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## British Porcelain, Pottery and Ceramic Trade Marks

# Dating Wedgwood

[Josiah Wedgwood](#)

NOTE: If the ware has '& CO' in the mark or stamp then it does not belong to Josiah Wedgwood but to [Wedgwood & Co \(Ltd\)](#)

[ [See: Confused about Wedgwood?](#) ]  
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## Old Wedgwood

Among collectors the term Old Wedgwood is taken to refer to wares produced before Josiah's death in 1795. Old Wedgwood is difficult to date. The first examination is of the piece itself. Old Wedgwood has a character of its own. It is finely crafted and just feels old. It is impossible to convey that quality in either words or photographs. The only way to gain an appreciation of the character of Old Wedgwood is to examine it, with the eye and with the finger tips. Take every opportunity to do so at shows and auctions.

## The Potters Mark

The next recourse is to the mark. Josiah started marking his production with his name in about 1759, impressing the name into the underside of the article with printer's movable type. The resulting mark was often uneven and sometime arced. In about 1769 he adopted the familiar mark with the name impressed from a single slug. the WEDGWOOD mark is found on useful wares between 1769 and 1781 and on all wares produced thereafter until the sans serif version of the mark was introduced in 1929.

## WEDGWOOD and BENTLEY

It was in 1769 that he formed two partnerships, Wedgwood and Bentley produced decorative ware with his good friend, Thomas Bentley. Their production is marked with one or the other of the several versions of the Wedgwood and Bentley mark. Useful wares were produced with his cousin, Thomas Wedgwood and bear the WEDGWOOD mark.

## THE LETTER/NUMBER CODES

In 1860 the Wedgwood factory started marking its wares with the date of

manufacture impressed in each piece as part of a three letter code. The first letter of the code represents the month of manufacture, the second identified the potter who threw the shape and the last letter signifying the year the piece was made starting with O for 1860. The series was repeated 4 times. From 1907 on in the third series the first letter for the month is replaced by a 3 and with the fourth series commencing with A in 1924 with the figure 4. There is an area of confusion in wares in the first two series. For example TOT could mean a piece produced in either June 1865 or June of 1891. Commencing in 1929 the year mark is replaced by the last two digits of the year, 30 standing for 1930.

Some assistance in resolving the ambiguity in the two series is provided by the month letter. January, February, April, September, October, November and December are always shown by their initial letter. June is always T and August is always W. In 1860-1863 March is M, May is Y and July is V. In 1864 March becomes R, May is M and July is L. In 1871 Wedgwood adopted pattern numbers with the code letter prefixes. I bought a small Queens Ware creamer at a flea market thinking from its style and shape to be quite old has the pattern number A1820 on its bottom. The impressed marks are badly filled in with the glaze and are almost obscured. The last figure in the three letter code is probably an O and the first two letters are impossible to read. Since the prefixed code was not introduced until 1871 I date the piece at 1886.

### WEDGWOOD'S IMPRESSED YEAR LETTERS

Occurring in sets of three (from 1860), the *last* shows the year of manufacture

O = 1860	U = 1866	Z = 1871	E = 1876	J = 1881
P = 1861	V = 1867	A = 1872	F = 1877	K = 1882
Q = 1862	W = 1868	B = 1873	G = 1878	L = 1883
R = 1863	X = 1869	C = 1874	H = 1879	M = 1884
S = 1864	Y = 1870	D = 1875	I = 1880	N = 1885
T = 1865				

O = 1886
P = 1887
Q = 1888
R = 1889
S = 1890
T = 1891*
U = 1892
V = 1893
W = 1894
X = 1895
Y = 1896
Z = 1897

From 1886 to 1897 the earlier (1860-71) letters are repeated.

\* From 1891 'ENGLAND' should occur on specimens.

A = 1898
B = 1899
C = 1900
D = 1901
E = 1902
F = 1903
G = 1904
H = 1905
I = 1906

From 1898 to 1906 the letters used from 1872 to 1880 re occur, but 'ENGLAND' should also appear.

From 1907 the sequence was continued, but a '3' replaces the first letter. From 1924 a '4' replaces the '3'. After 1930 the month is numbered in sequence and the last two numbers of the year are given, i.e. 1A 32 = January 1932. 'A' being the workman's mark.

### Other pointers

After 1891 the word ENGLAND is added to the WEDGWOOD mark continuing until

1908 when the words MADE IN ENGLAND replace it in all cases. MADE IN ENGLAND commenced appearing on some wares as early as 1898 but is not in general use until 1908.

Before the advent of the dating system in 1860 one must look to other clues to date pieces described as marked WEDGWOOD only. In Jasper the colour is important. Solid Black Jasper was produced between 1778 and about 1826; the white body dipped in black between 1778 and 1826 with production resumed in 1844 and continuing to the modern era. Pale blue dates the piece between 1775 and 1826. Dark or deep blues date the piece as before 1820. In general Jasper pieces produced before 1860 were produced before 1826 except for black, blue, green and dipped pieces and solid white jasper which were resumed in 1844.

Bone china was manufactured between 1812 and 1830 then abandoned until 1878. Majolica was first produced by Wedgwood in 1860 and continued until 1940. Pattern and shape are useful more in elimination of a range of dates than in assigning one. The transfer printed Liverpool Birds pattern of our 1920's dinner service was introduced in 1763 and has been irregularly produced ever since. The helmet shape of the cream pitcher and the parapet shape teapot have been in use for the same period. The date codes and trade marks place the service pieces of the set in the 1890s and the place settings from 1910 through 1924. The original owner obviously built her good china up over a period of years.

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## Josiah Wedgwood

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Questions and comments to: Steve Birks  
[steveb@netcentral.co.uk](mailto:steveb@netcentral.co.uk)

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## British Porcelain, Pottery and Ceramic Trade Marks

### Josiah Wedgwood (& Sons Ltd)



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- ➔ [How to Date Wedgwood](#)
- ➔ [Josiah Wedgwood the Potter](#)
- ➔ [Wedgwood Ware](#)

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#### Is it real Wedgwood?

The Wedgwood Collector is faced with many imitators and unscrupulous rival manufacturers who either traded on a relationship to the Wedgwood family by marking their wares so that the uninformed might buy them thinking that they were getting Wedgwood quality or left their products unmarked so that the buyer might attribute their work to the Wedgwood potteries.

Some of the imitators' work is quite good and would grace a collection of 18th and 19th century English potters work. Fortunately Josiah was the first potter of note to mark his production with his own name, rather than easily copied potters marks like the crossed sword mark used at Sevres or the Chelsea potteries' anchor mark.

Josiah was not reticent to defend his marks and reputation in court during his lifetime and his successors have followed that pattern to the present day. While early Wedgwood works may be unmarked, the presence of the correct mark is both an indication that the piece is genuine and an index of its age. *After 1781 few unmarked pieces can be correctly attributed to Wedgwood*

Beware of ware marked '[Wedgwood & Co](#)' by Enoch Wedgwood and also ware of the 1790-1801 period by the Knottingley Pottery which was also marked '[Wedgwood & Co](#)'

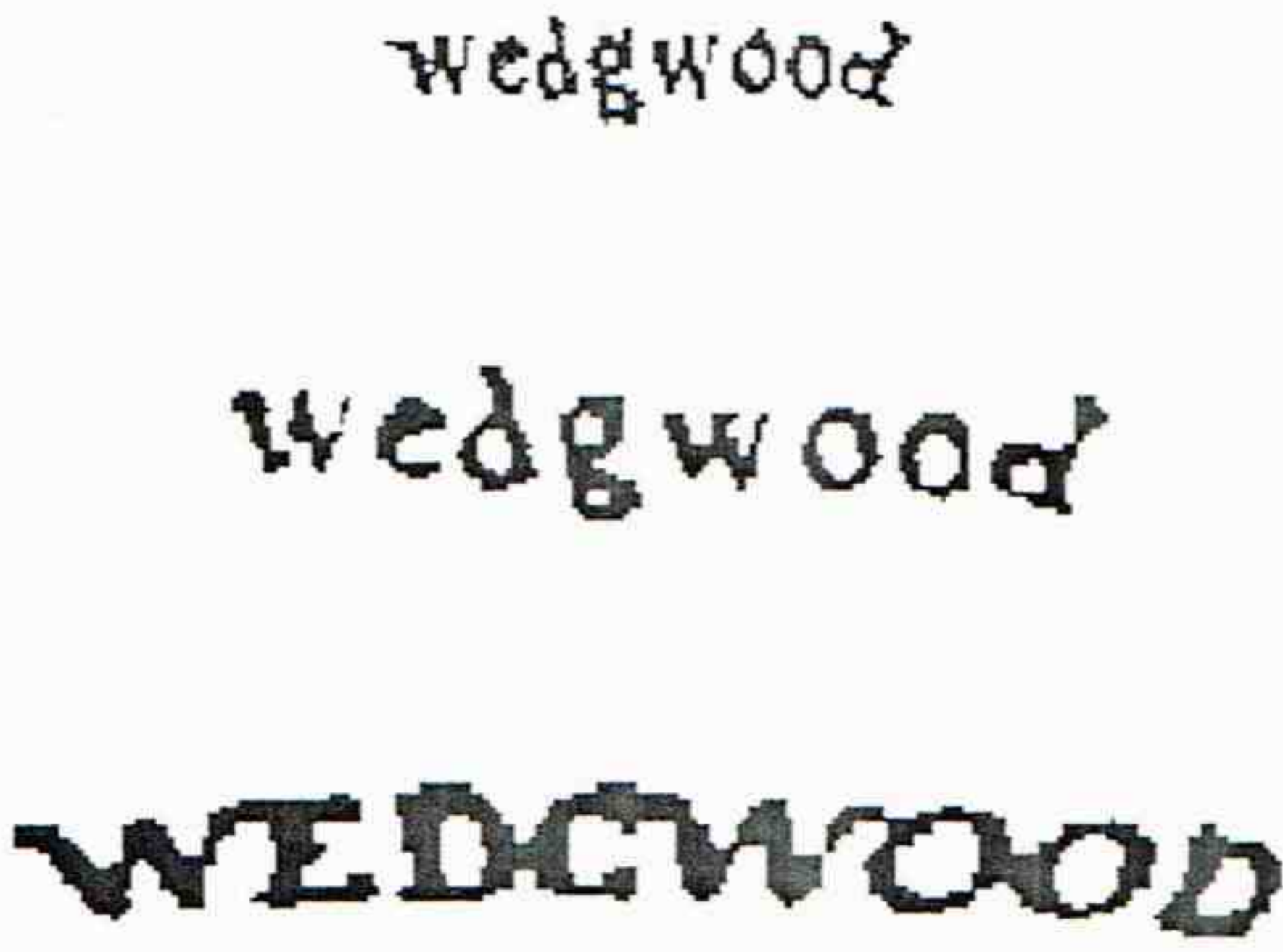
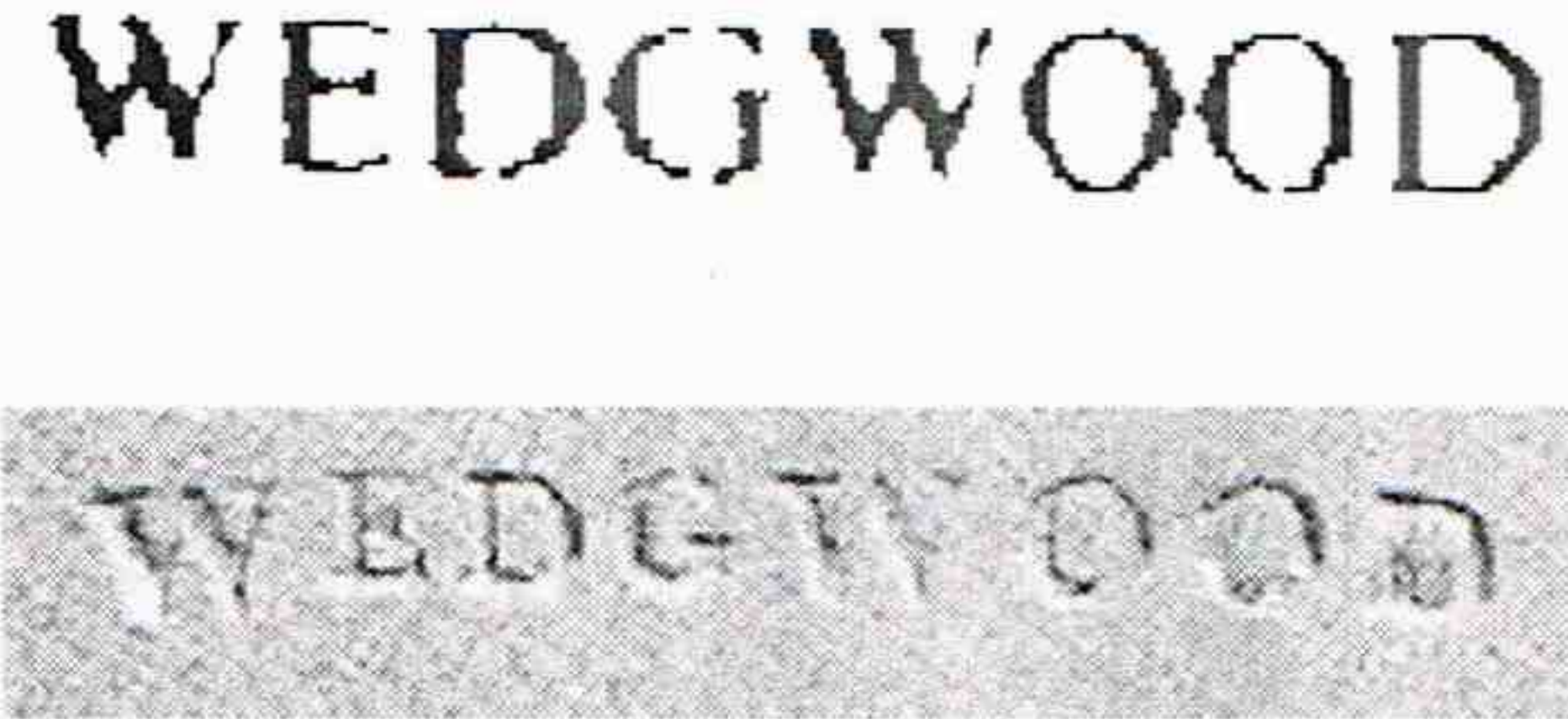

**Josiah Wedgwood (& Sons Ltd)**

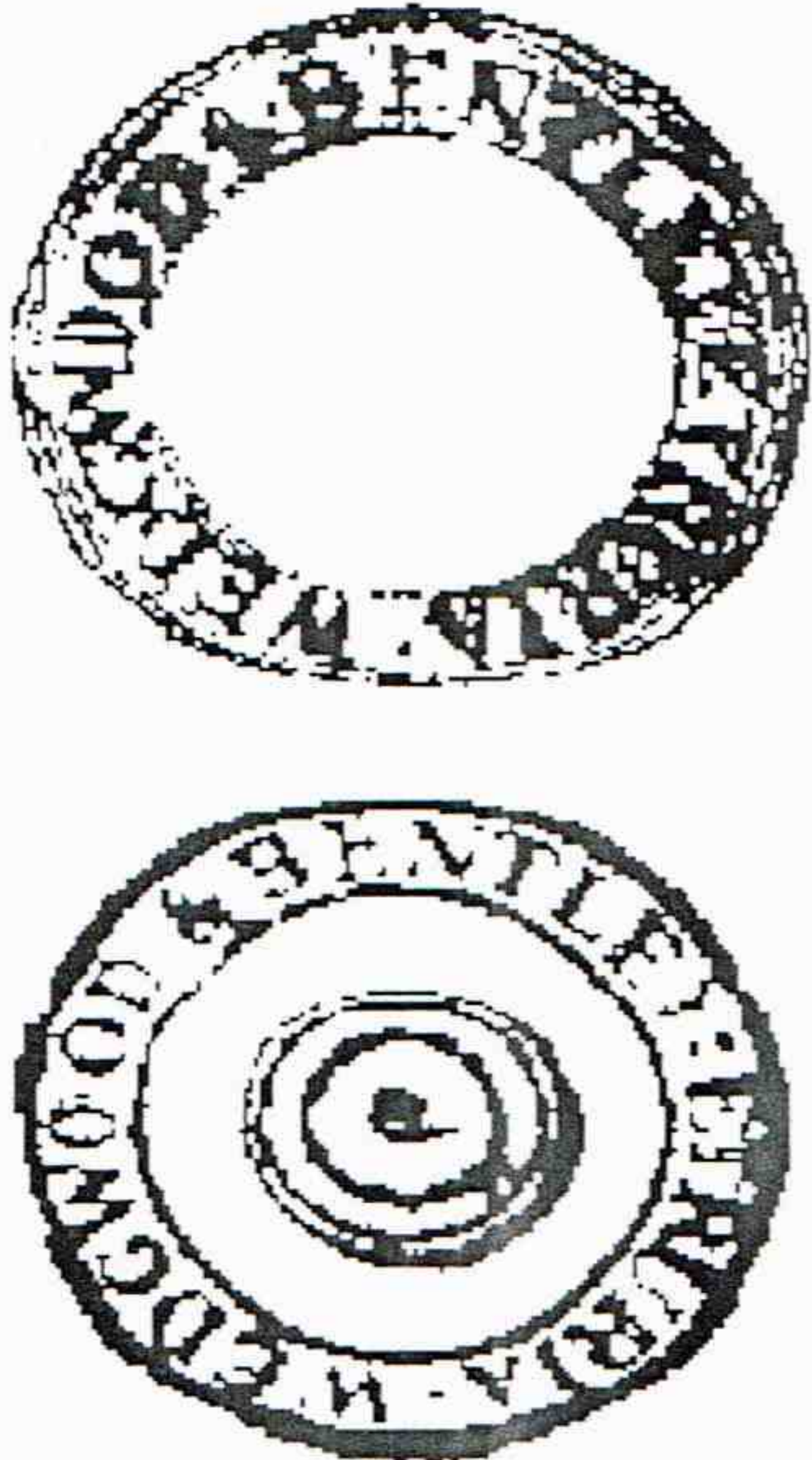
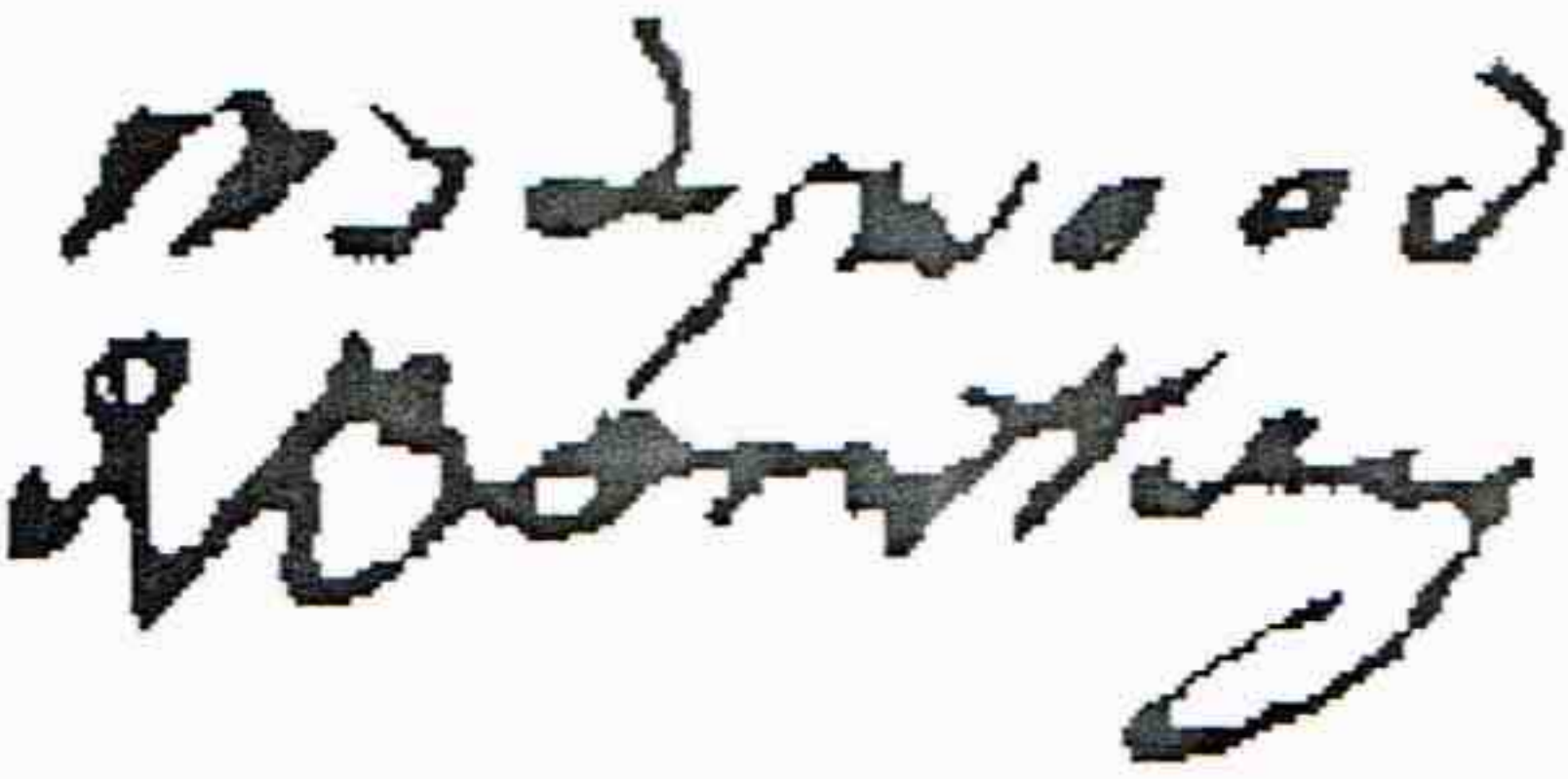
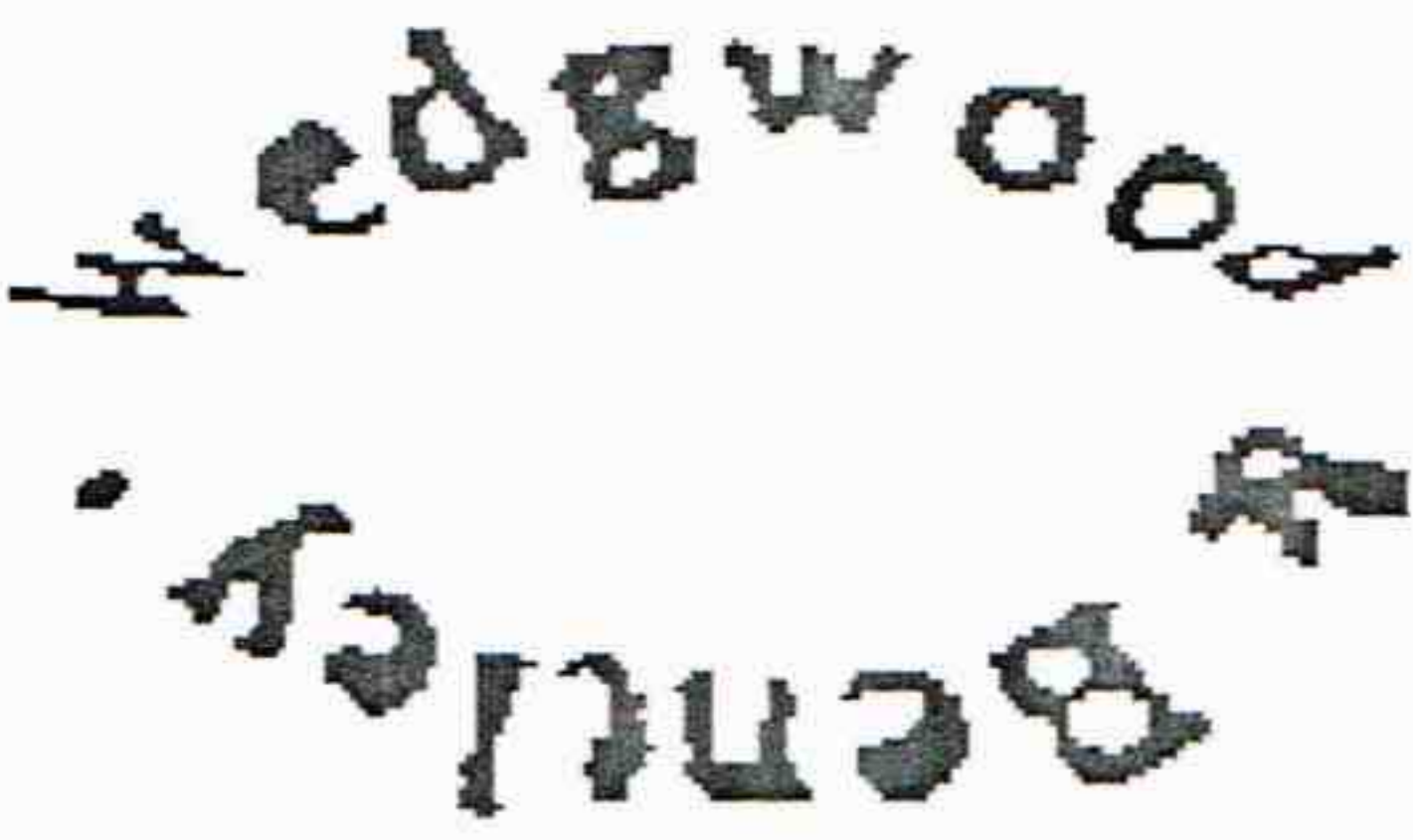
Famous manufacturer of earthenware and porcelain at Burslem then

Etruria and lastly Barlaston (where the factory is currently situated)





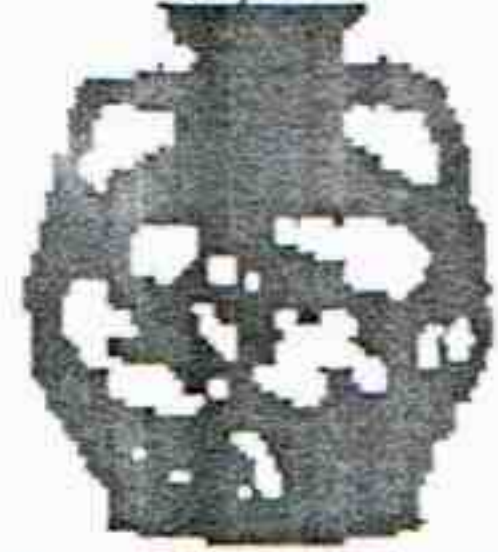
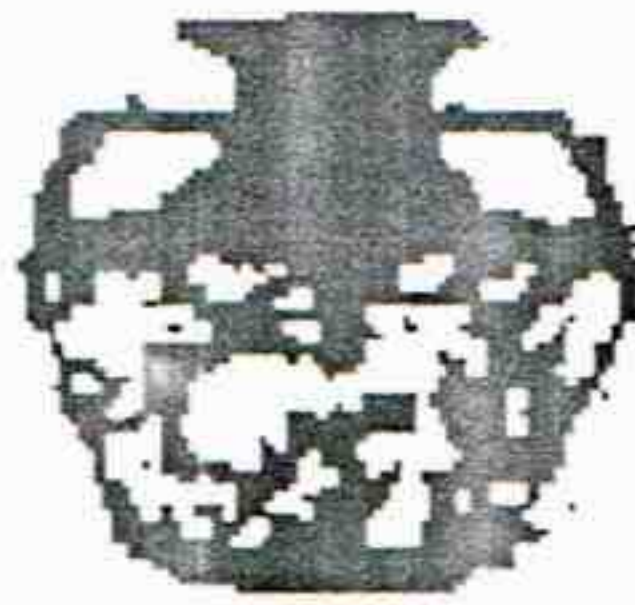
c.1759+

 How to Date Wedgwood

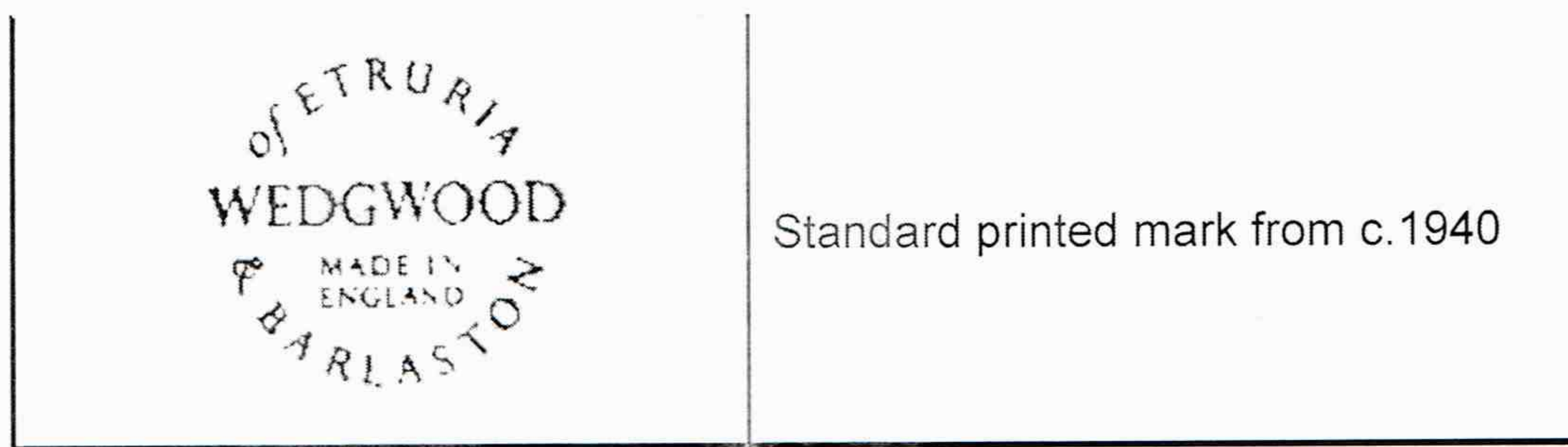
Mark	Description & date
	<p>Basic impressed name-mark on earthenware. c.1759+ Early examples show individually impressed letters.</p> <p>Josiah started marking his wares about 1759 with impressions made with printers movable type. Each letter was impressed separately and the mark is uneven and often in curved shape. Much of the production remained unmarked. These marks were used through 1769.</p>
	<p>In 1769 the work of Josiah's partnership with his cousin, Thomas Wedgwood for the manufacture of useful wares is impressed with this mark made with a slug.</p> <p>After the death of his partner Bentley in 1781(see marks below) this mark was used instead of the 'Wedgwood &amp; Bentley' marks.</p> <p>The mark was used on both useful and decorative pieces. This impressed mark remains the usual mark until the adoption of the sans serif version in 1929.</p>
	<p>Commencing in about 1769 the decorative works produced by Josiah's partnership with Bentley were marked with one of the three of</p>

 <p style="text-align: center;">W &amp; B</p>	<p>these marks either impressed or raised from the body.</p> <p>Examples of these impressed 'Wedgwood &amp; Bentley' marks are rare.</p> <p>Found on ornamental basalt, jasper and marbled wares.c.1769-80</p> <p>NOTE: The circular mark has been added to unmarked objects; these fake marks are relatively soft and can be marked by a pin, knife etc.</p>
	<p>This extremely rare script mark is used on ornamental wares between 1769 and 1780.</p>
<p>Wedgwood &amp; Bentley 356</p> <p>W. &amp; B.</p> 	<p>These three example marks were used on smaller seals, cameos and intaglios.</p> <p>The number in 356 is the Wedgwood and Bentley catalog number of the piece.</p>
<p>WEDGWOOD &amp; BENTLEY</p>	<p>This impressed mark is used on larger pieces, sometimes with the word ETRURIA added.</p>
	<p>These were used on all types of ware</p>

<p>Wedgwood. wedgwood.</p>	<p>from 1780 until about the time of Josiah's death in 1795.</p> <p>The top mark is the upper and lower case mark and the bottom is called the lower case mark.</p>
<p>WEDGWOOD &amp; SONS</p>	<p>This very rare impressed mark dates the piece at about 1790.</p>
<p>JOSIAH WEDGWOOD Feb. 2nd 1805</p>	<p>This rare mark used by Josiah Wedgwood II is found on lustre ware, basalts, rosso antico and Jasper Ware pieces.</p>
<p><b>WIDGWOOD</b></p>	<p><i>Printed</i> in red, blue or gold name-marks on porcelain (rare).</p> <p>c.1812-22</p>
<p>WEDGWOOD'S STONE CHINA</p>	<p>This printed mark appears on the stone china range manufactured between 1820-61.</p>
<p>WEDGWOOD ETRURIA</p>	<p><i>Impressed</i> mark with the place 'ETRURIA' added.</p> <p>c.1840-5</p>
<p><i>Emile Lessore</i> EMILE LESSORE</p>	<p>Typical signature marks found on Wedgwood earthenware painted by the French artist Emile Lessore.</p> <p>c.1858-76</p>
<p>wedgwood ENGLAND</p>	<p>England added from 1891</p>
<p>wedgwood MADE IN ENGLAND</p>	<p>Made in England added from 1910</p>
<p><b>WEDGWOOD</b></p>	<p>Impressed '<i>sans serif</i>' name-mark on earthenware from c.1929</p>
	<p>Basic printed mark on porcelain, c.1878+</p>

 <p>WEDGWOOD</p>	<p>England added from 1891                  Made in England added from 1910</p> <p>The description 'BONE CHINA' was sometimes used.</p>
 <p>WEDGWOOD                  TYRURIA. ENGLAND</p>	<p>Rare impressed mark on Queen's ware 1891-1900.</p>
 <p>WEDGWOOD</p>	<p>Printed mark on bone china from 1900 onwards ENGLAND OR MADE IN ENGLAND added below.</p>
 <p>WEDGWOOD                  BONE CHINA                  MADE IN ENGLAND</p>	<p>Printed mark on bone china from about 1902.</p>
 <p>WEDGWOOD                  BONE CHINA                  MADE IN ENGLAND</p>	<p>Machine printed mark on bone china 1950-62.</p>
 <p>WEDGWOOD                  BONE CHINA                  MADE IN ENGLAND</p>	<p>Bone china mark introduced in 1962.</p>





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### Useful Key Dates

1775 Jasper perfected and introduced  
 1777 Jasper dip introduced  
 1780 Death of Thomas Bentley and the end of the Bentley and Wedgwood partnership  
 1805 underglaze blue printing introduced  
 1806 Lustre introduced  
 1812 First printed mark  
 1827-41 Francis Wedgwood in partnership with Josiah II and Josiah III  
 1860 Majolica introduced. Three letter impressed mark (dating code) introduced for earthenwares  
 1875-85 Turquoise jasper introduced  
 1891 'England' mark introduced  
 1895 Incorporation of firm as Josiah Wedgwood and Sons Ltd.  
 1912 Powder blue decoration introduced  
 1953 Royal blue Jasper introduced to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth the II.  
 1980 250th anniversary of Josiah I birth, and 200th anniversary of the end of the Wedgwood and Bentley partnership

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[steveb@netcentral.co.uk](mailto:steveb@netcentral.co.uk)