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18th CENTURY MINIATURE CHINA

Tea was first introduced to England in the middle of the 17th century by the British East India Company and became very popular by the middle of the 18th Century. Around that time several porcelain companies were founded and began to make tea-ware. The early companies included Bow, Chelsea, Derby, Lowestoft, Liverpool, Wedgwood, Worcester and Caughley but most of these did not survive for long. Lowestoft and Liverpool factories closed towards the end of the century and other companies merged. Derby, Wedgwood and Worcester carried on producing porcelain into the 1800's when other successful factories such as Spode, Minton and Coalport began to appear. In the early days there were different types of ceramic bodies including saltglaze, creamware, and pearlware but the most popular seemed to be soft paste porcelain. The 18th century factories did make some miniature tea-ware but most of the miniatures made at that time were larger than the later pieces and too big for my collection so I do not have many examples of these. Miniature tea-sets really started to be popular early in the nineteenth century.

Most of the pieces that I do have from the eighteenth century were made by the Caughley porcelain company at their factory near Broseley in Shropshire which was owned by Thomas Turner and Ambrose Gallimore. This operated from around 1775 until 1799 and produced a variety of designs in soft paste porcelain. In 1799 this business was beginning to fail and it was purchased by one of their former apprentices, John Rose, who had successfully founded the Coalport Porcelain company. Caughley porcelain was then merged with Coalport and ceased to be an independent company.

During the twenty-five years that Caughley was in existence they produced quite a lot of miniature tea-ware and a considerable amount of this has survived. There were two main designs for their miniature tea-sets and both of these were in blue and white. The Island design was hand painted and the Fisherman design was decorated with transfers. They made teapots, coffee pots, sugar boxes, milk jugs, coffee cups, tea bowls and saucers. At that time tea was drunk out of bowls without handles. I have been lucky enough to build up a collection of these items and now have almost complete sets of each design.

Caughley also made a variety of miniature trios which consisted of a coffee cup, tea bowl and saucer. These were made in a variety of designs but I have not seen matching teapots, jugs etc. for these. I do have three different examples of these trios in my collection.

The only other miniature china that I have from the eighteenth century is a teapot and trio from the Lowestoft factory which was active from 1757 until it closed in 1802. These pieces are also in blue and white soft paste porcelain but again the pieces are a little bigger than later miniatures.

ROYAL CROWN DERBY



Although very different from the two previous designs this is still based on the Imari pattern and is known as Melton. The pattern number is 2649.



This pretty set is painted with pink roses and a turquoise panel with a tiny matching ginger jar. I have also seen the same design with a dark blue panel. Pattern 0608.

MINTON



This is painted with roses and garlands of other flowers. Note that the insides of the cups are painted as beautifully as the outsides. The pattern number is OA811.



Another hand-painted set – this time with forget-me-nots which were also a popular design of this period. The pattern number is 2385.

OTHER ENGLISH POTTERIES

In the previous chapters I concentrated on the major English pottery companies who have produced miniature tea-sets over the past 250 years but I also have a number of other English sets made by different companies. These are grouped together in alphabetical order in this next section and are examples of miniatures made by the featured companies.



Artone China was a small pottery founded in 1946, based in Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent and specialising in hand-painted studio type items in bone china. This set was made around 1950 and bears the maker's mark of an outline of a painter's palette and brushes with their name within. Teapot is 5.5cm and cup is 2cm high.



Lorna Bailey was a ceramic artist and designer working at her father's pottery studio, LJB Ceramics in Stoke-on-Trent, for about ten years from around 1995. During that time she painted a variety of vases, plates and other decorative items. Previous to that she had studied at the same college as

EUROPEAN MINIATURE TEASETS

The next two tea-sets are not from Limoges but they are the work of **Gabriel Fourmaintraux** of **Desvres, France**. He was from a long line of French potters whose family spanned several generations. Gabriel made a large quantity of miniatures during the period 1905 to 1925 and these are just two examples of his hand painted miniature tea-sets.



Hand painted miniature tea-set in blue and orange signed by Gabriel Fourmaintraux, Desvres. Approx 1910. The teapot is 3.5cm and cups 1cm high. other hand-painted set by Gabriel Fourmaintraux. The teapot is 4cm, cups 1cm high



Another hand-painted set by Gabriel Fourmaintraux. The teapot is 4cm, cups 1cm.

SILVER MINIATURE TEA-SETS



Birmingham silver tea-set made by Bishtons Ltd in 1953 which was the year of the Queen's coronation. Teapot is 3cm, the coffee pot is 4cm and the diameter of the round tray is 9cm.



This chocolate set is 1905 Chester silver bearing the maker's mark CS*FS – Cornelius Saunders & Frank Shepherd. The tray is wood with a 1909 Birmingham silver surround by Levi & Salaman and has a diameter of 7.5cm. The tiny chocolate pot has a wooden handle and is 4cm high.