

British Royal Portraits used by Advertisers on Early Toothpaste Pot Lids

Ben Z. Swanson Jr*, BS, DDS, and Stanley Gelbier†, LDS, PhD, DDPH, DHMSA

This article discusses the use of British royal portraits by dentifrice manufacturers in promoting their products in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The history of the manufacture decorating processes is described. A review of the literature is provided. All known types of underglaze, transfer printed toothpaste pot lids picturing royalty are catalogued. Nineteen of the 36 known types are illustrated and identified to enable a better appreciation of the beauty of these early containers.

TODAY, our sports, screen and pop idols are paid huge sums to endorse various products in the market place. Although it is unlikely that present-day royal or presidential personalities would become involved in such a commercial venture, it has not always been so. Starting in the first half of the nineteenth century British manufacturing firms, both with and without royal patronage, took advantage of the tremendous popularity of the royal family to hawk their wares. In the United States, although they may have had less appeal, presidents were similarly used.

Visitors to the museum of the British Dental Association will see displayed a collection of toothpaste pot lids. This collection contains three examples of pot lids with pictures of British royalty.

Products Marketed in Pots

The earliest product generally identified with pot lids is bear's grease for the hair.¹ Ointments, powders and pastes soon followed. Manufacturers of edible products such as caviare and fish pastes also took advantage of this attractive form of packaging.

Toothpaste became the major product associated with these pots, just as today it is the main product associated with tube packaging. Well over a thousand different toothpaste lids have been documented.

The Underglaze Printing Process

Pot lids are the covers or tops of small pottery containers used to hold a variety of manufactured products. These covers are frequently decorated to describe the contents.² Before the invention of the transfer printing process the brand names of manufactured goods were hand lettered on to the side of the pot or described by means of a paper label pasted on the lid.

Although laborious by today's standards, the transfer printing process introduced a

much quicker and economical method of describing the contents. This labelling method also allowed for a greater degree of artistic expression and enticed buyers by the aesthetic appeal of the package.

This distinctively English process originated in Liverpool in the second half of the eighteenth century and entered general use for packaging in the 1840s. However, transfer printing was used for domestic porcelain and pottery in the intervening period. Expense of manufacture compared with newer methods, almost eliminated this packaging method just prior to World War I.

The transfer is lifted with tissue-thin paper from an engraved copper plate that previously has been inked or coloured. It is then transferred to the lid after the first baking (the 'bisque' stage) and rubbed until the print firmly adheres to the pottery. The paper is then carefully removed and the lid glazed and fired to fix the design firmly as an integral part of the pottery.

The pots were usually round, short jars with a flat top suitable to take a transfer. Oval, square and rectangular pots were also made, but all but one of the examples catalogued below are round.

Monochrome and Polychrome Lids

Transfer printing allows for single colour application (usually black and white, as in a newspaper) or the addition of several other colours (as in a child's comic). Register marks are used to line up the different coloured transfers. These marks appear on multi-colour or polychrome lids as two small circles at three and nine o'clock. Gold bands are sometimes added around the border of the transfer to give the product a high class appearance.

Polychrome lids, with colourful scenes and no advertising on them, were made to keep and cherish. Inevitably they soon became collector's items and they remain immensely popular. Monochrome and polychrome lids with advertising were of a more pedestrian nature and were usually discarded.

The pot lids discussed in this article are both monochrome and polychrome. All have brand names and most give product information.

Early collectors and authors tended to neglect the advertising lid, and most were

thrown away. The hobby of digging in old rubbish tips by bottle collectors is largely responsible for today's intense interest in these lids.

Products were sold in pots in many countries, including the United States. Countries of the British Empire, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India, Malta and South Africa, all ordered them from the Staffordshire potters, but surprisingly only Australia and Great Britain appear to have produced lids featuring royalty. Of course, as new lids come to light, future diggers may come up with some rare and unrecorded varieties in this important series.

Royal Images

Queen Victoria was the most popular person to be featured on pot lids in general, including pomades, cold creams, shaving creams and hair regenerators. Looking at toothpaste alone, Princess Alexandra of Denmark, later Queen consort to Edward VII, was the most popular royal. She appears on 15 known varieties issued by five different toothpaste manufacturers; Victoria appears on 10 by six companies.

Edward VII's portrait appears on the lids issued by three different companies manufacturing toothpaste.

Three of Victoria's nine children and one grandchild appear on lids. In addition to Edward VII there were Princess Beatrice and Prince Arthur the Duke of Connaught. Princess Patricia, daughter of the Duke, was not particularly attractive: one can only speculate on whether this factor or use of the more perishable (above the glaze) manufacturing process, account for the lid's extreme rarity today.

In all, 17 different toothpaste firms risked the royal censure and sported a royal picture. The most common of these lids was produced by John Gosnell and Company. They were marketed all over the world for over 60 years, and the brochure accompanying the toothpaste was printed in five languages.

The Literature of Pot Lids

The senior author became interested in toothpaste lids about 13 years ago as an outgrowth of a dental memorabilia collection. This interest coincided with the beginning of bottle digging in the United Kingdom. At that time he published a modest catalogue³ to document what toothpaste lids were extant. Heath, Fletcher, Green and Lewis followed with more documentation,⁴⁻⁶ and Dale has published the most comprehensive work on advertising pot lids in Great Britain,⁷ but a definitive catalogue remains to be produced. Keil's

*Ben Z. Swanson is President, American Academy of the History of Dentistry and Postgraduate Student, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, Euston Road, London WC1.

†Stanley Gelbier is Honorary Assistant Curator, BDA Museum and Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Community Dental Health, King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, St Giles Hospital, St Giles Road, London SE5 7RN.

Dental History



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 1 (top left) A rare, early lid picturing a very young Queen Victoria. No manufacturer's name, but it is known to be Leonard and Bartlett Hooper of 43 King William Street, London (R GB T 20). (top right) Dr Dosteel's with the old head of Queen Victoria. One of the most sought-after pot lids on the British market (R GB T 3). (bottom left) Coloured version of the John Gosnell pot lid (R GB T 6). (bottom right) Black and white "Extra Moist" version of the John Gosnell pot lid (R GB T 8).

Fig. 2 (top left) Victoria and Albert on the very scarce lid of Napoleon Price (R GB T 19). (top right) J. Grossmith and Son version of Victoria and Albert (R GB T 13). (centre) A recently discovered pot lid picturing the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) in uniform of the 10th Hussars (R GB T 1). (bottom left) Unrivalled Cherry Toothpaste with a dark olive green background (R GB T 14). (bottom right) Very scarce Gosnell Brothers lid as opposed to the much more common lid of John Gosnell (R GB T 4).

Fig. 3 (top) Princess Alexandra pictured in her wedding dress on this early and rare Price & Co. lid (R GB T 17). (middle left and right) Two different portraits used by Sharp Brothers for their Cherry Toothpaste (R GB T 23 & 25). (bottom left and right) A similar portrait change was carried out by Dr Ziemer (R GB T 27 & 26).

Fig. 4 (top left) Alexandra pictured on the Melbourne lid of Alfred Fenton. Note the beaded circle and date registration mark (R AU T 4). (top right) This portrait was taken from a photographic study of Queen Alexandra by H. Van der Weyde (R AU T 2). (centre) The popular Princess Patricia pictured on this oval Liverpool pot lid (R GB T 2). (bottom left) The Duke of Connaught in military uniform (R GB T 15). (bottom right) Princess Beatrice wearing one of her favourite pendant necklaces, very rare (R GB T 21).

Table I Royalty pictured on toothpaste pot lids

- R GB T 1** Professor Browne. Cherry Tooth Paste, bust of Edward VII three-quarters left, monochrome, 80 mm, Swanson collection
- R GB T 2** T. Churton & Co. The Patrician Tooth Powder, bust of Princess Patricia facing with head left, polychrome, gold band, above the glaze print, oval, 68 × 95 mm, Green and Lewis p. 56.
- R GB T 3** Dr Dosteel's. Cherry Tooth Paste, old head bust of Queen Victoria three-quarters right, monochrome with scarlet background, gold band, 87 mm, Dale T519, p 297, Williams-Wood M98, Swanson no. 202.
- R GB T 4** Gosnell Bros. & Cos. Universal Cherry Tooth Paste, bust of Edward VII left, polychrome, gold band, 76-80 mm, mentioned in Dale appendix, Swanson no. 98.
- R GB T 5** John Gosnell & Co. Cherry Tooth Paste, young head bust of Queen Victoria left, polychrome, gold band, 77-80 mm, Dale T518, p 297, Swanson nos. 92, 94 and 95 (various colours of the same lid).
- R GB T 6** John Gosnell & Co. Ltd. Cherry Tooth Paste, young head bust of Queen Victoria left, polychrome, gold band, 80 mm, Dale T517, p 296, Williams-Wood M97, Swanson no. 96.
- R GB T 7** John Gosnell & Co. Extra Moist Cherry Tooth Paste, young head bust of Queen Victoria left, monochrome, 80 mm, Dale T530, p 299, Swanson no. 93
- R GB T 8** John Gosnell & Co. Ltd. Extra Moist Cherry Tooth Paste, young head bust of Queen Victoria left, monochrome, 75 mm, Dale T529, p. 299, Swanson no. 97.
- R GB T 9** John Gosnell & Co. Extra Moist Cherry Tooth Paste, young head bust of Queen Victoria left, monochrome, 32 mm, miniature, Dale T531, p. 299, Swanson no. 90.
- R GB T 10** John Gosnell & Co. Extra Moist Cherry Tooth Paste, Free Sample, young head bust of Queen Victoria left, monochrome, 31.5 mm, miniature, Dale T532, p. 299.
- R GB T 11** John Gosnell & Co. Ltd. Extra Moist Cherry Tooth Paste, young head bust of Queen Victoria left, monochrome, 35 mm, miniature, Dale T533, p. 299, Swanson no. 91.
- R GB T 12** J. Grossmith & Son. Cherry Tooth Paste, bust of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert accolated left, monochrome, 73 mm, Dale T676 p. 379, Swanson no. 101.
- R GB T 13** J. Grossmith & Son. Cherry Tooth Paste, bust of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert accolated left, monochrome with blue band over outside print and over central portraits, 81.5 mm, mentioned by Dale (T676), Swanson no. 102.
- R GB T 14** J. J. Mathias. Unrivalled Cherry Tooth Paste, bust of Edward VII left, monochrome with olive background, 82 mm, Dale T522, p. 297, Swanson no. 152.
- R GB T 15** Parton and Osborne. Connaught Tooth Paste, bust of Alfred, Duke of Connaught, facing with head three-quarters right, polychrome, gold band, 82 mm, Williams-Wood M195.
- R GB T 16** Parton Son & Co. Connaught Tooth Paste, bust of Alfred, Duke of Connaught, three-quarters right, polychrome, exact size unknown, Green p. 109.
- R GB T 17** Price & Co. late Price and Gosnell. The Celebrated Alexandra Cherry Paste, veiled bust of Alexandra facing, monochrome, gold band, 88 mm, Green and Lewis p. 29.
- R GB T 18** Price & Co. The Celebrated Alexandra Cherry Paste, bust of Alexandra three-quarters right, monochrome in sepia print, cherries and flowers in hair hand coloured, gold band, 63 mm, Green p. 108.
- R GB T 19** Napoleon Price & Cos. Cherry Tooth Paste, bust of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert accolated left, polychrome, gold band, 82.5 mm, mentioned by Dale p. 33, Williams-Wood M100, Swanson no. 203.
- R GB T 20** The Queen's Own. Cherry Tooth Paste, young head of Queen Victoria three-quarters right, no maker's name, monochrome in red print, 85 mm, Swanson collection.
- R GB T 21** Alexr. Rose & Co. Beatrice Tooth Powder, bust of Princess Beatrice facing with head three-quarters left, monochrome, gold band, 82 mm, Dale T647, p. 357.
- R GB T 22** Sharp Brothers Soap & Perfumery Co. Ltd. Royal Alexandra Cherry Tooth Paste (Red Lion Square), bust of Alexandra three-quarters left, polychrome, gold band, approximately 88 mm, Dale T706, p. 393, possibly Williams-Wood M207.
- R GB T 23** Sharp Brothers. Royal Alexandra Cherry Tooth Paste (12 and 14 Southampton Row), bust of Alexandra three-quarters left, polychrome, gold band, 87 mm, mentioned by Dale (T706), Swanson no. 234.
- R GB T 24** Sharp Brothers. Royal Alexandra Cherry Tooth Paste (12 and 14 Southampton Row), bust of Alexandra three-quarters left, monochrome, size unknown, mentioned by Dale (T706).
- R GB T 25** Sharp Brothers. Royal Alexandra Cherry Tooth Paste (12 and 14 Southampton Row), bust of Alexandra facing with head three-quarters left, polychrome, gold band, 83.5 mm, Swanson collection.
- R GB T 26** Dr Zeimer's. Alexandra Tooth Paste, London, bust of Alexandra three-quarters right head slightly left, monochrome, 75 and 91 mm, large size with gold band, Dale T701, p. 391, Williams-Wood M216, Swanson nos 282 and 283.
- R GB T 27** Dr Zeimer's. Alexandra Tooth Paste, London, bust of Alexandra three-quarters left head slightly right, monochrome, 70 and 89 mm, large size with gold band, Dale T702, p. 391.
- R GB T 28** Dr Zeimer's. Alexandra Tooth Paste, London, bust of Alexandra three-quarters right head slightly left, monochrome, miniature, exact size unknown, Dale T713, p. 395.
- R GB T 29** Dr Zeimer's. Alexandra Tooth Paste, London, bust of Alexandra three-quarters left head slightly right, monochrome, miniature, exact size unknown, UK collection.
- R GB T 30** Dr Zeimer's. Alexandra Tooth Paste, no address, London removed by abrasion, bust of Alexandra three-quarters right head slightly left, monochrome, 77 mm, Swanson collection.
- R GB T 31** Dr Zeimer's. Alexandra Tooth Paste, no address, bust of Alexandra three-quarters right head slightly left, monochrome, 77 mm, mentioned by Dale (T701).
- R GB T 32** Wilh. Zeimer's. Alexandra Tooth Paste, no address, trade mark, bust of Alexandra facing, monochrome, Dale T707, p. 393.
- R AU T 1** Browne & Heale. Browne's Victorian Cherry Tooth Paste, Sandhurst, young head bust of Queen Victoria left, monochrome in maroon, 78 mm, Keil no. 10.
- R AU T 2** De Leon's. Cherry Tooth Paste, bust of Alexandra three-quarters left but with the face almost in profile, monochrome with grey background, 82 mm, Swanson collection.
- R AU T 3** De Leon's. Cherry Tooth Paste, bust of Alexandra three-quarters left but with the face almost in profile, monochrome with grey background, miniature, exact size unknown, in an Australian collection.
- R AU T 4** Alfred Felton. The Alexandra Cherry Tooth Paste, Melbourne, bust of Alexandra three-quarters left, polychrome, gold band, British registration mark for 24 Aug, 1865, 79 mm, Keil no. 17.

Dental History

catalogue⁸ of Australian lids is an excellent reference for that series. Williams-Wood published a very good reference work, with many advertising lids listed.⁹ He included an exhaustive study of pot lid shapes.

Ball is today the world's foremost authority on pot lids. His main love is the scenic, polychrome lid, an interest reflected in his catalogue.¹⁰ Green published a general bottle book¹¹ which contains some pot lids and documents a few lids not found elsewhere. Although Hulme¹² and Griffiths¹³ reported the existence of toothpaste pot lids in the pharmaceutical and dental literature in 1956 and 1966 respectively, few other accounts have followed.

An excellent reference work¹⁴ on English and Dutch medical ceramics was published in 1969 by the Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine, but it contains a rather sparse list of pot lids.

Catalogue Numbers

In Table I, Dale⁷ and Swanson³ catalogue numbers are given beside each listing. Heath⁴ numbers are omitted, because she reports on no lids in the royalty series which have been previously undocumented. Where no reference number is given, the lid is uncatalogued. Other references, or the collection the lid is known to be in, are given on rarer pieces. In some cases only one example exists.

Although Dale⁷ is the best reference, he sometimes mentions two or three lids under one number. They have been separated here and given individual listings. Separate listings are not provided because of size differences except in the case of miniature (free sample) lids.

Green and Lewis⁶ do not give catalogue numbers, so reference to them in the listings is only made if the lid is not mentioned elsewhere.

Each entry in the following listing is prefixed by a catalogue number so that collectors of this series may refer to the many varieties without undue confusion. The first column is an R for royalty. The second column designates the country from which the product originated:

GB for Great Britain and AU for Australia. The third column indicates the product: T for toothpaste. A number then follows in the fourth column assigned to the individual type of lid.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank Messrs Bert Latham, Abe Ball and Ronald A. Cohen for their advice and encouragement in preparing this article.

Thanks are also due to the Photographic Department at King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry, especially the photographer, Jill Pearce.

References

- 1 Davis A. *Package and print: The development of container and label design*. London: Faber and Faber, 1967.
- 2 Clarke H G. *Under-glaze colour picture prints on Staffordshire pottery—the pictorial pot lid book*, 2nd ed. Leamington Spa: Courier Press, 1970.
- 3 Swanson B. *The tooth paste pot lid book*. Black Notley: Bottles and Relics Publications, 1974.
- 4 Heath J. *Identifying and valuing black and white pot lids*. Southampton: Southern Collectors' Publications, 1977.
- 5 Fletcher E. *Collecting pot lids*. London: Pitman, 1975.
- 6 Green R, Lewis D. *The advertising art of printed pot lids*. Bridgnorth: Old Bottles and Treasure Hunting, 1979.
- 7 Dale R. *The price guide to black and white pot lids*. Woodbridge: The Antique Collectors Club, 1977.
- 8 Keil R. *Collecting Australian pot lids*. Whylla: Robert Keil, 1981.
- 9 Williams-Wood C. *Staffordshire pot lids and their potters*. London: Faber and Faber, 1972.
- 10 Ball A. *The price guide to pot lids*. Woodbridge: The Antique Collectors Club, 1970.
- 11 Green R. *The best of British bottles*. Birmingham: UG Books, 1982.
- 12 Hume A N. 19th-century toothpaste pots. *Chem Drug* 1956; **165**: 618-619.
- 13 Griffiths B M. Dentifrices—an item of historical interest. *NZ Dent J* 1966; **62**: 296-301.
- 14 Crellin J K. *Medical ceramics in the Wellcome Institute*. London: Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine, 1969.

British Society of Dentistry for the Handicapped

The 1985 Winter meeting of the British Society for Dentistry for the Handicapped was held in the Robens Suite of Guy's Hospital Tower on Friday, 22 November, 1985. After registration, coffee and a short address of welcome by the president, Mrs Margaret Melville, the morning session was devoted to the management of the problems associated with heart disease.

Dr C. E. Handler gave an account of the methods used in determining the degree of infarction present after coronary artery occlusion by means of the thallium exercise perfusion test and tomography. The techniques of angioplasty to clear occluded coronary arteries and echocardiography were discussed.

Professor M. J. Tynan amplified the subject of angioplasty and its use in congenital heart disease for the dilatation of pulmonary valve stenosis and coarctation of the aorta. He described new techniques for sealing of atrial and ventricular septal defects and patent ductus arteriosus without open chest surgery and ultrasonic diagnosis of hypoplastic heart syndrome *in utero*.

Professor R. A. Cawson spoke of the risks of infective endocarditis in those patients with congenital heart disease and the pre- and post-treatment management of such patients with the appropriate antibiotic cover.

Members' papers were presented by eight speakers in the afternoon session and covered

the dental needs and assessment of the mentally handicapped and a plea to consider dental pain as a source of disturbed behaviour. Papers on dental health education, Huntington's chorea, the difficulties in obtaining dental treatment for the mentally handicapped, and the advantages of using relative analgesia all contributed to a particularly successful programme.

Later at the Annual General Meeting Mrs Melville made her valedictory address and installed Mrs Gudrun Hopper as president for the year 1986.

Endodontic Study Group in Scotland

An initial meeting was held at the Glasgow Dental Hospital on Monday, February 3, 1986, chaired by Professor R. C. Paterson.

Mr C. R. Stock started the proceedings with an excellent paper reviewing the use of ultrasonics in the cleansing of root canals. This was illustrated by interesting slides of treated cases. Mr Stock spoke with his customary clarity and wit. A lively discussion followed in which many aspects of root canal cleansing were raised. Professor Paterson proposed a vote of thanks which was warmly approved.

Professor Paterson then opened a discussion on the possible formation of a study group in Scotland. He said that he had considerable support from the British Endodontic Society Council. The options considered included the formation of a West of Scotland Group or a Scottish group, with

or without close links with the BES.

The majority of the 75 people present appeared to favour close links with the BES. A steering committee consisting of Professor R. C. Paterson, Dr A. Watts and J. Pairman was elected for one year. They were asked to explore the possibility of joining with interested parties in the East to form a Scottish Group.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday May 13, 1986, at the Glasgow Dental Hospital at 7.30 pm in the main lecture theatre (D Level). The speaker will be Professor Pierre Dow of the University of British Columbia, who will give a talk entitled 'A Canadian View of Endodontics'.

Anyone interested in joining the group is invited to contact Professor Paterson, Glasgow Dental Hospital, 378 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3JZ.

British Dental Students Association

The Cardiff Medical and Dental Students Club are hosting the BDSA Winter Conference from April 9 to 12.

Taking part in a debate on the future of dentistry will be Mr Norman Whitehouse (Secretary-designate of the BDA), Mr David Watson James, chairman of the GDSC, and Mr David Lloyd, vice-chairman of the GDSC.

Further details from Jill Adam, president, Cardiff Dental Students' Society, Cardiff Medical and Dental Students Club, Neuadd Meirionnydd, Heath Park, Cardiff CF4 4YS. **Advance Notice:** Cardiff May Ball May 16.

