

Hamilton fluted Coffee Cans

As a result of articles appearing elsewhere, I have recently been examining the faceted coffee cans in my collection, commonly called Hamilton fluted, the name given to the shape by the Derby factory. These cans with vertical concave fluting are not common but nor particularly rare - I have 57 examples from 11 factories, two of which where I am unsure of the manufacturer.

The most prolific producers were Coalport, Miles Mason and Pinxton, though several other factories produced some. Most factories used 16 flutes, the only exceptions being New Hall with 18 and Miles Mason with 20. Miles Mason used a unique handle on their versions with a flat top thumbrest which is unique to their faceted wares, with plain loops used by Coalport, Derby, 'Arrow Mark' and Swansea. Grainger and Minton used ring handles, the Minton one being the large ring. Examples are:



Arrow Mark only



Coalport (AHR) Pattern No 17 in Red



Derby Marked 465 in Puce



Grainger Unmarked



Miles Mason Unmarked (Pattern F62)



Minton marked 34 in Red



New Hall Pattern 136



Pinxton Unmarked



Swansea



Unmarked and Unidentified

The “Arrow Mark” Can in the first illustration is not believed to be the product of an individual factory . For many years these pieces were attributed to Pinxton but are now thought to be Derby blanks which were

decorated elsewhere. These shapes are identical to those produced at Derby and Geoffrey Godden suggested that they could have been decorated at Pinxton before their own product was perfected. Another possibility is William Billingsley's decorating establishment in Mansfield. The pieces are also found marked with a pattern number such as N1 above a capital A.

The New Hall example is interesting also. It is the only pattern known in which a can was produced. The earlier Hamilton fluted patterns, such as 81 and 89, were supplied with coffee cups, probably because they pre-dated the bute shaped coffee can fashion. The Hamilton fluted coffee cup also occurs in pattern 136, so this pattern appears to be unique in offering the buyer the choice between a coffee cup and coffee can to go with the tea bowl and saucer. Also pattern 136 is the last known one to use Hamilton fluting. Thereafter New Hall reverted to concave spiral fluting with both the cans and teabowls having 20 facets. The lowest pattern I am aware of in this fluting is a coffee cup in pattern 145, but the shape continued until at least pattern 568 plus an isolated example known in pattern 800.

It is noticeable that several major factories such as Worcester, Chamberlain and Spode did not produce these faceted cans, though Chamberlain used spiral fluting on its bucket-shaped versions.

Finally I have seen no blue and white coffee cans which are Hamilton or spiral fluted, possibly because the form did not lend itself to transfer printing. However several factories produced cans with two wide convex flutes separated by one narrow convex flute, known as royal fluting. This does not always extend as far as the foot of the can.

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