is an absolutely marriage made in heaven sitting on the 606 product.

Ian: Are you sales?

Robin: We have it at the studio. We have it at the studio. I love both. To bring both together is a masterstroke. If you look at the shelving, We have exposed screws. It's honest. It's almost undesigned which is why it's become a classic. It's got a way to go to catch up with the Brown Betty but this is back in the sixties but it looks really fresh today. The two products share that quality of not being design. Being honest. Fitting into your life. We've got ten out of ten. Maybe there are some questions?

Speaker (Linda?): Can you talk about these two because they are different.

Ian: There is a clear and a Rockingham glaze. The one on the right was the terracotta, the red Etruria Marl Staffordshire clay below a clear glaze. The one on the left is the Rockingham. I think because there are loads more Rockinghams than clear that Rockingham was actually a preference because it helped cover up a lot of the flaws if you look at all the clear glaze stuff it does quite defected underneath.

Speaker: I mean the shape.

Ian: This is the classic shape. Alcock, Lindley & Bloore made a non-drip collection and a classic spout. That's the difference. In terms of the colour finish there is a clear glaze and a Rockingham. I think the Rockingham was for quality control. They were making them so fast in the factory. The pots have always been so cheap and utilitarian. The Rockingham helps cover up the hand marks, the fettling. Is that the case at Cauldon, Zamir, that Rockingham helps disguise any flaws in the fettling if a seam is left or a detail in the clay?

Zamir: That is correct. Also the thickness, the application of the glaze is heavier so it does that job properly.

Ian: It's a lot more difficult to produce a clear one in terms of quality control.

Zamir: Yes it is.

Robin: I'm going to embarrass you a bit now Ian. He's taken on the idea of designing a twenty-first century Brown Betty which I think is a fantastically good idea and a really, really tough brief and I've been the guardian of the brief for Ian and so he gets these flights of fancy about putting a metal thing in for being an infuser. Cost? How much is that going to be? I wrote about this for *Design Magazine* in 1992 and it was five quid to buy the pot. I'm not sure what it is now, retail.

Zamir: Twelve to fifteen pounds depending on size.

Robin: So it's three times the price since. Margaret is looking because you sell them in Japan. You sell them a bit more in Japan I reckon.

Margaret Howell: A bit more.

Ian: The real problem with Brown Betties that are made with white clay in John Lewis with a Rockingham glaze, I think those ones are from Thailand, they retail for £16, so part of the big idea of working on a redesign is to really build in the history of the evolution and the refinement of the clay tied back into Stoke because at the moment I suppose any pots here have to compete with far East pots in terms of the labour costs. Of that there is no way you could possibly compete with that.

Speaker: Is there an ownership of one true design, or none?

Robin: I don't think there is. You could start tomorrow.

Ian: All the patents have expired. People attribute the Brown Betty as we know it today, some people, to Alcock, Lindley and Bloore but they've not been in existence since 1979. And Zamir is the longest remaining maker of the Brown Betty today and he's pretty well the last maker in Stoke.

Robin: I think for me the brief is that you can't make it the same way that Alcock, Lindley & Bloore did but they took full advantage of the manufacturing process to make that. So now it's gonna need to be a cast pot in the way that the mould is at the top so you've got to start thinking the modern equivalent is what are the modern advantages that can be built in to the Brown Betty today that will come out of that process so it isn't trying to reproduce that pot so some things you hang onto and other things go. The red clay you should hold onto. The Rockingham glaze. After that you can really start thinking about how to make it of today yet still ringing the bell of the Brown Betty.

Ian: The price will have to move a bit.

Robin: It will have to but it can only move so far because it is an everyday, democratic pot.

Speaker (Zamir?): £19.95

Robin: I agree. Under twenty. How much are you gonna pay for one? Under £20? £25 £30?

Ian: How much are you going to pay for an original which you can't get anywhere else in Stoke now?

Robin: So you're bringing in exclusivity. Playing the exclusive card for a democratic product. Sorry. He was thinking of putting it in a box. I said forget the box.

Ian: I have to keep sending my brief to Robin. He okays it.

Tim: I won't put it in a box. I personally think. I don't have a Dualit toaster but people should aspire to have a Brown Betty because it is a connection to the British tea culture. I don't have a problem with the cost. It's value for money. You're not getting value for money if it's a Far Eastern thing made with badly paid people. Wedgwood can only sell their Made in England things in Japan for example and that is a huge chunk of their business because it is made in the UK. These things have a premium. All the things made by Wedgwood in Indonesia, who I worked with for four years, wouldn't sell in Japan. As the English are tied to the teabag which yes does work well you can't think of just the English thing you have to think of tradition. I have a different hat on.

Robin: Forget the UK. It comes with a price perception so you're not going to be able to sell many in the UK so sell it as an export so you can sell it for more and make it brilliant.

Ian: The amazing thing about the object is the thing that what makes it British is not necessarily British because the clay was refined by two Dutch guys who were making pots in impersonation of Chinese wares in Staffordshire and now eighty percent of Zamir's product goes to America and Japan so it's really a global story, although it's quintessentially British and that's why it sells.

Robin: And I think you told us earlier that the glaze comes from Spain.

Ian: Yes.

Zamir: I'll correct that. The only frit [inaudible] part of it is melted and ground in Spain and is brought here.

Robin: Oxides are from here. So you can't get a glaze in Stoke anymore?

Zamir: Those people who used to melt the glaze are non-existent now.

Robin: Shocking. Stoke-on-Trent can't get a glaze anymore.

Speaker: Can hand in hand your new teapot with tea, a different type of tea, rather than a teabag. Could the two things be revolutionised again? I've been totally swayed by Number two tea.

Ian: It should work with both. I've had an early discussion that says it should have an infuser but should also be able to use it without an infuser.

Robin: A modern teapot should have that.

Speaker: But if it's designed in that way, keeping some elements, then it doesn't need an infuser.

Ian: Well the grid is actually quite redundant now. The teas that are made today are much finer than the original tea leaves that were in the Brown Betty so the grid in that pot now the holes are way too big. I think Zamir has mentioned before that he has had lots of problems when they tried to put grids in which causes blockages more, the tea spills and customers want refunds.

Tim: I think the problem is too that people are used to black tea the tea bag and as I said before the attachment to certain brands I'm amazed that there are lot of people who will drink PG but if it's a different kind of tea maybe they get their Japanese tea pot out when they want a good, honest builders brew all this kind of stuff it all revolves around a mug that is the brewing device and the drinking device.

Speaker: The language of the tea is completely different to the language of the pot.

Tim: Even, strangely, Brown Betties I don't think they... I think for many people a teapot is a strange alien, effete old-fashioned object so I don't think you can even get builders tea in it. Builders tea belongs in a mug. Everything happens in a mug. If you're having a teapot maybe. That's the big change, this interest in baking and the aspect of tea with that. Then the teapot has a place there particularly with British style

Robin: You could do both. You could throw the tea bags in when you didn't use the metal and you're on the PG Tips and then you get one of your fabulous teas and maybe you use the infuser you could sell it with and without.

Speaker: I've got a rather inferior [inaudible] which is quite big and I have to say that tea bags block it up on the third cup.

Ian: Low enough to the spit [inaudible] the teabag flows and stick into the hole... Zamir I think used to produce Brown Betty mugs. But it nowhere near has the longevity or popularity of the pot.

Zamir: Yes. They're attractive colours and designs. Just brown.

Ian: It's the association people have with the pot is a very deep association and not necessarily with the brown mug.

Tim: If you look at early pictures of people using Chinese or Chinese copies and in China they always use the Yixing terracotta clay but then they always have white cups. Our culture often had white cups whatever the tea was. Maybe you could see the strength of the tea. I love the practicality of it and if you think of ten [inaudible] glazes in Japan and China they have the great... But I think subliminal we like the cleanliness of a white cup.

Ian: I wonder if that has anything to do with the teapot needing to withstand thermal shock but by the time it's out of the teapot and into the cup you don't need the thermal shock for the cup so they might have resorted to making cups in the white clay that isn't as resilient as the red clay.

Robin: Tim will tell me it's a myth but the story about milk in first is apparently because if you were showing off and you had a white china cup you can pour water directly into china and it won't break. If you had a cheaper one you had better put some milk in first. People who put the milk in second showing off because they've got posh cups.

Speaker (Linda?): Tim, earlier you talked about another tea we would need silver for. Would you brew anything, all the teas, in that pot.

Tim: I was just referring to the way the British needed to buy and sell in silver. Silver pots came about I guess because the Chinese sometimes used silver to boil their water in so it can work with tea and then by the time we had a huge silver industry and also

didn't check [inaudible] so we take that round to the rest of the world. That's still going on. There's a lot of stuff being replated and used that way often with an ebony handle. A silver teapot would get too hot.

Speaker: So my question is would you use the Brown Betty for all your teas or are there some teas that you think would brew better in different pots?

Tim: I love porcelain because it's very hard, practical, and with Yixing pots like the one we're looking at before that I brought it absorbs taste into the clay because there is no glaze there therefore you can't change it. You're supposed to use one type of tea with it. Because the Brown Betty has a glaze you can use anything. But I still like the ultra vitreous state of porcelain. In an ideal world I would have a porcelain teapot. Possibly a white one. Rockingham glaze on the inside and then white on the outside. Apart from the spout you know really that is the area you have to clean the most. The inside you never wanna see. You don't wanna be bothered about cleaning the inside.

Ian: I think Linda is just looking for an endorsement. Would you serve all loose leaf teas in that pot?

Tim: You could and you should if you're British.

Speaker: Shouldn't you extend the design brief, Ian, to the mug because the people are so used to having the Brown Betty...

Robin: The problem there is that the mug has become such a low cost, low value item that you just can't compete with what is on offer. You were probably refining to the problem of you making your mug. You can go into John Lewis and buy a mug for £2. It's too difficult.

Speaker: Could you go the other way and think about a kettle? The opposite direction.

Ian: A brown kettle?

Speaker: That's what has made the builders mug, the kettle.

Tim: Ban kettles?

Speaker: Challenge the kettle with your design? It's the opposite direction of the mug. It's the thing that has become so routinised.

Tim: Someone did a ceramic kettle recently. Jasper Morrison?

Ian: Was it just the base?

Robin: There are flameproof ceramic bodies. You can make ceramic work on induction so you can heat your water up on an induction hob or on a gas flame. It's possible. But we're so entrenched with doing things a certain way so would people do it?

Ian: And I've already nearly got this brief approved. It's gotta be without the red clay, it's a Brown Betty [laughter]. The thing I really like about this project is that it's standing on 300 years of refinement, development and history and it's really nice to be part of that, to make something that is part of that history. And also building this relationship with Zamir and his factory. I'm not sure whether Cauldon Ceramics could produce an induction ceramic kettle. It's pretty heavy engineering.

Robin: It's a fired-on decal at the bottom. It's technically possible.

Speaker: I think the design process is an interesting one, you're talking about refinement over time, that's about design, making but also usage so I wonder how much is the use of it been part of the process? You using it? Have you started using it...

Ian: I do use them. I'm really much more attached to the, for me, because a lot of the project is about looking at British manufacturing and its troubles that's the driving force. Trying to find ways to build in this amazing 300 year narrative into this object because it's not really been integrated in that way. For me that is the driving mechanism. I do use the Brown Betty teapot at home but I have to say I don't use the teapot that often. But at the same time everybody owns a teapot so there is a massive market for it. I would say it's an occasional use object. Functionality of my experience and using them over again is not really factored in that much. I have about 40 of them now. I'm banned from buying any more, so...

Robin: Sorry about that.

Ian: Any other questions?

Robin: Bernard Shaw said: 'The subject isn't exhausted but we are.'

Speaker: In terms of your objections to the box, I understand that, looking to take it to a different level, the box for you Ian is a way of telling a story wasn't it?

Ian: Was the box completely rejected?

Robin: The box is back on. I've designed products where the cost of the box is more than the product inside so you can really come unstuck and then you say is this all one colour print. He was talking about a full colour print box. I said, 'Ian, you're mad'. If you're going to have a box it has to be brown corrugated cardboard with one-colour print. The spirit of the Brown Betty should be a low cost box.

Speaker: You want to tell the story don't you.

Ian: It's really important to tell that narrative through that box.

Robin: Careful. Products that need a story to be told rarely succeed in the market. One of the ten commandments is that it's got to sell itself. It's got to be so obvious.

Speaker: Do you think you can tell a story to the modern consumer about clay?

Ian: Clay is really cool at the moment [laughter].

Tim: Clay is cool and it's specific to a place. I've seen a lot in Japan. When things come out of a country and are successful in other countries they are then much more appreciated in the country where they come from. I have a feeling that if the Brown Betty was in the Museum of Modern Art lots of people in London would want it. If it's a success in Japan it becomes reflective and people feel that if they understand it and appreciate it we should appreciate and understand it.

Robin: That's a modern take, isn't it? Three hundred years ago they wouldn't have thought about it. It's just ballast in the boat. That's a reverse way of making it happen somewhere else and seeing if we catch up.

Speaker: Everyone loves a good story. It's a fantastic story. It won't detract from its use but it will improve people's appreciation of the value of it all. Just like viewing Wallace and Gromit... It's something very unique. You just need a very good copywriter.

Ian: Are you a copywriter?

Speaker: Before today my knowledge of Brown Betty teapot was zero. The teapot has [inaudible] curvature and it's a primitive shape. That is based on the [inaudible] teapot which I think is a German design. It's just like another British design like the Anglepoise desk lamp how oversea it's well known as Luxar... Manufactured in Norway. Maybe it's a case of some designs as an idea evolving elsewhere but actually it's a bit more niche and unique. Maybe the Brown Betty is gonna be picked up by someone else and that

becomes the next way of serving tea. You said 300 years. Three hundred years of refinement.

Ian: In terms of the first refinement of the red clay. The teapots Zamir makes today is made from the same seam that was first refined in 1695. That seam was seen as a catalyst of industrial production in Stoke because it had that thermal shock resistance that few clays had in the UK at that time. In terms of the story of the clay that's 300 years. The Brown Betty creeps up later.

Speaker: The Brown Betty is it more like a symbolic love of the design rather than the practicality of it?

Ian: I don't think so.

Robin: I think it has become symbolic. If you asked a child thirty years ago to draw a teapot they would draw that teapot. It's become an iconic image. It's quite British.

Ian: But the origins of the pot were about innovation and about making this super functional efficient object and there is a line somewhere that has crossed where it is now seen as an icon of heritage rather than its original...

Robin: There's an amazing social history you need to get onto because the handle and spout as you've seen was stuck on and the top was turned and the holes were drilled. Cost of labour. You couldn't do that now because by the time you finished joining all those things together it would be £100. That's the witness of the end of a period when the cost of labour... Making ceramics was about 40% labour cost. A high part of it.

Ian: The next part of the story is about designing around today's production.

Robin: Keeping his factory going and paying people properly...

Speaker: And telling the stories again. It's an impossible brief to ask him to improve on it because it is the archetypal teapot it's got a place in history and what Ian is doing is retelling the story by putting his own mark on it.

Ian: But there are also aspects like the infuser that could bring it up to date.

Tim: What about changing the name? Thermal shock teapot. There was Black Jack and some other names. You could play on the gender thing and call it Brown Billy.

Speaker: Brexit Betty.

Robin: I think there is enthusiasm for it. We're all waiting.

Ian: Thank you very much everyone for coming.

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Bethan Lloyd-Worthington Text, Commissioned for the BCB, 2017

If you close your eyes and see a teapot, odds-on it's this one. A constant among dust motes. Disappearing in cupboards. Playing nicely with others; on velvet tablecloths and cotton ones and wipe-clean melamine.

The globe shape reflects back its setting, and we can see our own daft face in it. The light bouncing back off the Rockingham glaze contains the image of wherever it is placed, at whatever time. See it. See what's reflected by it. Now see in this crystal ball the multitudes. Swishing about in its tannin squall are generations of unknown designers. They are - or they intermingle with - factory workers, craftspeople, businesspeople, harvesters, secret-keepers, shippers, scientists, sales teams and sailors. They are Chinese, Dutch, Indian, Stokie.

The evolution of this teapot began in red beds of Etruria Marl clay and it didn't stop with any one person. No single factory has a clear claim on its origin or its legacy. Brown Betty doesn't really belong to anyone, so its sweet nature includes everyone.

The design crept and leapt through increments of making, elevated by each factory's innovations. Good ideas - like how to stop the lid falling off or how to keep your knuckles from burning - have become part of the object. We know about the perils of numerous cooks, we respect the unassailable sanctity of a single vision, but the clearest articulation of the typology of 'teapot' has come from a wide net, through a proto-modernist filter of pragmatism.

Try playing Peepo! with historical accounts. Spy the Dutch Elers brothers in 1693, sifting red clay in Bradwell Woods. Making Yixing-a-like teapots for London and the wealthy. In 1750 glimpse the travelling Dr Richard Pocock riding into the "uneven, most beautiful, well-improved country" of the Potteries towns, noting the dry red China ware of Shelton. Somewhere here a gloss was added to this dry red body; the brown sugar-shell of glaze sealed part of the teapot's shifting, emergent identity. In the 1920s, half a million were born each week. Every single one of them was in essence Brown Betty, but they weren't all quite the same. They were all just BB enough.

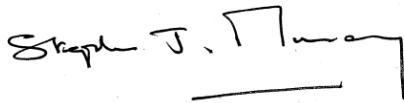
In this extended family saga, one cousin has the sheen of Lee Miller's attention, another doesn't make it out of town. One child has eternal tea with tigers while some imperfect wastleing is chipped then kept then dashed; sherds forming a beach beneath the streets. Ground down amidst the clay again. One staid relation lives cheaply and usefully at home for generations, while some striped cad is bought back from the States decades later, its particularities raining down the big money.

But this last is an anomaly in an unassuming dynasty whose motto is 'Cheap - but good'.

Statement of Support from Stephen Murray

We started out with the idea that the narrative developed through Ian's research and his Re-Engineered Brown Betty could elevate the history and narrative surrounding our company and authenticate Cauldon and the rest of the collection. This has been -achieved- Ian's edition sells at a premium to the rest of our collection and probably will go on to do so, it has opened up new premium markets such as retailers like Selfridges and Conran but it has also enabled us to increase the price of the rest of our products, driving higher profit margins across our collection. Working with a known and regarded designer has also elevated the perceived value of our wares which is necessary for us to draw a distinction between us and our competitors making handmade teapots in lower wage economies.

The Re-engineered Brown Betty teapot is now well established in the United Kingdom and Japan and we are starting to see uptake in America. We're continuing our collaboration with Ian who has been pivotal in securing resources for us to invest in new machinery and designing a new collection of storage jars that we are due to launch this September.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen J. Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Stephen J Murray

Cauldon Ceramics Ltd

Research Timeline

18 February 2015

Encountered items from the W.A. Ismay Collection at York Art Gallery

10 July to 30th August 2015

Exhibition 'A Ton of Clay' Jerwood Makers Open

25 September to 7 November 2015

Residency and Exhibition 'Icon' at Airspace Gallery, meet Zamir Shaikh

27 October 2015

Pitch exhibition concept to the directors of Vitsoe

4 November 2015

Pitch the concept of a revitalisation project to Shaikh and secure support in principle

January 2016

Begin fastidious collecting ALB teapots

7th July 2016

Visited ALBs great granddaughter Amanda Bloore

17–25 September 2016

Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot', Vitsoe, London, during the LDF

18 September 2016

Shaikh participates in public panel discussion

29 November 2016

Learn of the death of Shaikh

1 December 2016

Awarded Arts Council Grant to re-design, develop, produce and launch a re-engineered edition teapot at the BCB in September 2017

5 December 2016

Brief design team

18 January 2017

I received an email from Stephen Murray the new owner of Cauldon notifying me of the change in ownership and asking me to a meeting.

1 February 2017

Met with Stephen Murray to pitch the revitalisation project and negotiate continued support in principle of the RBB from CC

4 July 2017

Negotiate licencing agreement with Stephen Murray

23 September to 5 November 2017

Launched REBB at British Ceramics Biennial

6 December 2017

Discuss ongoing production of REBB and terms of contract with Stephen Murray

15-23 September 2018

Production run of RBB launched with Labour and Wait during the LDF

Articles and Reviews of the Re-engineered Brown Betty

Ambler, F. (2019) *Britain's Iconic Brown Betty Teapot Gets a Redesign*. Atlas Obscura. [Online] [Accessed on October 8th, 2021] <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/brown-betty>.

Clark, G. (2016). *Ian McIntyre explores the 300-year history of the Brown Betty teapot*. Cfile [online] [Accessed on 23 December 2016] <https://cfileonline.org/design-ian-mcintyre-explores-300-year-contemporary-ceramics/>

Cloudsdale, L. (2020) 'Brown Betty: The refreshing detail of a perfectly comfortable pour.' *Vitsoe Voice*, Issue 3, pp.33–7.

Elle (2016) 'Seven Fascinating Facts about the "Brown Betty" Teapot'. *Elle Decoration*, 11 November, p.39.

Flynn, P. (2019/20) 'Mr. Teapot, Man spends three years building the perfect brewing device' *Fantastic Man*, Autumn and Winter, pp.86–88.

Gibson, G. (2017) 'In praise of the Super Normal: It may be quiet but the new, limited-edition Brown Betty is rather brilliant.' *Crafts*, September/October, p.3.

Gibson, G. (2017) 'The Brown Betty.' *Crafts*, September/October, pp.44–51.

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Le Saux, E. (2019) *Ian McIntyre x Margaret Howell*. Milk decoration. [Online] [Accessed on October 8th, 2021] <https://www.milkdecoration.com/ian-mcintyre-x-margaret-howell/>.

Love, E. (2017) 'Design classic: Brown Betty teapot.' *Financial Times*. [Online] 31st August. [Accessed on October 8th, 2021] <https://www.ft.com/content/6e70696e-881e-11e7-afd2-74b8ecd34d3b>.

Morris, T. (2019) *The 10 Design Classics Every Man Needs In His Home*. Mrporter.com. [Online] <https://www.mrporter.com/en-us/journal/lifestyle/the-10-design-classics-every-man-needs-in-his-home-865906>.

Parsons, T. (2018) 'Reinventing Betty.' *Ceramic Review*, Issue 290, March/April, pp. 27–30.

Richardson, V. (2018) 'An update of a Time Honoured Teapot'. Beazley designs of the year 2018, p.188.

Riches, D. (2021) *Re-engineered Brown Betty Teapot by Ian McIntyre - Journal - Article Magazine*. www.the-article-magazine.com. [Online] [Accessed on October 8th, 2021] <https://www.the-article-magazine.com/journal/re-engineered-brown-betty-teapot-by-ian-mcintyre>

Articles and Reviews of the Re-engineered Brown Betty by Ian McIntyre

Lawrence, A. (2016) 'Teapot Genealogy as told by Ian McIntyre. ' *Disegno: The Quarterly Journal of Design* #12, Autumn, pp.190–4.

McIntyre, I. (2016) 'Design Classic: The unlikely setting of a traditional teapot in a modernist shop makes sense to Ian McIntyre. ' *Crafts*, September/October 2016, p. 26.

McIntyre, I. (2018) *A time-honoured teapot | The Brown Betty*. Design Museum. [Online] [Accessed on October 8th, 2021] <https://designmuseum.org/exhibitions/past-exhibitions/beazley-designs-of-the-year-2018/a-time-honoured-teapot-the-brown-betty>.

McIntyre, I. (2018) Poster-packaging history of the Brown Betty on launch edition RBB.

McIntyre, I. (2019) 'Re-engineering the Brown Betty teapot', Victoria and Albert Museum, London, online video, 1 July 2019: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeDZUq9WIEQ>

Acquisitions

Design Museum, London, 2017.

'New Materials and Processes Collection', The Special Collections Museum,
Manchester Metropolitan University, 2017

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2017. (C.215:1 to 3-2021)

York Art Gallery, York, 2017.

Manchester Art Gallery, June 2019

Awards

ACE grants for the arts, December 2016, £10,000 to re-design, develop, produce and launch a re-engineered edition teapot at the British Ceramics Biennial in September 2017.

BCB co-commissioned funding £2,500 in September 2017

'Beazley Designs of the Year '2018, Shortlisted

Manchester Metropolitan University, £5,000 to re-design, develop, produce and launch a re-engineered edition teapot at the British Ceramics Biennial in September 2017.
December 2016

Recipient of the Manchester Contemporary Art Fund

Exhibitions

'Icon', AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, 26 September – 7 November 2015.

'Brown Betty: the archetypal teapot', Vitsoe, Marylebone, London, 17–25 September 2016.

'Brown Betty: An Everyday Archetype', British Ceramics Biennial, Stoke-on-Trent, 23 September – 5 November 2017.

'Beazley Designs of the Year', Design Museum, London, 12 September – 6 January 2019.

'Food: Bigger than the Plate', Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 18 May – 20 October 2019.

Compton Verney *'A Tea Journey, From the Mountains to the Table'* July 2019

'The Brown Betty Teapot', Margaret Howell, Paris, 5 – 28 September 2019

'The Brown Betty Teapot, A British Design Classic Re-engineered'. Margaret Howell Jinnan and Tokyo, Japan, 2020

Design Museum touring exhibition *Material Tales: The Life of Things*, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, 2021

<https://www.cafamuseum.org/en/exhibit/detail/869>

Morocco Pavilion in Expo 2020 Dubai, October 2021-March 2022