



FROM WORCESTER TO PERTH - investigating a topographical plate

This plate was an eBay purchase in 2013 and was described as a rare Worcester porcelain plate painted with a named view. Two questions immediately came to mind - which factory made it and was a contemporary print the likely source of the view?

Description: a porcelain plate with a gilt gadrooned and scalloped rim with a broad turquoise band, the centre painted with 'The upper Fall of Moness' [named in red script on the base] within a gilt shell and scroll border. Date c.1840 or a little later. Size: 24 cms. (9.5 ins.) diameter. Marks: traces of an impressed mark on the base, but illegible due to pooling of the glaze, together with retailer's mark for 'RITCHIE & Co. / *Royal China Rooms*, PERTH' printed in puce.

The plate is fairly heavy and quite thickly potted and the general appearance, particularly the rather ill-defined gadrooning, did not suggest a Flight, Barr & Barr or Chamberlain origin, so the most likely maker was Grainger. Henry and John Sandon's book on **Grainger's Worcester Porcelain** (London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1989) provided a good clue as it lists Ritchie & Co. as one of the shops supplied and given its own mark (appendix 6 on p.205). A Directory for the City of Perth and vicinity of 1837-38 records a James Ritchie, china merchant at 54 St. John Street.

The Falls of Moness are located in Aberfeldy, Perthshire. It is a waterfall, 150 metres high, among the Birks [birch trees], which are celebrated in a poem/song lyric written in 1787 by Robert Burns [source: Wikipedia]. Many images are available, but the source of the painting on this plate is a steel engraved print drawn by William Bartlett or Thomas Allom, originally produced for the part-work series **Scotland Illustrated** by William Beattie (London, Virtue & Co., 1835-1838), but also available in later editions and impressions. Unfortunately we are unlikely to be able to identify the painter of the plate.

Jim Sewell, November 2020