The Birth of a Consumer Society

The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England

Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb

Hutchinson

London Melbourne Sydney Auckland Johannesburg

CHAPTER THREE

Josiah Wedgwood and the Commercialization of the Potteries

The demand for this sd *Creamcolour*, alias *Queensware*, . . . still increases. It is eally amazing how rapidly the use of it has spread over the whole Globe, & how niversally it is liked. How much of this general use, & estimation, is owing to the iode of its introduction & how much to its real utility & beauty? are questions in hich we may be a good deal interested for the government of our future Conduct. he reasons are too obvious to be longer dwelt upon. For instance, if a Royal, or oble Introduction be as necessary to the sale of an Article of Luxury, as real legance & beauty, then the Manufacturer, if he consults his own inter! will bestow much pains, & expence too, if necessary, in gaining the former of these advantages, he wod in bestowing the latter.

Josiah Wedgwood, 1767.

Fashion is infinitely superior to *merit* . . . and it is plain from a thousand instances you have a favourite child you wish the public to fondle and take notice of, you ave only to make choice of proper sponcers.

Josiah Wedgwood, 1779.

is difficult for twentieth-century man to understand the excitement that as generated by pottery and porcelain in the eighteenth century. To a ciety accustomed to regard crockery as a humble and ubiquitous accom- niment to everyday life, it is not easy to imagine the craving to possess it hich gripped so many layers of eighteenth-century society. Most people iow of the way in which the Dutch in the seventeenth century were caught a fever of speculation over the possession and price of tulip bulbs, but very w are familiar with the far more important and far more pervasive china ania of the eighteenth century.

In the face of such ignorance, a consumer boom in pottery may seem an ilikely event. The aristocracy of England blocking the streets outside edgwood's London showrooms in their eagerness to buy his latest pottery; violent vase madness breaking out amongst the Irish'; an 'epidemical' kness to possess his wares amongst the upper and middling ranks; an tension of the market so profound that 'common Wedgwood' came within reach of 'common people'[1]—such excitement strikes a surprising note to

I am greatly indebted to Josiah Wedgwood and Sons Ltd. of Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, for permission to quote from the manuscripts in the Wedgwood Museum (subsequently referred to as WMSS). This chapter draws heavily on material previously used in my articles 'Josiah Wedgwood: An Eighteenth Century Entrepreneur in Salesmanship and Marketing Technique', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, XII, No. 3 (April 1960), pp. 408–33; 'Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley: An Inventor-Entrepreneur Partnership in the Industrial Revolution', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 14, (1964), pp. 1–33; and 'The World Market for Eighteenth Century Creamware', *Proceedings of the Wedgwood International Seminar* (1969), pp. 1–29. It is substantially extended, revised and reshaped and includes some new evidence relating to the size of Wedgwood's exports, taken from an article 'Home versus Foreign Demand in the Industrial Revolution: The "Myth" of the Wedgwood Exports'. This was accepted for publication by the *Economic History Review* but withheld for use elsewhere.

a society so accustomed to the almost universal possession of ample crocke that a hunger to possess it, a compulsive need to own the latest fashions in it, is difficult to imagine.

In eighteenth-century England such excitement was less surprising. The simple fact that most people had possessed so little pottery—and were increasingly presented with both the ability to afford it[2] and ample opportunity to acquire it—offers some explanation of the depth to which the new consumer spending reached down the social scale. The very novelty of the consumer boom explains some of its hectic, hysterical nature, just as the eagerness to consume of previously deprived classes explains the mass nature of its ultimate market.

But novel and dramatic and far reaching as it was, the consumer boom in pottery was not entirely unheralded. The earlier excitement which had surrounded its up-market relative, porcelain, makes it easier to understand.

For by 1750 all Europe was already in the grip of a china fever. Royalty led the way. Augustus, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, established Meissen in 1710; Louis XV of France sponsored the manufacture of china at Vincennes in 1747 and later in 1756 at Sèvres; the King of Naples set up a factory at Capo di Monte, and later at Buen Retiro near Madrid. The nobility were quick to follow the royal lead. 'A porcelain factory' said Karl Eugen, Duke of Württemberg, 'is an indispensable accompaniment of splendour and magnificence'.[3] He 'thought that no prince of his rank should be without one, a sentiment that was echoed throughout Germany in the 1750s. Four electors—Mainz, The Palatinate, Bavaria and Brandenburg—possessed flourishing factories, in output if not in profit, at Höchst, Frankenthal, Nymphenburg and Berlin . . . elsewhere dukes, princes, bishops, *landgraves* and *margraves* were all in china, right down to the tiny principalities of Nassau-Saarbrücken and Pfalz-Zweibrücken'.[3] Few made any profit and most made considerable losses. But princely prestige demanded them, just as aristocratic prestige demanded that the aristocracy of Europe should purchase their products. They bought to such effect that, in J. H. Plumb's words, 'No mania for material objects had ever been so widespread, so general to the rich of all nations.'[4]

[2] Neil McKendrick, 'Home Demand and Economic Growth: A New View of the Role of Women and Children in the Industrial Revolution', *Historical Perspectives: Studies in English Thought and Society*, ed. Neil McKendrick (1974), pp. 152–210.

[3] J. H. Plumb, 'The Royal Porcelain Craze', *In the Light of History*, (1972), p. 57.

[4] Ibid., p. 58.

Conditions such as these provided entrepreneurs as perceptive as Wedgwood and Bentley with rich commercial opportunities to exploit. Wedgwood delighted in the compulsive pursuit of perfection in porcelain. He gloried in the astronomical prices charged by Louis XV at Sèvres. He heard with glee of the spectacular losses incurred and the royal subsidies which repaired those losses, because he realized that from such prices, such royal involvement, came prestige, a powerful social cachet, which could with skilful marketing be exploited to his own advantage and profit. Few men rode the currents of fashion more adroitly than Wedgwood and Bentley, and few realized more quickly what a powerful up-draft could come from a royal patron. Best of all was 'the fact that Louis XV, the arbiter of Europe's taste, had given the royal imprimatur to porcelain. Indeed Louis did more than this. He did not think it beneath his dignity to conduct personally an annual sale of his factory's products'.[5] The king himself was prepared to act as his salesman, to auction Sèvres himself. 'Nothing better indicates the reverence, the idolatry, that the European aristocracy lavished on china than that the Most Christian King, who could not socially meet a bourgeois, should have been willing to act as its huckster.'[6] The effects of such a royal patronage and promotion were not lost on the English. No English king founded a porcelain factory. But there was no lack of individual enterprise. For the English aristocracy wanted what their European cousins wanted, and many an eager entrepreneur rushed to take on the appalling costs of trying to satisfy their wants. For porcelain was highly valued by the fashionable world of mid-Georgian England. Fashionable women valued it, if not above all things, at least to quote Macaulay 'as much as they valued their monkeys, and much more than they valued their husbands.'[7] They were willing to pay handsomely for the pleasure of possessing it. Dr. Johnson and Boswell were not alone in commenting, after a visit to Derby, that 'the Derby China is very pretty, but . . . so dear that perhaps silver vessels of the same capacity may be sometimes bought at the same price'.[7] Lesser factories such as those at Plymouth and Bristol offered tea-sets at '£7.0s.0d. to £12.12s.0d. and upward'[8] at a time when an average workman's wage would be substantially less than a pound a week. Yet such were production problems and such their costs that many porcelain factories faced great financial difficulties—Bow, Longton Hall and Chelsea had to close, Derby and Lowestoft came close to ruin, and many lesser factories went bankrupt.

The significance of such costly enthusiasms was not lost on Wedgwood. He realised that a powerful potential demand was there, that prices were

[5] Ibid., p. 63.
[6] It is no accident that this period saw the founding of so many of England's porcelain factories—Chelsea, Derby, Worcester and Bow, and a host of others.
[7] Samuel Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, 20 September 1777.
[8] Admittedly these were described as 'highly ornamented' and they offered other simple, less complex tea-sets at 'various prices as low as £2.2.0' but that was still three times an average workman's weekly wage.

high and the market was accustomed to paying them, that with skilful handling the market could be greatly extended. But more was needed than this to explain the consumer boom which followed. It required commercial and industrial skills of a very high order to take advantage of the market possibilities—to divert the enthusiasm from porcelain to pottery, from the aristocracy to the rest of society, from high prices that led to restricted sales and the bankruptcy court to high prices which attracted a mass market and bumper profits. It was Wedgwood's commercial triumph to turn that pursuit of ceramic luxury by the rich into the pursuit of useful (albeit fashionably desirable) pottery for the many. It required, in fact, one of the most brilliant and sustained campaigns in the history of consumer exploitation. To manipulate and to extend the market opportunities was not as simple as many historians have supposed.

* * *

When Josiah Wedgwood was born in 1730, the Staffordshire potters sold their wares almost solely in Staffordshire. Their goods found their sale in the local market towns,[9] and occasionally, carried by pedlars and hawkers or on the backs of the wretched packmen of the eighteenth century, they reached further afield[10]—to Leicester, Liverpool and Manchester. To sell in London in any quantity was rare,[11] to sell in Europe virtually unknown.[12] Yet by 1795 Wedgwood had broken through this local trade of fairs and pedlars to an international market based on elegant showrooms and ambassadorial connections; he had become the Queen's potter and sold to every regal house in Europe. His wares were known in China, India and America. Other potters had prospered but Wedgwood had flourished above all others. Born the twelfth son of a mediocre potter with only the promise—and a promise never fulfilled—of a £20 inheritance, he died in 1795 worth £500,000 and the owner of one of the finest industrial concerns in England. His name was known all over the world. It had become a force in industry, commerce, science and politics. It dominated the potting industry. Men no longer spoke of 'common pewter' but of 'common Wedgwood'.[13]

Such fabulous success is not easily explained. It certainly cannot be explained in terms of Wedgwood's gifts alone. For Wedgwood was fortunate

[9] Cf. Pitt Agric. Survey, pp. 2-3, 166, for list of the 24 markets.
[10] Cf. T. Whieldon: Memorandum Book. *c.* 1740-52, p. 78. An unusually distant order 'Mr. Green at Hovingham, Eylsham Norfolk. Aug. 11'.
[11] Ibid., p. 81. 'For Miss Ferney . . . directed to Capt. Blake in Surrey St. in the Strand.' As Lorna Weatherill has shown, by the mid-1750s this had changed and John Wedgwood's Account Book records that most of his ware was sent to London, but this was a quarter of a century after Wedgwood was born. See L.Weatherill, *The Pottery Trade and North Staffordshire, 1660–1760* (1971), pp. 81–3.
[12] John Baddeley's records show that substantial quantities were sent to Alexander Parke of Amsterdam between 1753 and 1767 (see J. Mallet, John Baddeley of Shelton, part 1, *Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle* (1966), VI. pp. 126–7) but there is no evidence of such traffic in 1730.
[13] Cf. *The Black Dwarf*: 17 September 1817.

in the period in which he lived. Born poor into the squalor and dirt of a peasant industry,[14] one might have thought him unlucky. Superficially he was. The ware was still crude, the market still local, the roads almost impassable, and the workmen as likely to go drinking and wenching as to appear at work. Worse conditions for industrial expansion might seem difficult to imagine. But in all this were the signs of improvement. The technical discoveries of Astbury, Booth and Whieldon had opened up new opportunities for expansion and improvement; steam power was soon to open up more. Wesley was leading men to more methodical lives, Brindley and Bridgewater were building their canals, and agitation over the state of the roads had already started. By the 1750s the market had already grown: most of John Wedgwood's sales were to London and his account book shows that a far wider national market was now available than when Wedgwood was born a quarter of a century before. It was in this period—between 1739 and 1760—that the records of the Weaver Navigation show a six-fold increase in the carriage of pottery; and that the coastal trade in pottery grew in importance;[15] and the exports to the colonies took on a new significance. When Josiah was serving his apprenticeship, such movements were only in their infancy, but with each year they gathered strength and support. He still had to fight reaction. But in the 1760s he found allies he would have looked for in vain in the 1730s. Moreover the demand for earthenware was steadily growing. Tea-drinking—rapidly becoming a national characteristic—and beer drinking—already well established as such—were both increasing. These, and the more fashionable drinks of coffee and hot chocolate, greatly increased the demand. Further, the growth of incomes, the shift of tastes, particularly of the 'middle classes' and the expansion of overseas trade provided market opportunities in constantly mounting numbers.[16] But most important of all, the rise in population represented a vast and growing market with ever-expanding needs. It was Staffordshire that satisfied them. For plate was too expensive, pewter too scarce, and porcelain too fragile to compete with the versatile pot. In these conditions the potteries were bound to prosper.

The reasons why Wedgwood prospered above all others have proved more elusive. Most historians have argued that his discoveries—green glaze, creamware, jasper and black basalt—won him technical supremacy over his rivals; and that his factory organization and division of labour—his stated desire 'to make such machines of the Men as cannot err'[17]—confirmed his superior quality. But this alone is not sufficient to explain his supremacy. For his inventions were quickly copied and his quality easily reproduced.

[4] Josiah Wedgwood: *An Address to the Young Inhabitants of the Pottery:* Etruria. 27 March 1783, p. 21.
[5] T. S. Willan, *The English Coasting Trade, 1600–1750* (1938), and 'Weaver Navigation Records', Cheshire C.R.O., V. 1–6; see Weatherill, op. cit., pp. 80–1.
[6] Asa Briggs: *The Age of Improvement*, p. 28.
[7] WMSS. E.18265-25. J(osiah) W(edgwood) to T(homas B(entley), 9 Oct. (1769)

They won him immediate attention but they could not keep it unless he could afford to sell his ware more cheaply than his rivals. This historians have cheerfully assumed. The statement by Professor Ashton that 'it was by intensifying the division of labour that Wedgwood brought about the reduction of cost which enabled his pottery to find markets in all parts of Britain, and also of Europe and America'[18] is merely the most recent and most authoritative of a long line of such views—Meteyard,[19] Jewitt,[20] Church,[21] Smiles,[22] Burton,[23] and Trevelyan[24] all produce the same argument. They note the efficiency of Wedgwood's factory system, his avoidance of waste, the drop in breakages through the use of canals, the cheapening of transport charges because of canals and turnpike roads, and conclude that Wedgwood's wares were obviously cheaper than his rivals. Unfortunately they were not. His goods were always considerably more expensive than those of his fellow potters: he regularly sold his goods at double the normal prices,[25] not infrequently at three times as high, and he reduced them only when he wished to reap the rewards of bigger sales on a product that he had already made popular and fashionable at a high price,[26] or when he thought the margin between his prices and those of the rest of the pottery had become too great. In 1778, for instance, he introduced a cheaper teapot to cut down the huge price gap which had arisen between his prices and those of Palmer and Neale, a rival local firm, writing, 'Mr Palmer sells his three sizes of black fluted teapots at 18/- the long doz.[ns] that is @9.[d] 1/- & 18.[d] Per pot which we sell at 50 or 60/-!'[27]

There are ample reasons why the usual explanations did not apply. Canals, for instance, may have cheapened his goods, but they cheapened all other potters' goods as well; and though division of labour made for cheap production, the cost of experiments and the many failures they automatically entailed,[28] the expense of commissions to artists,[29] and the high wages that Wedgwood paid,[30] more than cancelled this out. But more important than this was Wedgwood's decision not to compete with his rivals in price. It was never his practice nor his intention to sell cheaply. As he wrote towards the

[18] T. S. Ashton: *The Industrial Revolution 1760–1830* (1948), p. 81.
[19] Eliza Meteyard; *The Life of Josiah Wedgwood;* 2 vols. (1865–66).
[20] Llewelyn Jewitt; *The Wedgwoods* (1865).
[21] A. H. Church; *Josiah Wedgwood* (1894).
[22] Samuel Smiles, *Life of Wedgwood* (1894).
[23] William Burton, *Josiah Wedgwood and his Pottery* (1922).
[24] G. M. Trevelyan, *The Social History of England.*
[25] WMSS. E.18457-25. JW to TB. 14 April 1773 & WMSS. Leith Hill Place MSS. JW to TB 21 & 22 April 1771.
[26] WMSS. E.18392-25. JW to TB. 23 Aug. 1772.
[27] WMSS. E.18814-25. JW to TB. 25 Feb. 1778.
[28] Wedgwood fired over 10,000 pieces of jasper before he achieved perfection.
[29] They included artists of the stature of John Flaxman, George Stubbs, and William Hackwood. Cf. Neil McKendrick: 'Josiah Wedgwood and George Stubbs', *History Today,* VII, No. 8. (August 1957), p. 514.
[30] To deal with this in detail is beyond the scope of this chapter.

end of his life, ' as always been my aim to improve the quality of the articles of my manufacture, rather than to lower their price',[31] and, more important than his statements,[32] his price lists fully confirm this. His selling policy relied on quality and above all on fashionable appeal, and Wedgwood believed that high prices had an integral part to play in such a policy, writing 'a great price is at first necessary to make the vases esteemed *Ornaments for Palaces*'.[33] He did not charge his pottery at what it was worth (from the point of view of production costs) but at what the nobility would pay for it.[34]

Some idea of how this policy developed can be gained from a letter he wrote to his partner, Bentley, in 1771. Faced with a mounting stock he was overjoyed at the prospect of a large order[35] from Russia: 'This Russ.n trade comes very opportunely for the useful ware, & may prevent me lower.g the prices here, though it may be expedient to lower the prices of the Tableplates to 4/- Per doz in London, as our people are lowering them to 2/3 or 2/- here. Mr Baddeley who makes the best ware of any of the Potters here, & an Ovenfull of it Per Diem has led the way, & the rest must follow, unless he can be prevail'd upon to raise it again, which is not at all probable, though we are to see him tomorrow, about a doz.n of us, for that purpose . . . Mr Baddeley has reduc'd the prices of the dishes to the prices of whitestone, . . . In short the *General trade* seems to me to be going to ruin on the gallop—large stocks on hand both in London & the country, & little demand. The Potters seem sensible of their situation, & are quite in a Pannick for their trade, & indeed I think with great reason, for *low prices* must beget a *low quality* in the manufacture, which will beget *contempt*, which will beget *neglect*, & disuse, and there is an end of the trade. But if any one Warehouse, distinguish'd from the rest, will continue to keep up the quality of the Manufacture, or improve it, that House may perhaps *keep up its prices*,[36] & the *general evil*, will work a *particular* good to that house, & they may continue to sell *Queens ware at the usual prices*, when the rest of the trade can scarcely give it away. This seems to be all the chance we have, & we must double our dilligence here to give it effect. The same Idea may be applied to Ornaments, & the crisis in which a foreign vent for our goods will be the most singular service to us, is, whilst the General Manufacture is *degradeing*, the particular one *improving* 'till the difference is sufficiently apparent to strike the most common purchacers; & that crisis seems now to

[31] WMSS. E.8636-10. JW to Mr. Charles Twigg. 18 June 1787.
[32] The letter which he wrote to Lord Paget (E.18895-25, June 1, 1779) saying that he wished 'his profits rather to arise from a large consumption, than from a high price with diminished sale' which is quoted by Ralph M. Hower, *Journal of Economic and Business History*, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 306, is an exception which is not convincing in face of the mass of contradictory evidence in Wedgwood's letters to Bentley, e.g. E.18407-25, 19 Sept. 1772, and E.18770-25, 10 July '77.
[33] WMSS. E.18392-25. JW to TB. 23 Aug. 1772.
[34] WMSS. E.18307-25. JW to TB. 4 June (1770).
[35] It amounted to some £4,000.
[36] My italics.

at hand, which I am very sorry for, but it seems to me inevitable; I am certain the Potters cannot afford to work their goods in a Masterly manner, & sell them at the prices they now do, & they will probably go lower still.'[37] He held the same view in 1773 when 'the whole of the Pottery'[38] agreed to lower their prices a further 20 per cent. For though he anxiously asked, 'Do you think we can stand our ground in London @ 5/ P (doz) for plates, when everybody around us will be selling @ 2/6 & 3/-?',[38] and discussed the possibility of having two prices, he eventually decided against cuts of any kind, writing 'We must endeavour to make our goods better if possible—other people will be getting worse, and thereby our distinction will be more evident.'[38] And he took this decision despite the fact that other potters' prices were by now '1/3 of our price'.[38]

In taking this decision Wedgwood committed himself to new methods of selling his ware, for he not only decided on high prices, but also determined on large sales to a widespread market. He had quickly realized that at the prices he charged quality alone would be sufficient only to win for him a limited and specialized market, and to confine his sales to a small and exclusive class. Moreover in the eighteenth century his improvements and inventions did not remain his monopoly for long. They were copied and reproduced—cheaply and in quantity. Every new invention that Wedgwood produced—green glaze, creamware, black basalt and jasper—was quickly copied;[39] every new idea—jasper cameos, intaglios and seals, tea trays, snuffboxes and knifehandles—was eagely taken up; every new design —Etruscan painting, the Portland Vase and Flaxman's modelling— was avidly reproduced. And in every case the reproductions were cheaper. Even William Adams, perhaps the finest potter amongst Wedgwood's rivals, whose products equalled if they did not surpass Josiah's,[40] could undercut his prices by 20 per cent.[41] The result was inevitable. Those customers who had been attracted by his novelty and his quality, reluctantly but nonetheless surely, left him for cheaper makers, writing like James Abernethy, 'I imagined that you was the only person that printed that sort of ware— but it seems that there are others that put up with smaller profits.'[42] Such comments occur over and over again in Wedgwood's early correspondence.

It was therefore not by novelty and originality alone that Wedgwood held his custom, nor was it solely by high quality. For his novelty did not survive

[37] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB 21 & 22 April 1771.
[38] WMSS. E.18457-25. JW to TB. 14 April 1773.
[39] Creamware for instance—in its improved form virtually his own creation—was being made by 1784 by 25 potters in Burslem and Newcastle alone. Cf. Bailey's Western Dictionary for 1784. W. Mankowitz & R. G. Haggar, *Concise Encyclopaedia of English Pottery & Porcelain* (London, 1957), pp. 268-70.
[40] Ibid., p. 226, 'Turner's wares were "frequently equal in quality" to JW's', and W. B. Honey describes Adams' jasper as 'quite equal' to that of JW.
[41] Mankowitz & Haggar, op. cit., p. 4.
[42] WMSS. E.30554-5. J. Abernethy to JW, 2 Oct. 1763.

for, long, and his h quality was not unrivalled. Both played an integral part in his sales policy, but they are not in themselves sufficient explanation of his success. He had the good sense to realize that he was not likely to invent pottery superior to his creamware, his black basalt, or his jasper. Having once achieved perfection in production, he must achieve perfection in sales and distribution. It was clear that Wedgwood must either cut his prices as his rivals did in the cut-throat race for the custom of an expanding market, or see some new distinction to mark off his wares from the rest of the pottery. He chose the latter course, and it is with these new methods that this chapter is mainly concerned: how Wedgwood won a world-wide demand, and how he invented the means of satisfying it.[43]

* * *

He did this partly by the capture of the world of fashion. For although Wedgwood had complete confidence in his wares—writing, 'wherever my wares find their way, they will command the first trade'—he also realized that '*Fashion* is infinitely superior to *merit* in many respects, and it is plain from a thousand instances that if you have a favourite child you wish the public to fondle & take notice of, you have only to make choice of proper sponcers [sic.].'[44] The sponsors he aimed to win for his pottery were the monarchy, the nobility, and the art connoisseurs—in fact, the leaders of fashion. He quickly realized that to make pots for the Queen of England was admirable advertisement. To become the Queen's Potter and to win the right to sell common earthenware as Queen's ware, was even better. As Wedgwood wrote: 'the demand for this s.d *Creamcolour,* alias, *Queensware,* . . still increases. It is really amazing how rapidly the use of it has spread over the whole Globe, & how universally it is liked. How much of this general use, & estimation, is owing to the mode of its introduction—& how much to its real utility & beauty ? are questions in which we may be a good deal interested for the government of our future Conduct. The reasons are so obvious to be longer dwelt upon. For instance, if a Royal, or Noble introduction be as necessary to the sale of an Article of Luxury, as real elegance & beauty, then the Manufacturer, if he consults his own interest will bestow as much pains, & expence too, in gaining the former of these advantages, as he wo.d in bestowing the latter'.[45] Wedgwood was not a man to fail to consult his own interests. He took immediate action.

That Wedgwood sought such patronage has been categorically denied. Miss Meteyard for instance, wrote in tones of hushed approval, 'we have seen Mr. Wedgwood working silently onwards . . . unsolicitous of patronage

So that whatever the price merchants had to admit, as Boehler of Darmstadt did in 1789, that 'stamped with your name (your goods) will always find a ready sale anywhere'. And that is a single example from a chorus of such comments.
WMSS. E.18898-26. JW to TB. 19 June 1779.
WMSS. E.18167-25. JW to TB. (17 Sept. 1767).

having laboured to invest the articles produced by his hand with excellence and taste hitherto unknown, he left the natural results to their own time and place of fulfilment'.[46] She closes in defiance—and in capital letters—'IT WAS PATRONAGE WHICH SOUGHT THE GREAT POTTER: NOT THE GREAT POTTER PATRONAGE'.[47] It is an eloquent defence but unfortunately grossly untrue.[48] But in Miss Meteyard's *Life* eulogy strides across every page and criticism is scarcely allowed a footnote. And to her mind patronage-seeking was very definitely not praiseworthy. She was too well attuned to that attitude of her Victorian age which had condemned Millais and Frith for advertising soap,[49] to allow such methods to sully the name of her hero. She scarcely recognized that he had to market his goods at all. Only three pages out of some eleven hundred deal explicitly with how he sold and distributed his goods.

That Wedgwood did seek such patronage is indisputable. He went to endless trouble and expense to win the royal favour—the famous green and gold tea set was followed up by a box of patterns and a creamware dinner service, and by 1768 he was advertising his '*Royal Patronage*' in the *St. James's Chronicle* and 'in that morning paper which is mostly taken by the people of fashion'[50] to broadcast the opening of his new rooms. He did not let their support languish for want of attention, constantly urging Bentley, 'that a little push further might still be made with due decorum'.[51] In December 1770 Her Royal Highness the Princess Dowager was being waited upon,[52] and in 1771 he was scheming to become 'Potter to *His* Majesty' and 'Potter to the Prince of Wales'.[53] Nor did he neglect the younger members of the royal family, and by 1790 he had won the title of 'Potter to her Majesty & their Royal Highnesses the Duke of York & Albany & the Duke of Clarence'.[54] He did not hesitate to exploit it to the full, writing to congratulate his partner on his efforts with the Queen, 'you have sown the seeds of a plentiful & rich harvest, which we shall reap in due time . . . Their majestys are very good indeed! I hope we shall not lose their favour, & promise ourselves the greatest advantage from such Royal Patronage, & the very peculiar attention they are pleased to bestow upon our productions.

[46] Eliza Meteyard, op. cit., I, pp. 368-9.
[47] Ditto.
[48] Apart from being untrue of the whole of JW's life, this statement also distorts the origins of the order for the Queen's tea-set. The order was offered to many potters before Wedgwood saw the potential value of accepting it.
[49] Marie Corelli in the *Sorrows of Satan* speaks of Millais as having 'degraded himself' when he painted 'the little green boy blowing bubbles of Pears' soap'. Cf. Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and George Stubbs', loc. cit., p. 509.
[50] WMSS. L.17666-96. JW to Mr. Cox. 13 June 1768.
[51] WMSS. Leith Hill Place. JW to TB. 8 July 1771.
[52] WMSS. E.18334-25. JW to TB. 24 December 1770. Wedgwood was quite satisfied despite the small order because ''tis good to have an opening, & to be known, the former may increase [sic], & the latter cannot hurt us'.
[53] WMSS. Leith Hill Place. JW to TB. 8 July 1771.
[54] WMSS. E.1066-2. Printed Bill Head from Wedgwood. 24 Feb. 1790.

It was a good hi[t] you gave them . . . I hope it will work, & have its proper effect'.[55] On eve[ry] bill head, every order form and every advertisement his ti[tles] were proudly displayed.[56] For he was confident that if he had the p[a]tronage of the great, he would have the custom of the world.

Having tapped or attempted to tap all the sources of royal patronage, he next broached the nobility and gentry. For he wished 'if possible (to) do in this as we have done in other things—begin at the *Head* first, & then proceed to the inferior members'.[57] Convinced of the value of a fashionable reception for his goods, he went to great trouble and expense to achieve it. Though he fully realized the cost, interruptions and poor immediate returns of special individual orders,[58] or 'Uniques'[59] as he called them, he willingly accepted expensive and difficult commissions. Other potters fought shy of such projects, Wedgwood and Bentley accepted every challenge. They welcomed commissions from Queen Charlotte for a specially designed tea-set which all potters had refused,[60] from George Stubbs for huge stoneware plaques of great technical difficulty,[61] and from Catherine the Great for a table service requiring 952 pieces and over a thousand original paintings.[62] Strictly uneconomical in themselves, the advertising value of these productions was huge.[63] In the same way, though on a lesser scale, he made pebbleware for Sir George Young,[64] cameo heads for the sons of Mrs. Crewe,[65] and printed ware for Lady Isabella Stanley.[66] For as Bentley wrote of the latter, 'Tho' this is trifling matter we must please these great Friends who are warm Patrons of this Manufacture'.[67] All of these orders were 'uniques'—they could never go into general production. They were made entirely for their advertising value, to win the patronage of the court and courtly circles; the friendship of the architects and the artistic world; the favour of the fashionable aristocracy and the gentry; and, of course, the future custom of them all.

By appealing to the fashionable cry for antiquities, by pandering to their requirements, by asking their advice and accepting their smallest orders, by flattery and attention, Wedgwood hoped to monopolize the aristocratic market, and thus win for his wares a special distinction, a social *cachet* which would filter through to all classes of society. Everything was done to attract

[54] WMSS. Leith Hill Place. JW to TB. 7 Sept. 1771.
[55] WMSS. E.18341–25. E.1066–2, E.18504–25, and many others.
[56] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 2 Sept. 1771.
[57] WMSS. E.18283–25. JW to TB. 10 Jan. 1770. 'Defend me from particular orders'; also cf. WMSS. E.18269–25. JW to TB. 19 Nov. 1769.
[58] WMSS. Ditto.
[59] WMSS. E.18073–25. JW to John Wedgwood. Postmark 17 June (1765). He says he received the order 'because nobody else wo[u]d undertake it'.
[60] WMSS. E.18785–25. JW to TB. 18 Oct. 1777 and many other references.
[61] WMSS. E.18450–25. JW to TB. Postmark 23 March (1773). Cf. Dr. G. C. Williamson.
[62] WMSS. E.18498–25. JW to TB. 14 Nov. 1773.
[63] WMSS. E.18269–25. JW to TB. 19 Nov. 1769.
[64] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 2 Sept. 1771.
[65] WMSS. E.622–1. TB to JW. 21 June 1769.
[66] WMSS. E.622–1. TB to JW. 21 June 1769.

...his aristocratic attention. A special display room was built[68] to begui[le] the fashionable company which Josiah drew after him to Etruria;[69] steps were taken to make the London showrooms attractive 'to the ladies',[70] and to keep the common folk out;[71] he was even prepared to adjust his prices downwards so that they could be paid genteely, writing to his partner, 'I think what you charge 34/– should . . . be . . . a Guinea & a half, 34 is so odd a sum there is no paying it *Genteely* . . .'.[72] Once attracted everything was done to keep such attention. The good will of Wedgwood patrons never withered from neglect. Sir George Strickland was asked for advice on getting models from Rome;[73] Sir William Hamilton was asked for advice on gilding;[74] they were complimented by the reproduction of their country houses on the great Russian service;[75] and great care was taken to flatter them by giving them first sight of any new discovery.[76] The first Etruscan vases, for instance, were shown before they were put on sale to 'Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Mrs Chetwynd,[77] Lord Bessborough, Earl of Stamford, Duke of Northumberland, Duke of Marlborough, Lord Percy, Lord Carlisle St James's Place, Earl of Dartmouth, Lord Clanbrazill, Lord Torrington, Mr Harbord Harbord'.[78] These were the nucleus of an aristocratic claque that did Wedgwood untold good. They praised his ware,[79] they advertised it,[80] they bought it,[81] and they took their friends to buy it.[82] Wedgwood had no scruples about exploiting their friendship and their praise. In 1776, for instance, by artful flattery he carefully prepared the ground for his new Bassrelief vases at the next season's sale, writing to Bentley, 'Sir William Hambleton, our very good Friend is in Town—Suppose you shew him some of the Vases, & a few other Connoisieurs [sic] not only to have their advice, but to have the advantage of their puffing them off against the next Spring, as they will, by being consulted, and flatter'd agreeably, as you know how, consider themselves as a sort of parties in the affair, & act accordingly.'[83] In the small, interconnected,

[68] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. (a fragment) JW to TB. 27 July 1771.
[69] WMSS. E.18878–26. 25 Feb. 1779. JW to TB.
[70] WMSS. E.18149–25. JW to TB. Postmark 1 June (1767).
[71] WMSS. Ditto. 'For you well know that . . . my present sett of Customers . . . will not mix with the rest of the World. . . .'
[72] WMSS. E.18271–25. JW to TB. 1 Dec. 1769.
[73] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 7 Sept. 1771.
[74] WMSS. E.18365–25. JW to TB. 11 April 1772.
[75] WMSS. E.18498–25. JW to TB. 14 Nov. 1773. An action designed to 'rivet them more firmly to our interests'. For list of views, cf. G. C. Williamson, op. cit., pp. 59–60.
[76] WMSS. E.18274–25. JW to TB. 9 Dec. 1769. Also E.18273–25. Sarah W. to JW, 6 Dec. 1769.
[77] Mrs. Chetwynd was their connection with the palace.
[78] WMSS. E.18274–25. JW to TB. 9 Dec. 1769.
[79] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 7 Sept. 1771.
[80] WMSS. E.18367–25. JW to TB. 18 April 1772.
[81] WMSS. Innumerable examples, e.g. E.30857–5 and E.30859–5.
[82] WMSS. E.18505–25. JW to TB, 6 Dec. 1773. Lady Littleton, for example, makes a point of 'taking her friends to Wedgwood's showrooms.'
[83] WMSS. E.18693–25. JW to TB. 12 Sept. 1776.

gossip-ridden wo-'' of the English aristocracy in the eighteenth century, such introductio. were vital, for even a very few sales could have an important effect.

For the lead of the aristocracy was quickly followed by other classes. Fashions spread rapidly and they spread downwards. But they needed a lead. As Wedgwood put it, 'Few ladies, you know, dare venture at anything out of the common stile [sic] 'till authoris'd by their betters—by the Ladies of superior spirit who set the ton'.[84] Wedgwood fully realized the value of such a lead, and made the most of it by giving his pottery the name of its patron; Queensware, Royal Pattern, Russian pattern, Bedford, Oxford and Chetwynd vases for instance. He went further than this with some. For he was not afraid to anticipate this patronage and to give his wares its beneficient sanction before it was bestowed. When he wished to give a new cheap line in flowerpots a good send off he wrote to Bentley, 'They want a name—a name has a wonderful effect I assure you—Suppose you present the Duchess of Devonshire with a Set & beg leave to call them Devonshire flowerpots. You smile—Well call them Mecklenberg[85]-or—or—what you please so you will but let them have a name'.[86] Once again Wedgwood is quite explicit about his expectations of the effect such names could have on the sales of his products. His repeated admission of the infallibly superior power of fashion over merit, of reputation over real utility or beauty contrasts starkly with the genteel position that Miss Meteyard paints. She admits the *fact* that Wedgwood gave his products the names of the rich, the royal and the influential, but her interpretation of the reasons for it is quite different: 'These were no vulgar appellations given to flatter a patron, or to insure sales; but simply showed[87] from whose possessions the vases had been modelled. Occasionally this was true, but even when it was, it was often merely the excuse for Wedgwood to gain for his product the selling power of the name involved, and often there was no such excuse. The cheap line in flowerpots had to be *found* a suitable patron—by Wedgwood presenting them to a suitably influential person such as the Duchess of Devonshire, or Queen Charlotte or her brother, Prince Ernst of Mecklenburg. Whether they owned the original or merely possessed a Wedgwood copy mattered little to Wedgwood's customers. The power of the association would be sufficient to boost sales.

Once committed to this policy of reliance on the support of the great, Wedgwood had to attend to every dictate of fashion. He could not afford to let Wedgwood ware become unfashionable. He combined with Matthew Boulton to satisfy the demand for ormolu-mounted pottery;[88] he banished gilding from his vases—and gilders from his workrooms—at the command

WMSS. E.18766-25. JW to TB. 21 June 1777.
The brother of Queen Charlotte.
WMSS. E.18811-25. JW to TB. 9 Feb. 1778.
E. Meteyard, op. cit., II, p. 68.
WMSS. E.18193-25. JW to TB. 15 March 1768.

of Sir William Hamilton and an unresponsive market;[89] he made jack teapots to show off to better advantage the current feminine vogue for bleached white hands; and when English society found the uncompromisingly naked figures of the classics 'too warm'[90] for their taste, and the ardour of the Greek gods too easily apparent, Wedgwood was quick to cloak their pagan immodesty—gowns for the girls and fig leaves for the gods were usually sufficient. But occasionally he had to go further. For as he wrote to Wright of Derby, 'fig leaves are not always enough,'[91] and in order to conceal 'that part which might give offence to our delicate Ladies' some figures were entirely redraped.

Some have assumed that since there was no apparent consistency to Wedgwood's draping—the Barberini vase still naked in 1795, while other designs were completely draped in the 1770s—then there could be no commercially purposeful thinking behind Wedgwood's policy. On the contrary, Wedgwood's policy on nudity provides a nice illustration of how he adapted his products to suit the market. The aristocracy could take their art largely unbowdlerized and Wedgwood was usually wholly faithful to the classical originals of his reproductions which were aimed at this market alone—as his immensely expensive reproductions of the Barberini Vase were in the 1790s. But when he aimed at the less tolerant middle-class market he was enthusiastically draping Greek originals in the 1770s. One can date the spread of the market, as well as the growth of prudery, from the different versions of some of Wedgwood's products. As the Dancing Hours went down market Hackwood had to redrape Flaxman's earlier version, and the Herm of Priapus had to be so heavily beflowered as to conceal his original purpose in life. Wedgwood was shrewd enough to realize that in some areas English prudery was even stronger than English snobbery. So he toned down the Greeks to maximise his sales. So long as they remained innocent of the generative powers he once symbolized, the genteel middle-class market would happily buy Priapus. They wanted a fashion symbol, not a fertility symbol. Authenticity alone would have disastrously limited Wedgwood's potential market. So Wedgwood used to the fullest extent the classical vocabulary of his day, and kept his more 'correct' interpretations of this classical grammar for his aristocratic customers.

Indeed his manipulation of the renewed classical enthusiasms of the late 1760s and early 1770s was of major importance to his sales promotion.

To the rage for antique and the excitement over Herculaneum Wedgwood gave special attention. It was vital that he should. For tired of the late

[89] WMSS. E.18365-25. JW to TB. 11 April 1772.
[90] WMSS. E.18278-25. JW to TB. 28 Dec. 1769, & E.18523-25. JW to TB. 13 March 1774.
[91] This correspondence often verged on broad comedy as Wright tried to meet Wedgwood's insistence on modesty without completely altering the composition of a picture. Cf. WMSS. E.672-1. Joseph Wright to JW and many others.

baroque and ro extravagances of the middle decades of the century, the world of fashion had flocked to acclaim the new discoveries at Naples. The proliferating decoration, the exuberant colours, and the universal gilding of rococo were banished; the splendours of baroque became distasteful; the intricacies of *chinoiserie* lost their favour. The demand was for purity, simplicity and antiquity. The Grand Tour had done much to prepare the ground in England.[92] Familiarized with the ancients for the first time, hordes of English Milords[93] returned from the continent demanding the pure, the correct, the scientific art as they chose to call it. Before long the neo-classical reigned supreme, and a ready sale awaited the first potter to produce a pleasing neo-classical style. Here was the perfect market for Wedgwood to exploit. He was not the man to ignore it. He changed his style and became the prophet of the new art form. It was to this realization of the possibilities of neo-classicism,[94] whilst his rivals still busied themselves with what he called 'a dazzleing profusion of riches & ornament'[95] that Wedgwood owed much of his success. For it meant that he was fully established as the favourite of the world of fashion. He had first use of a market 'randy for antique'.[96]

Wedgwood did everything he could to promote and to serve the new fashion. He based his vases on the urns and amphorae of the ancients, he decorated them with classical swags and garlands, he reproduced their cameo medallions and reclining figures. He invented new glazes to suit these designs and revived encaustic painting to decorate them. He named his new factory 'Etruria' and inscribed on its first products the words 'Artes Etruriae Renascuntur'. To clinch his position as leader of the new fashion he sought out the famous Barberini vase as the final test of his technical skill. At first his efforts were in vain. Lady Portland, like an ecstatic squirrel with a unique nut, had secreted it away amongst her other treasures, and would show it to none but her closest friends. But her death gave Josiah his chance, and his reproduction of the vase caught the imagination of the whole continent. Every detail of the mythology behind the vase was eagerly discussed and Wedgwood's name circulated through every European court.

Moreover, Wedgwood wanted his wares to play the part in contemporary art that the statues and ceramics of the ancients had played in all previous centuries, to become in fact part of the works of art of the future. With this end in view he commissioned Wright of Derby to paint his ware,[97] and invited Romney to use his wares as background material when in want of

[92] It is interesting to note that JW's classical products did not sell well in Russia—beyond the reach of the Grand Tour and the new fashion.
[93] Gibbon was told that there were 40,000 Englishmen on the Continent in 1785.
[94] Cf. C. H. Wilson, The Entrepreneur in the Industrial Revolution in England, *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, V, p. 137.
[95] WMSS. E.18365–25. JW to TB. 11 April 1772.
[96] Cf. Philip Larkin, *The Less Deceived*, p. 27.
[97] WMSS. E.18834–25. JW to TB. Endorsed by TB. 'Should have been dated 5 May 1778'.

rnaments,[98] whilst in the family portrait by Stubbs, although most he children are on horseback, and Wedgwood and his wife are sitting under a tree, a large Wedgwood and Bentley vase nevertheless found a place by Josiah's side. In encouraging this attitude Wedgwood discovered one of the most sophisticated advertising techniques of the century—for the fact that his wares alone appeared on the canvases of such famous artists was bound to excite attention[99]—especially amongst the fashionable connoisseurs who displayed their most favoured possessions in the same way. Zoffany's portrait of Lord Towneley surrounded by the spoils of the villa Hadrian, or Reynolds's portrait of Sir William Hamilton displaying his favourite antique vases were in the same tradition. The fact that the products of a contemporary factory could perform the same role and occupy the same place in paintings by Reynolds, Wright of Derby and Stubbs staked a powerful claim to status by association for Wedgwood and his pottery.

This kind of association also helped to win the favour and support of the artists and the connoisseurs. How highly Wedgwood rated this support can be seen from a discussion with 'Athenian' Stewart about whether they would gain or lose by competition with Matthew Boulton of Soho.[100] 'We agreed that those customers who were more fond of show & glitter, than fine forms, & the appearance of antiquity wo^{d} buy Soho Vases, and that all who could feel the effects of a fine outline & had any veneration for Antiquity wo^{d} be with us.—But these we are afraid wo^{d} be a minority; a third class we therefore call'd in to our aid, compos'd of such as wo^{d} *of themselves* choose shewy, rich & gawdy [sic] things, but who wo^{d} be *over ruled by their betters* in the choice of their ornaments as well as (in) other matters; who wo^{d} do as their *architects*, or whoever they depended upon in the matters of taste directed them; & with this reinforcement we thought Etruria stood a pretty good chance with any competitor.'[101] It would be difficult to find a more explicit statement of the importance to Wedgwood's sales of the influence of the legislators in taste; and it provides a nice example of Wedgwood's concern to make use of that influence, and of the pressure of his workload, that this long discussion of it should have been continued in a letter written over Christmas—one half on Christmas Eve, the second half on Boxing Day.

It was this belief in the selling power of fashion and the support of the art world which led Wedgwood to spend so much time in gaining the approbation of the connoisseurs, the artists and the architects. He had no intention of relying on merit alone to sell his goods, he sought out patrons and sponsors to reinforce that appeal. Just as he felt that his flowerpots would sell more if they were called 'duchess of Devonshire flowerpots', and

[98] Wedgwood Correspondence. John Rylands Library, Manchester, Vol. 10 (1110), p. 6.
[99] For more detailed discussion of this practice cf. Neil McKendrick: 'Josiah Wedgwood and George Stubbs', *History Today*, VII, No. 8 (August 1957), pp. 508–9.
[100] They were considering opening a London showroom in the Adelphi.
[101] WMSS. E.18335–25. JW to TB. 24 & 26 Dec. 1770.

ıis creamware more it called Queensware, so he longed for Brown,[102] Wyatt,[103] and the ' .ıthers Adam[104] to lead the architects in the use of his :himney pieces, a... for Stubbs to lead the way in the use of Wedgwood ɔlaques. And he was right to do so. He backed the leaders of fashion in the ɔelief that the rest of society would follow—and they did. He was as aware ıs his contemporaries were of the power of class competition and the :mulative spending which sprang from social emulation. He was aware of what Forster in 1767 called 'the perpetual restless ambition of each of the nferior ranks to raise themselves to the level of those immediately above hem. In such a state as this fashion must have uncontrolled sway. And a ashionable luxury must spread through it like a contagion'.[105]

The struggle that Wedgwood had to sell his magnificent jasper ablets—generally accepted to be amongst the finest things he ever made, nd now amongst the most expensive—illustrates the importance of this ıatronage. For the lack of it damned these tablets. Some were sold,[106] but hey never sold well. For the fashionable architects refused to support them. Vedgwood and Bentley did everything they could to win them round: Vedgwood assiduously cultivated the friendship of 'Capability' Brown,[107] Bentley advocated their use to Adam,[108] and was urged by Wedgwood to call n Wyatt and 'try if it is not possible to root up his prejudices & make him friend to our jaspers. If we could by any means gain over two or three of ıe *current architects* the business would be done'.[109] Once again Wedgwood ; brutally frank. His admission of the importance to his sales of such a ıshionable lead is once again quite explicit. He recognized very clearly that t is very much in Mr Adam's power to introduce our things into use'.[110] For e knew that their high quality alone could sell only a few. They needed roper sponsors. For 'If you are lucky in them no matter what the brat is, lack, brown or fair, its fortune is made. We were really unfortunate in the ıtroduction of our jasper into public notice, that we could not prevail upon ıe architects to be godfathers to our child. Instead of taking it by the hand, : giving it their benediction, they have cursed the poor infant by bell, book : candle, & must have a hard struggle to support itself, & rise from under ıeir maledictions'.[111] For once Wedgwood and Bentley's marketing techiques had failed. Their salesmanship had drawn a blank.

[102] WMSS. E.18147-25. JW to TB. 23 May 1767. He wrote on meeting 'the famous Brown ... He may be of much service to me, & I shall not neglect what chance has thrown into my way'.
[103] WMSS. E.18855-26. JW to TB. 16 Oct. 1778.
[104] WMSS. E.18394-25. JW to TB. 30 Aug. 1772.
[105] N. Forster, *An Enquiry into the Present High Prices of Provisions* (1767), p. 41.
[106] Sir John Wrottesley, Sir Laurence Dundass and Lady Bagot bought them.
[107] WMSS. E.18853-26. JW to TB. 6 Oct. 1778.
[108] WMSS. E.18394-25. JW to TB. 30 Aug. 1772.
[109] WMSS. E.18855-26. JW to TB. 16 Oct. 1778.
[110] WMSS. E.18394-25. JW to TB. 30 Aug. 1772.
[111] WMSS. E.18898-26. JW to TB. 19 June 1779.

This was, however, an exception and serves only to illustrate the importıce of Wedgwood's methods and the very real influence of that fashic le support which he so ardently courted. For by these methods Wedgwood nad won the patronage of the court, the aristocracy, the artists and the *cognoscenti*. In doing so he had gained the favour of a powerful social catalyst. For in the smaller, more closely-knit society of the European nobility of the eighteenth century, these patrons, these *'lines, channels & connections'*[112] as Wedgwood called them, were of vital importance. They led the fashion. They encouraged imitation. They spread the Wedgwood name abroad and sent presents of his ware: Horace Walpole bought it[113] and wrote to his widely scattered friends about it;[114] Mrs. Crewe sent a desert service to the Countess of Zinzindorf in Vienna,[115] 'the Duke of Richmond ... made a present of a pair of vases ... to the Duke of Leinster who was in Raptures with them';[116] and so on. Wedgwood did not let the matter rest there. He had no hesitation in exploiting this patronage. When he heard of 'a violent *Vase madness* breaking out amongst'[117] the Irish, Wedgwood wrote in haste to Bentley: 'This disorder sho[d] be cherish'd in some way or other, or our rivals may step in before us. We have many Irish friends who are both able & willing to help us, but they must be applied to for that purpose ... Ld. Bessboro' you know can do a great deal for us with his friends on the otherside (of) the Water by a letter of recommendation or otherwise as he may think proper. You are to visit him soon—the rest will occur to you. The Duke of Richmond has many & virtu-ous friends in Ireland. We are looking over the English Peerage to find out *lines, channels & connections*—will you look over the Irish Peerage with the same view—I need not tell you how much will depend upon a *proper* & *noble* introduction. This, with a fine assortment of Vases & a Trusty & *adequate* Agent will ensure us success in the conquest of our sister kingdom'.[118]

* * *

These were the more subtle advertising techniques of Josiah Wedgwood. They assured him a favourable reception for his wares in London and in the country houses of the rich. They stimulated interest and made his products known even in the provinces. They formed the basis of his sales policy—but only the basis. He had to use more direct methods to force home his advantage

[112] WMSS. E.18314-25. JW to TB. 2 Aug. 1770.
[113] *Catalogue of the Contents of Strawberry Hill*, 1842, pp. 130, 131, 179, 180, 181.
[114] *Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. Toynbee, IX, p. 305; X, 282; XI, 172. Also cf. E. Meteyard, op. cit., II., p. 72. It must be admitted that Walpole was not always admiring.
[115] WMSS. E.18350-25. JW to TB. 17 Sept. 1771.
[116] WMSS. E.18314-25. JW to TB. 2 Aug. 1770.
[117] WMSS. Ditto.
[118] WMSS. E.18314-25. JW to TB. 2 Aug. 1770. Cf. E. Meteyard, op. cit., II, pp. 176-7.

and exploit the position he had won for himself. Warehouses, showrooms, exhibitions, tra ıarks, new standards of display, puffing articles, straightforward advertisement, free carriage, and travelling salesmen; all of these played their part in Wedgwood and Bentley's marketing campaign.

Wedgwood was quick to realize the value of a warehouse in London. For high-quality goods he needed a market accustomed to 'fine prices'. He was not likely to find it in the annual market fairs of Staffordshire—the time-honoured entrepôt of their county's pots—nor amongst the country folk who haggled over their wares straight from the crateman's back or the hawker's basket, and to whom expense was the controlling factor in deciding their custom. A London warehouse would give him direct access to the fashionable clientele he aimed at and an opening in what was still the major distributing centre for the wholesale trade of the country.[119]

He first opened a warehouse there as early as 1765 and it soon became an integral part of his sales organization. It gave him the opportunity to put into action some of his most creative ideas. For apart from its success in the wholesale trade,[120] Wedgwood quickly reinforced its position by developing a vigorous retail trade in London. In two years his trade had outgrown his rooms in Grosvenor Square, and he was writing to Bentley, 'We must have an Elegant, extensive & Conven(ien)t shewroom',[121] and discussing the merits of different sites. Pall Mall was thought to be too accessible to the common folk, for he wanted space for more exciting methods of display,[122] rather than for accommodation of the general public.[123] He planned to have a great display of his wares set out in services as for a meal 'in order to *do the needfull* with the Ladys in the neatest, genteelest, and best method. The same, or indeed a much greater variety of setts of Vases sho.d decorate the Walls, & both these articles may, every few days be so alter'd, revers'd, & transform'd as to render the whole a new scene, Even to the same Company, every time they shall bring their friends to visit us.

'I need not tell you the many good effects this must produce, when business, & amusement can be made to go hand in hand. Every new show, Exhibition or rarity soon grows stale in London, & is no longer regarded, after the first sight, unless utility, or some such variety as I have hinted at above continues to recommend it to their notice . . . I have done something of the sort since I came to Town & find the immediate good Effects of it. The first two days after the alteration we sold three complete setts of Vases at 2 & 3 Guineas

[119] C. R. Fay, *Great Britain: an economic and social survey*, p. 132.
[120] With the development of the canal system and the growth of turnpike trusts its importance to Wedgwood's wholesale trade naturally declined though it was still vital for foreign dealers.
[121] WMSS. E.18147–25. JW to TB. 23 May 1767.
[122] WMSS. E.18711–25. JW to TB. 4 Nov. 1776.
[123] WMSS. E.18149–25. JW to TB. Postmark 1 June (1767).

ett, besides many pairs of them, *which Vases had been in my Room 8 and some of them 12 months & wanted nothing but arrang(e)ment to sell them*'.[124] (My italics.) It is clear from this that Wedgwood anticipated the most modern ideas of effective display—after nearly two hundred years retail potters use almost exactly the same layout to show off their wares.

He even anticipated a rudimentary self-service scheme—the pride of twentieth-century shopkeepers' ingenuity—for he planned to have his slightly inferior goods, priced according to their quality, and displayed 'in one of the best places of your lower Shop, where people can come at them, & *serve themselves*'.[125] (My italics.) Further he laid out his tiles in patterns to show their full variety;[126] he placed his cheap vases on a separate range of shelves;[127] and to give his customers a greater sense of the rarity of his goods, he strictly limited the number of jaspers on display in his rooms at any given time.[128] In the early 1770s when the fate of gilding was still in the balance, he proposed a temporary solution as a shield to the delicate sensibility of his patrons' tastes by proposing 'a Curtain immediately for your Pebble ware shelves, which you may open or shut, inlarge or diminish the shew of gilding as you find your customers affected . . . It wo.d *moderate the shew* at the first enterance (sic)—hide the Gilding from those who think it a defect, & prevent the Gold from tarnishing'.[129] For their entertainment he provided pattern books in all his warehouses as 'they will be looked over by our customers here, & they will often get us orders, & be pretty amusem.t for the Ladies when they are waiting, wh.ch is often the case as there are som(e)times four or five diff.t companys, & I need not tell you, that *it will be our interest to amuse, & divert, & please, and astonish, nay, & even to ravish the Ladies* . . .'[130]

His success was immediate. His account books, his list of visitors, and contemporary comment all record the constant streams of fashionable callers. As early as 1769 he was taking £100 a week[131] in cash sales at his London rooms alone, in addition to numerous orders which were often for even larger sums. His men had to work night and day[132] to satisfy the demand and the crowds of visitors showed no sign of abating.[133] Wedgwood's in fact had become one of the most fashionable meeting places in London. As Lord Townshend wrote of 'Squire Hanger', a beau and a macaroni,

[124] WMSS. E.18149–25. JW to TB. 1 June (1767).
[125] WMSS. E.17677–96. JW to William Cox. 7 April 1769.
[126] WMSS. E.18711–25. JW to TB. 4 Nov. 1776.
[127] WMSS. E.18364–25. JW to TB. 6 April (1772).
[128] WMSS. E.18802–25. JW to TB. 15 Dec. 1777.
[129] WMSS. E.18365–25. JW to TB. 11 April 1772.
[130] WMSS. E.18232–25. JW to TB. Feb. 1769. My italics.
[131] WMSS. E.30857–5 & E.30859–5. Peter Swift to JW 18 & 25 March, 1769.
[132] WMSS. E.18230–25. JW to TB. 15 Feb. 1769.
[133] WMSS. E.30857–5 & E.30859–5. Peter Swift to JW, 18 & 25 March, 1769.

At tersall's,[134] Wedgwood's, and eke the Rehearsal,[135]
Tho... straightway at Betty's[136] he's sure to converse all;
At Arthur's[137] you meet him, and the mall in a sweat,
At Kensington Garden's he's posted vidette.[138]

It is not surprising that Boulton and Fothergill in Pall Mall,[139] Josiah Spode in Fore Street, Cripplegate and then at the more genteel Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields,[140] and finally Minton[141] followed Wedgwood's lead and established warehouses in London. For a fashionable appeal in London had vital influence even in the depths of the provinces. The woman in Newcastle-upon-Tyne who insisted on a dinner service of 'Arabesque Border' before her local shopkeeper had even heard of it, wanted it because it was 'much used in Lond.º at present', and she steadfastly 'declin'd taking any till she had seen that pattern'.[142]

To encourage this outward spread of fashion and to speed it on its way, Wedgwood set up warehouses and showrooms at Bath,[143] Liverpool[144] and Dublin[145] in addition to the showrooms at Etruria[146] and Great Newport Street. The effect on the Liverpool potters of Wedgwood's competition can be seen from a contemporary's comment. The local historian Enfield wrote in 1774, 'English porcelain, in imitation of foreign China, has long been manufactured in this town; and formerly with success. But of late this branch has been much upon decline, partly because the Leverpool (sic) artists have not kept pace in the improvements with some others in the same way; but chiefly because the Staffordshire ware has had and still continues to have so general a demand, as almost to supersede the use of other porcelain. The great perfection to which this art, both in works of utility and of ornament and taste, is carried at the modern Etruria, under the direction of those ingenious artists, Messrs. Wedgwood & Bentley, at the same time that it is highly serviceable to the public and reflects great honour on our country,

[134] For sportsmen.
[135] Opera House, Haymarket.
[136] The famous fruit shop in St. James's St.
[137] Unknown.
[138] D. Marshall, *London & the Life of the Town*, in *Johnson's England*, ed. A. S. Turbeville, vol. I, p. 187.
[139] WMSS. E.18261–25. JW to TB. 27 Sept. 1769.
[140] Arthur Hayden: *Spode and his Successors*, pp. 20–2.
[141] Minton-Senhouse MS. & Minton Account Sales; cf. Dr. John Thomas: *The Economic Development of the North Staffordshire Potteries since 1730, with special reference to the Industrial Revolution*, p. 815. There had been other less successful attempts before Wedgwood to set up a fashionable warehouse in London. See L. Weatherill, op. cit., p. 88.
[142] WMSS. E.1192–2. Joseph Harris of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to JW. 1780. It was for this reason, too, that Wedgwood took such care to keep in step with London fashion, writing to Bentley on 17 Dec. 1777, 'if we should ever make this article in earnest you must furnish us with the fashion, shape, size & real model from the great City'.
[143] WMSS. Numerous letters to Mr. Ward from JW, e.g. E.4428–6 to E.4651–6.
[144] WMSS. Numerous letters to Mr. Boardman from JW, e.g. E. –8 and E. –9.
[145] WMSS. Numerous letters to Mr. Brock from JW, e.g. E.3880–5 to E.3908–5.
[146] WMSS. Leith Hill Place (a fragment). JW to TB. 27 July 1771.

must be unfavourable to other manufacturers of a similar kind'.[147] any other were to suffer a similar fate.

It was on the London showrooms, however, that Wedgwood lavished most of his attention. By judicious use of shows and exhibitions he kept up his London sales[148] and advertised his more spectacular productions. These were carefully stage managed. Great care was taken in timing the openings,[149] and new goods were held back to increase their effect. As Wedgwood wrote to Bentley: 'Your shew will be vastly superior to anything your good Princes & Customers have hitherto seen. I am going upon a large scale with our Models &c which is one reason why you have so few new things just now, but I hope to bring the whole in compass for your next Winters shew and ASTONISH THE WORLD ALL AT ONCE, For I hate piddleing you know'.[150] Winter, summer, spring and autumn sales were bolstered up by the occasional exhibition. Anything they made for the Queen, for instance, was automatically exhibited[151] before it was delivered, with reproductions[152] on sale to press home their advantage after the show had ended. But the most influential exhibition of all was that of the Russian service for Catherine the Great in 1774. Its display, Wedgwood thought, 'would bring an *immence (sic) number of People of Fashion* into our Rooms—Wo.d *fully complete our notoriety* to *the whole Island & help us greatly*, no doubt, *in the sale of our goods, both useful and ornamental*—It wo.d *confirm the consequence we have attain'd, & increase* it, by *shewing that we are employ'd in a much higher scale* than *other Manufacturers*. We should shew that we have paid many comp.ts to our Friends & Customers, & *thereby rivet them the more firmly to our interests . . .*'[153] The benefits which Wedgwood expected to flow from such fashionable 'notoriety' would be valuable both for his immediate sales and his future profits because it would help to boost his long term reputation on which he felt both ultimately rested.

Nothing was spared. For Wedgwood was determined to make the most of the opportunity. New rooms were taken;[154] the public—or rather the 'Nobility & Gentry'—informed that admittance was by ticket only;[155] and ample advertisement was planned.[156] The success of the show was certain.

[147] Dr. William Enfield, *A Hisotory of Liverpool*, 1774, p. 90, quoted in Knowles Boney, *Liverpool Porcelain of the 18th Century and its Makers* (1957), p. 7.
[148] WMSS. E.18853–26. JW to TB. 6 Oct. 1778.
[149] WMSS. E.18696–25. JW to (TB). (Sept. 1776.)
[150] WMSS. E.18614–25. JW to TB. 6 Aug. 1775.
[151] WMSS. E.18350–25. JW to TB. 17 Sept. 1771.
[152] WMSS. Uncatalogued. JW to TB. 17 Oct. 1771.
[153] WMSS. E.18498–25. JW to TB. 14 Nov. 1773. No. 2 (i.e. the second letter from JW to TB that day). My italics.
[154] Portland House, Greek Street, Soho. First mentioned as 'our new Rooms'.
[155] WMSS. Draft of advertisement. 30 May 1774. See C. C. Williamson, op. cit., p. 33.
[156] Ibid. Planned for the front page of Public Advertiser & Gazeteer (Miss Meteyard claims that it appeared in these and *St. James's Chronicle* but it can only be traced to *Public Advertiser* for 8 June 1774).

Regarded as one of the most popular sights in London, it was visited by Queen Charlo[illegible]nd by her brother His Royal Highness Prince Ernst of Mecklenburg,[157] and by the King and Queen of Sweden, and day after day for over a month the fashionable world thronged the rooms and blocked the street with their carriages.[158] Wedgwood had ensured its success by his choice of subject alone, for almost all of those whose country seats were represented on the service trekked from their distant homes to see the exhibition.[159] The last ounce of publicity was wrung out of it, by displaying duplicates of the service in the showroom at Etruria, and painting others 'without the Frog' for a continued display at Greek Street.[160] With this exhibition he had aroused and exploited the imagination of the fashionable world. He was equally capable of harnessing the emotion of the rest of society to serve his own ends.

No public event—Chatham dying,[161] Wesley preaching,[162] or Keppel pleading[163]—lacked its commerical opportunities for Wedgwood. As early as 1766 he wrote to Bentley, 'What do you think of sending Mr. Pitt upon Crockery ware to America. A Quantity might certainly be sold there now & some advantage made of the American prejudice in favour of that great Man'.[164] Similarly when Admiral Keppel was tried by court martial and, amidst great enthusiasm, acquitted, Wedgwood wrote at once for a picture to copy, regretting that he had not 'had it a month since, and advertis'd it for pictures, bracelets, rings, seals, &c.'[165] Exasperated by the delay he wrote that their travelling salesman 'says he could sell *thousands* of Keppels at any price. Oh Keppel Keppel—Why will not you send me a Keppel. I am perswaded (sic) if we had our wits about us as we ought to have had 2 or 3 months since we might have sold £1000 worth of this gentleman's head in various ways, & I am perswaded it would still be worth while to disperse them every way in our power'.[166] For the same purpose the rise of Methodism, the Slave Trade controversy, and the Peace with France were all given ceramic expression: Wesley, printed in black by Sadler and Green, on a Wedgwood teapot;[167] slavery on the famous jasper medallion of the kneeling slave, asking 'Am I not a man and a brother?',[168] the Peace treaty on a jasper plaque specially commissioned by Josiah from Flaxman.[169] Other contemporary figures much in the public eye—Garrick, Dr. Johnson, Prie[illegible]v, [illegible]rs. Siddons, Captain Cook and many others[170]—joined Wedgwood's s[illegible]es of famous heads: Greeks, Romans, Poets, Painters, Scientists, Historians, Actors and Politicians.[171] Made up into 'Historical Cabinets'[172] these heads found a ready sale. One alone proved abortive—the Popes. They were tried but sold poorly. They lacked sales appeal, for as Wedgwood explained 'nobody now a days troubles their heads about his Holiness or his Predecessors'.[173] Not, at least, in England, but Wedgwood found an alternative use for him in his Catholic export trade.

Wedgwood also used newspaper advertisement—in London, provincial and even continental papers. This part of his marketing programme has received little attention; historians in general preferring to quote his occasional refusal rather than his more general acceptance of this medium. His remark, 'I would much rather not advertise at all if you think the sales are in such a way as to do without it . . .'[174] clearly indicates a certain reluctance. But this can be explained. It was due to his temporary fear of further attentions from 'Antipuffado'[175]—an anonymous opponent of 'that monstrous blast of puffery'[176] which eighteenth-century manufacturers used to advertise their goods. This method itself—articles pretending impartiality but in fact praising certain goods—seems to have grown out of the initial desire of some large firms to avoid direct advertisement. They shrank from what Wedgwood called 'blowing my own trumpet'[177] and preferred to get others to do it for them. The company they would have to keep must also at first have discouraged them, for many advertisements were from petty traders, hawkers, quacks, local shopkeepers, and other more dubious professions. The Queen's Potter was naturally not keen to share a column with battling women and fighting cocks; nor eager to offer his services alongside those of a prostitute or a gigolo, a wet nurse or a bug killer[178]—even though the latter claimed to serve the same monarch and be the oldest in the land. Wedgwood felt the same initial aversion to using travelling salesmen because it savoured of hawking.[179]

But whatever his feelings, a study of Wedgwood's letters and of contemporary newspapers makes it quite clear that he conquered them. Certain forms of advertisement he would never countenance. He banned his show-

[157] WMSS. E.18547-25. JW to TB 15 & 16 July 1774.
[158] *Diary of Mrs. Delaney.* 7 June 1774.
[159] Dr. G. C. Williamson, op. cit., The list of views (1282 in all), pp. 55–91.
[160] WMSS. E.18540–25. JW to TB. (20 June 1774).
[161] WMSS. E.18840–25. JW to TB. 30 June & 1 July 1778.
[162] Donald C. Towner, *English Cream Coloured Earthenware* (1957). Plate 85(b).
[163] Keppel had been accused by Sir Hugh Pallister, his second-in-command. He was acquitted on 11 February 1779 and received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament.
[164] WMSS. E.18123–25. JW to TB. 18 July 1766.
[165] WMSS. E.18878–26. JW to TB. 25 Feb. 1779.
[166] WMSS. E.18880–26. JW to TB. 1 March 1779.
[167] Donald C. Towner, op. cit. Plate 85(b).
[168] WMSS. E.19002–26. JW to Dr. Erasmus Darwin. (July 1789). A Copy.
[169] WMSS. E.30193–2. JW to John Flaxman. 2 Nov. 1786.

[170] Wolf Mankowitz, *Wedgwood*, catalogues for 1779 and 1787, pp. 203–75.
[171] WMSS. E.18657–25. William Cox to TB. 24 Feb. 1776.
[172] WMSS. E.18433–5. JW to TB. 2 Jan. 1773.
[173] WMSS. ditto. Wedgwood was careful to avoid certain political implications, however, and refused to reproduce certain heads, e.g. E.18772–25. JW to TB. 19 July 1777.
[174] WMSS. Leith Hill Place. JW to TB. 13 Feb. 1771.
[175] WMSS. Leith Hill Place. JW to TB. 11 Feb. 1771.
[176] E. S. Turner, *The Shocking History of Advertisement.* Ch. II, *passim.*
[177] WMSS. E.19001–26. JW to Dr. Erasmus Darwin. Endorsed. 28 June 1789. Copy.
[178] Turner, op. cit., pp. 28–48 and *passim.* N. B. Turner makes no mention of Wedgwood and Bentley.
[179] WMSS. E.18827–25. JW to TB. 16 April 1778.

rooms from using handbills, writing 'We have hitherto appeared in a very different light ommon Shopkeepers, but this step (in my opinion) will sink us exceedingly ... I own myself alarm'd ... it being a mode of advertisement I never approv'd of ...'[180] Wedgwood had to tread an especially careful path with regard to his advertisements. He had to make his goods widely known and yet avoid damaging beyond repair the special cachet he had won for his product as the prized possession of the fashionable and the great. To reach a very wide market and yet retain a fashionable reputation, indeed to use that fashionable reputation as an important part of his mass sales promotion, was not easy, but it was Wedgwood's distinctive achievement to do so. He could afford eventually to lose the hyper-fashionable (as he eventually lost the support of Horace Walpole) so long as his general reputation survived. He felt it would be damaged by association with those who used handbills. But there were many other forms, which, when his stock began to mount, he was quick to use, writing 'This seems to point out advertising ... All trifling objections vanish before a real necessity'.[181] His faith in the value of advertisement is further borne out by his belief that Cooper and Duburk failed in Amsterdam because they did not make 'a fair experiment what advertising &c would do'.[182] And it is conclusively proved by the numerous occasions on which he used it. He advertised his ware,[183] his warehouse,[184] and his agents;[185] he advertised his Royal patronage and the support of the nobility;[186] he marked his ware and he advertised that mark. As he wrote to Bentley in 1773, 'it will be absolutely necessary for us to mark them, and advertise that mark'.[187] He even organized the trial over encaustic painting in London for the sake of advertisement, writing to Bentley, 'May not this affair furnish us with a good excuse for advertising away at a great rate?'[188] Furthermore he proposed to publish prints of the pieces of furniture into which Wedgwood ware had been introduced in much the same way that Vincennes and Sèvres had long been used in French furniture. A step which he believed 'would give sanction, & notoriety to our productions to such a degree, perhaps, as we have at present no idea of. I would put these Nos. into the common mode of sale in all the shops, & in our own Warehouses every where'.[189] Here Wedgwood felt he was on sure ground. The association with fine furniture would reinforce his reputation with the fashionably elegant. The widespread demonstration of that con-

[180] WMSS. E.18427–25. JW to TB. 7 Dec. 1772.
[181] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 16 Feb. 1771.
[182] WMSS. E.18616–25. JW to TB. 10 Aug. 1775.
[183] WMSS. E.18341–25. JW to TB. 17 Feb. (1771).
[184] WMSS. E.18563–25. JW to TB. 10 Nov. 1774.
[185] WMSS. E.18504–25. JW to TB. 2 Dec. 1773. In this case the agent was Brett.
[186] WMSS. Ditto.
[187] WMSS. E.18489–25. JW to TB. 7 June 1773.
[188] WMSS. E.18325–25. JW to TB. 13 October 1770.
[189] WMSS. E.18518–25. JW to TB. 20 Feb. 1774.

ction would make a wider market ever more eager to own those pie of Wedgwood which they could afford. Those who could not afford the fine furniture embellished with Wedgwood plaques, could at least aspire to own the plaques, and could certainly afford to own the useful ware whose trade mark proclaimed its relationship with more exclusive and more expensive ornamental ware.

He did not neglect to keep up a steady stream of flattering articles in the press. Some of these occurred in the natural course of events. By its own fine quality and the judicious attention of its makers, Wedgwood's wares had many admirers amongst the literary connoisseurs and won periodic praise for them in the daily news-sheets. But Wedgwood did not rely on this alone. He speeded up the process and augmented it. Although, for instance, he received two unsolicited puffs[190] in August and September 1770, by October he was writing to Bentley, 'There is a most famous puff for Boulton & Fothergill in the St James's Chronicle of the 9th & for Mr Cox likewise, How the Author could have the assurance to leave us out I cannot conceive. Pray get another article in the next paper to complete the Triumverate.'[191] The attacks on this puffing technique, by Antipuffado, excited such attention that Wedgwood and Bentley discussed exploiting it for their own ends. For having realized that exaggerated abuse could be as effective in publicity as praise—one of the more advanced advertising ideas—they discussed methods of provoking their anonymous attacker to strike again: 'But should not we seem a little nettled & provoked to induce him to take up his pen again, for if he thinks his writeing is of service to us, he will certainly be silent. You mention his letter as a foundation for my advertiseing—How wo[d] you introduce the mention of it into an advertisement?'[192] After much discussion this idea was eventually rejected, but it shows an awareness of advertising techniques far ahead of their time. They were always conscious of the value of propaganda, and they were not above suggesting to the King and their customers that there was no hope of obtaining more of the vital ingredients for their jasper. 'This idea will give limits, a boundary to the quantity which your customers will be ready to conceive may be made of these bassreliefs, which otherwise would be gems indeed. They want nothing but *age* & *scarcity* to make them worth any price you could ask for them.'[193] He could not give them age but he did his best to imply that they were scarce. It is interesting to note that Wedgwood suggested to Bentley that he should burn this letter.

A study of their advertisements reveals a number of interesting develop-

[190] WMSS. E.18323–25. JW to TB. 1 Sept. 1770, one in the *Gazette* and another in *Lloyds*. Another in the *Daily Advertiser*. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 21 Jan. 1771.
[191] WMSS. E.18325–25. JW to TB. 13 Oct. 1770. Later JW denied that he ever advertised without affixing his name. L.H.P. MS, JW to TB. 11 Feb. 1771.
[192] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 12 Feb. 1771.
[193] WMSS. E.18802–25. JW to TB. 15 Dec. 1777.

ments in the selling policy. From a copy of his first,[194] it is clear that he had decided to pay cost of carriage on his goods to London, even though this would mean a loss of £500 a year in his profits.[195] Of even greater importance is the way this policy developed in the advertisement outlined to Bentley in 1771 when poor sales demanded 'that some additional mode of sale be thought of or our dead stock will soon grow enormous'.[196] In this,[197] free carriage to London is extended to part payment—and a very considerable part—to any place in England. In addition he offered the first recorded example of a satisfaction-or-money-back policy. Not only is this the first of its kind to be discovered in Europe or America but it antedates John Wanamaker—who is normally given the credit for this innovation—by nearly a century.[198]

Advertisement alone, however, was not sufficient fully to exploit the English market. As Wedgwood said, 'It seems absolutely necessary for the increase of our sales . . . that some means must be unremittingly made use of to awake, and keep up the attention of the world to the fine things we are making & doing for them'.[199] He felt that his rival Voyez sold his wretched seals 'by mere dint of application to the buyers',[200] and so he went to work himself armed with pattern boxes, catalogues and samples. This was so successful that he extended it, and in 1777 he took the momentous decision to make his wares known throughout the country by personal introduction in the shape of travelling salesmen, and a crude and primitive version of the modern commercial traveller or sales representative can be seen in the proposals drawn up in October of that year between Wedgwood and John Brownbill.[201] Despite early difficulties Wedgwood persevered and by 1787 there were three such travellers on the road,[202] and by 1790 a book of rules and travellers' procedure, called the Travellers' Book,[203] had been drawn up. In it the record of their sales and their expenses bears ample testimony to their success.[204]

By such means Wedgwood broke through to a national market. By novelty, quality and fashionable appeal he won the favour of London and the notice of the provinces; with sales, exhibitions, and spectacular productions—all well advertised—he publicized this support; and with warehouses, salesmen

[194] WMSS. E.18230–25. JW to Sarah Wedgwood. (Feb. 1769).
[195] WMSS. E.18191–25. JW to TB. 3 March 1768.
[196] WMSS. E.18293–25. JW to TB. 18 April 1770.
[197] WMSS. E.18341–25. JW to TB. 17 Feb. (1771).
[198] Ralph M. Hower, 'The Wedgwoods—Ten Generations of Potters', *Journal of Economic and Business History*, vol. 4, No. 2, (1932), p. 305.
[199] WMSS. E.18880–26. JW to TB. 1 March 1779.
[200] WMSS. E.18507–25. JW to TB. 10 Dec. 1773.
[201] WMSS. E.18784–25. JW to TB. 17 Oct. 1777.
[202] WMSS. Byerley, Howorth and Brownbill.
[203] WMSS. L.23571. Travellers' Book, *c.* 1793.
[204] WMSS. ditto. In 10 days in June 1793, the expenses amounted to £2.9.10½ (added up wrongly by the traveller to £2.9.10) and the sales to £101.3.2.

ıd free carriages he invented the means of satisfying that demand. H ng made his ware desirable, he had made it accessible.

* * *

The capture of the English market was not enough to satisfy Wedgwood. He longed to serve the whole world from Etruria, and constantly scanned the horizon for new markets. No country—Mexico, Turkey, not even China—was too distant for him to contemplate with excitement. No obstacle—Russia's taste, Spain's hostility, or Portugal's prohibition—was too great for him to hope to overcome it. Difficulties served only as a challenge to his ambition. France—home of European porcelain, centre of rococo elegance, and safe behind a high tariff wall—was the greatest challenge of all. Even the thought of it inspired Wedgwood, 'And do you really think we may make a *complete conquest* of France? Conquer France in Burslem? My blood moves quicker, I feel my strength increase for the contest—Assist me my friend, & the victory is our own . . . we will fashion our porcelain after their own hearts, & captivate them with the elegance & simplicity of the ancients'.[205]

Necessity as well as ambition led Wedgwood and Bentley to seek new outlets for their products. They needed a larger market to move their stock, to exploit the capabilities of their production machine, and to swallow old lines which had exhausted their selling power in England. In the early seventies when sales were slack, Wedgwood wrote 'we must either find some new markets or . . . turn off some of our hands'.[206] The stock was too large, '& nothing but a *foreign* market . . . will ever keep it within any tolerable bounds'.[207] He determined that 'Every *Gentle* & *Decent* push should be made to have our things *seen* & *sold* at Foreign Markets. If we drop, or do not *hitt off* such opportunities our selves we cannot expect other People to be so (in)attentive to them, & our trade will decline & wither, or flourish & expand itself, in proportion as these little turns & opportunitys are neglected or made the most of'.[208]

Wedgwood seized on the slightest hint of an opening into a new market. Merely reading in Lady Mary Wortley Montague's *Letters* of the Turks' taste for pots of perfume in the numerous arches around their rooms, filled him with lust for the Turkish market. It was a purely ceramic lust, however, for he wrote, 'Let who will take the Sultanas if I could get at these delightful

[205] WMSS. E.18252–25. JW to TB. 13 Sept. 1769.
[206] WMSS. Leith Hill Place Ms. JW to TB. 10 April 1771.
[207] WMSS. Leith Hill Place Ms. JW to TB. 11 Feb. (postmark 14 March) 1771.
[208] WMSS. E.18384–25. JW to TB. 5 Aug. 1772. Those, like Professor Payne, who see little evidence of any great pressure on Wedgwood to sell abroad [see P. L. Payne in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. VII, Part I, ed. P. Mathias and M. M. Postan (1978), p. 190] in 1771 and 1772 should take note of his expressed willingness to go 'to the utmost verge of prudence or rather beyond', and the quite exceptional risk of sending £20,000 worth of pottery to Europe in 1772 in his major inertia-selling campaign.

little niches, & [illegible]rnish them, is all I covet in Turkey at present'.[209] This casual reference conjured up a whole range of commercial possibilities to Wedgwood and he was convinced that 'if we had a clever Ambassador there som(e)thing might be done'.[210] His desire for such a contact is easy to appreciate, for the diplomatic service—although this had remained largely unappreciated—had proved one of the most fruitful channels of entry into foreign trade.

It was yet another way in which he exploited the favour of the aristocracy and his connections with the Establishment. They had already ensured a favourable reception for his goods in England. Their influence was not unfelt even on the Continent, but it required something more than this to penetrate fully the European market. When offered on the open market through the normal channels of merchant and middleman, the high quality of Wedgwood's products earned them immediate attention, but their price worked against them. Many lay idle as dead stock, some were returned as too expensive. They required a 'proper & noble introduction' such as he had contrived for them in England to overcome this drawback. What better introduction to the heart of European courts and their fashionable attendants could be devised than through her Majesty's ambassadors?

Wedgwood realized that they were naturally keen to raise the prestige of their country, and by flattery and presents he rapidly won their allegiance. 'Suppose we were to make S[r] W[m] Hamilton a present of an Etruscan tablet . . . it would be the best introduction they could have in the country where he resides'.[211] His confidence in such introductions was such that he had once written, 'The Russians must have Etruscan, & Grecian vases about the 19th Century. I fear they will not be ripe for them much sooner, unless our good friend S[r] Wm. Hamilton should go Ambassador thither & prepare a hot bed to bring these Northern plants to Maturity before their *natural* time'.[212] Many of his letters have survived as evidence of the care with which Wedgwood solicited such help. Bentley had done much of the original work in cultivating the diplomats,[213] but after his death Wedgwood took over and even as late as 1786 he still felt the need to prepare the ground carefully with the British ambassador in Vienna for the promotion of a new production (or rather a new application of his cameos):

> Sir, Encouraged by the many instances of your Excellency's condescension in giving my manufactures the honour of your patronage, and for which, I beg leave to assure you, Sir, I feel the most lively gratitude, I take the liberty to inclose to your Excellency specimens of a new production, or rather a new application of my Cameos of two colors to the purposes of buttons for Gentlemen's and Ladies' dresses, each button in a set having a different subject, principally from the antique. They have not yet been made public in this Kingdom, His Royal [illegible]ness The Prince of Wales only being in possession of a set of them. If these little things should appear to your Excellency likely to place the ingenuity of the manufacturers of this Kingdom in a favourable point of view to Foreigners, I shall not doubt your Excellency will do me the honor to take them under your patronage in the circle of your friends and I flatter myself, Sir, you will have the goodness to pardon the liberty which I thus most humbly presume to take. I have the honor to be, Sir, your Excellency's most obliged and most obedient humble Servant, Jos. Wedgwood.[214]

[209] WMSS. E.18407-25. JW to TB. 19 & 20 Sept. 1772.
[210] WMSS. ditto.
[211] WMSS. E.18855-26. JW to TB. 16 Oct. 1778.
[212] WMSS. E.18367-25. JW to TB. 18 April 1772.
[213] See Neil McKendrick, 'Josiah Wedgwood and Thomas Bentley', *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.* 14 (1964), p. 20.

Everywhere such introductions proved invaluable, and through the agency of ambassadors, envoys, consuls and plenipotentiaries, Wedgwood's wares entered—with no trouble and little expense beyond the cost of the original presents to the diplomats—the courts of Russia, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Turkey, Naples, Turin and even into China. Such a catalogue of services is impressive. But it is by no means complete. For these men were magnificent evangelising agents for Wedgwood's ware. Each representative did more than introduce Wedgwood into one country. Ambassadors are peripatetic beings and like malaria-carrying mosquitoes they carried Wedgwood's name abroad,[215] to convert the world to what Wedgwood called 'the true belief—(a belief) in our tablets'[216] vases and multifarious productions.

Wedgwood alone amongst the Staffordshire potters enjoyed these favours, and the honour of such attention was not lost on his customers. When the Portland vase was first successfully copied it was introduced to the courts of Europe in the finest possible style through Wedgwood's ambassadorial connections.[217]

Those connections were, however, only one of the methods used by Wedgwood to break through to an international market. In the export trade no less than in England, the process of marketing pottery underwent a great change. His general sales policy was the same. He was determined on superior quality rather than cheap production to sell his wares. He was also determined to keep his prices high. From the beginning, therefore, as in England he was committed to a policy of interesting the rich and exciting the favour of the fashionable. Once more he relied on court circles to publicize the unusual quality of his wares by buying the most outstanding pieces. He knew well enough that if it was bought by kings, it would be bought by their

[214] JW to Sir Robert Murray Keith, 1 March 1786. British Museum, Additional MSS. 35,536. f.118. I am indebted to Dr. T. C. W. Blanning for drawing my attention to this letter. Many similar ones could be cited.
[215] Men like Sir Robert Liston who bought over £238 worth of Wedgwood ware whilst he was at Madrid and Stockholm, and later visited Washington, Batavia and Constantinople on diplomatic missions, cf. D. B. Horn, *British Diplomatic Representatives 1689–1789*, pp. 138, 144, and *Concise D.N.B.*, p. 782(a).
[216] WMSS. E.18863-26. JW to TB. 22 Nov. 1778.
[217] WMSS. Moseley MSS. JW to T. Byerley, July 1790, containing a transcript of Lord Auckland's letter to Wedgwood.

courtiers, a once fashionable at court it would be bought by the gentry, and so on down the social scale. The ambassadors had set these wheels in motion. But more than this was required. For there were many competitors for the European market. Firms such as Boulton and Fothergill were as alive to the possibilities as Wedgwood and Bentley, and they were not squeamish in their compliments. Occasionally they stole a march even on Wedgwood. As in 1776, when Josiah wrote in anguish to Bentley, 'They are now preparing a complimentary Group with a proper Inscription, upon the death of the Grand Duchess. You see they have carried *into execution* what we have only *talked about*, and will proffit by it, so surely as Princes love flattery'.[218]

Moreover, they had to make their goods easily accessible to classes outside the county circles. There was no smooth ambassadorial introduction to the minor nobilities of Europe. They had to resort to cruder methods for them. One was the first recorded example of inertia selling on a significant scale by a major England exporter. For Wedgwood and Bentley proposed to send a thousand parcels containing £20,000 worth of pottery, to deluge Europe with earthenware, for it seemed 'the only mode in which our Goods can get into such Familys'.[219] As Wedgwood wrote excitedly to Bentley: 'This object is great indeed, and my general idea upon it is to close heartily with it *to the utmost verge of prudence* or *rather beyond*[220] . . . I think we sho.d not sell all to Italy and neglect the other Princes in Germany & elsewhere who are waiting with so much impatience for their turns to be served with our fine things—unless you think it better to send all to one place at a time that one Agent may first do the business in Italy, then in Germany and so on to Spain, Mexico, Indostan, China, Nova Zembla and the L.d knows where.'[221] Germany was, in fact, the first to be tried. It was a great risk. But it came off.[222] Wedgwood did not propose to repeat it. Only rising stocks and the exhaustion of all other efforts to move them, justified such storm-trooper methods. It was an exceptional technique and similar only to Wedgwood's flooding of Frankfurt with specially prepared goods in 1790 at the coronation of Leopold as Emperor. The goods he prepared were in celebration of the coronation and of Leopold's life.[223] For such objects he could hope for only

[218] WMSS. E.18684–25. JW to TB. 14 July 1776.
[219] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 2 Nov. 1771. When one realizes that the average workman's weekly wage is far more than one hundred times higher than its equivalent in the 1770s, it is not extravagant to see this as the equivalent of something approaching £2,000,000 in present day values. In fact the value was even higher, for the individual parcels actually sent cost far more than £20—those sent to Dukes and Princes averaged £35 each, those to Electors averaged £70.
[220] My italics.
[221] WMSS. Leith Hill Place MS. JW to TB. 26 Oct. 1771.
[222] By August 1773 eighteen of the projected customers had failed to pay up, but later accounts showed that the debtors finally dwindled to three.
[223] WMSS. E.19010–26. 'Invoice of the Ornamental Ware shipped by JW & Co, to Fran(c)furt S/M', 11 Sept. 1790.

temporary sale, and his intention was to advertise as much as .. sell. They were designed to display his goods in the most spectacular fashion to the great congregation of European nobility that gathered to watch the coronation, and to the huge crowds that swarmed in their wake, in the hope that 'the remembrance of fine things will be implanted with sufficient force upon their minds'[224] for them never to forget them. The Portland vase was displayed there for the same purpose. For it was not the Frankfurt market that Wedgwood was aiming at—he had harnessed that before—but at the market of the whole of Europe. This concentration of goods at Frankfurt was like throwing a pebble into a pond and Wedgwood was more interested in the ripples than the splash. For slowly the fashionable crowds would disperse and with them would go Wedgwood's cameos, carried as seals on the bellies of Polish noblemen like Prince Czartoriskie, or worn as lockets at the throats of Portuguese princesses like the Marchioness of Pombal to startle distant families by the brilliance of their colour and the sharpness of their modelling, and to win orders by their novelty from every corner of Europe.

Having won the notice and the custom of the nobility, Wedgwood wished to proceed lower in the social scale. 'The Great People have had these Vases in their Palaces long enough for them to be seen and admired by the Middling Class of People, which class we know are vastly, I had almost said, infinitely superior in number to the Great, and though a *great price* was, I believe, at first necessary to make the vases esteemed *Ornament for Palaces*, that reason no longer exists. Their character is established, and the middling People w.d probably by (sic) quantitys of them at a reduced price.'[225] Simply by cheapening goods which he has already made fashionable Wedgwood immediately opened up a great new market. In years like 1771–72 and 1777–78 when home demand fell Wedgwood was more willing than usual to contemplate cutting his prices, writing uncharacteristically to Bentley on 17 December 1777 of pieces which he thought could attract very large 'foreign sales, if the price does not prevent it'. In his view the price 'should be lower'd very considerably . . . A crown a piece for the largest wd. be quite enough to the merchants, & we had better sell five at 5/– each then two at 10/6. They are an excellent article to make in quantitys and we c.d by any means find sale for them'.[226] But it was not a method which he relished, and his wares were still far from cheap. To win this class completely he had to appeal to the differences in interests as well as in its purse. It clearly required different marketing techniques from those used to seduce the upper classes.

[224] WMSS. Moseley MSS, JW to JW II, 3 Sept. 1790.
[225] WMSS. E.18392–25. JW to TB. 23 August 1772.
[226] WMSS. JW to TB, 17 Dec. 1777. This was a far cry from the impertinent pricing attitude developed in response to the rampant demand of the late 1760s;—'2 guineas is too little, but I am rather afraid of 5', but for all the subtle manipulation of his pricing policy Wedgwood ultimately always returned to his high price policy arguing that his goods were 'at least as much better as they were dearer'.

The mass of the population was socially inaccessible to ambassadors, too numerous for individual parcels, and too insignificant to be flattered by reproduction. But if Wedgwood could not appeal to their vanity, he found an admirable substitute in their loyalty. He made cameo medallions of their monarchs, writing to Bentley, 'I hope to make some . . . use of his C(atholic) Majesty in the Spanish Trade—*if the subjects* are fond of their King[227] the Spanish trade will be ours.' He exploited not only their loyalty to the crown but their patriotism, their pride in their national heroes, writing, 'People will give more for *their own Heads,* or the *Heads in fashion,* than for any other subjects, & buy abundantly more of them . . . We should select the proper Heads for the different European Markets . . . and this Plan will certainly increase our wholesale business'.[228] Their faith was equally skilfully exploited: the Popes for Italy and Spain,[229] the saints for South America,[230] Mohammed or rather (as Wedgwood more precisely and more accurately phrased it) 'proper subjects for the Faithfull amongst the Musselmen' for Turkey.[231] Buddha alone of the better known gods seems to have been neglected—presumably for economic reasons.

To the varying fashions and different tastes of his foreign buyers he gave his detailed attention. For France, for instance, where the rococo wonders of the mid century were far from dead, Wedgwood produced ormolou-mounted pottery to meet the prevailing fashion.[232] Though in Russia he dumped his old goods 'much seen or blown upon', he also produced a special pot for them alone[233] and sent them 'shewy, tawdry, cheap things, cover'd all over with colors (sic)'[234] because they thought creamware ugly. For hot climates which shared this aversion, he made 'green & Gold ware'[234] [sic] 'because they do not like *pale, colourless* ware'.[235] To America, adjudged not ripe for expensive things at present he sent mainly cheap goods and seconds, whilst for Turkey he invented a whole new range of goods to suit its exotic fancy.[236] Nor did he neglect the minor details of national habit—cups in the Saxon fashion were made for Germany; and small coffee cups, as was their custom, for the Venetians.[237]

By these means Wedgwood had created an enormous demand for his ware both ornamental and useful. The upper classes bought both, but mainly the

[227] WMSS. E.18669-25. JW to TB. 15 May 1776.
[228] WMSS. E.18679-25. JW to TB. 2 July 1776.
[229] WMSS. L.10137-12. 'A List of orders for Mr. Walmesley, Deans Gate, Manchester.' 30 Jan. 1775. 'Saints &c may answer at this market, try to provide some . . . & send a sett of the Popes . . . or a few loose ones'.
[230] WMSS. E.18561-25. JW to TB. 5 Nov. 1774. ' . . . some articles sho.d be made on purpose for this trade relative to their Religion . . . Crucifixes, Saints.'
[231] WMSS. E.18522-25. JW to TB. 8 March 1774.
[232] WMSS. E.18193-25. JW to TB. 15 March 1786.
[233] The 'black & yellow'.
[234] WMSS. E.18487-25. JW to TB. 14 Aug. 1773.
[235] WMSS. E.18500-25. JW to TB, postmk 22 Nov. (1773).
[236] WMSS. E.18444-35. JW to TB. 4 & 6 March 1773.
[237] WMSS. E.31191-1. TB to JW. 18 Oct. 1776.

expensive ornamental wares, and in imitation of their social superiors the lower classes bought the useful. He had achieved this success by wide and sweeping changes in the potters' marketing techniques. He had, however, a further contribution to make. He radically altered their methods of distribution. He built canals, promoted turnpike trusts, and developed a sales organization of his own. His part in the promotion of turnpikes and canals was vital to the development of Staffordshire for 'they were the basis of the prosperity of the Potteries'.[238] This aspect of his work is too well known to require repetition here. His attempt to break away from the middleman in the distribution of his goods has, however, been only slightly touched upon by other historians.

He had dealt since 1769 through middlemen such as Boulton and Fothergill, Bentley and Boardman, Hume and Walmesley, Edmund Radcliffe and a host of others abroad. But, vital as their service was to most potters, Wedgwood was rapidly outgrowing his reliance upon them. More and more merchants, attracted by Wedgwood's name and reputation, were writing to him personally in order to get more favourable terms.[239] Naturally Wedgwood was keen to accept their advances and dispense with the middlemen and their profit-devouring commissions, and he knew that they would 'leave us whenever they can buy 6d P doz cheaper. I would therefore wish us to have a correspondence of our own, independent of any set of men whomsoever, both at home and abroad, with the Merch.ts & with the Shops. We can make any quantity, & the only P(aten)t we can now have is to make them *perfect* & *disperse* them. The former shall have my best attention here & I shall lose no opportunity of assisting in the latter as occasions may offer',[240] a neat, in practice an almost too neat, definition of their respective roles in the partnership.

Although his reputation attracted many buyers, Wedgwood did not rely on his name alone to overcome the many difficulties—distance, language and tariff prohibitions—which foreign merchants had to face. He sought them out with pattern boxes,[241] and catalogues in translation;[242] tempted them with discounts, reductions and special terms for the first order;[243] and eased their problem of delivery by establishing foreign warehouses like those in Dublin,

[238] J. H. Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1950), p. 147.
[239] WMSS. E.5077-7. Conrad Wilhelm Krause of Brunswick ('Brounschwyk') to JW, 15 Feb. 1771. Krause has 'several Times received by Hands of my Friends Goods from your Fabric' but now he wished to 'Negotiate Direct'. There are many similar examples.
[240] WMSS. E.18473-25. JW to TB, postmark 21 June (1773).
[241] WMSS. E.18501-25. JW to TB. 21 Nov. 1773. 'We shall want some hundreds of small dishes to send abroad as patterns the next spring. . . .'
[242] First in French in 1773 (E.18501-25), then German and Italian in 1774 (E.18518-25 and E.18524-25), and finally Dutch and Russian in the same year (E.18527-25). They seem to have been a new idea, at least to the Potteries because incredibly elaborate steps were taken to keep the illustrated ones secret in order 'to get the start one season at least'.
[243] The elasticity of JW's attitude to discounts is fully illustrated in his dealings with Messrs. James Jackson & Co of St. Petersburg. L.H.P. 1771.

Paris and Amsterdam, and employing foreign agents like Veldhuyson and Perregaux. F the further comfort of his foreign buyers he employed French-, German-, Italian- and Dutch-speaking clerks and answered their letters in their native tongue. Ample testimony to his success and the increasing momentum of commercial development he brought about can be found in his account books. And an analysis of his foreign correspondence reveals the constant expansion of foreign orders. For although he only received his first order from abroad in 1764, by 1790 he had sold in every city in Europe. The spread of his foreign sales can be mapped out with considerable although not precise accuracy from the letters of foreign merchants buying direct from Wedgwood. Many more, buying through middlemen, would probably complicate the map of the evidence if their orders were available, but we know for certain that he had received orders from Amsterdam by 1764; from St Petersburg and Brunswick in 1769; from Dublin in 1771; from Naples in 1773; from Dessau, Leipzig and Paris in 1774; Bonn, Dresden, Dunkirk, Leghorn, Malaga, Rotterdam, Trieste and Venice in 1775; Goa in 1776; Moscow and Nice in 1777; Ostend, Rome and Vienna in 1781; Geneva in 1782; Antwerp, Brescia, Cadiz, Hamburg, Ratisbon and Stuttgart in 1783; Brussels, Genoa, Lisbon and Palermo in 1784; Dorpat, Marseilles, Stockholm, Strasbourg in 1785; Basle, Bilbao, Bologna and Madrid in 1786; Danzig, Rouen, Turin in 1787; Ancona, Berne, Oslo, Lübeck, Mittau, Nuremberg, Parma, Riga, Udine in 1788; Boulogne, Darmstadt, Douai, Mainz, Mannheim, Milan in 1789; Göttingen, Regensburg, Tournai in 1790; Ansbach and Copenhagen in 1791; Cologne and Memmingen in 1793.[244] This list is meant to give an impression of the rapid spread of Wedgwood's exports rather than to be a complete list. Many of the dates might well need to be adjusted forwards, and he is known to have been dealing with The Hague, Metz, Limoges, Zurich, Lausanne, Bordeaux, Épernay, Bayreuth, St. Amand, Florence, Gothenburg, Konigsberg, Oporto, Archangel, Warsaw, Brema and Messina by 1790, but it is not certain when the first order for these cities was received.

This list makes no mention either of his earlier colonial sales through Bentley and Boardman. The European market with a population of over 200 million (compared with a market of less than 3 million Americans or indeed a home market of less than 8 million) was increasingly after 1772, and dominatingly after 1784, to become Wedgwood's major outlet for his products, but in the 1760s his exports went primarily to the colonies. Wedgwood's hyperbole, the political intent of the letter, and the difficulties of judging the size of his sales through middlemen casts doubt on statements like the one to Sir William Meredith, M.P. for Liverpool in 1765 that 'the bulk of our particular manufacture is exported to home markets for our

[244] This list is culled from the whole range of WMSS. but more especially from E.609-1 to 30210-1; E.835-2 to 1954-2; E.2742-4 to 3282-4; E.3724-5 to 31090-5; E.4321-6 to 31129-6. Cf. Hower, op. cit., p. 309.

home consumption is very trifling in comparison with what is se broad, and the principal of these markets are the continent and islands of North America'.[245]

The detailed evidence for Wedgwood's exports is large in amount, varied in type and presents evidential difficulties of interpretation which make it impossible to examine in detail here. The list of direct evidence includes Wedgwood's claims, intentions and boasts, and Wedgwood's Books of Bad Debts, his lists of foreign orders, and his analysis of orders on hand at particular moments of time. But the indirect evidence requires one to take note also of the timing and distribution of Wedgwood's fakes, of Wedgwood's imitators, of foreign governments' protective tariffs, or even at times their total prohibition, of the activities of arcanists and foreign spies and the timing of Wedgwood's efforts to check the loss of industrial secrets to them, and of the times when Wedgwood actively smuggled his goods into foreign markets, not to mention the varied array of contemporary comment in letters, Board of Trade examinations, travellers' accounts and satirical cartoons.

In my view the contemporary values put on the size and importance of Wedgwood's exports are fully borne out by an examination of the detailed quantitative data. Those cartoonists who saw the figure of John Bull made up of British exports with English cotton as the main body, and English pottery as the unmistakable face, and Wedgwood's products as the jaunty hat with his name clearly stamped upon it, were right in both the relative proportions and the relative prominence they gave to Wedgwood. The cartoonist who presented John Bull as hurling the knives and forks of Sheffield cutlery, and skimming the plates of Wedgwood through the ranks of embattled French, whilst a frightened Napoleon crouched in terror at the effects of English exports used as guided weapons, was also right in spirit.

But if one eschews the more picturesque evidence and relies on hard statistics one can show from Wedgwood's lists of bad debts that approximately 10 per cent of them derived from exports in 1771, approximately 33 per cent in 1773 (when admittedly they were artificially swollen by the effects of his inertia selling campaign), and approximately 75 per cent in 1789. Now bad debts are not a direct and undeviating index to total sales, but in fact all the other evidence points in the same direction. A geographical analysis of his merchants' correspondence, a geographical analysis of the intended places of sale of unexecuted orders, a geographical analysis of actual individual orders (as well as the geographical analysis of bad debts), all point to substantial colonial demand in the 1760s, later dwarfed by sales to Europe. The significant change of gear in actively seeking foreign sales comes first in 1772, with a further sales effort in 1778, and unmistakable evidence that by 1784 Wedgwood was exporting nearly 80 per cent of his total produce. This is all the more significant because one can show that by 1785 the whole

[245] 'Home versus Foreign Demand: The Myth of Wedgwood's Exports'—see note 1.

of the Staffordshire potteries were exporting 84 per cent of their total produce abroad. I have discussed elsewhere the evidence which shows how the spread of individual orders matches this pattern. It shows that the spread of foreign factories set up specifically to rival Wedgwood's creamware matches it. It shows how the timing and intensity of foreign fakers, the peak activity, both by and against foreign industrial spies, the evidence of foreign observers, and the decline of foreign competition and the tariff activity to defend them, *all* fit in with this general pattern.[245]

One final point requires attention. For no account of Wedgwood's marketing activities would be complete without some mention of the part he played in organizing the potters, appealing to ambassadors and exploiting his noble connections to bring pressure to bear upon the formation of economic policy and the government's attitude to import restrictions and prohibitions. This aspect of his career is more germane to Wedgwood's political activities and as such is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is necessary to point out here that by his action he influenced the Government in its formulation of the Irish Treaty of 1785, initiated an attempt to lift the Swedish prohibition on English earthenware in 1789, and led the potters in their efforts to secure favourable commercial treaties with Portugal in 1785, and, most important of all, with France in 1787. Some idea of the effects this could have on the official statistics, if not on the potter's actual sales, can be judged by a comparison of the earthenware exports to France in 1785 and 1789. In 1785 they totalled £641; four years later they amounted to £7,920.[246] Yet again Wedgwood had penetrated a market which had defied all previous English potters.

There are many reasons why the offical statistics are unreliable, and why, in my opinion, the reliance on Elizabeth Schumpeter's trade statistics is so misleading.[247] Too little allowance is made for smuggling (the fact that there were no export duties on pottery did not mean that there were not heavy import duties imposed by the governments of countries buying English pottery, and the cheerful assumption by historians that manufacturers like Wedgwood had no need to smuggle is not borne out by either the evidence that they did so, or the tariff barriers they were trying to avoid). Too little allowance is made for the effects of the rise of prices—not just the modest eighteenth-century inflation, but the decisive increase in the value of the goods manufactured by eighteenth-century entrepreneurs. Mrs. Schumpeter's statistics are based on a valuation for pottery of 5 shillings per hundred pieces—an adequate valuation when fixed, but absurdly inadequate for Wedgwood's products, or even those of his rivals who sold so much more cheaply than he did. If the value of six-tenths of one penny per piece of

[246] G. Villiers and John Baring, *Final Report of the Commercial Relations between France and Great Britain* (Parl. Report, 1834), p. 87.
[247] E. B. Schumpeter, *English Overseas Trade Statistics 1697–1808* (1960).

pottery exported[248] were to be raised to 3 pence per piece, the estimate that 16 per cent of total pottery manufactures were exported would rise to 80 per cent. When one realizes that the price per dozen of common Staffordshire creamware was 3 shillings a dozen—i.e. 3 pence each, the likelihood of this figure Mrs. Schumpeter relies on being correct can easily be judged.[249]

Such was his success that he had in the words of Faujas de Saint Fond, 'created a commerce so active and so universal, that in travelling from Paris to St Petersburg, from Amsterdam to the farthest point of Sweden, from Dunkirk to the southern extremity of France, one is served at every inn from English earthenware. The same fine article adorns the tables of Spain, Portugal, & Italy, and it provides the cargoes of ships to the East Indies, the West Indies and America'.[250] In Poland in 1783, it was announced that 'His Majesty (Stanislas Augustus) wishing to put an end to the considerable loss in currency caused by purchases of table-ware manufactured in England, has established . . . at great expense, a pottery at the Belvedere palace'.[251] Even the great European factories—Sèvres, Meissen, Vienna, Fürstenberg, Paris and Doccia had to follow the humble Staffordshire potters and reproduce Wedgwood's designs.

If I have laboured this point it is to show to what lengths Wedgwood was prepared to go to sell his wares, to show what detailed attention he lavished on his customers' requirements and to show how misguided is the accepted and often repeated view that Wedgwood and Bentley 'were in fact too absorbed in the creation of beauty to be overmindful of the means and methods of its dissemination'.[252] Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, far from such delightful indifference to sales and such unselfish devotion to beauty, Wedgwood was quite prepared to reproduce ugly objects if his customers wanted them, writing, 'I have a very small vase which was dug out of Herculaneum . . .I do not see any beauty in it but will make something of it'[253] if Sir William Farringdon wishes it. Moreover, when his orders exceeded his output, he answered the demand by supplying ware which he had bought from other potters—potters like Lowe, Astbury, Meir, Garner, Turner, Heath, Browne and Malkin and many others[254]—whose products were usually cheaper imitations of Wedgwood, often much below his standard

[248] i.e. 5 shillings or 60 pence divided by one hundred pieces equals 6/10ths.
[249] In fact if one painstakingly puts the known contemporary price to each piece ordered from abroad (and I have done so for many of Wedgwood's foreign orders) the average value per parcel is about 5 pence. Allowing for the margin between Wedgwood's prices and his rivals, one is not surprised when the average value of foreign orders for *their* products comes out at approximately three pence each piece.
[250] Faujas de st Fond: *Voyage en Angleterre, en Ecosse et aux Iles Hébrides*, vol. I, p. 112.
[251] Witola Kula, *Szkice o manufakturach w Polsce, XVIII wieku* (Warsaw, 1956) 1, 304; quoting from Pamiztnik . . . 1783 (ed. Switkowski). I am indebted to my colleague Professor L. R. Lewitter for this reference.
[252] Meteyard, op. cit., I, 368–9.
[253] WMSS. E.18271–25. JW to TB. 1 Dec. 1769.
[254] WMSS. E.4840–6 to 5062–6. And various other scattered references.

of production which could never have sold in quantity without the aid of Wedgwood's marketing organization. In the 1780s when the supply constantly lagged behind the demand, Wedgwood was forced to buy in quantity from other potters—he bought £4,500's worth from George Neunburg alone in the first six months of 1784.[255] Nothing displays better the importance of Wedgwood's salesmanship than this period. For so fashionable had his name become and so popular his wares, that he could sell at a higher price what his rivals could not sell at all. His buyers complained bitterly when the pottery sent did not bear his name, but they usually accepted it—albeit reluctantly—so long as the pill was sweetened by a respectable amount of their orders being truly Wedgwood. The brand image was obviously of great importance to his buyers, and we know that many of their customers insisted that their purchases carried the Wedgwood trademark, but inevitably there was a less discerning market which would accept imitation Wedgwood.

Despite constant complaints of high prices, slow delivery, bad packing and inadequately made-up orders, the retail merchants had to deal with Wedgwood in preference to any other potter. For their customers—both foreign and English, both humble and aristocratic—knew of Wedgwood ware, knew that the English queen, the Russian empress and countless foreign and native aristocrats used it, and they were determined to have those pieces of Wedgwood which they could afford. Patterns seen in the London showrooms were insisted on by ambitious hostesses in the provinces; Catherine the Great's service seen in St Petersburg persuaded Muscovite nobles to order similar sets; heads of the Popes in jasper spread Wedgwood's name through Italy, Spain and South America; and the Queen of Portugal in cameo proved irresistible to the people of Lisbon. Medallions of the notables of Germany, Holland, France, Poland, America, Sweden, Denmark and Turkey served a similar purpose there. Once they reached these distant parts their excellence proved their own advertisement. It encapsulated all the virtues of the prevailing European taste for the neo-classics and when particular markets proved unresponsive to the current taste Wedgwood was always willing to adapt his designs to suit the market he was aiming at.

His customers also knew that his ware was easily available. For not only had he had to make his ware well known, he had also had to make it accessible to the world market whose attention he had won. The difficulties involved in buying from Etruria alone might have discouraged all but the most ardent. As Wedgwood rightly said,'it will only be a few, who have the disorder very strong upon them who will be at the trouble of procuring them from such a distance'.[256] In fact the methods of distribution suited to the peasant craft stage of the potteries had proved totally inadequate to dispose of the growing production of Etruria. And Wedgwood had completely transformed them. The impact of the Industrial Revolution in the Potteries

[255] WMSS. L.1788 to 1789. Cf. Hower, op. cit., p. 301.
[256] WMSS. E.18318-25. JW to TB. 20 Aug. 1770.

had an inevitable effect on the attitude of the potters to marketing their goods. It called for new methods of salesmanship and new centres for display. Men with a specialized knowledge of commerce were needed as partners; foreign agents required to handle the European markets; and trained linguists were necessary to deal with the increasingly technical problems of foreign orders. To solve these problems Wedgwood set up salerooms in the provinces; experimented with travelling salesmen carrying pattern boxes for display; published catalogues with illustrations and in translation; employed foreign clerks to translate his orders from abroad; and took as his partner the Liverpool merchant Thomas Bentley.[257] He led the cry for canals and turnpike roads and petitioned the government on commercial treaties.

Dr. Thomas allows such changes to signify 'a commercial revolution in the disposal and dispersion of their goods as real and disturbing as the productive changes which occurred inside their industrial organizations and as far reaching as the Communication and Transport revolutions which occurred outside their factories',[258] and dates its completion as 1850. But although all the other potters did not experience such a revolution by that date, there can be little doubt that Wedgwood had initiated all the most important changes by 1790. Yet no aspect of Josiah Wedgwood's life has been so neglected as his impact on the commercial techniques of the eighteenth century. Few are more important.

For it was by such methods that a local craft became a national industry and served an international market. In 1775 Wedgwood had hoped to 'ASTONISH THE WORLD ALL AT ONCE'.[259] What he expressed as a hope in 1775 he had accomplished as a fact in 1795. His ware was in universal demand. Admired by the Emperors of China, Russia and Germany; praised by scientists of the calibre of Priestley, Watt and Black; and painted by artists as fashionable as Stubbs, Romney and Wright of Derby, it was acclaimed by art, science and society. And—which was more important for Wedgwood—it was equally acclaimed by the public. For it was from his huge sales of his common useful ware—seals, buttons, inkpots, tableware and the like—that Wedgwood drew his greatest reward from his commercial campaign. The servants' hall was quick to follow its mistress's lead, and Wedgwood's accounts consistently return a higher percentage of sales and takings in his useful ware than in his ornamental; even in fashionable Bath,

[257] Other potters teamed up with merchants—Josiah Spode II with William Copeland, the successful London tea merchant in 1824, Thomas Minton with William Pownall, the Liverpool merchant in 1793—but Wedgwood's association with Bentley which began in 1769 was one of the earliest and most successful of the great eighteenth-century 'inventor and entrepreneur' partnerships. Owing to the disappearance of all but fragments of Bentley's correspondence it is difficult to do full justice to his part in the partnership in this volume, but I have attempted to show elsewhere how important it was; see *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.* (1964).
[258] Dr. J. Thomas, op. cit., p. 771 *et seq.*
[259] WMSS. E.18614-25. JW to TB. 6 August 1775.

the proportion was 60 to 40.[260] It is therefore in the fading lists of outstanding accounts and against the neglected bundles of everyday orders that the true picture of Wedgwood's universal appeal and widespread success is to be found. They record ambitions of the chef of the Yacht Inn in Cheshire who hoped to found his gastronomic reputation on Wedgwood's creamware; the taste for Wedgwood shared by a German professor at Brunswick and a bachelor don at Cambridge; the popularity of Wedgwood in a lonely military garrison in Quebec; and the purchase of Wedgwood by Edward Gibbon whilst writing his great history in Lausanne. These and many others bought it: Spanish ambassadors, Indian colonists, Bohemian nobles, Bristol chemists, Oxford colleges, Lancashire merchants and Sicilian monarchs. By superb marketing methods and the exercise of his vivid entrepreneurial imagination, Josiah Wedgwood had achieved his purpose. He was what he wished to be: 'Vase Maker General to the Universe'.[261]

He had accomplished, in fact, the most spectacular example of a successful policy of product differentiation in the history of British pottery. He had played the dominant commercial role in helping to open up a world market for his new inventions, and then captured it for himself and his many Staffordshire competitors. Since he enjoyed no monopoly in the production, since he was not competitive in price, it required a remarkably effective marketing and sales campaign to achieve his success. As a sustained assault using such a variety of promotional ploys it was rivalled only by entrepreneurs of the calibre of Matthew Boulton,[262] but as I attempt to show below,[263] some of his commercial techniques were rivalled, and even surpassed, by many an unsung eighteenth-century businessman.

* * *

Josiah Wedgwood's career offers the perfect illustration of the most striking and characteristic features of the commercial and consumer revolution of the late eighteenth century. His marketing techniques might have been designed to demonstrate—although with an elegance and style and effectiveness which few of them can match—the concepts enshrined in such academic labels as the 'Veblen effect', the 'demonstration effect', the 'snob effect', the 'bandwagon effect' or the 'penetration effect'.[264] All these 'effects' were explicitly recognized by Wedgwood. Social emulation through emulative spending, the rich London market inspiring imitative behaviour in the provinces, the lead offered by the aristocratic few being aped by the socially aspiring many, the general clambering after the example provided by the

[260] WMSS. E.4428-6 to 4651-6. Returns to Wedgwood of the takings in the Bath salerooms.
[261] WMSS. E.18232-25; JW to TB, February 1769.
[262] Eric Robinson, 'Eighteenth Century Commerce and Fashion: Matthew Boulton's Marketing Techniques', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 16 (1963), pp. 39-60.
[263] See chapter 4.
[264] H. Leibenstein, 'Bandwagon, Snob and Veblen Effects in the Theory of Consumers' Demand, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 64, (1950), pp. 183-88.

legislators of taste—all of these phenomena were thoroughly and efficiently exploited by Wedgwood.

His crisp and economical descriptions of current consumer behaviour and the action best suited to satisfy it—'Fashion is infinitely superior to *merit*', begin at the head first, and then proceed to the inferior members', 'Few ladies dare venture at anything out of the common stile 'till authorised by their betters', 'a *great price* was at first necessary to make the Vases esteemed *Ornaments for Palaces*', 'I need not tell you how much will depend upon a *proper & noble* introduction'[265]—often put to shame the jargon-ridden accounts of modern academic commentators. Indeed after examining the variety and ingenuity of his successful commercial techniques, one might feel that justice required that the creation and exploitation of this type of consumer demand should be labelled the Wedgwood effect, or more precisely the Wedgwood and Bentley effect.

Since modern academic convention (in modest acclaim of its own practitioners) attaches a nomenclature taken from those who first staked their claim to recognize a particular pattern of economic or social behaviour in the past, rather than giving the credit to those who recognised its contemporary importance and took commercially purposeful action, then Veblen is more likely to be honoured than Wedgwood or Bentley.

Yet few more deserve such recognition, for their partnership encapsulates a remarkable range of selling techniques—some revived and some original, some common to many of their competitors, others far ahead of their time. The full catalogue of their marketing techniques contains many ideas which seem startlingly novel and anachronistically modern. They used inertia-selling campaigns, product differentiation, market segmentation, detailed market research, embryonic self-service schemes, money-back-if-not-satisfied policies, free carriage, give-away sales promotion, auctions, lotteries, catalogues (illustrated and in translation), advanced credit, three-tier discount schemes, including major discounts for first orders, and almost every form of advertisement, trade cards, shop signs, letterheads, bill heads, newspaper and magazine advertisment, fashion plates and fashion magazines, solicited puffs, organized propaganda campaigns, even false attacks organized to provide the opportunity to publicize the counter-attack (even the despised handbills were given a brief trial before they were banned). Some, like the self-service schemes, were of little significance; others, like the massive inertia selling campaign of 1771 were exceptional and born of the need for action up to 'the utmost verge of prudence or rather beyond'; but most were integral parts of an imaginative but consistently applied commercial policy which was designed to reach as wide a market as possible, even if different sections required very different approaches. There were campaigns specifically directed at the aristocratic market, the middling ranks and the mass market,

[265] All quoted above.

campaigns specifically aimed at different national markets, different religious faiths, and different aesthetic commitments. The range of goods which Wedgwood made allowed him to meet the needs of the kitchen, the dining room, and the drawing room; nor did he neglect the garden, the conservatory, or the dairy. With bin labels for the cellar, bidets for the bathroom, dog bowls for the kennels; with his chandeliers, crucifixes, water closets, fountains and plant pots, with his fonts for christening and funeral plaques for church memorials, he provided for most human needs from birth to death. Whether eating or excreting, whether drinking or washing, whether providing light for their homes, or playing chess, the eighteenth-century customer had a remarkable wide range of his consumer needs satisfied by the protean variety of Wedgwood's products. All this vast variety had to be directed at their appropriate buyers—and as a result there were campaigns aimed specifically at the male market, and, far more frequently, specifically at the female market—even the potential custom of children was not neglected. There were toys and miniatures directly aimed at the juvenile market, and, more obliquely, this particular consumer group were approached through the educational aspirations of their parents and the educational aids provided by their schools.

To all these different needs and different consumer groups Wedgwood gave his energetic attention. His commerical imagination missed few opportunities, and although he occasionally regrets a failure to satisfy a need (as with the demand for reproductions of Keppel's head), or concedes that Matthew Boulton has stolen a march in the art of strategic sycophancy ('and will proffit by it, so surely as Princes love flattery'), or bemoans his failure to win the support of the architects in the promotion of their large jasper plaques, his success rate was remarkably high and his attention to the market remarkably comprehensive.

In the history of such salesmanship it is natural to stress the landmarks in the history of entrepreneurial manipulation of the market. In the history of the Potteries (and Wedgwood's phenomenal personal success) it is necessary to stress the distinctive features which help to explain that success which so far exceeded most of his competitors. But if Wedgwood outshone all of his rival potters in this department as he did in so many others, it must not be forgotten that his promotional techniques and his sales organization helped to bring profits and prosperity—albeit of a lower order and to a lesser degree—to many of his fellow potters. Many rode to success on Wedgwood's commercial coat-tails, just as they clambered onto the classical bandwaggon he had set rolling, or copied his breakthroughs in technique, organization or invention. He, of course, enjoyed a considerable lead. The time lag between his introduction of new commercial ideas and the ability of the Staffordshire potters to respond to them was not always short. Some of the advantages Wedgwood won for himself were never accessible to his rivals, but the price of a 10 per cent commission to Wedgwood was often their route to markets

opened up by Wedgwood. At the cost of lower profits—the result of their lower prices and his commission—they could absorb the custom of those beyond and below the reach of Wedgwood's price policy.

And just as canals and turnpikes promoted by Wedgwood opened up the national market for all the Staffordshire potters, just as the improvements and inventions made by Wedgwood extended the range of products for many of his rivals, just as the designs he paid famous artists to produce for him were soon the property of others, so this battery of commercial techniques benefited potters other than Wedgwood and Bentley. They benefited to a lesser degree, but by extending the market, by exciting new demand, and by commercializing his potteries, Wedgwood inevitably brought the advantages of an increased demand to the rest of his industry.

The growth of national aggregate demand was an inviting target for all. Existing demand levels—at the luxury end of the market and at the mass level—were all increasing. By so successfully exploiting that demand and by extending it further, by releasing latent demand, and by inducing new demand by exciting new wants, Wedgwood helped to create a host of new commerical opportunities from which others beside himself could benefit.

The response was inevitably varied and unequal. Eighteenth-century commercial techniques encompassed a world which still included the humble packman carrying his goods on his own back and peddling them in an area limited by his own stamina, by the often still execrable local roads, and by the poverty of many of his customers. But it also now encompassed world-famous companies using travelling salesmen equipped with illustrated bilingual catalogues, ambassadorial channels exploited for purely commercial purposes, elegant showrooms, foreign warehouses, royal patronage, international advertisement, all dependent on sophisticated pricing policies, effective market research, accurate cost accounting, skilled manipulation of fashion, and a whole battery of commercial techniques designed to make effective a carefully worked out marketing policy.

In one's immediate concern to stress the demand side of the equation one must not forget the supply side. Neither Wedgwood nor the rest of the Potteries would have flourished without new inventions, new methods of production and new standards of workmanship. Raising capital, collecting debts, costing accounts, recruiting and disciplining labour, controlling production, meeting wage bills—indeed the whole panoply of problems facing the businessman—had to be successfully solved in order to succeed.[266]

Here, however, the primary aim is to examine and explain his commercial skills. Having done so, it is difficult to deny that a quite new order of commercial sophistication had been introduced to the Potteries by Wedgwood. Of course new markets had been broached before, of course some Staffordshire potters had sold in London before Wedgwood, of course some had exported

[266] How Wedgwood met *these* challenges, and solved *these* problems is dealt with in detail in my forthcoming book *Josiah Wedgwood and the Industrial Revolution*.

their goods -oad—both to the colonies and to Europe—before Wedgwood. But the sca. of their operations was dwarfed by his, just as the commercial skills of the pre-Wedgwood potteries were primitive compared with his.

By painstaking research one can establish that some of Wedgwood's techniques have an honourable pedigree before his day, just as by examining eighteenth-century rubbish tips[267] one can show that early Staffordshire slipware reached Chester, or infer that it reached Bristol,[268] or point out that some of the butterpots made for the local Uttoxeter market eventually reached London.[269] But after Wedgwood's commercial assault on the national and European markets the evidence of his success is overwhelming. The suggestion that 84 per cent of the total annual production of the Staffordshire potters (worth some £300,000 in eighteenth-century values, and approximately £30,000,000 at today's prices) was being exported by the late 1780s is difficult to avoid. The evidence of *how* Wedgwood achieved that commercial revolution is equally abundant.

Where else before the 1770s could one find such concentrated evidence of such an explicit awareness of the need for a varied commercial response to the needs of the market, such a variety of demand-enhancing commercial ploys, such an acceptance of the active promotional approach to salesmanship and marketing, as a single letter from Wedgwood to Bentley provides. It reveals a quite new intensity of concentration on commercial techniques compared with the pre-Wedgwood potteries:

'Wo[d] you *advertise* the next season as the silk mercers in Pell mell do,—Or *deliver cards* at the houses of the Nobility & Gentry, & in the City,—Get leave to *make a shew* of his Majesty's Service for a month, & ornament the Dessert with Ornamental Ewers, flower baskets & Vases—Or have an *Auction* at Cobbs room of Statues, Bassreliefs, Pictures, Tripods, Candelabrias, Lamps, Potpouris, Superb Ewers, Cisterns, Tablets Etruscan, Porphirys & other Articles not yet expos'd to sale. *Make a great route of advertising this Auction,* & at the same time mention our rooms in Newport St.—& have another Auction in the full season at Bath of such things as we have now on hand, just sprinkled over with a few new articles *to give them an air of novelty* to any of our customers who may see them there,—Or will you trust to a *new disposition of the Rooms* with the new articles we shall have to put into them & a few modest *puffs in the Papers* from some of our friends such as I am told there has been one lately in Lloyd's

[267] G. Webster and K. Barton, 'An eighteenth-century rubbish pit, Trinity Street, 1953', *Journal of the Chester and North Wales Architectural and Archaeological and Historical Society* (1957), XLIV, p. 19.

[268] Lorna Weatherill, op. cit., p. 80, argues that Staffordshire pottery of the pre-Wedgwood (i.e. pre-1730) period reached Bristol because of 'random finds of pieces which were *probably* not manufactured in Bristol and are *similar in style* to the Staffordshire pieces in the Victoria and Albert Museum.' My italics.

[269] Weatherill, op. cit., p. 77.

Chronicle,'[270]—but that surely is enough to give the flavour of ' letter. Here auctions, exhibitions, visiting cards, straightforward adver. ments, puffs, novelties and changes in the rooms are all considered in a single letter as 'new means of exciting attention to our vases'.[271]

The new levels of commercialization suggested by that single letter, are confirmed, reinforced and proved beyond reasonable doubt by the incomparable richness of the evidential resources of the rest of the Wedgwood archive.

[270] WMSS. E.18318–25. JW to TB. 20 Aug. 1770.

[271] Ibid.