

Portals To The Past



British Ceramics 1675 - 1825

By Rick Russack

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — In 1965, the Mint Museum acquired the M. Mellanay Delhom collection of more than 2,000 pieces of early English, European and Asian ceramics. Delhom, as part of the deal, became the Mint’s curator of ceramics. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of this acquisition, the museum has mounted a stunning exhibit, “Portals to the Past: British Ceramics 1675–1825.”

The Mint Museum has refined and added to its ceramics collections over the years and is today recognized for its commitment to presenting works of clay as art, ancient to contemporary. Appropriately, it has the largest institutional collection of pottery from North

This soft paste Chelsea porcelain coffeepot of circa 1745–1749 has flowering tea branches molded in high relief swirling across the body and lid. Museum purchase, Delhom Collection.





Carolina, plus holdings of Native American ceramics. The Delhom-Gambrell Reference Library houses more than 4,000 volumes on ceramics and other decorative arts. One treasure is the Jesuit priest Jean-Baptiste du Halde's 1736 *The General History of China*, describing porcelain to Europeans for the first time.

In conjunction with "Portals to the Past" and in association with D. Giles Ltd, the Mint Museum published *British Ceramics 1675–1825*. Divided into sections on earthenware, stoneware and porcelain, the 272-page catalog includes more than 175 color illustrations of objects in the exhibit. Each item is thoroughly identified and discussed in context. The book features essays on the Delhom collection, its formation and acquisition by the

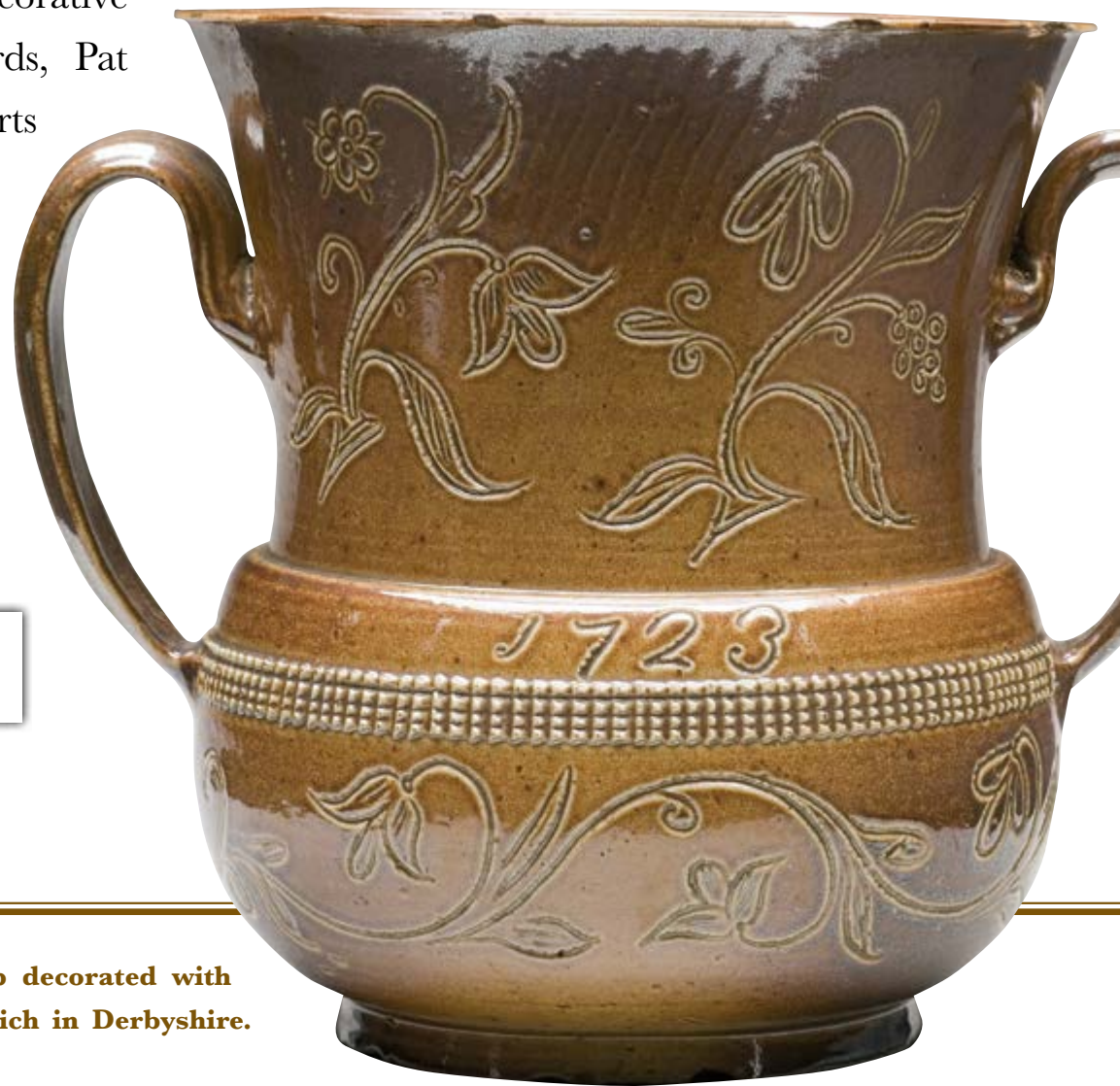
This circa 1765–1770 sweetmeat stand is an exceptional example of the work of William Littler of West Pans, East Lothian, Scotland. Littler decorated it in the signature style he called "Mazzarine blue and gold." Gift of the Mint Museum Auxiliary.

museum. Catalog entries are by noted experts, among them the Mint Museum's curator of decorative arts Brian D. Gallagher, Diana Edwards, Pat Halfpenny, Maurice Hillis, Letitia Roberts and Margaret Ferris Zimmermann. The book is a worthwhile addition to the library of any dealer or collector interested in early British ceramics...

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Dated 1723, this salt-glazed stoneware loving cup decorated with incised flowering vines is from Nottingham or Crich in Derbyshire. Museum purchase, Delhom Collection.

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