

Walter Slater lustreware



Walter Slater came from a family that already had three generations of decorative managers in potteries. Born in about 1865, Walter became an apprentice at Minton's and by about 1885 he had moved to work for Doulton's, where he worked for twenty years: for the first half of that period the examples of his work which survive show that he was an artist of merit, especially with floral subjects. And later he worked on the more modern wares which might now be termed Art Nouveau. Lactolian ware, for example, included bone china vases with decorations giving a milky effect, and Spanish ware, a form of decoration, mainly on vases and often in deep blue, which used raised gold outline for floral and other subjects.

By 1905, therefore, it seems likely that Percy Shelley would have been aware of Walter's work and would certainly have known of the Slater family. However, the time at which Walter joined the Foley Works was not a particularly hopeful one for artistic experiment: the economic depression of the first decade of the century. So he found himself at first supervising the design of more popular wares: toilet sets; children's ware; domestic earthenware such as jelly moulds; and souvenir china. By the time the economic situation had improved, Walter was given more artistic freedom. Since he followed Frederick Rhead as Artistic Director, he developed existing series. In 1909 over 150 new patterns were introduced into the earthenware pattern book. These included 11 lustre patterns which bore the Spano-Lustra backstamp (see page 18 for a sample). In 1911 he introduced a new series of Intarsio ware, in what might nowadays be termed an Art Nouveau style.



The non-pattern book lustre-decorated pieces which are focussed on here were introduced in 1920. The technique used created a background of gradually changing colour on the piece, then ornamentation in gold and other colours was added, and finally a glaze with an iridescent finish. Walter's use of this style of decoration was probably most successful on the dark-coloured backgrounds he developed. When such a variety of lustres was first introduced they found a welcoming public. At the 1921 British Industries Fair the whole of one side of Wileman & Co.'s display was devoted to these productions. During the customary royal visit, Queen Mary expressed particular interest and is reported to have referred to some of them as "charming". Their popularity was maintained through to about 1925 when the firm was renamed Shelley, but when lustres were last mentioned in trade journals in 1928 only a few pieces were available.

The dynamic effect of lustre glaze may explain why most of the subjects were organic: animals, plants etc. Without pattern numbers, this collection of 99 uses those broad categories. If you have any examples not included here, please send details and images to information@shelley.co.uk

A large, stylized facsimile of Walter Slater's signature, written in a cursive hand. The signature is 'Walter Slater' with a long, sweeping underline.

The 45 base pics I have carry a facsimile of Walter's signature (right). He was ahead of his times: it's Walter dot Slater. A thinner version was used on some vase and powder bowl bases.

A smaller, more delicate facsimile of Walter Slater's signature, also in a cursive hand, with a shorter underline.

Chris Watkins 2019

Scale of illustrations: 1/4

With thanks to Gerry Pearce, Bruce Sandie, Chris Davenport, Peter Porrazzo, Bob Nicol Smith, Mike Smith, Pearl Jacks



butterflies & swirls on 813 Vase 39cmh



? and leaves on bowl 31cm



Cranes on Bowl 37cmd



butterflies and Scottish thistles on 804 vase 25cmh



Carp on 850 bowl 31cmd



dragon on ginger jar 22.5cmh



dragon on 813 vase 39cm



dragon2 on 813 vase 38cmh



dragonfly on ginger jar 23cmh



DragonFlies & silver gilt on bowl 31cmd



eagle on shallow round bowl31cmd



eagle Vi et Virtute on round bowl 31cmd



Dragon on Wall Plate 35cmd



Dragon on charger 36cmd



Imperial dragon on plate 36cmd



Imperial dragon on plate 36cmd



Lion rampant on ginger jar 21cm



Order of the Garter on vase 60cmh



lions on bowl 31cmd



lions & leaves on bowl 31cmd



lion rampant on 807 vase



lions on 804 vase 26cmh



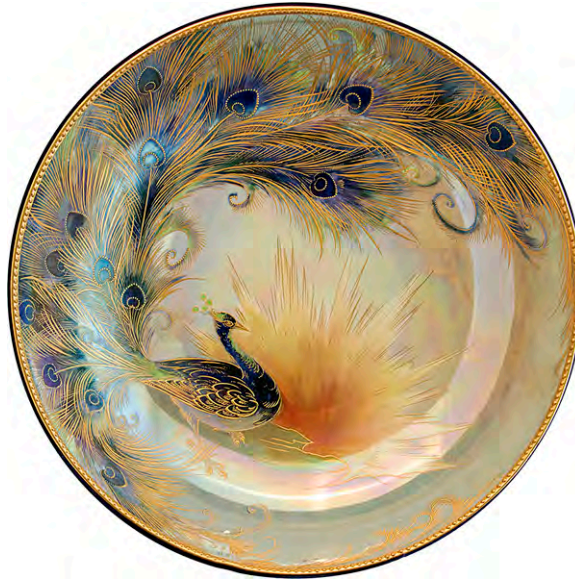
lion crests on round bowl 31cmd?



Order of the Garter on 813 vase 38cmh



swans on bowl 35cmd



peacock on bowl 30cm



peacock on 813 vase 38cmh



pheasant on ginger jar 23cmh



pheasant? on bowl 31cmd



fairies on vase 46cmh



fairies on pair of 813 vases 39cmh



geisha1 on 813 vase 38cm



geisha2 on 813 vase 38cm



Geisha on 801 vase 19cmh



Geisha on 744? octagonal bowl 23.5cmd



Geisha on tazza 30cmd



Geisha on tazza 25cmd



geisha on 850 bowl



Geisha2 on plate 36cmd



geisha on 830 bowl 31cmd



anemone? gilt on bowl 25cmd



blossom on Ginger Jar



Briar Rose on 850? bowl 31cmd



tulips? on bowl 31cmd



carnations & swirls on 850? bowl 30cm



carnations on 850? bowl 30cmd 6cmh



Dandelion on 804 vase 26cmh



flowers & swirls on bowl 30,5cmd



grapes on bowl 30cm



grapes on bowl 30cm



grapes on bowl 25cmd



grapevine on ginger jar 22.5cmh



grapes on bowl 30cmd



grapevine on 809 vase 27cmh



grapevine on cylindrical vase 32cmh



grapevine on 837 & 838 vase 21cm & 26cm



grapevine on ginger jar 22.5cmh



grapevine on bowl 30cmd



grapevine on 849? bowl 25cmd 6cmh



grapevine on 850? Bowl 31cmd



hibiscus on ginger jars 23cmh



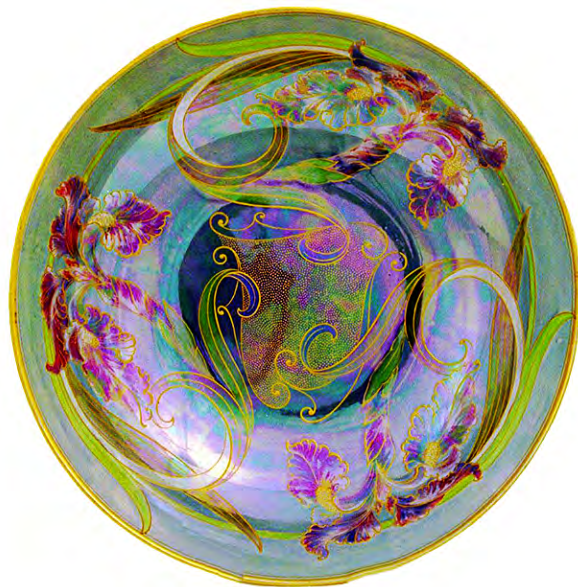
hibiscus on bowl 30cmd



Honesty on 804 vase 26cm & 807 vase 21cmh



Iris & swirls2 on 850 bowl 31cm



Iris & swirls2a on 850 bowl 31cmd



Iris & swirls3 on 850 bowl 31cm



Iris on ginger jars 22.5cmh



Iris on ginger jars 22.5cmh



Iris/cornflower? on 813 vase 38cmh



leaves & flowers on bowl 25cmd



Leaves on shallow bowl 28cmd



leaves on 849? shallow round bowl 28cmd 7cmh



leaves & heart on 850? bowl 31cmd



lilies on 850 bowl 30cmd 8cmh



peonies on Bowl 31cmd



peonies on Bowl 31cmd



poppies blue on bowl 30cmd 7cmh



poppies on 813 vase 39cm



Poppies on bowl 31cm



rose & grapes on bowl 31cm



Star of David on 849 bowl 25cmd



thistles on bowl 30cmd



tulip & swirls on 388 tazza 18cmh



trees & clouds on bowl 30cm



tulip? & swirls on bowl 30cmd



green foliage on Bowl 31cmd



Royal Coat of Arms on 850 bowl 30cmd



galleons on bowl 25cm 7cmh



galleons on bowl 31cm



swirls on bowl 26cm



swirls2 on bowl 38cmd



Deco medallion on 807 vase 22cmh
on 774 vase 18cmh

on 803 vase 25cmh

Variety of backstamps

There is one backstamp which is only used on Walter Slater lusterware. It is distinguished by a diagonal line through the S of Shelley. It has two variants. Others use the 1916-1925 backstamp. Of the 99 pieces illustrated in this collection I have 29 images of backstamps. Just under half are “specials”.

SPECIAL PLUS “MADE IN”



SPECIAL WITHOUT “MADE IN”



NON-SPECIAL PLUS “MADE IN”



NON-SPECIAL WITHOUT “MADE IN”



THIN SIGNATURE PLUS “MADE IN”



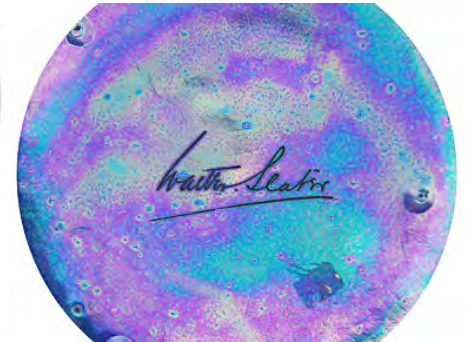
THIN SIGNATURE WITHOUT “MADE IN”



AND ONE WITH BOTH!



ONE WITH NONE!!



Spano-Lustra 7000 series patterns

7527 Cornflower

7528 laurel

7552 laurel



(on 485 biscuit jar)



(on 486 biscuit jar 15cmh)



on 413 vase 15cmh



on 455 clock 26cmh



on 17 bowl 13cmh



on 114 candlestick 15cmh



7556 Cornflower

7578 Cornflower

7594 laurel



on 329 clock 24cmh



on 417 vase 22cmh



on 717 Notre Dame Candlestick 26cmh



on 790 vase 12cmh



on 417 Vase2 22cmh



on 478 Kai Ping Vase 14cmh



on 468 vase 18cmh



on 417 vase 22cmh



(on 482 vase 18cmh)

And then

there were six patterns in the pattern book that were produced with facsimile Walter Slater signatures on the base, sometimes with the pattern number too:

8483 Circles & splashes



8306 lustre carp



8306A lustre carp



8306B lustre carp



8356 lustre Butterflies



8357 lustre Butterflies

