

Sherratt Figures: A Photo Index



Myrna Schkolne

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Introduction

In 1991, Malcolm and Judith Hodkinson published *Sherratt? A Natural Family of Staffordshire Figures*. Their ground breaking book was the first to use scientific methodology to establish criteria for attributing Staffordshire pottery figures.

Although the potter Obadiah Sherratt did not mark his figures, by the twentieth century a small group of figures with distinctive features was, rightly or wrongly, associated with his name. The Hodkinsons linked many more figures with shared features to this group. Acknowledging that an attribution to Sherratt specifically could be challenged, they suggested that the use of the Sherratt name was, at the very least, a convenient moniker that would be easily understood.

The Hodkinsons' work is a flawless and invaluable reference that has withstood the test of time. It includes an alphabetical listing of the Sherratt models, each illustrated with a small black and white image. Since its publication, further models have inevitably come to light, and, for that reason, I have assembled this photo record. Digital technology affords limitless space, so I have included multiple variations of many figures, and most images are in color.

The models illustrated herein are those that I am certain were, at the very least, probably made by Sherratt. I am aware of a handful of other models that he may well have made, but I lack evidence to confirm the attribution. The text in this document is sparse because the Hodkinsons have already said it all, so please refer to their work for a deeper understanding.

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Wombwell's Menagerie

Abraham Stop



Ale Bench





Archangel Gabriel



Archer

The lady archer pairs with the sportsman with dog. The figure without bocage was made that way.



Baptism of Mary





Barber



Bear Baiting

Sherratt's bear baiting groups, known from only these two examples, probably date from his early years. The man and dog are also components of Sherratt's earliest bull baiting groups. The base on the first group is like that used for a large Sherratt tiger. Slab bases, as on the second group, are on a Death of Munrow and a large lion, both apparently being earlier Sherratt products.



Courtesy John Howard

Billy Waters and Douglas



Bird Nesting



Birds



Courtesy John Howard

Bull Baiting

The first two models are Sherratt's earliest bull baitings. The clawed base, apparently his first table base, was in use before 1820. The other brown table base followed shortly thereafter.



Courtesy Christie's



This is the most well-known form of Sherratt's bull baiting, and it is most often on the marbled table base used in the 1820s and 1830s. The bull and the man differ from and are noticeably smaller than those in the groups on brown bases. Sometimes the man's hat was omitted. The example on the rainbow base is uncommon, and the dog atop the bull is smaller.



Courtesy Christie's

These three groups utilize a different man. The first is on the same scale as traditional bull baitings on marbled bases. The other two are significantly smaller, measuring at most 9 inches across.



These groups were made without a man. The first, measuring 13.7 inches across, is on the same scale as traditional full-sized bull baiting groups, and the second, measuring 8 inches across, is smaller.



These groups use many of the same molds as previous groups, but none is particularly evocative of “Sherratt” or exhibits features enabling attribution. Perhaps they were forerunners to Sherratt’s other groups, or perhaps other potters made them. The dog on the last group is a replacement.



Byron, Lord

“Byron” is incised on the reverse of this bust. The motif on the front of the socle is on several Sherratt boxes. (See Dogs, Girls on Plinths.) It also is on busts of the Duke of York and Nelson that, unlike this bust, are not painted in a typical Sherratt style.



Cats



Ceres



Christ and the Woman of Samaria



Christ's Agony



Cobbler



Corder and Marten

The script and dress pattern on the final two figures are not otherwise on Sherratt figures, so another potter may have made them.





Courtesy Sotheby's

Courtship



Courtesy Roger Jones





Cows and Bulls



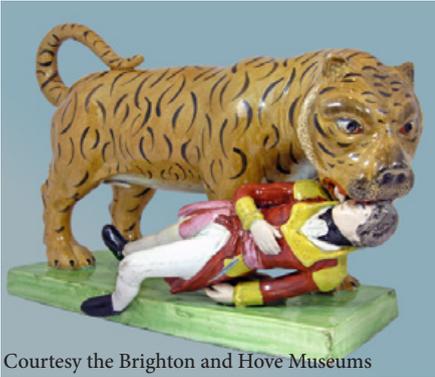


Dandies





Death of Munrow



Courtesy the Brighton and Hove Museums



Courtesy Sotheby's



Deer





Deer Stalker



Dogs





Dr. Syntax





Duke of York

This bust is impressed “DUKE OF YORK” on the reverse and, like the small bust of the Nelson, Sherratt may have made it. The painting on both busts is atypical, but the royal motif on the socles is otherwise only associated with Sherratt. He used that motif on a bust of Byron and on box lids (see Dogs and Girls Resting on Plinths) that display additional Sherratt features.



Elements



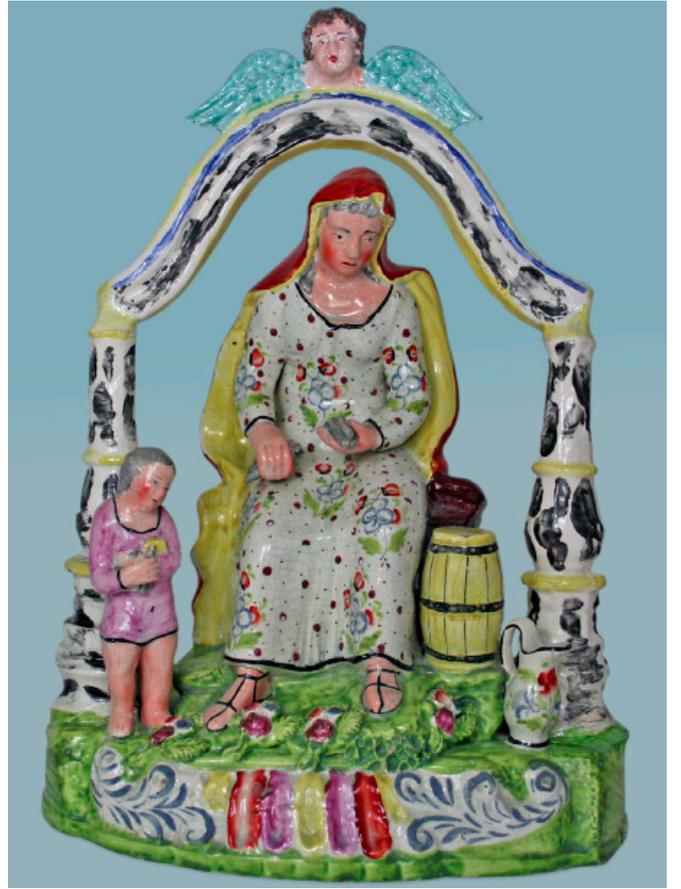
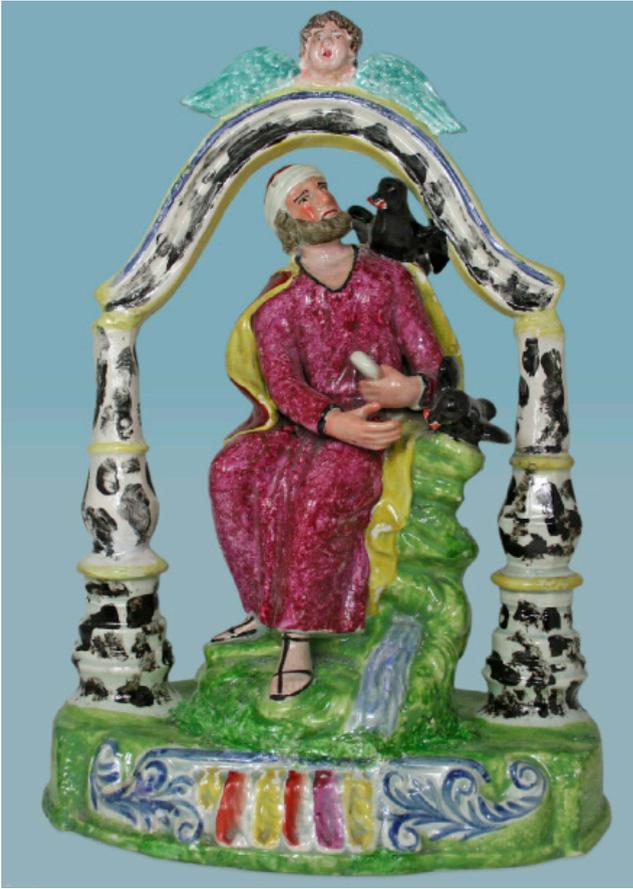
Elijah and the Widow

Note that Sherratt made two models of the Widow.



Courtesy John Howard





Faith, Hope, Charity





Family

These figures also occur in Teetotal groups.



Courtesy the National Trust

Flight to Egypt, Return from Egypt





Flora



Flower Vendors

The little model wearing a long dress pairs with a similar model facing in the other directions. Three different heads occur on the girl seated facing left and two on the girl facing right. The companion to the last figure has not been identified.





Foxes



Gardeners





Girl Resting on Plinths



Grecian & Daughter



Jim Crow



King William IV, Queen Adelaide



Land Lord & Land Lady



Courtesy the Brighton and Hove Museums

Leopards

The large leopard titled THE DEATH OF A NEGRO probably once held a Black man between its jaws and is not from the same molds as the tiger in THE DEATH OF MUNROW groups. The group relates to a fake-news report of 1834 telling of animals escaping from Wombwell's menagerie. Figure groups showing lions and tigers mauling other victims are on the same theme.



Lions

The lion mauling a child and the lion mauling a woman relate to fake news reports of 1834 detailing the escape of animals from Wombwell's menagerie.









Malibran, Maria

Sherratt subsequently used the molds from this figure to fashion a figure of the young Queen Victoria.



Man with Book, Man with Sword

These small figures are also on Sherratt's large "Prepare to Meet Thy God" groups.



Milkmaid



Miss Foot



Musicians









Nelson

This bust is impressed “NELSON” on the reverse and, like the small bust of the Duke of York, Sherratt may have made it. The painting on both busts is atypical, but the royal motif on the socle of each is otherwise only associated with Sherratt. He used this motif on a bust of Byron and on boxes (see Dogs and Girls Resting on Plinths) that display additional Sherratt features.



Courtesy National Maritime Museum

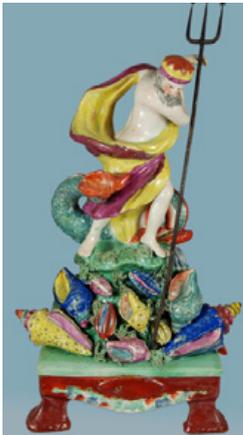
Neptune and Venus



and Albert Museum, London.



(c) The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Paul Pry

Sherratt made Paul Pry in two sizes.



Performing Animals



Polito's Menagerie



Pomona

The usual model of Pomona (the first three) is in the same style as figures of Ceres and Flora and can be found paired with one or the other. No companion to the final small figure is recorded.



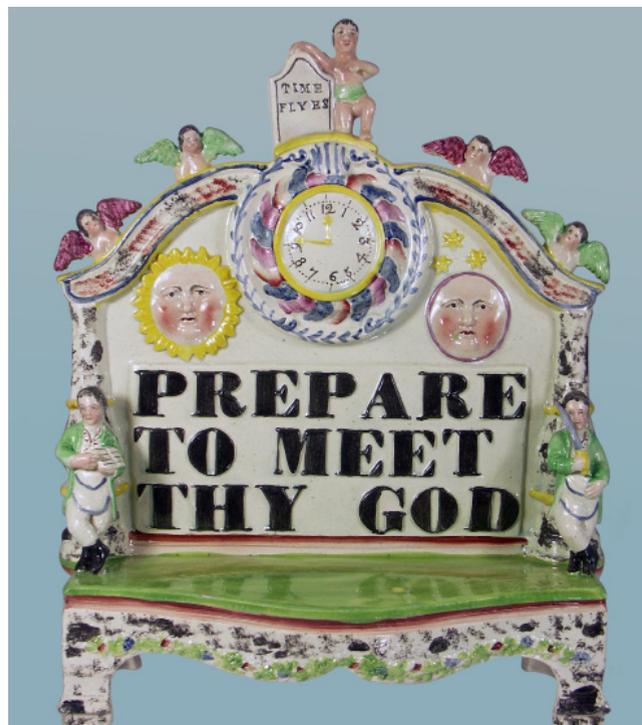
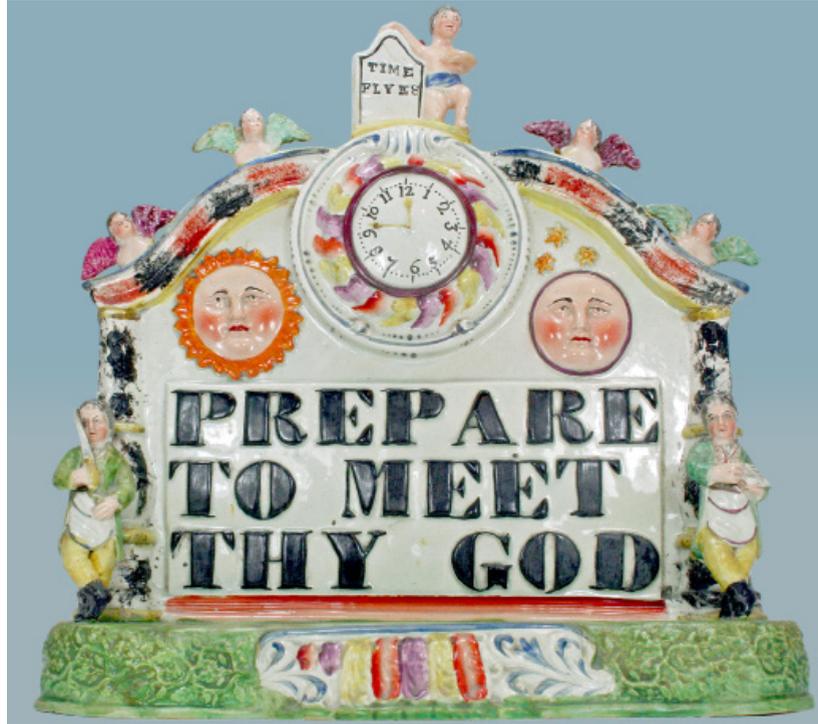
Poor Soldier

This model is known as the Poor Soldier because at least one other potter made a similar figure titled thus. The base strongly suggests a Sherratt attribution.



Prepare to Meet thy God

See also “Archangel Gabriel” for a figure titled “Prepare to Meet thy God.”



Putti



Courtesy Madelena

Puzzle Jugs

Sherratt probably made these two jugs. Both are painted in a typical Sherratt manner; the small musician on the left hand jug is on Sherratt menageries and occurs as a free standing figure; and the sun face is on Sherratt's Prepare to Meet Thy God groups. Not all jugs from these molds exhibit Sherratt features, so perhaps other potters made them.



Courtesy John Howard

Queen Victoria

This figure is from the same molds as the figure of Maria Malibran



Reading





Red Barn

The second Red Barn is essentially the same as the first but has a different base and bocage. The third Red Barn is a petite model, measuring just under 5" across.



Religious Officials

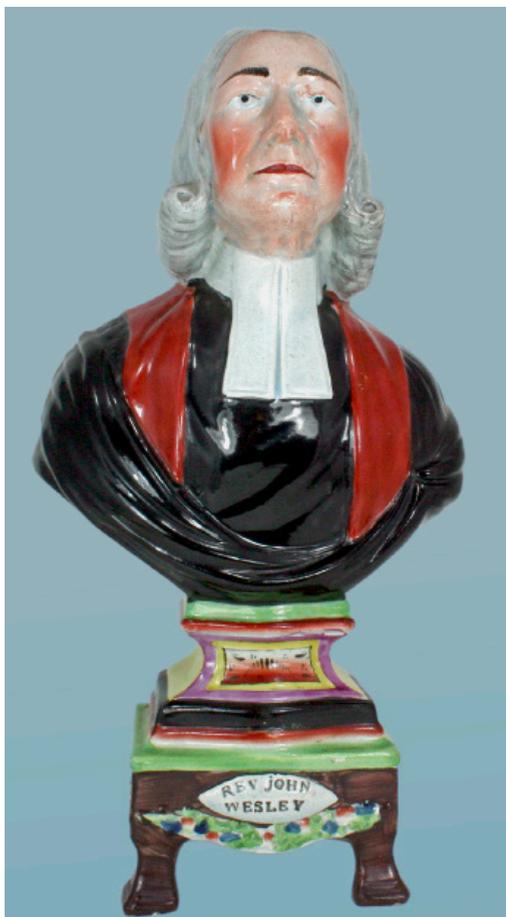
These figures may or may not portray the Rev. John Wesley. There is insufficient evidence for confidently attributing them to Sherratt, but the distinctive enamelling strongly suggests that he made them.



Remus & Romulus



Rev. John Wesley



Roger Giles



Royal Supporters



Saint George & Dragon



Saints, Biblical



Seasons

These figures allegorical of Summer, Autumn, and Winter are the only recorded Sherratt Seasons. Winter is similar to a model of a shepherd.



Sheep





Shepherds

Also see “Musicians” for musicians with sheep.





Tam O'Shanter, Souter Johnny



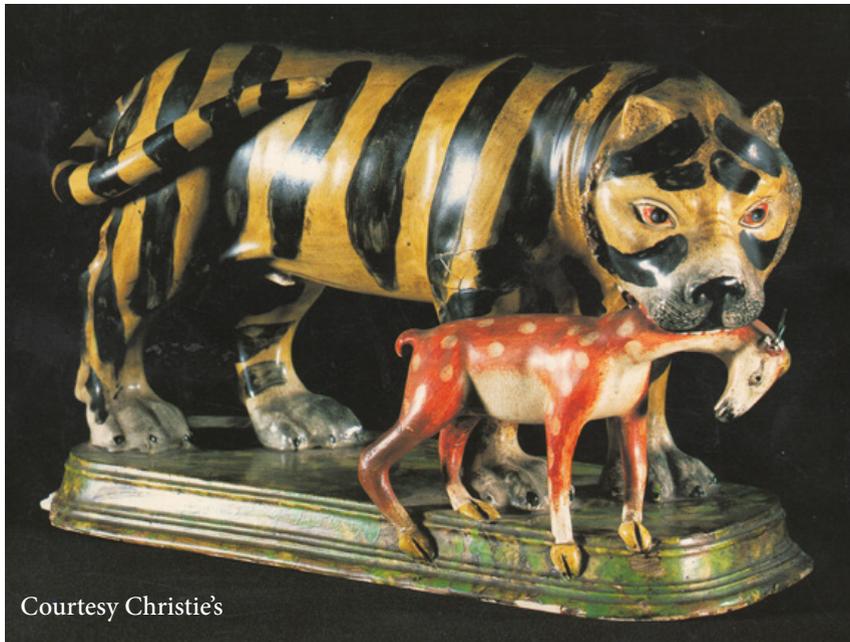
Teetotal



Tigers

The large tiger holding a deer shares molds with rare Sherratt groups. The base is on a bear baiting group, and the deer is also in the jaws of a large lion. (See Bear Baiting and Lions.)

The other five groups relate to fake-news reports of 1834 recounting the escape of animals from Wombwell's menagerie. (See Lions and Leopards for other groups on this theme.)



Courtesy Christie's



Courtesy John Howard





Toby Jug



Courtesy Bonhams

Turk



Unidentified Subjects

The girl (with losses) in the second group occurs as a lone figure of a bird nester.



Vendors



Venus and Cupids



Vestris, Madame



Virgin Mary



Courtesy Winterthur Museum

Weddings





© The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK



Welsh Tailor and Wife



Courtesy Andrew Dando

Wombwell's Menagerie

