

Reprint of the Edinburgh Branch's newsletter for November 2013

With the kind permission of the Edinburgh Branch

Welcome to Robert Jardine – one of our favourite speakers, always an inspiration in content and presentation!

Robert's talk was titled 'A New Look at Bo'ness Pottery'. As he had previously given us presentations on Bo'ness, he had confined this one to cover his last ten years' research, where the internet had opened up a whole new world.

Roebuck Period – Robert reckoned that the accepted image of Dr. John Roebuck, Figure 1, was probably not of him but of his grandson, John Arthur Roebuck. Dr. Roebuck senior moved to Kinneil House in Bo'ness in 1764, having been involved with sulphuric acid production in Prestonpans and then the Carron Ironworks. In many ways a brilliant man, he was not good with money. His coal mines in Bo'ness supplied the Carron Ironworks and numerous saltpans but the mines frequently flooded and he became bankrupt. In 1794 he started the Bo'ness Pottery



Figure 1 - Dr. John Roebuck?
under his eldest son John's name.

Tod's Mill - There is a 1796 record of five mills on the River Avon: two corn mills, two flour mills and Tod's Mill at Borrowstownness, Figure 2, which ground flints. Robert has recovered some flints from the River Avon by the mill. In the 1871 Census there was a record of James Newbigging living at Tod's Mill; he was described as a Glaze Miller for a Pottery.

Dr. John Roebuck died on 15th July 1794; for his burial in the new Church yard at Carridden Cemetery, the best mortcloth was used, and the big bell rung. His Will has recently become available on the www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk. NB: as this information is in the public domain you have to pay for copies from this site; contact Robert if you want information on this.



Figure 2 - Old Photograph of Tod's Mill

Jamieson Period – In 1828 began the Jamieson Period at the Bo'ness Pottery, but not long after, James Jamieson died, leaving the pottery to his three year old son James. Other family members effectively then ran the pottery for young James but several of them also died in the space of a few years: James Shaw, his uncle, in December 1842; his grandfather James Shaw in 1845; and Janet Jamieson in June 1847, thus removing all the experienced members of the Jamieson family. After Janet's death James had financial difficulties but somehow the pottery continued in business.

Jamieson's Modern Athens series of transfer prints were very successful; the last print Robert had discovered was of St. Paul's Chapel at York Place, but there could still be more patterns from this series waiting to be discovered.

Marshall Period – John Marshall married James Jamieson’s sister Janet in 1836 and after her death he re-married. In 1867 he took his brother-in-law William McNay into the partnership hence the McNay link with Bo’ness Pottery. John Marshall died in 1879 and William McNay died the following year. After William’s death his brother Charles Wason McNay was in charge of the pottery.

Robert mentioned the free website <http://www.nationalarchives.ie> for the National Archives of Ireland from where he obtained the Will of Charles Wason McNay. Robert’s genealogical research proved that Charles Wason McNay was born Charles Wason but his parents separated and then his mother Margaret, who was a McNay, added the McNay surname.

Bridgeness Pottery – In 1887 Charles Wason McNay left the Bo’ness Pottery and started his own pottery at Bridgeness. The Fan pattern bowl, Figure 3, has the Bridgeness Pottery mark. Robert showed photographs of a series of christening mugs for members of the McNay family, and reported that there was evidence that The Studio Strathyre took their wares to Bridgeness Pottery for firing.



Figure 3

Grange Pottery – Henry Davis is mentioned by J. Arnold Fleming in his 1923 book on Scottish Pottery. But where was the Grange Pottery, Grangepans? The National Library of Scotland website www.nls.uk includes a Slater’s Directory listing for Henry Davis. Another useful website, listing material from the Edinburgh Gazette, www.edinburgh-gazette.co.uk, reports the July 1888 sequestration notice for Henry Davies, Engraver, Earthenware Manufacturer and China Merchant. Robert is working on some ideas he has about the wares of this pottery.

Robert’s excellent website is at: <http://bonesspottery.co.uk>