

Chapter Three: Marks of production, marks of commerce: proprietary branding on
stone bottles



Fig. 3.1, stoneware bottle¹

Between 1812 and 1834, Edward Wormald was earning a living as a porter merchant operating within the Harrogate area, alongside four other porter dealers in Knaresborough.² Although documentary evidence concerning Wormald is slim, his business – or at least his customers – travelled to York, as shown by the bottle fragment illustrated Figure 3.1, uncovered at Hungate.³ Other stoneware bottle fragments excavated at Hungate have revealed that York had a variety of local drinks

¹ York Archaeological Trust (hereafter YAT), Project 5000 (Hungate): SF158, 'stone bottle' (1817-1834).

² Pigot & Co, *Directory of Cheshire, Cumberland... 1828-9* (Part II: Notts-Yorks & N Wales), p.995. Pigot's also lists seven wine and spirit merchants in Knaresborough, but none of either trade are listed for Harrogate.

³ Unfortunately the documentary evidence for Edward Wormald is scant; his marriage and wife's death are noted in the *York Herald* in 1829 and 1836 respectively, but his business is not listed in any Yorkshire trade directories for the 1820s or 1830s, nor does he feature in the York census returns.

merchants who marked their bottles in a similar fashion.⁴ As ceramic historian Derek Askey has commented, the earthenware bottle had ‘a truly local identity’.⁵



Fig. 3.2, stoneware bottle⁶

The semi-circular stamp on the other side of the bottle, however, was the nationally recognised mark of Joseph Bourne, the founder of the now famous Denby pottery in 1812.⁷ The son of William Bourne, a stoneware manufacturer at Belper, close to Denby, over the next thirty-five years the success of Joseph Bourne’s business enabled him to take on two other nearby Derbyshire potteries. By 1856, Bourne had become the owner of the Shipley Pottery in 1845 and transferred its works to his

⁴ See Appendix 4, ‘Stonewares 1650-1900 from Hungate and Swinegate, York (from York Archaeological Trust IADB)’ for details of these bottles.

⁵ Derek Askey, *Stoneware Bottles from Bellarmine to Ginger Beers 1500-1949*, Second Edition (Barnsley, 1998), p.8.

⁶ YAT, Project 5000, SF158, ‘stone bottle’.

⁷ Askey, *Stoneware Bottles*, p.159.

Denby site in 1856.⁸ Likewise, in 1833 Bourne acquired the nearby Codnor Park pottery after its owner, William Burton, surrendered to financial difficulties in 1832. In 1861, Bourne transferred Codnor Park's production to Denby.⁹ With Belper already part of his empire, Joseph Bourne became, in the words of Derek Askey, 'easily the largest producer of stoneware bottles and other domestic wares' of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Exact figures of production are not available, but it is clear that earthenwares were produced on a large scale: a trained potter could make 2,500 pieces a week.¹¹ Their chief trade was in ink bottles for P. & J. Arnold of London, although like many other stone bottle producers, the blacking bottle was also a stalwart of their production line.¹²

As discussed in chapter one, proprietary branding acted as a signifier of authenticity and as an assurance of quality for consumers. It took place through a variety of methods and was performed by multiple users: from the manufacturer through to distributor and finally retailer. As a result, objects contained branding that was attended to in varying degrees by different audiences. The marks on stone bottles make explicit this series of exchanges, a series that is often overlooked in histories of branding.¹³

⁸ Ibid., p.171.

⁹ Ibid., p.165.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.159.

¹¹ Desmond Eyles, *Royal Doulton 1815-1965. The Rise and Expansion of the Royal Doulton Potteries* (London, 1965), p.18.

¹² Ronald R. Switzer, *The Bertrand Bottles. A Study of Nineteenth-Century Glass and Ceramic Containers* (Washington, 1974), p.71.

¹³ See for example many of the contributions listed in Table 1 in the thesis introduction. See also: the contributions in Geoffrey Jones and Nicholas J. Morgan (Eds.), *Adding Value. Brands and Marketing in Food and Drink* (London, 1994); Ruth Herman, 'An exercise in early modern branding', *Journal of Marketing Management* 19 (2003), 709-727; the contributions in Lionel Bently, Jennifer Davis and Jane C. Ginsburg (Eds.), *Trade Marks and Brands. An Interdisciplinary Critique* (Cambridge, 2008);

This ‘life history’ or ‘object biography’ methodology, in which the object is considered throughout all its stages of human interaction, is a technique familiar to anthropologists and those in other disciplines.¹⁴ Historical archaeologists are particularly adept at this, but historians are beginning to integrate such considerations into their work.¹⁵ Using such a methodology opens up nuances in the historical discussion of commodity branding, which have formerly privileged the relationship between the producer and consumer of goods. These discussions have, however, overlooked the fact that the person who filled the container did not always place these marks upon it. Equally important, yet overlooked, is the fact that some marks that represented different identities were applied at the same time. Stamps had to be placed before the bottle was fired, which meant that Wormald and Bourne’s marks were both made at the same time, in a similar fashion to the makers of glass pharmaceutical bottles. As with medicines, and as the thesis will show in chapter five with tobacco pipes, such a production process challenges the assumptions about the

the contributions in Teresa Da Silva Lopes, and Paul Duguid (Eds.), *Trademarks, Brands and Competitiveness* (London, 2010).

¹⁴ Paul Courtney, ‘Ceramics and the history of consumption: pitfalls and prospects’, *Medieval Ceramics* 21 (1997), p.96. See also: Arjun Appadurai, ‘Introduction: commodities and the politics of value’ in Arjun Appadurai (Ed.), *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), 3-63; Igor Kopytoff, ‘The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process’, in Arjun Appadurai (Ed.), *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, 1986), 64-91; Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, ‘The cultural biography of objects’, *World Archaeology* 31:2 (1999), 169-178; Cornelius Holtorf, ‘Notes on the life history of a pot sherd’, *Journal of Material Culture* 7:1 (2002), 49-71; Harold Mytum, ‘Artefact biography as an approach to material culture: Irish gravestones as a material form of genealogy’, *Journal of Irish Archaeology* 12/13 (2003/2004), 111-127; Janet Hoskins, ‘Agency, biography and objects’, in Chris Tilley et al (Eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture* (London, 2006), 74-84; the contributions in Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Eds.), *Women and Things, 1750-1950. Gendered Material Strategies* (Farnham, 2009); Vesa-Pekka Herva and Risto Nurmi, ‘Beyond consumption: functionality, artifact biography, and early modernity in a European periphery’, *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 13 (2009), 158-182; Siân Jones, ‘Negotiating authentic objects and authentic selves: beyond the deconstruction of authenticity’, *Journal of Material Culture* 15 (2010), 181-203.

¹⁵ See the contributions in C.L. White (Ed.), *The Materiality of Individuality. Archaeological Studies of Individual Lives* (London, 2009). For a historian’s use, see: Karin Dannehl, ‘Object biographies: from production to consumption’, in Karen Harvey, *History and Material Culture. A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (London, 2009), 123-138.

‘trustworthiness’ of marks that claimed to represent particular individuals or companies.

Furthermore, although ceramic historians such as Llewelyn Jewitt and David Gaimster have examined pottery stamps in detail, this was to ascribe provenance and production dates. They did not integrate the marks into any wider history.¹⁶ Likewise, though Askey’s work demonstrates extensive research on pottery stamps, it was to merchants’ stamps that he referred when he described the ‘truly local’ nature of stone bottles. He has given precedence to the marks of the sellers of the liquids inside the bottles, rather than those of the makers of the bottles. By re-interpreting branding to include the many marks sometimes found on single objects, this chapter will integrate both marks of production (pottery stamps, such as Joseph Bourne’s) and marks of commerce (merchants’ marks, such as Edward Wormald’s). It will then go on to illustrate how on some occasions, these marks can be interpreted as both symbols of production as well as commerce. They changed, depending on their reader. As anthropologists Daniel Miller and Arjun Appadurai have noted, the context in which the mark was and is read, was and is crucial.¹⁷

Archaeologist Paul Courtney has concurred with Miller and Appadurai: ‘the same object may have different uses and meanings for different individuals or groups.’¹⁸

¹⁶ Askey, *Stoneware Bottles*; Llewelyn Jewitt, *Ceramic Art of Great Britain*. Ed. By G.A. Godden (London, 1883); David Gaimster, *German Stoneware, 1200-1900. Archaeology and Cultural History. Containing a Guide to the Collections of the British Museum, Victoria & Albert and Museum of London* (London, 1997).

¹⁷ Daniel Miller, *Artefacts as Categories. A Study of Ceramic Variability in Central India* (Cambridge, 1985); Appadurai, ‘Introduction: commodities and the politics of value’.

¹⁸ Paul Courtney, ‘Ceramics and the history of consumption’, p.96.

This is reflected in the different marks found upon stone bottles. As this chapter will demonstrate, although Joseph Bourne's pottery mark was a message to his customer, Edward Wormald, it was also potentially of importance to Wormald's own customers. Knowing the quality of the container in which their product was kept – as gauged from the potters' stamp – may have been important to those who purchased it. As we will see, for customers of liquid blacking manufacturers, these marks of production could be read as an extra mark of authenticity found upon 'genuine' products, such as that of Robert Warren. To create a convincing fake, counterfeiters would have had to ensure that in addition to the mark of the brewer or blacking manufacturer, that they also included the mark of the correct pottery.

Studies of liquid blacking and porter, which were frequently sold in stone bottles, have not considered pottery marks. Analysis has focused to a greater extent upon the documentary evidence such as advertisements, company records and legal documents rather than packaging.¹⁹ The way in which a product was packaged, however, was important in terms of engendering trust in the actual product; it reassured customers that the product had not been tampered with, as well as helping them determine whether they had obtained a 'genuine' product. The stone bottles used for blacking

¹⁹ On drink, for example: Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse. A Social History* (London, 1983); Peter Clark, 'The "Mother Gin" controversy in the early eighteenth century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 38 (1988), 63-84; Richard G. Wilson, 'Selling beer in Victorian Britain', in Geoffrey Jones and Nicholas J. Morgan (Eds.), *Adding Value. Brands and Marketing in Food and Drink* (London, 1994), 103-125; Paul Duguid, 'Developing the brand: the case of alcohol, 1800-1880', *Enterprise & Society* 4:3 (2003), 405-441; James Simpson, 'Selling to reluctant drinkers: the British wine market, 1860-1914', *Economic History Review* 58:1 (2004), 80-108; Charles Ludington, "'Claret is the liquor for boys; port for men": how port became the "Englishman's Wine", 1750s-1800', *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009), 364-390. There are very few works on blacking, with most by Dickens scholars aside from John Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge, 2009). See: Michael Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory* (St Leonards, 2011); Michael Allen, 'New light on Dickens and the blacking factory', *The Dickensian* 106:2 (2010), 5-30; Wilfred Partington, 'The blacking laureate: the identity of Mr Slum, a pioneer in publicity', *Dickensian* 34 (1938), 199-202.

and drink were even more uniform in appearance than drug bottles: they rarely varied in their basic design. Although different sizes and capacities were available, essentially the stone bottle was a relatively unprepossessing, mundane object: functional, but far from unique, unlike some pharmaceutical packaging.²⁰ Users of these bottles nonetheless shared some methods of branding with the owners and vendors of patent medicines. Blacking manufacturers in particular used devices such as pictorial designs or signatures upon labels, which were repeated in advertisements, billheads and even on their buildings.

Commodity branding, therefore, was a process that was achieved through *layering*: trust was aggregated in a product not only by incorporating the marks of all people involved in a product's life history, but also by building up layers of marking on both the product itself and associated advertising or other retail material. This chapter revises previous interpretations of branding by examining earthenware bottles and showing that they had marks of makers and sellers of the liquids in them. It thus shows that these multiple brand marks said different things to different people and also together contributed to the branding of commodities like blacking.

²⁰ John Styles, 'Product innovation in early modern London', *Past & Present* 168 (2000), pp.153-158.

1. Marks of production



Fig. 3.3, salt-glazed stoneware bottle²¹; Fig. 3.4, salt-glazed stoneware bottle²²

Although it is difficult to be exact, marks of production appeared on earthenwares from the early nineteenth century. Pottery marks were nearly always found at the bottom of the bottle on the side; the only exceptions were those on food preserving jars, which were positioned on the shoulder, above the details of the proprietary marks of the person whose product filled the jar.²³ Other ceramics manufacturers tended to mark their product in a different area: pottery marks on delftware apothecary jars were found on the underside.²⁴ Wedgwood wares were sometimes similarly marked on underneath pots. Although these may have been references to the capacity of the object, ceramicist Geoffrey Godden suggests that they might also be potters' tallymarks, intended to calculate a specific employee's output.²⁵

²¹ Private collection, 'Heighlington's stoneware bottle' (c.1820-1833) (Photo copyright: J. Kemp).

²² YAT, Project 5000, SF12184, 'Stoneware blacking bottle base' (1817-1834).

²³ J. Kemp, pers. corres. (April 2010).

²⁴ Tim Huisman, *Delft Apothecary Jars. A Descriptive Catalogue* (Leiden, 2005), p.11.

²⁵ Geoffrey A. Godden, *British Pottery. An Illustrated Guide* (London, 1974), p.122, 152.

Though they placed their pottery marks in different areas of the bottle, both Burton and Bourne did share a similarity in their marks' size and shape. This was a semi circular stamp in a serif typeface that covered around a quarter of the bottle's surface.²⁶ As Askey has shown, many early nineteenth-century potteries across Britain employed a similar typographical language of marking to Burton and Bourne.²⁷ By contrast, Lambeth potters such as Henry Doulton (who would later found Royal Doulton) and Stephen Green used slightly different marks that were oval in design and used a sans serif type.²⁸ All were made through the type-impressed method.

Not all stonewares contained such branding: it has been estimated that 43 per cent of stoneware flasks moulded into notable figures – in particular the 'Reform Flask' genre of bottles that were moulded in the likeness of Lord Brougham, responsible for the passage of the 1832 Reform Act – had no pottery mark.²⁹ The Museum of London's Ceramic and Glassware Database reveals that of 157 intact stonewares of the relevant time period in their collection, 53, roughly a third, are marked with some kind of proprietary branding. Of these 53, the Museum has definitively identified twelve as pottery marks, most from Derbyshire or Doulton.³⁰

²⁶ The surface area of the stone bottle is estimated from the fact that most were 25cm high and 9cm wide (the underside has been discounted). Bourne's semi-circular mark was 3cm high at its apex and 6 cm wide.

²⁷ Askey, *Stoneware Bottles*, p.93, p.97, p.99, p.183, pp.215-216. There is no recorded Belper stamp: see Askey, *Stoneware Bottles*, p.90.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.104.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.53.

³⁰ See Appendix 5, 'Stonewares 1600-1900 from various London sites (from Museum of London Ceramics and Glass Collection Database)'. A similar analysis of the YAT-excavated pottery is not possible, due to the current limitations of the Integrated Archaeological Database (IADB) and largely fragmentary nature of the finds.

As the earliest pottery marks were quite large, it is difficult to explain their oversight by both contemporaries and historians. Bourne's stamp in Figure 3.2 occupied around a quarter of the bottle, as did Burton's mark in Figure 3.3. The evidence of large assemblages of these bottles indicates that pottery marks began to reduce in size over the century.³¹ Three different-sized stoneware ink bottles that were recovered from the shipwreck of the SS *Republic*, which sank in 1865, show that the mark in all three had become shorter and the text much smaller, as depicted in Figure 3.5. These also bore the mark of P & J Arnold, London ink sellers, seen more clearly in Figure 3.6. At most, the 1865 Bourne stamp occupied an estimated eighth of the bottles' surface. This is further corroborated by an example of the Denby pottery stamp on a stone bottle in the Museum of London collection, dated between 1871 and 1880, which shows that the Denby mark had developed into a device that resembled Doulton's stamp – an oval of around two centimetres high – and as such covered far less of the bottle's surface.³² By the later part of the period, then, pottery marks became considerably smaller. It is possible that the reduction in size of pottery marks has been conflated with a decrease in their perceived importance by contemporaries and historians alike, which would explain their oversight.

³¹ Askey, *Stoneware Bottles*, contains many images of these marks that reveal that the later stamps reduced. For stamps from 1800-1820, see p.97; for the period 1820-1840, see p.93; for 1850-1880, see p.104. See also Chris Green, *John Dwight's Fulham Pottery. Excavations 1971-79* (London, 1999), p.160 for Fulham pottery marks, which decrease between 1800 and 1900.

³² Museum of London Ceramics and Glass Database (hereafter MoL CGD), 57.11/6 'Bottle' (Bourne mark); see also MoL CGD, 80.486/76, 'Ink bottle' (Doulton mark). Unfortunately in both records the marks are poorly photographed but can be seen at the sides of the bottle.



Fig. 3.5, stoneware bottles³³; Fig. 3.6 detail on stoneware bottle³⁴

Furthermore, the neglect of the pottery mark may be due to its position on the bottle. On the example illustrated in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, Bourne’s mark was on the opposite side to Wormald’s – effectively creating a front and a reverse of a bottle. Although this was not necessarily the norm, as demonstrated by Figure 3.3, in which the porter merchant’s mark was positioned directly above Burton’s Codnor Park Pottery stamp, this demarcation between ‘front’ and ‘back’ was reinforced when other forms of branding were applied to the bottle. When labels were attached to a bottle, a ‘front’ and ‘back’ was designated, in the same way that Wormald’s mark implied a ‘front’. It is difficult to ascertain how much notice consumers of blacking or drink would have taken, therefore, of the ‘reverse’ of a bottle. Certainly, in a museum context, these marks have been considered less important for display purposes: the few extant,

³³ Neil Cunningham Dobson and Ellen Gerth, ‘The shipwreck of the SS *Republic* (1865). Experimental deep-sea archaeology. Part 2: cargo’ *Odyssey Papers* 6 (2009), p.22.

³⁴ *Odyssey’s Virtual Museum* (hereafter OVM), *SS Republic*, ‘J. Bourne & Son master ink bottles’ (1865).

labelled liquid blacking bottles exhibited at the Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising are presented with the label facing the visitor. There are no pottery stamps on view.³⁵

Analysis of the intact ink, shoe and stove blacking bottles with labels in the National Trust Collections database has revealed a similar lack of pottery marks on the same side as the label. In these records, the images of the bottles have presented the labelled side as the ‘front’ of the bottle.³⁶ Furthermore, illustrations of blacking bottles in contemporary advertising material similarly presented the labelled side of the bottle as the ‘front’: adverts aimed at achieving product recognition and reassurances of authenticity, so it is understandable that any pictures of the product would show their proprietary label.³⁷ Pottery stamps, therefore, may well have been subject to a similar oversight by contemporary consumers. The sellers of the liquids sold inside the bottle (the brewers or blacking manufacturers) often applied their own labels to the bottle, which could partially or entirely cover any impressed marks.³⁸ Despite this oversight, pottery marks were important communicative devices. The first part of this chapter explores the value of pottery marks, as well as the way in which these moved from marks of production to marks of commerce depending on the context in which they were read.

³⁵ Intact examples of labeled, corked blacking bottles have proven elusive in most museum catalogues. The Museum of Brands, Packaging and Advertising is the only collection found with examples on display. However, they were unable to provide further information on any of the items on display or remove them from the display to determine whether there were any stamps on the ‘reverse’ (November 2010).

³⁶ For example: National Trust Collections (hereafter NTC), Uppark, , West Sussex, 138194.4, ‘Blacking bottle’; NTC, Cotehele, Cornwall, 444610, ‘Bottle’; NTC, Lanhydrock, Cornwall, 881703.1, ‘Bottle’; NTC, Shaw’s Corner, Hertfordshire, 1275112, ‘Ink bottle’ (all C19).

³⁷ John Johnson Collection (hereafter JJC), Window Bills and Advertisements Folder 4 (6), ‘Turner’s Real Japan Blacking’ (c.1817 onwards). I have ascribed this date based on the newspaper evidence rather than the JJC’s rather later date of 1860-1880, but the latter may be correct.

³⁸ J. Kemp, pers. corres (April 2010).

1.1 Marks of production as representations of authenticity

In his history of Royal Doulton, Desmond Eyles has stated that stonewares were sold directly to major clients such as Warren's Blacking, the brewers, Whitbread, and paint-makers, Berger of Homerton.³⁹ Between 1817 and 1835, these companies represented Doulton's three biggest customers, and exemplified at least two trades in which it was important to trust the quality of the bottle that held their product.

Recycling containers was an important aspect of the retailing of paint and drinks.

Sellers often used the 'penny returnable' method by which they would refund a farthing (by the late nineteenth century) on the return of an empty bottle to them.⁴⁰

Earthenwares were, by their nature, highly porous. Recycling them posed a risk that on subsequent fillings, the contents would take on the flavour of whatever it had previously contained.⁴¹ Stoneware, however, was fired at a higher temperature, which created a watertight finish to bottles.⁴² Paint makers did not want their glorious colours – in the nineteenth century, a fairly recent innovation – to be turned into murky greys by the traces of some earlier paint from inside the bottle in which they were sold. Nor did ginger beer or porter sellers want their drink tainted by the residue of a different drink previously sold in that bottle. It was important to paint makers, brewers and drinks merchants, therefore, that they received an authentic product of potters such as Joseph Bourne, who guaranteed that their stonewares would not absorb the product that they contained.

³⁹ Eyles, *Royal Doulton 1815-1965*, p.26.

⁴⁰ Askey, *Stoneware Bottles*, p.105.

⁴¹ Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons, *Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Excise Establishment, and into the Management and Collection of the Excise Revenue throughout the United Kingdom. Stone bottles, and sweets* (London, 1834), p.6.

⁴² For more on the production of stoneware and its unique properties, the best introduction is: David Gaimster, *German Stoneware, 1200-1900. Archaeology and Cultural History. Containing a Guide to the Collections of the British Museum, Victoria & Albert and Museum of London* (London, 1997). A description of the stoneware activities of John Dwight can be found in Green, *John Dwight's Fulham Pottery*, pp.17-33, particularly pp.28-29.

Likewise, this message was important for the end or ‘retail’ consumers of these bottles – the people who purchased the good that was retailed inside the stonewares. These people would also want to ensure that their paint or drink was untainted if the container had been used before. Trust in the pottery mark, then, was important to *all* users of the bottle. We may understand this as an aggregation of trust in which the potter’s reputation was accumulated throughout the bottle’s life cycle, since the decision of the brewer to source their bottles from a particular pottery would have an impact upon the quality of their drink. Marks of production, then, were relevant to all users of the bottle.

These marks were doubly important when customers of bottles did not purchase them directly from the pottery, but through a middleman. Prior to Bourne’s acquisition of the pottery, Codnor Park distributed its goods through an agent based in Milk Street, London.⁴³ As with medicines, the longer the distribution chain of a product, the more important the mark became and the more trust a customer invested in it. A protracted supply chain provided more opportunities for a product to be tampered with and more opportunities for blame to be shifted in the case of faulty products. Marks of production therefore also represented marks of culpability and responsibility, something that was diffused when greater numbers of people were involved in the distribution of an object.⁴⁴

⁴³ Sir Richard Phillips (1828) quoted in Askey, *Stone Bottles*, p.165.

⁴⁴ Thomas Carlyle found this to his disadvantage, when he received broken clay pipes by post and was unable to obtain replacements. Carlyle Letters Online (hereafter CLO), Thomas Carlyle to Alexander Carlyle, 8 April 1840 (accessed October 2011).

Marks of production, then, were a physical manifestation of an attempt at creating the trust necessary for potters to convince wine, porter and ginger beer sellers that bottles were genuine. This was reinforced through a controlled repetition of the mark on other material relating the manufacture, production and retail of stonewares, so long as the places in which these were used were as fiercely guarded and tightly controlled as the mark on the bottle itself.

While as we have seen, the pottery stamp on the bottle decreased over the nineteenth century, this was not the only place in which a potter was able to display their mark. Trade catalogues, billheads and advertisements all reproduced these marks. Joseph Bourne repeated his mark upon his billheads throughout the nineteenth century. An invoice dated October 1836 featured the royal coat of arms, complete with the motto of the Order of the Garter and lion and unicorn seated upon a stage with ‘J BOURNE, PATENTEE’ underneath it. Over the top of the arms, in a semi circle, was the phrase ‘Denby & Codnor Park Potteries Derbyshire’, in repetition of the mark found upon the pottery. Adjacent to the coat of arms was Bourne’s name, framed by the statement: ‘Manufacturer of the vitreous stone bottles, jars, &c. Warranted not to absorb’, in direct echo of the pottery mark, and was in fact printed in a font not dissimilar to that used on the stamp.⁴⁵ Similar statements were repeated in a trade catalogue of the 1860s. It again deployed the royal coat of arms (although with the lion and unicorn in slightly different positions).⁴⁶ The most intriguing repetition of the

⁴⁵ Derbyshire Record Office (hereafter DRO), D3147/17/1, bill dated 27 October 1836 from J. Bourne to W. & J. Pike.

⁴⁶ DRO, D3147/27/1, trade catalogue of Joseph Bourne & Son, c.1860.

pottery stamp, however, was on a list of prices for Bourne's wares issued in the 1850s, in which the familiar declarations of his patent for vitreous stoneware glaze appeared over a facsimile of the stamp and the caution that 'J. B. Warrants his Bottles and Jars not to absorb liquid acids; and to prevent fraud, he stamps upon them this impression.'



Figure 3.7, stamp from Joseph Bourne Potteries price list, c.1850⁴⁷

The stamp shown in Figure 3.7 was a fairly close representation of that which appeared upon the side of a bottle and matched its size. Brewers, drinks merchants and blacking makers therefore would be able to compare this with the one found on their bottles to ensure that they had an authentic Bourne product. It became a standard image and infused the company's documentation – invoices, trade catalogues – with trust, which when appearing upon a document that required the recipient to fill their

⁴⁷ DRO, D3147/27/1, Joseph Bourne price list for stone bottles and jars, c.1850. I have not seen a mark on a bottle with the small square inside it, which may suggest that it was where the handle of the stamp was attached. An example of a transfer print stamp (not type-impressed), which shows the general shape of such an object, can be seen in Askey, *Stoneware Bottles*, p.123.

end of the transaction, was important to Bourne. The mark of production and what it represented was not restricted only to the object itself. It was a true ‘brand’ image. This meant that it was important for owners of such marks to carefully control the way in which their proprietary branding appeared and to stamp out counterfeits. The fact that Bourne felt it necessary to emphasise that the pottery stamp was a means of ensuring a genuine Bourne product, indicates that other people may have attempted to pass off unmarked bottles as Bourne’s, although evidence of any imitations has not yet come to light. The mark, therefore, became extremely important in terms of assuring customers of the authenticity of a product, reinforced by its appearance on official documentation of the company.

Marks of production, then, were a multi-media performance. As with marks of commerce – as will be discussed later in the chapter – their repeated use in a controlled and relevant manner imbued them with virtues of authority and trust. This was reinforced through their appearance on a variety of different formats. Proprietary branding was a physical means of communicating to customers something that was actually fairly intangible. It was a psychological message, inviting a person to trust that all identically marked objects (be it documentary or stoneware) were of the same origin. Yet they were multifaceted; they also encouraged potential bottlers to believe that all products that bore the mark would be of an identical quality. For Bourne and his patented technologies that resulted in stonewares that did not absorb whatever they held, that standard was a high one. The next section of this chapter will illustrate the way in which he attempted to portray this standard through the creative application of his proprietary branding.

1.2 Marks of production as signifiers of quality

The ‘life history’ approach to interpreting ceramics has highlighted the importance of context. Pottery marks did not only serve as indications of the origin of a commodity, but were also used in order to communicate reassurances about the quality of the object. Like medicine vendors, stoneware producers utilised the credibility of others to boost consumer confidence in their product.

Potters were keen users of patents. William Powell, a Bristol potter, developed a technique for ‘an attractive cream-coloured opaque glaze for his stoneware... [this] had greater sales appeal when used for jam-jars, bread-pans, pie-dishes and other kitchen-wares’ as well as for chemical wares. As a result, his competitor, Henry Doulton, had to undertake extensive experimentation at his Lambeth pottery to achieve a similar glaze for his customers.⁴⁸ Doulton took out patents for his manufacturing techniques, relating to amendments to his kilns (1854) as well as ‘improvements in earthenware jars and bottles’ (1861), and for developments in the manufacture of vat-sized containers.⁴⁹ Likewise, Joseph Bourne patented improvements to his kilns as well as the method for his vitreous glaze.⁵⁰ As already outlined, this finish was crucial because it was well established that the interior of a poorly glazed bottle was practically impossible to clean entirely. In the Inquiry into the Excise upon stoneware bottles in 1834, W. Hetherington, Surveying General Examiner of the Excise agreed that ‘it is impossible to clean [bottles] if the liquor is soaked through... [because]the interior is not so smooth or so well crystallized as

⁴⁸ Eyles, *Royal Doulton, 1815-1965*, pp.31-32.

⁴⁹ Askey, *Stoneware Bottles*, p.178.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.160.

glass'.⁵¹ Advertising the fact that one had the technology to overcome this was, therefore, a huge selling point for makers of stonewares. Bourne proved that his technology worked with a patent, which implied that testing had demonstrated the efficacy of such a method.

Patents had a dual importance, however; not only did they theoretically prevent rivals from using the same method of production, they allowed manufacturers to use symbols of royalty. Even if these were not on their actual wares, they appeared upon all paperwork relating to their commerce. Bourne's invoices and pricing lists carried these marks. A survey of his business documentation between the 1830s and the 1860s shows that the coat of arms appeared regularly on both pamphlet-sized catalogues as well as bills to customers, although they were subtly different each time. In 1836, an invoice featured an engraving of the royal coat of arms in an extremely prominent position, occupying a third of the head of the paper. It was clearly tailored to Bourne, as the lion and unicorn were depicted lying down upon a pedestal that had 'J Bourne, Patentee' inscribed upon it. Over the top of the coat of arms in the familiar half oval was 'Denby & Codnor Park Potteries Derbyshire'.⁵² His pottery stamp was echoed therefore, in the presentation of the royal mark. Although presumably the design of seated lion and unicorn was not made especially for Bourne – any proprietor's name could appear within the 'pedestal' – the entwining of Bourne's identity with royalty in such a way had considerable impact for the proprietorial branding. By linking his name and personal mark so closely with the royal family,

⁵¹ *Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the Excise Establishment*, p.26.

⁵² DRO, D3147/17/1, Bill to Messrs. W. and I. Pike, 27 October 1836.

Bourne was clearly attempting to associate himself with the credibility of the crown and imply a certain degree of quality to his products.

In the 1850s, a price list for the Denby, Codnor Park and Shipley Potteries was headed by a much smaller royal device in a more traditional design, with the lion and unicorn facing each other upon either side of a crowned shield. Far more prominent in this layout was the reproduction of Bourne's stamp (illustrated in Figure 3.7).⁵³ An 1860 price list and catalogue, however, reflected perhaps a change in priorities for the potter. The facsimile of his stamp was replaced by a much larger design of the British coat of arms positioned over the statement, 'JOSEPH BOURNE & SON, Patentees and Manufacturers of the Vitreous Stone Ink and Blacking Bottles, Jars, &c.'⁵⁴

This latter example of Bourne's evocation of royal symbols differed markedly from his earlier depiction. The 1860 design was flanked on either side by the proud declarations: 'Prize Medal of the Great Exhibition, 1851', and 'Prize Medal with Special Approbation of the American Exhibition, 1853'. As one can see in Robert Ellis's official catalogue for the 1851 Great Exhibition, potters used such events to showcase their wares and draw attention to the techniques that they had developed. Joseph Bourne's entry described the objects that he had selected for display as 'specimens of articles manufactured from fine stoneware clay, so vitrified as to be equal to glass for purposes in which the latter is employed.'⁵⁵ Awards represented a

⁵³ DRO, D3148/27/1, Denby, Codnor Park and Shipley Potteries price list, c.1850.

⁵⁴ DRO, D3147/27/1 Denby Pottery price list, c.1860.

⁵⁵ Robert Ellis, *The Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition*, Vol. 2 (London, 1851), p.725.

powerful endorsement by the officials of these shows, and from the 1850s onwards were frequently used in advertising for a variety of commodities.⁵⁶ Manufacturers cited these prizes to generate trust; as with testimonials from so-called ‘experts’ in medicine advertisements, such awards were deployed in order to generate trust (although whether the judging panel were indeed experts was another matter).

Furthermore, the Great Exhibition took place within a context in which British art, design and industry were the subjects of great royal interest. Some of the diverse institutions dedicated to the support of these pursuits that had been founded in the eighteenth century, such as the Society of Arts, received royal patronage in 1847. Others, including the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal Horticultural Society were created in the early nineteenth century and received royal patronage in the middle years of the nineteenth century, revealing an increasing momentum over the early nineteenth century in royal endorsement of the art, design and culture as well as industry.⁵⁷ As Jeffrey A. Auerbach has outlined, Prince Albert was particularly enthusiastic about the promotion of British art and industry. Albert, who was also the President of the Society of Arts, headed the Royal Commission into the organisation of the Exhibition and apparently threw himself into the task with gusto.⁵⁸ The monarchy’s publicised support for the event – in addition to Albert’s involvement, Queen Victoria officially opened the Exhibition – also enabled manufacturers to

⁵⁶ For example, YAT, Project 5000, SF1091, Dundee Marmalade pot bearing the legend ‘ONLY PRIZE FOR MARMALADE 1862’ (C19).

⁵⁷ For more detail on some of these royal-affiliated institutions and their activities and involvement with Henry Cole, see Elizabeth Bonython and Anthony Burton, *The Great Exhibitor. The Life and Work of Henry Cole* (London, 2003).

⁵⁸ Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851. A Nation on Display* (London, 1999), pp.22-31. For more on the royal promotion of design and industry in the period, see also: Deborah Philips, ‘Stately pleasure domes – nationhood, monarchy and industry: the celebration of the exhibition in Britain’, *Leisure Studies* 23:2 (2004), 95-108 and Delia Millar, ‘Royal patronage and influence’, in John M. MacKenzie, *The Victorian Vision. Inventing New Britain* (London, 2001), p.31, pp.42-43.

affiliate their proprietorial identity with that of royalty; the implication being that the royal family had the means to use any possible product and so would use only the highest quality of any commodity. Auerbach has shown that Albert was particularly enthusiastic about the competitive element to the Exhibition, which added a certain cachet to any prizes awarded to exhibitors.⁵⁹ References to the Exhibitions, then, implied quality. If the monarchy bestowed their patronage upon a product, it followed, then that product must be worthy of use.

Marks of production, then, can be read in two different ways depending on their context. They acted as an indication of a product's origin and thus provided reassurances to consumers about their authenticity and genuineness. Yet they were, in their own right, marks of commerce: a proprietorial signal from maker to consumer, in a relationship that has been overlooked by most analyses or discussions of branding, that do not employ an 'object biography' approach. A closer reading of the marks upon drink and blacking bottles complements existing studies of the advertisement of these goods, through the integration of the other identities that were involved in the production or exchange of these commodities. Furthermore, messages conveyed through branding could aggregate through a product's life cycle: the mark made by the manufacturer of the container reflected quality and authenticity to the person who would go on to decant their product into it. Once this process had taken place, however, the mark of the potter remained for other users to read or ignore. This represented trust between paint or blacking manufacturers and the potter, but had implications for the consumer of paint or blacking too, whether their attention was

⁵⁹ Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, pp.23-24.

drawn to it or not. These customers trusted that the paint or blacking seller would package his product in a suitable receptacle. Trust, as represented by these symbols of production, was therefore aggregated and accumulated as the bottle moved throughout different users and transactions.

2. Marks of commerce: a case study in blacking



Fig.3.8, stoneware bottle fragment⁶⁰

Joseph Bourne's mark, then, could be interpreted as both a mark of production and a mark of commerce depending on the context it was read. The branding found on the

⁶⁰ YAT, Project 5000, SF8420, 'Warren's 30 Strand stoneware bottle fragment' (c.1817-1835).

bottle fragment shown in Figure 3.8, which read: ‘Warren’s / Liquid Blacking / 30 Strand’, despite being implemented at the bottle’s production stage by Bourne, can be understood as principally as a mark of commerce belonging to Robert Warren, a London-based liquid blacking manufacturer. Although Warren was a producer of the good contained within the bottle, his mark is more logically understood as one of *commerce* rather than of production, unlike Bourne’s stamp. Warren sold the product packaged inside the bottle and as such his mark was intended as a commercial signal that assured customers of the authenticity and quality of that product.

As outlined, marks of commerce have received more attention from historians of consumption than the marks of production discussed in the first section. They were used, as Wormald’s mark in Figure 3.1 demonstrated, to establish a good’s origin and to differentiate them from similar products. They were intended to convey quality and authenticity.⁶¹ Much like the branded drug trade, the blacking industry – one of the biggest users of the stoneware bottle – used proprietary branding to communicate these values to their customers. In common with medicine proprietors, retailers of these products placed their marks on a variety of different material surfaces.

Historical analysis of the trade has focused on the surviving documentary evidence, in particular advertising.⁶² Proprietary branding certainly appeared in these types of source material. Yet incorporating the container and packaging itself into the analysis

⁶¹ Frank S. Fanselow, ‘The bazaar economy or how bizarre is the bazaar really?’, *Man* 25:2 (1990), p.252; George A. Akerlof, ‘The market for “lemons” : quality uncertainty and the market mechanism’, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 84:3 (1970), p.499.

⁶² Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period*, pp.117-161.

of these goods reveals the sheer *diversity* of media that blacking makers and sellers used in order to transmit their marks. Furthermore, much like medicine producers, blacking manufacturers dispensed their product inside bottles branded with proprietary details that were placed upon the bottle by someone else. This potentially compromised the trust that consumers placed in these marks as indicators of authenticity and genuineness, something that medicine vendors Dicey and Co warned both unscrupulous glassblowers and their customers of in the early nineteenth century.⁶³ As a result, much like medicine sellers, blacking proprietors layered marks of commerce throughout their product's packaging in order to convince customers of a product's authenticity as well as of its quality.

2.1 Marks of commerce: establishing authenticity and combating counterfeits

Any successful manufacturer was at risk from rivals and imitators of their product, and in the nineteenth century the liquid blacking trade was no exception. Estimates in 1880 suggested that around £560,000 was spent by the British public on blacking.⁶⁴ The industry certainly created two exceptionally wealthy individuals: Charles Day and Robert Warren. As two of the best known manufacturers of shoe polish in the nineteenth century, both at one point or other during their careers, were engaged in intensive campaigns against imitators of their own variant of blacking. Charles Day, co-founder of Day & Martin and the major partner, left a personal estate of around £200,000 and real estate valued at £140,000 at his death in 1836.⁶⁵ As Horace Smith

⁶³ See Chapter One.

⁶⁴ Asa Briggs, *Victorian Things* (London, 1988), p.37.

⁶⁵ T. A. B. Corley, 'Day, Charles (1782/3–1836)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/59284>, (accessed October 2010). According to the National Archive's historic currency calculator, Day's personal fortune alone would

wrote with sardonic humour in *The Tin Trumpet*, 'our blacking-makers acquire fortunes, and build palaces.'⁶⁶ A direct result of such commercial success was of course, a proliferation of counterfeits and pretenders to the 'true recipe' of the enormously popular product.

Proprietors therefore needed to protect their product against these imitators. Marking the product with their details of their name, address and other unique pictorial devices was a crucial security measure. It reassured customers that they had purchased a genuine Day & Martin or Robert Warren's product. Trust in the product was built through repeated deployment of these marks on the containers of blacking, on the labels pasted on the outside of them, and in advertisements. Genuine manufacturers also took their pretenders to court, with more success than vendors of medicines. This section will explore the multiplicity of ways in which marks of commerce were enacted in order to establish the authenticity of a product. It will analyse surviving earthenware containers, labelling and newspaper advertising, as well as considering the ways these were discussed in a legal context.

have equated to the spending value of £10 million in 2005 money. This included his primary residence in Regents Park and a second home in Edgware, the lodge of which was built in the shape of a blacking bottle, as testament to the mundane product that made his fortune, see: Edgware: Introduction', *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 4: Harmondsworth, Hayes, Norwood with Southall, Hillingdon with Uxbridge, Ickenham, Northolt, Perivale, Ruislip, Edgware, Harrow with Pinner* (1971), pp.151-155, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22453> (accessed December 2011).

⁶⁶ Horace Smith, *The Tin Trumpet, or, Heads and Tails, for the Wise and Waggish, Vol.1* (London, 1836), p.153. This reference is from Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period*, pp.117-120.

2.1.1 Establishing authenticity: surface marking

Unlike branded pharmaceuticals, blacking was sold in standard earthenware bottles that rarely varied in colour, size or design. The excise duty on stone bottles imposed in 1812 and amended in 1817 (discussed at length in chapter four) set out strict measurements and design for the manufacture of these bottles: they were to be ‘made of Earthen or Stone ware, or of Earth or clay, the Mouth or Orifice of which shall not exceed in Diameter the Diameter of the Neck thereof by more than One Quarter of an Inch, and which shall not exceed Two Quarts in Measure.’⁶⁷ In a nutshell, such standards thwarted any potter with visions of producing any variation on the stone bottle’s fundamental design. Stamps or other forms of branding, however, were not mentioned in the legislation, allowing the potter and his customer (in this case the blacking manufacturer) to implement any mark upon the bottle that they wished.

Figure 3.8 illustrates the proprietary mark of Robert Warren, stamp impressed upon a bottle that would formerly have contained his blacking: ‘WARREN’S // LIQUID BLACKING // 30 STRAND’. Warren had moved to these premises by 1817, having formerly been based at 14 St Martin’s Lane since inheriting the business from his father, Thomas Warren.⁶⁸ Whilst at St Martin’s Lane, Warren had his bottles marked in a similar fashion; an example from the Museum of London database reveals that these bottles were type impressed with the legend ‘WARREN’S // LIQUID BLACKING // 14 St MARTINS LANE // CHARING CROSS’. This was repeated in

⁶⁷ An Act to exempt *British* and *Irish* Stone Bottles, made and used for the sole Purpose of containing Liquid Blacking, from the Duties of Excise on Stone Bottles granted by an Act of this Session of Parliament (1817).

⁶⁸ T. A. B. Corley, ‘Warren, Robert (1784/5–1849)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/59283> (accessed October 2010).

his adverts, which ended: ‘Caution: Observe No 14, St Martin’s Lane, is Stampd on each Bottle, and the Cork Sealed R.W.’, in order to help customers identify an authentic bottle.⁶⁹



Fig. 3.9, stoneware bottle fragment⁷⁰

Unlike Warren’s later stamp (illustrated in Figure 3.8), however, the marking of the St Martin’s Lane bottle was much larger and occupied considerably more of the surface of the bottle. The later stamp was also of a much more standardised finish. The St

⁶⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, 29 August 1807, issue 2194; *Hull Packet*, 3 May 1808, issue 1112; *Leeds Mercury*, 25 June 1808, issue 2240; *Leeds Mercury*, 16 July 1808, issue 2243.

⁷⁰ MoL CGD, 82.528 ‘blacking bottle’ (1801-35). No image is attached to the item record but an image of the bottle can be seen at the Museum of London Prints website, <http://www.museumoflondonprints.com/image/670793/blacking-bottle-c-1820> (accessed November 2011).

Martin's Lane lettering was irregular in size and, as Figure 3.9 illustrates, was placed somewhat haphazardly onto the bottle. This awkward placement and lack of finesse compared to the Warren's mark shown in Figure 3.8 implies that this was not a custom-made mark. The line at the edge of the stamp in Figure 3.8 indicates that this stamp was a complete and distinct frame into which all the lines of printer's type were permanently positioned. This suggests either that the mark was created in a rush, as if Warren had suddenly discovered the necessity of marking his bottles to assure customers that they had the genuine product and had hastily ordered his potter to incorporate Warren's details without waiting for a custom-made stamp to be created, or the more likely scenario, given that it was relatively easy to create a new stamp by inserting printer's type into a wooden frame, that the mark was created by a non-professional potter, unused to mass-marking bottles in the manner that Bourne or Doulton would have been. The overall effect was most likely not reassuring to the customer: the lack of care implied in its application suggested a counterfeit, not a genuine Warren's product. The mark in Figure 3.9 certainly bears a close resemblance to the stamp of Jonathan Warren, Robert's uncle, who also sold blacking under the Warren name. However, Jonathan also sold his blacking in similarly crudely finished stamp-impressed bottles, with haphazard positioning and size of type spelling out his details: 'J Warren's / Liquid Blacking / 13 Gt Suffolk Steet / Hay Market'.⁷¹ It may be that this was simply the style of the potters that the two Warrens in this period, but there is no denying that more polished and standardised marks such as that depicted in Figure 3.8 presented a more trustworthy image to the twenty-first-century eye, and, it is quite possible, to the nineteenth-century consumer as well.

⁷¹ A bottle with Jonathan Warren's 13 Great Suffolk Street address is illustrated in Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory*, p.42.

Despite the potential risk of pre-stamped bottles being sold to other blacking proprietors, as with Dacey and Co's pre-embossed medicine bottles, and the possible risk to a product's overall trustworthiness if the packaging (including branding) appeared shoddy, it was important for retailers to have their marks physically imprinted on the bottle of the product as well; although labels would cover a considerable amount of the bottle's sides, and therefore quite possibly covered up the retailer's stamp, ultimately a label was removable.⁷² The stamp, however, was permanent. Integrating these marks into the product at the early stage suggested careful execution of business, rather than hastily printed and stuck-on labels upon plain stone bottles imagined of opportunistic counterfeiters. As with pharmaceutical counterfeits, there was a far higher risk of being exposed as a fraudster if consumers were trained to expect specific stamps upon their bottles of blacking, as well as uniquely designed labels. Impressed stamps, then, offered an important form of protection for consumers, so long as the distribution chain from potter to blacking manufacturer remained uncompromised and that the mark was carefully applied.

This was especially important given that blacking bottles were frequently returned to blacking manufactories and rinsed in their wash house before being refilled.⁷³ George Dodd's detailed description of behind the scenes at Day & Martin's described the wash-house for the bottles and the process involved, although 'the manufacturer would probably be as quite well pleased to use new bottles altogether, and save

⁷² As already discussed, intact examples of labeled blacking bottles are rare. See NTC, Uppark, West Sussex, 138194.4, 'Blacking bottle'.

⁷³ George Dodd, *Days at the Factories; or the Manufacturing Industry of Great Britain Described...* (London, 1843), p.216.

himself the trouble of washing old ones'.⁷⁴ Manufacturers recycled bottles, not necessarily for economy, but in order to stop them falling into the hands of would-be counterfeiters, who could appropriate the mark of the genuine maker as their own. As Dodd noted, '[E]very one who is learned in the matter of domestic perquisites knows that old blacking-bottles, like old things of many other kinds, can find a market'.⁷⁵ No doubt fraudsters offered money to buy back old bottles or went door to door to collect empty earthenwares: the mark of a trusted proprietor was highly valuable.

Surface marking, therefore, was an extremely important means of branding the proprietary identity into a commodity, physically intertwining the proprietor with their product, and owners took care to ensure they received their bottles back, so that their stamp could not be misappropriated. Unlike Dicey and Co's warnings placed in the advertisement columns of contemporary newspapers, the evidence indicates that blacking sellers were untroubled by this breach of trust and that potters did not sell bottles marked with one proprietor's identity to another. This may have been due to the (occasional) presence of the potter's mark of production upon the bottle as well: any fraudulent potters would have been easily identified. Glass bottle manufacturers, by contrast, did not appear to leave a mark of production on their handiwork, meaning that any embossed medicine bottles they made were less easily traceable. It would appear that the counterfeit blacking manufacturer was required to use different branding methods to mislead customers. Analysis of nineteenth-century stone bottles in the Museum of London, the National Trust and YAT's collections has demonstrated that the majority were unstamped entirely: as this chapter has outlined,

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

two-thirds of the Museum of London's bottles were unmarked with stamps of any kind, production or commercial. Instead, marks of commerce (both 'genuine' and 'fake') were placed upon bottles through labelling.

2.1.2 Establishing authenticity: labels

Around 64 per cent of the stone bottles in the Museum of London ceramics collection are unmarked, suggesting that not all trades used impressed stamps or transfer prints in order to mark their bottles.⁷⁶ As outlined, liquid blacking manufacturers, unlike their medicine-producing contemporaries were unable to utilise innovative shapes of container. How else to differentiate a product in a market of otherwise identical containers? There is evidence to indicate that by the 1820s, labels had become an ideal alternative for some blacking makers. They were cheaper than having the pottery stamp one's own mark into the bottle, and allowed for greater variation and freedom of expression in the design and information incorporated on the label. Use of labels varied between companies, and indeed, entire trades. Some used both stamps and labels; this was certainly the case for Robert Warren's branded blacking. The material evidence, however would suggest that Day & Martin did not stamp their bottles at all.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ See Appendix 5, 'Marked stonewares 1650-1900 from various London sites (data from Museum of London Ceramics and Glass Collection Database)'.

⁷⁷ Bellevue House, Ontario bottle, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wiless/5802262137/in/set-72157627086895348> (accessed: November 2011). NTC, Uppark House, West Sussex, 138194.4, 'blacking bottle'.



*Fig. 3.10, detail from Warren Russell & Wright advert⁷⁸; Fig. 3.11, Day & Martin
blacking bottle⁷⁹*

Labels on liquid blacking bottles occupied a significant amount of space on the container, which, as we have seen, could cover an impressed mark, and thus negate their influence. An example of Day & Martin's on display at Bellevue House, Ontario, shows about an inch of earthenware bottle underneath the label and slightly less above it, although it is difficult to ascertain how much of each side the label covered.⁸⁰ An intact Day & Martin's bottle held by the National Trust, depicted in Figure 3.11, reveals that the label covered a similar amount of the bottle's surface area. Similarly an advert for Warren Russell & Wright's blacking from the late 1830s included a detailed reproduction of their genuine bottles in which the label covered a significant part of the bottle's 'front', shown in Figure 3.10. An advert from 1893 for

⁷⁸ JJC, Advertising, Oil and Candles 1 (31), 'Untitled advert' (c.1838-1842).

⁷⁹ NTC, Uppark House, West Sussex, 138194.4, 'blacking bottle'.

⁸⁰ 'Real Japan Blacking', <http://www.flickr.com/photos/wiless/5802262137/in/set-72157627086895348> (accessed: November 2011).

the B.F. Brown and Co range of shoe cleaning products featured an illustration of a bottle of their Army & Navy Liquid Blacking in which the label covered an even greater amount of the bottle. Certainly the labels on their glass bottles of 'Brown's Satin Polish' depicted alongside the liquid blacking covered at least two sides of the bottle.⁸¹ Likewise, paste blacking came in small receptacles shaped like flowerpots in which their labels covered a similar amount of the container.⁸² Analysis of all the liquid blacking labels in the John Johnson Collection has revealed that in the main, they covered between fifteen and twenty per cent of the surface area of a bottle, and this increased over the period to forty per cent by the end of the century.⁸³ Labels, then, provided a large space that was unlikely to be overlooked by consumers and one in which blacking manufacturers could mark their product to prove its genuineness.

Day & Martin, while apparently not users of stamped bottles, did, however, differentiate their product from others by the use of labels in order to convey their proprietary identity, to confirm the origin of their product, and to protect customers from fake articles. In 1810, they were compelled to place an advert in the *York Herald* to warn 'country shopkeepers and others' that 'a Set of SWINDLERS are now travelling the COUNTRY to solicit ORDERS in the Names of DAY and MARTIN,

⁸¹ JJC, Labels 1 (3a), 'B.F. Brown and Co London and Boston' (November 1893); JJC, Labels 1 (3b), 'B.F. Brown and Co London and Boston' (December 1893); JJC, Labels 1 (5), 'B.F. Brown and Co, London and Boston' label (November-December 1893). The last example is in colour whereas the others are red, white and black only.

⁸² JJC, Labels 1 (14), 'Waterproof paste blacking made by Jonathan Warren' (nd.). An example of the paste blacking pots can be seen in Davis, *Package and Print*, plate 6.

⁸³ This is estimated on the standard blacking bottle having similar height and width measurements to porter bottles. JJC, Labels 1 (11a), 'Real Japan Blacking made by Geo. Lamerte', covered eighteenth per cent of the bottle's surface (1820-30s); JJC, Labels 1 (16), 'Real Japan Blacking' (Robert Warren), sixteen per cent (1840s); JJC, Labels 1 (9a), 'Real Japan Blacking made by Day and Martin', covered sixteen per cent (n.d.); JJC, Labels 1 (6a), 'E. Brown & Son's boot preparations sold everywhere', nineteen per cent (1890s); JJC, Labels 1 (5), 'B.F. Brown and Co. London & Boston', forty per cent (1890s). I have ascribed some of these dates based upon the advertising and legal evidence, as the JJC does not always give a date for these manufacturers' operations.

BLACKING MAKERS, 97, High-Holborn, London.’ As a result, they advised customers to look for the ‘No. 97, it will easily detect the *Counterfeit*; many of them having *no Number at all*.’⁸⁴ The notice was repeated in the *Oxford Journal* and in the *Lancaster Gazette* in October 1810 and in the *Leeds Mercury*, *Aberdeen Journal* and *Derby Mercury* in 1811, which suggested that counterfeits were endemic across the country.⁸⁵ Another notice, printed across the country in 1812 and 1813, certainly indicated so. In this advert, Day & Martin described the design and content of their genuine labels and the defects in the fake:

‘[Day & Martin wish to] acquaint the Public, that by attending to the following particulars they will avoid being taken in by the *vile* Compositions that are offered as the *genuine* BLACKING, prepared by them at 97, HIGH-HOLBORN, London. After the word BLACKING in the first line of the Labels the *Counterfeits* have a small (as) some have the same *before* the word MADE in the next line, and others put a small (nr) lately before the Number 97. Purchasers should observe that the whole Address is clear and distinct.’⁸⁶

The ‘97’, then, was a crucial security device and measure of authenticity. Other parts of the label’s design also acted in this way. From the 1820s, Day & Martin labels were printed in red, black and white. They were rectangular in shape and had an

⁸⁴ *York Herald*, 18 August 1810, issue 1042.

⁸⁵ *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 20 October 1810, issue 2999; *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser*, 20 October 1810, issue 488; *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser*, 17 November 1810, issue 492; *Leeds Mercury*, 19 January 1811, issue 2374; *Aberdeen Journal*, 3 April 1811, issue 3299; *Derby Mercury*, 7 November 1811, issue 4147.

⁸⁶ *York Herald*, 7 November 1812, issue 1158. It also appeared in *Bury and Norwich Post*, 27 May 1812, issue 1561; *Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser*, 8 August 1812, issue 582; *Hull Packet*, 7 September 1813, issue 1390; *Aberdeen Journal*, 27 October 1813, issue 3433.

image of the Day & Martin manufactory in their centre.⁸⁷ On either side of this picture was a description of the product and directions for use, which, if followed, would ‘produce the most brilliant Lustre and Jet Black ever beheld.’ The top of the label was headed ‘Real Japan Blacking made by Day and Martin’, with the address, 97 High Holborn at the bottom of the label. The ‘97’ was an extremely prominent feature of the design, with ‘Day & Martin’ written inside each number, thus repeating, perhaps to extremes, the proprietary details. Either side of the ‘97’ was the price – one shilling – and a facsimile of the ‘signature’ of Day & Martin.⁸⁸

The success of Day & Martin was, of course, too tempting a prospect for counterfeiters of the period to overlook. Day & Martin printed its own labels, with a room in the High Holborn factory dedicated to their manufacture.⁸⁹ Whether it was due to economy or protection is unclear; most likely it was both. Some fraudsters were somehow able to obtain genuine labels, recycled from legitimate Day & Martin bottles, but otherwise imitators made their own.⁹⁰ The John Johnson Collection holds what may well be a possible counterfeit Day & Martin label. At first glance, it appears genuine: it used the same colours, a virtually identical image of the blacking manufactory and signature as well as the ‘97’ device with ‘Day & Martin’ written inside. However, there are subtle differences. The company name is ‘Day and Martin Ltd’; the ‘97’ symbol is framed by the statement of ‘Trade Mark’; the address given at the bottom is ‘Stratford, London’ and the entirety is headed by the legend ‘well stir

⁸⁷ I have based this date upon the evidence provided by the affidavit of Thomas Quarmbly, in Chancery between Robert Warren and Benjamin Warren, Plaintiffs and George Lamerte, Defendant, 15 November 1827, reproduced in Michael Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory*, pp.162-164.

⁸⁸ JJC, Labels 1 (9a), ‘Real Japan Blacking made by Day and Martin’ (C19). This is identical to the label affixed to the blacking pot kept at Bellevue House, Ontario, see fn.75.

⁸⁹ Dodd, *Days at the Factories*, pp.224-226.

⁹⁰ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor. : The Condition and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Cannot Work, and Will Not Work*, Vol. 1, (London, 1861), p.474.

before using'.⁹¹ Although Day & Martin moved premises in the 1880s after a fire at the High Holborn factory, it relocated to Borough Road, south London, rather than east London. The company also grew in size over the nineteenth century to require an additional manufactory in Liverpool, but at no point do the trade directories for the period indicate that Day & Martin was ever found in Stratford.⁹² However, this label bears a very close resemblance, including the peculiar wording of 'Well stir before using' to what is likely to be a genuine bottle, held by Uppark House in Sussex, where the address was given as New Southgate, N11, premises to which the company moved after its acquisition by Carr & Son early in the twentieth century.⁹³ At a glance, then, the labels were very similar. It is possible that as long as the essentials were the same – colour, logo-esque devices and name – consumers would be fooled.

This Stratford pretender to the Day & Martin name was not the only counterfeiter with which the company had to contend. In 1831, Day & Martin was successful in its application for an injunction against a manufacturer named Binning, who used labels so similar to Day & Martin's that the sole deviation was that Binning described his as 'equal to Day & Martin'. Unsurprisingly, 'the words "equal to" were printed in a very small type'.⁹⁴ After Charles Day's death in 1836, his executors combatted counterfeit labels created by Day's nephew, who had set up a blacking manufactory not far from

⁹¹ JJC, Labels 1 (9c), 'Real Japan blacking made by Day and Martin Ltd' (c.1862-1900). I have ascribed this tentative date, rather than using the date given by the JJC, due to the presence of 'Trade Mark' either side of the '97' device, a legal recognition that only came into being following the 1862 Select Committee on Merchandise Marks).

⁹² The company is listed as at 97 High Holborn in *Kelly's Post Office London Directory (Small Edition)* (London, 1852), p.698; and still there in *Business Directory of London (Part 2)* (London, 1884), p.103; by the 1890s, however it had relocated to Borough Road, see: *Post Office London Traders Directory* (London, 1891), p.1549.

⁹³ NTC Uppark, West Sussex, 138194.4, 'blacking bottle'; see the short company history for Carr & Son at http://www.carrdaymartin.co.uk/history_1923.html (accessed December 2011).

⁹⁴ *Day v Binning* (1831).

the new location of Day & Martin.⁹⁵ The executors claimed that the nephew Day's labels were so similar to their own that the public could be deceived, as he had merely substituted small differences such as a coat of arms for a picture of the blacking warehouse on the original and altered the address (which was also quite similar). With not inconsiderable audacity, Day responded by pointing out that nobody named either Day nor Martin were now involved in the business that had formerly belonged to Charles Day, so that it was the *executors* that were in fact defrauding the public; he, on the other hand, 'had applied to an intimate acquaintance of his, of the name of Martin, to join him in the manufacture and sale [of blacking]', and so was legally entitled to use the name of Day & Martin.⁹⁶ Day's cheek was unrewarded, however, when the judge hearing the case granted an injunction and forbade him use of the Day & Martin brand name.

In 1864, in his study into the street sellers of London, Henry Mayhew interviewed the people who sold blacking door to door. One described how he sold blacking that was labelled ' "equal to" (in very small letter) "DAY AND MARTIN" in very large letters.' As he confided to Mayhew, the seller had been told by one manufacturer that he had faced legal action but "it was no use sueing [sic] a mouse."⁹⁷ Labels, then, were an important means of conveying proprietorial identity, establishing the source of a product, and providing indications as to the expected quality of a product.

⁹⁵ The executors were unrelated to Charles Day.

⁹⁶ *Croft v Day* (1843).

⁹⁷ Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*. Vol.1, p.474.

2.1.3 Establishing authenticity: pictorial devices

Label fraud in the blacking industry was not unusual. Robert Warren, too, faced a number of legal battles, first with his uncle, Jonathan Warren, and then, after Jonathan's death, with the subsequent owners of Jonathan's business over the imitation of his labels. Robert Warren's blacking labels bore some similarities to those of Day & Martin: printed in red, white and black, the key features of the label were an image of the blacking manufactory and the address where this premises was located, 30 Strand. A witness in a Chancery case between subsequent owners of Jonathan Warren's blacking manufactory, George Lamerte and William Edward Woodd, suggested, however, that it was Day & Martin who emulated Robert Warren's label design.⁹⁸

As an authenticity measure, the '30' symbol was an important device to Warren. As we have seen in Figure 3.8, it was stamped into the bottle. By using it in his labels, Warren layered it throughout his packaging to reassure customers that they had the genuine product. Although his earliest adverts merely advised customers to 'ask for WARREN'S Blacking', his later notices specifically recommended customers: 'Be particular to enquire for Warren's, 30, Strand. All others are counterfeit'.⁹⁹ As Figures 3.12 and 3.13 show, his labels and advertising made prominent use of the '30' symbol.

⁹⁸ Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory*, p.62. The unusual spelling 'Woodd' is used throughout the Chancery cases.

⁹⁹ *York Herald*, 19 April 1817, issue 1390; JJC, Advertising, Oil and Candles 1 (26a), '30 Strand' (.c1830-1835).



Fig. 3.12, Robert Warren's Blacking label¹⁰⁰; Fig. 3.13, detail from advert for Robert Warren's Blacking¹⁰¹

Robert Warren's emphasis upon the 30 device grew out of an attempt to distinguish his manufacture from that of his uncle, Jonathan. However, Jonathan Warren's response to his nephew's move to 30 Strand and Robert's subsequent emphasis upon the number 30 throughout his marketing, was to relocate *his* blacking warehouse to 30 Hungerford Stairs, just off the Strand. Jonathan's labels included directions to Hungerford Stairs, an act that seemed very similar to counterfeit medicine proprietors who faked entire shops.¹⁰² One blacking seller described to Henry Mayhew the ways in which labels of well-known blacking and black-lead manufacturers were imitated, although occasionally they were able to obtain genuine labels: 'the name and address must of course be different, but the arrangement of the lines, and often the type, is followed closely, as are the adornments of the packet.'¹⁰³ Mayhew highlighted the way in which the '30' device was used by other manufacturers: the labels of Lewis'

¹⁰⁰ JJC, Labels 1 (16), 'Real Japan Blacking' (1817-1837); '30 Strand', 1835; JJC, Advertisements, Advertising, '30 Strand', 1831.

¹⁰¹ JJC, Advertising, Oil and Candles 1 (28b), '30 Strand' (11 November 1831).

¹⁰² *Barclay v Nicholls* (1794).

¹⁰³ Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, p.474.

India Rubber Blacking were printed ‘in large type, as a sort of border... while in the middle was a very black and predominant 30’. The address – Princess Street, Portman Market – was printed in very small type underneath the 30; as Mayhew commented, ‘the 30 is meant to catch the eye with the well-known flourish of “30, Strand”’.¹⁰⁴ In one advert entitled ‘Imposture Unmasked’, Robert Warren advised people to look carefully at the labels of blacking: ‘in many [counterfeit] instances the imposition labels are artfully interlined with a different address, *in very small characters*, between the more conspicuous ones of “No. 30” and “STRAND.’¹⁰⁵

Upon his death, Jonathan Warren’s blacking business was taken over by Woodd and Lamerte. Robert Warren claimed this partnership copied his ‘30’ device on their labels and handbills, and that they made only subtle alterations including the substitution of Jonathan Warren’s name for Robert’s.¹⁰⁶ Woodd and Lamerte quarrelled and abandoned their partnership not long after Jonathan Warren’s death, which prompted Lamerte to start his own blacking business based at 100 London Wall.¹⁰⁷ Neither accepted that the other had the right to use Jonathan Warren’s name in the manufacture and advertising of their blacking product and so their case went to court. They acknowledged the similarity of Jonathan Warren’s branding to Robert Warren’s: Lamerte described Robert Warren’s labels and handbills in such detail that the Chancery document even included an illustration of the ‘30’ symbol (seen in

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.473.

¹⁰⁵ *Bristol Mercury*, 25 August 1823, issue 1743.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, C13/909/36 Warren v Lamate [Lamerte]. Bill and answer (12 November 1827); TNA, C13/1500/110 Warren v Woodd. Bill only (19 November 1827). The Warren’s Chancery Court references used in this chapter were first brought to my attention in Michael Allen, ‘New light on Dickens and the blacking factory’, in which the feud between the various successors to Jonathan Warren’s factory are discussed in detail. See also: Michael Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory*.

¹⁰⁷ One of Lamerte’s blacking labels, which gives this address, can be seen at: JJC, Labels 1 (11b), ‘Real Japan blacking made by Geo. Lamerte’ (nd).

Figure 3.14), complete with a man shaving by the reflection of his boot's reflection (as shown in Figure 3.13).



*Fig. 3.14, detail from Chancery Court proceedings*¹⁰⁸

Lamerte and his partner, Lewis Worms, responded in kind: ‘We believe that Woodd was anxious to take advantage of the reputation of Robert Warren and to vend his Blacking as and for the Blacking of Robert Warren.’¹⁰⁹ It was understood then, that Robert Warren sought to differentiate his product through repeated use of the ‘30’ device upon his labels. These somewhat convoluted lawsuits illustrated the value of labels as a means of conveying proprietary identity, whether appropriated or genuine. Furthermore, it was not Robert Warren’s ‘30’ symbol alone that was imitated: Day & Martin’s ‘97’ device was also copied. The less well known blacking makers Scott and Statham (later Statham & Co) imitated the ‘97’ symbol that was intrinsically linked with Day & Martin, as the piece of one of their window placards in Figure 3.15

¹⁰⁸ TNA, C13/865/12 Woodd v Lamerte. Bill and answer (November 1826).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

illustrates. Their business was located at 97 Pall Mall, enabling them to feature the '97' device in their window displays and presumably on their labels, though no labels have yet come to light. As devices, then, it was believed that they were a highly effective means of convincing customers about the supposed 'authenticity' of a product.

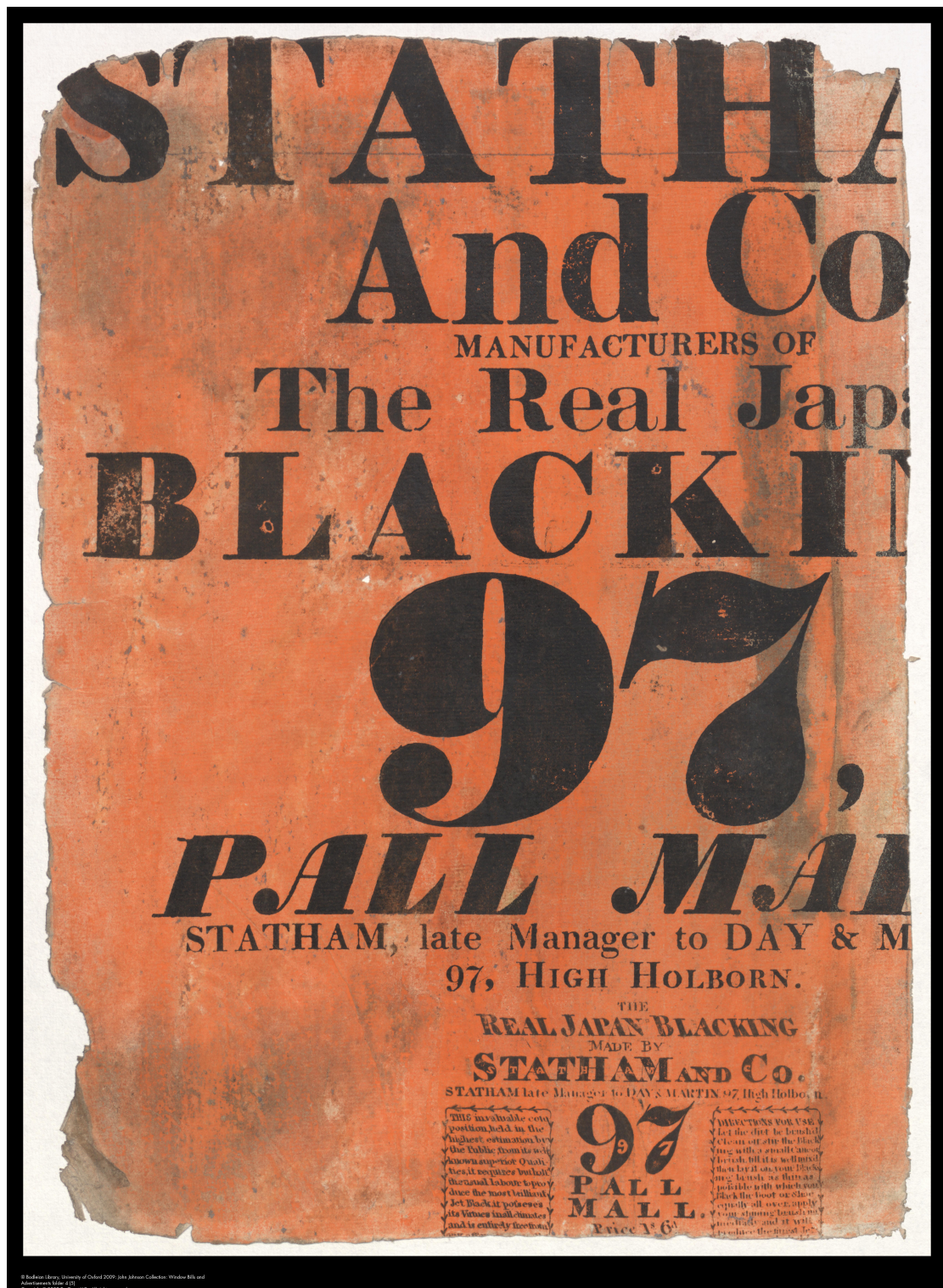


Fig. 3.15, Statham & Co window display¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ JJC, Advertising posters, Window Bills and Advertisements folder 4 (5), 'Statha[m] and Co. window bill' (c.1860-1890).

It was not only numeric devices that were copied. Richard Turner, a rival to the Warrens, imitated each unique identifying trait of Robert Warren's promotion to such an extent one wonders if it was a parody or tongue in cheek response to Warren. Alongside his '30' device, Robert Warren's recurring motifs included images of the gleaming finish that his blacking achieved, so mirror-like a man could shave using his reflection from his boot, or a cat could be startled by its reflection in a Warren's polished boot. This latter illustration by noted caricaturist, George Cruikshank, became 'the most famous advertising image of its day.'¹¹¹ These were incorporated into and alongside the '30' symbol, as shown in the label in Figure 3.12 and in the detail from the advert in Figure 3.13. An 1831 advert urged customers to: 'Hasten to Warrens, at 30, in the Strand / To purchase your Blacking, the best in the Land! / And for polish and surface, and brightness of hue, / No mirror shall then be compared to your shoe'.¹¹²



Fig. 3.16, detail from Warren's Blacking advert¹¹³; Fig. 3.17, detail from Warren's Blacking advert¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period*, p.38.

¹¹² JJC, *Advertising, Oil and Candles 1* (28a), 'A hint!' (23 December 1831).

¹¹³ JJC, *Advertising, Boots and Shoes 1* (27c), 'One cheer more!' (1817-1837).

¹¹⁴ JJC, *Advertising, Boots and Shoes 1* (26), 'Substance versus shadow' (1817-1837).

This emphasis upon boots so clean that one could see one's reflection became a signature device of Robert Warren, to help people recognise an authentic product from a counterfeit. Turner imitated this motif. A window placard for Turner's Real Japan Blacking featured an illustration of a man shaving by the reflection of his boot, with a bottle labelled 'Turner & Co's Liquid Blacking' next to it; the detail is so keen that even his reflection could be seen on the boot itself. This was reproduced in his newspaper advertisements, which also featured short poems in the style used by Robert Warren. A stylised 'signature' concluded the notice.¹¹⁵ In the background, a scene not dissimilar to the blacking manufactories illustrated on Warren and Day & Martin's labels is depicted – an industrial building with many windows – that, when taken in at a glance would have given an impression not dissimilar to Warren's or Day & Martin's advertising.

¹¹⁵ *York Herald*, 29 August 1818, issue 1461; *York Chronicle*, 10 February 1820, issue 3203. Not all versions of Turner's advert featured this imagery: a notice placed in *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser* 11 December 1823, issue 3060, had only a poem and no pictorial device.



Fig. 3.18, detail from Turner's *Real Japan Blacking window display*¹¹⁶

Furthermore, the inclusion of the 'blacking manufactory' on Turner's window advertising material was important. Such imagery was a recurring motif for blacking proprietors. As Wordsworth commented, buildings were often covered with proprietary identities, 'like a title-page / With letters inscribed from top to toe'.¹¹⁷ George Scharf's sketches of London street life include one of Larnder & Co's Blacking Manufactory, located at 244 Strand – evidently a popular address for makers of shoe polish seeking to bask in the popularity of Robert Warren. The building was, quite frankly, an awe-inspiring testament to footwear; on either side of the windows on each level were respectively, 'a pair of Hessian boots, a pair of oriental slippers,

¹¹⁶ JJC, Window Bills and Advertisements Folder 4 (6), 'Turner's Real Japan Blacking' (c.1817 onwards).

¹¹⁷ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book VII (1805), in Rick Allen, *The Moving Pageant. A Literary Sourcebook on London Street-Life, 1700-1914* (London, 1998), p.81.

and inverted blacking bottles over boot jacks.¹¹⁸ The company's name was repeated not only in huge lettering all the way down the building but also at eye level. In the window were large placards advertising the product. W Ryland, a blacking manufacturer based in Gray's Inn Lane ('two doors from Holborn') also depicted his premises on his label, a lofty building with many windows and 'RYLAND BLACKING MAKER' over the doorway.¹¹⁹ Likewise, Robert Warren's labels included an image of his factory that showed that his building, too, was quite literally branded, with 'WARREN'S BLACKING WAREHOUSE' dominating the front of the building.¹²⁰ This was repeated on his trade cards, as depicted in Figure 3.19. Similarly, the trade card evidence indicates that Day & Martin repeated their '97' device on their manufactory.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ British Museum (hereafter BM), British Roy Scharf Vol.4 PV, 1900,0725.90, 'drawing' (1828); see also: Peter Jackson, *George Scharf's London. Sketches and Watercolours of a Changing City, 1820-50* (London, 1987), p.67.

¹¹⁹ JJC, Labels 1 (12), 'Patent oil Japan blacking, made by W. Ryland' (nd.).

¹²⁰ JJC, Labels 1 (16), 'Real Japan Blacking' (1817-1837).

¹²¹ BM, Heal, 15.2, 'trade card/print' (nd.).

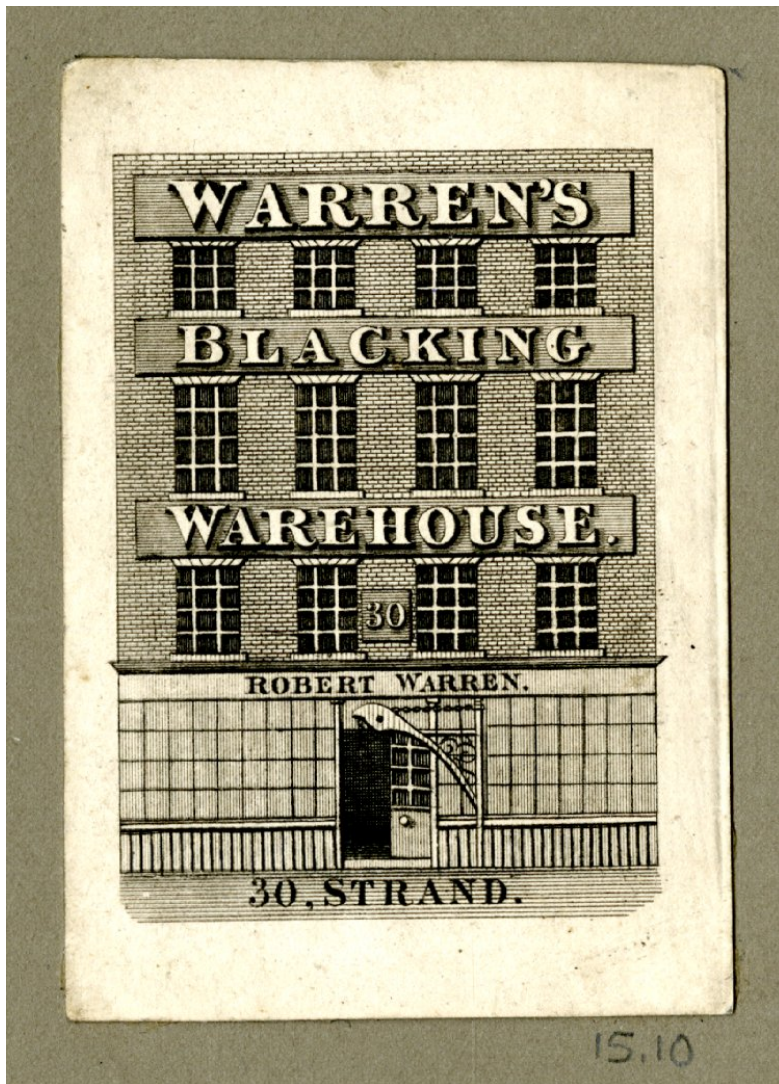


Fig. 3.19, draft trade card for Robert Warren¹²²

Day & Martin's manufactory at 97 High Holborn was also depicted on their labelling. Their building was majestic: a paragon of Georgian architecture complete with rows of symmetrically-placed windows and Ionic columns.¹²³ By contrast, the buildings featured in the less well-known maker's advertising such as Turner's window placard, Lamerte's labels or those used by Mile End manufacturers, Gibbins Harrison & Co,

¹²² BM, Banks, 15.10, 'draft trade card of Robert Warren' (nd.)

¹²³ JJC, Labels 1 (9a), 'Real Japan Blacking made by Day and Martin' (nd).

did not include any names or other devices, although at quick glance the rows of windows and columns presented the impression of a grand manufactory.¹²⁴ This image was in stark contrast to that described by Charles Dickens who recollected his childhood spell at work in Jonathan Warren's factory: 'a crazy, tumble-down old house, abutting of course on the river, and literally overrun with rats'.¹²⁵ Any representations of manufactories were conspicuously absent from Jonathan Warren's labels.¹²⁶

Robert Warren did not stop at branding buildings, however: he branded the person. A sketch by Scharf depicted 'walking tins of blacking', in which people were dressed as bottles of liquid blacking heavily marked with 'WARREN'S [sic] // BLACKING // 30 // STRAND'.¹²⁷ Such techniques call to mind the way in which employees are sometimes required to dress up as a company mascot or logo, such as Mickey Mouse at Disney. He also branded himself: his trade tokens featured an image of himself in profile – not dissimilar to real currency, and thus evoking all the associated emotions that consumers placed in coinage, as well as incorporating on the opposing side both the '30' device and the image of a cockerel fighting its reflection in a boot, both repeatedly used in Warren's newspaper and handbill advertising.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ JJC, Window Bills and Advertisements Folder 4 (6), 'Turner's Real Japan Blacking' (1817 onwards); JJC, Labels 1 (11b), 'Real Japan blacking made by Geo. Lamerte' (nd.); JJC, Labels 1 (11a), 'Real Japan Blacking made by Geo. Lamerte' (c.1820s-1830s); JJC, Labels 1 (10), 'Real Japan jet blacking manufactured by Gibbins Harrison & Co' (nd.).

¹²⁵ Charles Dickens, quoted in John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens*, Vol. 1 (London, 1924), p.21.

¹²⁶ JJC, Labels 1 (14), 'Waterproof paste blacking made by Jonathan Warren' (nd.).

¹²⁷ BM, British Roy Scharf Vol.1 PV, 1862,0614.1090, 'drawing/advertisement' (1834-1838); see also: Jackson, *George Scharf's London*, p.37.

¹²⁸ Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory*, p.50; p.55.

Overwhelmingly, the imitation of these devices demonstrates that proprietors deployed them as techniques by which they helped consumers identify legitimate and genuine products. From their inclusion on the container itself, these devices were repeated and layered in order to build in as many means of securing a product's branding as well as to reinforce its message. Their repetition on the container itself, labels, newspaper advertising, handbills and window placards, not to mention the buildings in which these commodities were manufactured and retailed, fully justified Wordsworth's description of them as 'blazoned' above the windows of shops.¹²⁹ Nineteenth-century blacking manufacturers became thoroughly adept at branding their product in every way they could, extending this to their skilful manipulation of advertising practices as well as the packaging.

2.1.4 Establishing authenticity: signatures

In such a competitive industry as the nineteenth-century blacking trade, it was understandable that some manufacturers chose to layer their branding in order to build in extra levels of security. Robert Warren used both impressed stamps and labels, and these labels contained not only the pictorial devices outlined in the previous section, but also that other crucial anti-counterfeit device, the signature. Many of Robert Warren's adverts, usually witty verses prefaced by one of Cruikshank's illustrations, incorporated a reproduction of his signature.¹³⁰ This was reproduced upon the labels for his liquid blacking. His uncle, Jonathan Warren, marked his labels for paste

¹²⁹ Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, in Allen, *The Moving Pageant*, p.81.

¹³⁰ Examples can be seen in the John Johnson Collection, see: JJC, Boots and Shoes 1 (27c), 'One Cheer More!' (1817-1837); JJC, Boots and Shoes 1 (26), 'Substance versus shadow' (1817-1837); JJC, Oil and Candles 1 (27a), 'The Persian standard; or, the rising sun' (1830-1835).

blacking at least in a similar fashion.¹³¹ It helped, of course that they shared a surname, and Jonathan used his whole name, rather than attempt to emphasise this shared name, thus differentiating his label from his nephews'.¹³²

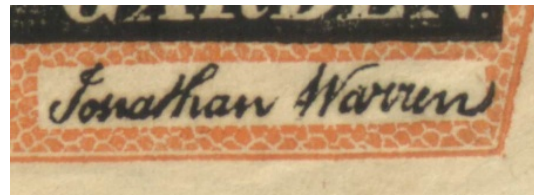
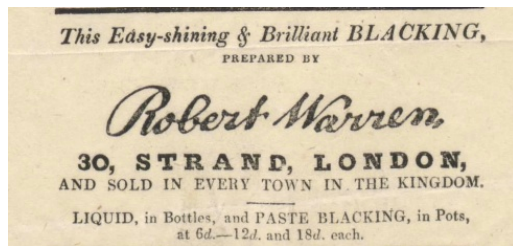


Fig. 3.20, detail from Robert Warren's Blacking advert¹³³; Fig. 3.21, detail from Jonathan Warren's Paste Blacking label¹³⁴

Other proprietors also incorporated their signature into their labels' design, including Day & Martin and George Lamerte. The possible counterfeit Day & Martin label – for Day & Martin Ltd, at Stratford – emphasised the signature, an exact copy of that on the genuine label, by incorporating it twice.¹³⁵ Contemporaries were evidently accustomed to seeing signatures as a mark of authenticity of a product as the device was included in an 1831 caricature of Henry Hunt, Radical MP. Hunt was the proprietor of 'Matchless Blacking', and was depicted by Charles Jameson Grant holding a giant stoneware bottle spraying blacking across the House of Commons,

¹³¹ There are no known surviving examples of Jonathan Warren's liquid blacking labels.

¹³² JJC, Labels 1 (14), 'Waterproof paste blacking made by Jonathan Warren' (nd.).

¹³³ JJC, Advertising, Boots and Shoes 1 (26), 'Substance versus shadow' (1817-1837).

¹³⁴ JJC, Labels 1 (14), 'Waterproof paste blacking made by Jonathan Warren' (nd.).

¹³⁵ JJC, Labels 1 (9c), 'Real Japan blacking made by Day and Martin Ltd' (c.1862-1900).

labelled with the advice: ‘none is genuine without the Signature of the maker Henry Hunt Esq MP’.¹³⁶

Signatures were clearly interpreted as a representation of the origin and, therefore, the genuineness, of a product. Robert Warren’s ‘Imposture Unmasked’ advert advised customers that ‘the original matchless BLACKING bears on each bottle a short direction, with the signature of ROBERT WARREN.’¹³⁷ As discussed in chapter one, the definition of forgery of signatures in financial crime changed over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Courts no longer emphasised personal knowledge of having seen a genuine signature being made as they had early in the period, instead becoming just one of a number of protective measures for financial instruments.¹³⁸ The increased use of facsimile, printed signatures, as opposed to ‘real’ handwritten signatures, implied a similar depreciation of the value or trust placed in signatures on commercial goods as measures of authenticity. The increasing scale on which products began to be produced over the period made it unfeasible for a proprietor to personally sign every unit manufactured. As such, the signature became something akin to the pictorial devices previously discussed, what we would today consider a logo. What became important about this device was, therefore, not its individuality but its standardisation. The trust a signature imparted added to the overall credibility of the product, alongside other devices. Labels were packaging devices that served to combine a variety of methods of imbuing the product they contained with signals to

¹³⁶ BM, Satires, 1985,0119.245, Charles Jameson Grant, ‘Matchless Eloquence [sic] thrown away or 267 against little Joey and his Shining Friend’ (1831).

¹³⁷ *Bristol Mercury*, 25 August 1823, issue 1743.

¹³⁸ Randall McGowen, ‘Knowing the hand: forgery and the proof of writing in eighteenth-century England’, *Historical Reflections*, 24:3 (1998), p.411.

consumers about trust in the origin of that product. Branding, then, was a multi-faceted process that both layered and aggregated messages to consumers.

2.2 Marks of commerce: communications of quality

In addition to the assurances of authenticity, stone bottles also bore marks of commerce that aimed to convince customers of their content's quality. As we have seen, the manufacturers of nineteenth-century earthenwares attempted to differentiate their product from others by conveying their high standards, something that they did in part by linking themselves with well respected, credible sources. Makers such as Joseph Bourne interwove their proprietary branding on their billheads and trade catalogues with other marks, unrelated to the industry such as the royal coat of arms, and in so doing associated themselves with the reputation of the owner of that mark. Marks of commerce were used in a similar manner. Particularly necessary in an industry such as the blacking trade in which the output was nearly identical and any differences in quality would have been largely indiscernible to the average consumer, branding was crucial. In order to convince customers of the quality of their product, proprietors advertised their branding widely alongside claims to the superior nature of their blacking, with testimonials asserting to the quality and affiliation with royal or noble patrons.

It is likely that part of the appeal of liquid blacking for counterfeiters was its relative cheapness. Often made on a domestic scale, it could yield potentially vast profit. It is clear that Charles Day and Robert Warren in particular were commercially successful,

selling their blacking to virtually every town across the country. Yet how did these men compile such vast personal fortunes for manufacturing a product one could make oneself at home for very little cost? In his study of Robert Warren's advertising techniques, Strachan has noted the general 'cultural resonance' of 'the lustrous and well-polished late Georgian boot'.¹³⁹ In part the success of these entrepreneurs was due to a culmination of factors, such as the development of better paving and sewerage systems that began in the Georgian period.¹⁴⁰ Although the changes to the urban landscape were piecemeal, overall there was a general improvement in paving and quality of streets.¹⁴¹ This was combined with a fashion for promenading, encouraged by the building of squares or areas in which people could walk around without dirtying their footwear or clothes. In addition, changes in consumer expectations for pre-made goods, combined with a low price (liquid blacking came in bottles priced at 6d., 10d., 12d. and 18d. and the paste was sold in stoneware pots for 6d., 12d. and 18d.), meant it was probably more economical to buy blacking than it was to make it.¹⁴² Making blacking, while described in domestic recipe books as a fairly straightforward procedure – 'thinned with vinegar to the thickness of Oil let it stand in the bason [sic] a few hours: put the treacle & Blacking [ivory or lamp black] together & a little vinegar to make it the thickness of batter, pour the vitriol & then the oil' – the likelihood that making blacking could be a messy process is difficult to escape.¹⁴³ The variety of recipes for blacking in some books suggested that the pursuit for the shiniest boots could in fact be a more costly procedure; the Johnson family household book included four different concoctions for blacking. 'Mr

¹³⁹ Strachan, *Advertising and Satirical Culture in the Romantic Period*, p.120.

¹⁴⁰ Joyce M. Ellis, *The Georgian Town, 1680-1840* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp.86-105.

¹⁴¹ Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity. London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York, 1998), p.76.

¹⁴² The advert in the *York Herald*, 24 June 1826, issue 1867 gives these prices for the blacking.

¹⁴³ Borthwick Institute for Archives (hereafter BI), RET 4/7/2, Lord Headley's receipt for military blacking (early C19).

Moore's' recipe called for the standard ingredients of ivory black and oil, alongside sugar and to finish 'to the whole of this mixture, add a Glass of Brandy, Gin or any other Spirit' as well as the juice of two lemons.¹⁴⁴ Another in the same volume required two or three days delay in acquiring the finished product while one waited for half an ounce of Gum Dragon to swell in a pint of 'Good Milk'.¹⁴⁵ Why should people waste two or three days to make their shoe polish when they could purchase it, fully made and ready for application, for a mere six pence?

However, these factors all combined alongside what could be described as a greater national awareness of cleanliness on one level, and a downright obsession with shiny footwear on another. In the nineteenth century, Captain Rees Howell Gronow remembered Lieutenant-Colonel Kelly of the First Foot Guards as so fixated upon his boots 'that the polish now in use could not surpass Kelly's blacking in brilliancy' and that allegedly when Custom House burnt down, 'Kelly was burnt with it, endeavouring to save his favourite boots.'¹⁴⁶ The 1801 James Gillray caricature, 'A Pair of Polished Gentlemen', illustrates that Day & Martin and Robert Warren tapped into a pre-existing demand for gleaming boots. In the print, it is clear that to the artist, the two men illustrated– the highly fashionable Sir Lumley St George Skeffington and Montagu James Matthew – were depicted as heads with boots for bodies. Also pictured was an intriguing array of paraphernalia to help them develop an elusive secret recipe for the glossiest boots in the country, surpassing even those of royalty,

¹⁴⁴ Wellcome Trust (hereafter WT), MS.3082 Johnson Family recipe book, Vol. I, p.99.

¹⁴⁵ WT MS.3082, Johnson Family recipe book, Vol.I, 'Composition for Boot Tops Mrs Boulton', p.130. The recipe also called for alcohol and oil of lavender. This is followed on page 131 with a recipe from 'Mrs Boulton's servant' to clean, though not shine, boot tops.

¹⁴⁶ Rees Howell Gronow, *Reminiscences of Captain Gronow, Formerly of the Grenadier Guards and MP for Stafford* (London, 1962), pp.222-224.

such as vials of 'Pine Apple' and 'Spirit of Salt'. In the foreground of the picture lay a broken bottle of 'Royal Blacking'. These men took their blacking very seriously. In his *Reminiscences*, Captain Gronow recounted the infamous episode of a young man enquiring of the dandy Beau Brummell where he bought his blacking: "'Ah!" replied Brummell, gazing complacently at his boots, "my blacking positively ruins me. I will tell you in confidence; it is made with the finest champagne!"'¹⁴⁷

There are at least three broad interpretations of the late Georgian and Victorian preoccupation with clean boots, or cleanliness as a whole, which contribute to the public's readiness and indeed enthusiasm as outlined with the 'Pair of Polished Gentlemen', to 'buy into' the shiny boot phenomenon. In examining contemporary attitudes towards cleanliness we need to consider, too, views towards dirtiness; such zeal for clean boots was somehow revealing of feelings towards dirt. After all, most recipes for blacking contained either ivory char (animal bones) or lamp black (soot), in order to obtain the appropriate pigmentation at a suitably cheap price. Thus, in polishing boots with blacking to make them appear clean, people were in fact wiping dirt upon them. Indeed, despite the improvements to the urban environment, the streets were still far from what would be considered clean today. In the early nineteenth century, soldiers too, were compelled to keep their boots clean – something that has been interpreted as a disciplinary or ritualised aspect of military service.¹⁴⁸ People 'expended a great deal of time and effort cleaning and blacking boots, which immediately soiled [upon leaving the house]'. There were perhaps, alternative motivations driving people to clean their boots: Valerie Steele has argued

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p.72.

¹⁴⁸ Alison Matthews David, 'War and Wellingtons: military footwear in the age of Empire', in Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil (Eds.), *Shoes. A History from Sandals to Sneakers* (Oxford, 2006), p.119.

that footwear has always been ‘a powerful charm’.¹⁴⁹ Later in our period, obsessive cleaning of boots hinted at the subject of fetishism upon which relationships such as Hannah Cullwick and Arthur Munby’s was in part based.¹⁵⁰ The drive for immaculate boots was also perhaps a form of aping ones’ social superiors; a form of social emulation. The dawn of Day & Martin’s, Warren’s and other brands of blacking, brought affordability to this quest for the perfect polish for those who could not afford champagne or essence of pineapple for their blacking. As such, high standards of quality were essential.

Although blacking was sold in three forms – paste, bars and liquid – the latter was always dispensed in generic stone bottles. To the consumer, then, all shoe polish appeared identical. Manufacturers therefore needed to differentiate their product, both tangibly in terms of packaging design, but also on an intangible, psychological level. To prompt that crucial first purchase, as well as encourage repeat buyers, they needed to convince consumers that their product was of a superior quality. This was achieved through branding, which was used in conjunction with marketing techniques such as testimonials and endorsement from nobles or royalty. Manufacturers also emphasised their knowledge and skill, as well as their link to the ‘true’ or ‘original’ blacking compound. Ultimately, all techniques used branding as a signifier for an expected particular standard of quality.

¹⁴⁹ Valerie Steele, ‘Shoes and the erotic imagination’, in Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil (Eds.), *Shoes. A History from Sandals to Sneakers* (Oxford, 2006), p.250.

¹⁵⁰ For more on Hannah Cullwick and Arthur Munby and their servant/master relationship, see her edited diaries: Hannah Cullwick, *The Diaries of Hannah Cullwick, Victorian Maidservant. Edited and with an Introduction by Liz Stanley* (London, 1984); Leonore Davidoff, ‘Class and gender in Victorian England: the diaries of Arthur J Munby and Hannah Cullwick’, *Feminist Studies*, 5:1 (1979), 86-141; Diane Atkinson, *Love and Dirt. The Marriage of Arthur Munby and Hannah Cullwick* (London, 2003).

2.2.1 Claims to invention: product exclusivity

Marks of commerce transmitted signals about the personal reputation of the vendor or manufacturer in order to determine product quality. In part, this was achieved through emphasising the qualifications or background of a manufacturer, in order to legitimise their claims to product exclusivity. This was a similar technique to that used by the makers of patent medicines, who traced their 'rightful' inheritance of a particular nostrum's recipe or included details of their training and qualifications in their adverts and package design. The market for blacking was similarly competitive. When a particular product became successful, proprietors emphasised their exclusive ownership of it as a means of differentiating themselves from the competition. The origins of the Day & Martin blacking formula were somewhat hazy – it was apparently invented by a soldier servant of a Doncaster recruiting officer and passed on to the entrepreneurial pair by Benjamin Martin's brother-in-law. The feud between the Warren family best demonstrated the importance of claims to have been the inventor of a particular recipe of blacking.¹⁵¹

Jonathan Warren claimed that it was he had 'discovered' Warren's blacking in the late eighteenth century, and taken his brother Thomas on to help with the business; they fell out and Thomas left to start his own rival firm. Robert Warren's account, however, asserted that his father Thomas developed the recipe and began selling it, pre-made, in 1795. Robert assisted his father in the running of the business and on Thomas's death in 1805 Robert became the sole proprietor.¹⁵² The cases of alleged

¹⁵¹ T.A.B. Corley, 'Day, Charles (1782/3 – 1826)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.libproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/59284>, (accessed January 2010).

¹⁵² Allen, 'New light on Dickens and the blacking factory', p.5.

imposition upon his name that Robert Warren took to the Chancery court outline very specifically the pains to which each proprietor went to in order to establish their claim to the recipe invented by Thomas Warren and inherited by Robert. In his suit against Edward Woodd, Robert Warren outlined how in 1795 Thomas Warren began manufacturing blacking known as Warren's Japan Blacking, held in 'great reputation and esteem' by the public, and that Robert took over the business in 1805 on Thomas's death. He went on to describe how he 'at length succeed[ed] in establishing a very large and extensive business having Customers in most Towns in England and that such business was carried on in the name of your Orator Robert Warren alone'.¹⁵³ In the case of *Warren v Lamerte* (1827), Robert Warren asserted that the name of Jonathan Warren apparently invoked by Lamerte in his advertising and labelling: 'such name is a fictitious name and only made use of by the said Defendant in order the more easier to sell and dispense of his Blacking as and for the Article so as aforesaid [i.e., Robert Warren's blacking]'.¹⁵⁴ The feud between the Warrens was so notorious that it even earned its own account in the 1824 parody of Robert Warren's advertising campaign, *Warreniana*.¹⁵⁵ As Michael Allen, who has studied the rivalry between the Warrens in detail, notes, by the 1820s there were four claimants to the 'Warren's Blacking' title: Robert Warren himself; Wood's 'Jonathan Warren's original Japan Blacking'; Lamerte's blacking advertised as 'manufacturer to the late Jonathan Warren' and Jonathan Warren's eldest son – named, of course, Jonathan, whose labels were styled as 'Jonathan Warren, eldest son of the late celebrated inventor of that name'.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, as outlined in an earlier section, a relative of Charles Day claimed a (somewhat dubious) partnership with a person named Martin,

¹⁵³ TNA, C13/1500/110 *Warren v Woodd*. Bill only (November 1827).

¹⁵⁴ TNA, C13/909/36 *Warren v Lamerte*. Bill and answer (November 1827).

¹⁵⁵ William Frederick Deacon, *Warreniana [1824]*. Edited by John Strachan (London, 1999).

¹⁵⁶ Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory*, p.72.

so that he was legitimately able to trade blacking as Day & Martin.¹⁵⁷ Statham & Co of 97 Pall Mall, similarly highlighted their link to Day & Martin, with adverts that mentioned Statham's previous role as 'late manager to Day & Martin 97 High Holborn'.¹⁵⁸ Manufacturers went to great and tenuous lengths to prove their links with the original recipe or inventors. It aimed to boost consumer trust in their ability to produce a high quality product in every bottle.

2.2.2 Official or institutional patronage



Fig. 3.22, detail from Robert Warren's Blacking advert¹⁵⁹

Proprietors of blacking did not just attempt to establish their own credibility through emphasising their personal link to the product and to its inventors. Jonathan Warren's

¹⁵⁷ *Croft v Day* (1843).

¹⁵⁸ JJC, Windows Bills and Advertisements folder 4 (5), 'Statha[m] and Co. manufacturers of real Jap[an] black[ing]' (c.1860-1890); *Morning Post*, 15 March 1814, issue 13462.

¹⁵⁹ JJC, Advertising, Oil and Candles 1 (27a), 'The Persian standard; or, the rising sun' Robert Warren's Blacking advert (c.1830-1835).

wife stated in an affidavit that her husband affixed the names and addresses of his customers to his window placards; she claimed Jonathan had to stop this because Thomas Warren used the information to poach customers.¹⁶⁰ Unlike with advertising for medicines, testimonials or recommendations of ‘ordinary’ folk were not used. Instead, manufacturers of blacking utilised language that evoked notions of royalty or nobility on their product. This advertising trope was used by the owners of a variety of different products or people in the service industry. Liquid blacking manufacturers were no exception. Although Day & Martin and Robert Warren did not directly utilise references to Letters Patent, in his advertisements Warren clearly played upon this. One poem advertising the blacking, ‘The Persian Standard; or Rising Sun’, described how an army with boots cleaned by Warren’s helped them gain victory and featured a mock coat of arms. Pictured in Figure 3.22, it was a tongue-in-cheek treatment of heraldic devices that featured two supporting figures cleaning boots either side (with their reflections gleaming back them), and in the centre of the shield, three suns were positioned over three bottles of blacking. At the bottom of the shield was another pair of boots and shoe brush. Underneath was the motto, ‘Luceo non Uro’ (‘I shine not burn’). Though satirical, the device only functioned because references to the monarchy, nobility or heraldic images were tropes of advertising and branding.

It was in the second half of the nineteenth century that blacking manufacturers began to emphasise these links with nobility and the monarchy. Despite ‘a brief and vocal efflorescence of anti-monarchical sentiment in the late 1860s, Victoria was to remain

¹⁶⁰ Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory*, p.50.

a popular and venerated Queen'.¹⁶¹ The implied endorsement of the crown, therefore, was believed to have a considerable impact upon the consuming public. This belief prompted the development of products such as Clarks' Royal Leamingtonian Blacking. Clarks prefaced their window display placards with the declaration 'By Appointment to the Queen' and the image of the blacking bottle shown in the advert incorporates the royal arms on the label of the bottle, with 'CLARKS // HUNTING // BLACKING' written around it.¹⁶² E. Brown & Sons advertised their 'nonpareil' Meltonian Blacking 'as used in the Royal Household' and the labels featured elegant script and design as befitted such customers.¹⁶³

Another manufacturer, Kent & Co, marketed their 'Original and Superior' Royal Caoutchouc Oil Paste Blacking, manufactured in south London, with posters incorporating a highly ornate design that used scroll-like foliage, fans, and atop the whole placard, a crown.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, a label for the Somerset 'True Blue' shoe blacking to commemorate a Conservative Party victory in the 1834 general election, also featured a crown as a focal point of the design, in sumptuous gold and dark blue.¹⁶⁵ A survey of other products including crown motifs in the John Johnson Collection reveal that they were popular devices on the most eclectic of goods; a quarter of a ream of superfine note paper was encased in a wrapper that had

¹⁶¹ Duncan Bell, 'The idea of a patriot queen? The monarchy, the constitution, and the iconographic order of greater Britain, 1860-1900', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34:1 (2006), p.7. See also: Richard Williams, *The Contentious Crown. Public Discussion of the British Monarchy in the Reign of Queen Victoria* (Aldershot, 1997); Alex Tyrell and Yvonne Ward, ' "God bless her little Majesty." The popularizing of monarchy in the 1840s', *National Identities* 2:2 (2000), 109-125.

¹⁶² JJC, Advertising posters, 'Clark's royal Leamingtonian blacking' (c.1865-1890).

¹⁶³ JJC, Labels 1 (6a), 'E. Brown & Son's boot preparations sold everywhere' (1890s); *Websters's Royal Red Book* (London, 1897), p.xviii.

¹⁶⁴ JJC, Advertising posters, 'Kent & Cos. Original & superior royal caoutchouc oil paste blacking' (c.1860-1890).

¹⁶⁵ JJC, Labels, 1 (18), 'Conservative Japan blacking' (3 February 1834).

illustrations of both Albert and Victoria as well as crowns and the scroll-like foliage designs seen on Kent & Co.'s blacking poster.¹⁶⁶ These designs were highly reminiscent of official instruments such as the early versions of the stamp duty labels analysed in chapter two, ornate designs that were difficult to forge. While security against counterfeits was important, manufacturers also used branding to intertwine their identity with royal imagery, to imply endorsement of their product.

Other makers opted to conjure elite affiliation through different means. The second half of the nineteenth century saw a proliferation of worldwide trade exhibitions, endorsed, and indeed celebrated, by the state. Historical discussion of these events has often been framed in terms of expressions of imperialism or as a set of cultural technologies.¹⁶⁷ This is reinforced by Paul Greenhalgh's study of the world fair phenomenon, which has demonstrated that 'hundreds' of exhibitions took place across the world between 1851 and 1939.¹⁶⁸ In these discussions, the state has been firmly in control. Few studies, however, have acknowledged the way in which manufacturers legitimised these fairs and, in turn, legitimised the authorities that organised them. The state's control over the administration of these fairs suggested that it recommended and endorsed the exhibited products. Manufacturers' participation in these events, and their subsequent appropriation of the exhibition's graphic culture in their own branding, implied their products were of a high quality. The appropriation

¹⁶⁶ JJC, Labels 14 (76), 'A quarter of a ream of superfine satin note paper' (c.1840s).

¹⁶⁷ Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas. The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1939* (Manchester, 1988), 52-81; Meg Armstrong, "'A jumble of foreignness': the sublime musayums of nineteenth-century fairs and expositions", *Cultural Critique* 23 (1992-1993), 199-250; Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Fair America. World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington and London, 2000), 45-71; Tony Bennett, 'The exhibitionary complex', in Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner (Eds.), *Culture/Power/History. A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 1994), 123-154.

¹⁶⁸ Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, p.2.

of these marks suggests that these fairs were a two-way process. Producers received endorsement; in turn, they also helped legitimise the state or monarchy by according its endorsement as something extraordinary.

For proprietors intertwined their marks of commerce with the marks of the exhibition. Prizes and awards earned at these displays appeared on labels and advertising material. Sometimes even simply the opportunity to reference their attendance (whether they won a prize or not) was enough: affiliation through participation. In the 1890s, blacking makers B.F. Brown and Co emphasised their high standards through association with these fairs and trumpeted their ‘Highest Award’ from the Paris Exhibition 1889 on their advertising material.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, this technique was a kind of peer review; other experts in the manufacture of these goods had judged the product of an exceptional standard. While heavy levels of state involvement may have added certain pressures in the adjudication of the competing items, there was also a degree of expert review involved. The judges would only grant this status to those who deserved it because otherwise their credibility would be jeopardised in turn. As we have seen with Bourne’s award-winning vitreous glazed stonewares, as a method of boosting trust in a proprietary mark, this was not exclusive to the makers of boot preparations: a Derby-based cotton manufacturer included details of four prizes from London, Dublin, Paris and Vienna on the front of his packets of thread in the 1870s. Likewise, John Symons & Co included on their adverts a plethora of awards from London, Paris and Calcutta, not to mention vague references to monarchical affiliation with the subtitle, ‘the Royal Excelsior’, for their Devonshire champagne

¹⁶⁹ JJC, Labels 1 (3a), ‘B.F. Brown and Co London and Boston’ (November 1893); JJC, Labels 1 (3b), ‘B.F. Brown and Co London and Boston’ (December 1893); JJC, Labels 1 (5), ‘B.F. Brown and Co London & Boston’ (1893).

cyder.¹⁷⁰ Marks of commerce, then, both appropriated and helped legitimate marks representative of authority and power.

However, the big players of the blacking industry did not evoke royal connections or mention any awards earned for their product, beyond Robert Warren's satirical coat of arms used occasionally in his advertising material. This does not mean that they did not use devices that had well-established affiliations and connotations. Day & Martin's window placard, for example, used the symbol of a caduceus – a symbol often mistaken for the rod of Asclepius, a medical symbol depicting a staff and a serpent wrapped around it. The caduceus was a winged staff with two serpents entwined around it, a motif used from the nineteenth century as a printer's mark in medical texts. It has been hypothesised that this usage by printers is the reason why in the twentieth century, the two symbols have been confused, resulting in both symbols becoming associated with medicine.¹⁷¹ It is difficult to know why exactly Day & Martin opted to use the caduceus on their window placards – and whether they actually intended the symbol of medicine and knowledge, or commerce – but it is an extremely prominent aspect of the design of these posters, appearing on either side of the name and address of the manufacturers and a large '97', incorporating again the name of the company inside each numeral.¹⁷² An analysis of other ephemera in the John Johnson Collection reveals that in the nineteenth century the caduceus was used on labelling and advertising for a variety of global trades; cigar boxes, matchboxes

¹⁷⁰ JJC, Labels 16 (12), 'W. Evans & Co.'s Boar's Head Cotton' (c.1870s); JJC, Labels 19 (45b), 'Devonshire cyder' (July 1896).

¹⁷¹ Robert A. Wilcox and Emma M. Whitham, 'The symbol of modern medicine: why one snake is better than two', *Annals of Internal Medicine* 138:8 (2003), pp.674-675.

¹⁷² JJC, Windows Bills and Advertisements folder 4 (3a), 'Day and Martin's real Japan blacking' (c.1820-1860); JJC, Windows Bills and Advertisements folder 4 (3c), 'Day and Martin's real Japan blacking' (c.1820-1860).

and on bale labels in the weaving trade.¹⁷³ Day & Martin then, drew upon an established precedent by using such allegorical imagery in their advertising and in so doing they imbued their proprietorial identity with intangible ideas about mercantile success.

As proprietors of products vended in earthenware containers, blacking makers therefore used a range of additional materials in order to validate the proprietorial identity that they sought to present through branding marks of commerce upon their product. While a close reading of the bottle itself provides valuable insight into the branding practices of traders in the early modern period, it is overwhelmingly clear that incorporation of the ephemeral, associated material culture of these products is necessary in order to fully understand the way in which branding was intended and interpreted to contemporaries. Using all these sources allows us to fully realise the ‘life history’ of these objects and recognise their changing meanings as the context through which the bottle passed also changed.

3. Conclusion

The marks upon eighteenth- and nineteenth-century earthenwares reveal branding to be a far more complex process than has previously been acknowledged. Broadly speaking, we can separate proprietary branding into marks of production and those of commerce. The role of marks of production, in particular, have been overlooked by

¹⁷³ JJC, Tobacco Papers 1 (121), ‘Svelgani’ (c.1910s); JJC, Labels 13 (15a), ‘Rödfos tændstikker’ (c.1880); JJC, Labels 17 (93b), ‘Bale label with allegorical figures flanking a coat of arms’ (c.1830s-1860s). The Rödfos tændstikker label in particular emphasised international commerce, with two caduceus’ holding up a globe.

historians who consider the study of branding is part of the analysis of historical marketing. The majority of work on this type of branding has been carried out by ceramicists, art historians or museum curators, who have been focused on attributing the marks to specific potters and determining an object's provenance. The publication of catalogues of marks, which run into multiple volumes, reveal in extensive detail, the degree to which these marks have been studied. Reproductions of marks feature alongside biographical details of producers, company histories and often illustrations of how these devices changed over time.¹⁷⁴ This work has not yet been integrated into a wider history of consumption.

However, detailed information of this kind can be used in order to consider broader issues within society, such as the way in which commodity branding was read and understood in the period. Incorporating marks of production into this analysis perhaps naturally preferences the 'life cycle' methodology of reading earthenwares over other ways of incorporating material culture into historical research. Taking such an approach reveals yet another complex facet of commodity branding: marks that represented a particular identity were not necessarily placed upon the object by that individual. Potters were responsible for the implementation of the marks of commerce of the blacking, drink or paint merchant that would use the bottle to contain their product. They might then sell them to counterfeit blacking or paint manufacturers, not only the identity represented in the mark. This compromises claims made by historians, archaeologists and anthropologists that branding was intended to reassure

¹⁷⁴ For example: William Chaffers, *Marks and Monograms on European and Oriental Pottery and Porcelain*. Edited by Geoffrey A Godden, *Fifteenth Edition* 2 Vols. (London, 1965); Geoffrey A. Godden, *Encyclopaedia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks* (London, 1964).

customers of authenticity and genuineness.¹⁷⁵ Instead, stone bottles encourage us to adopt a more fluid interpretation of the ‘life cycle’ methodology that accounts for multiple implementers, readers and users of these marks, which means that branding is not static, but rather encourages us to see the way in which these marks, their meaning and intent varied, depending on the context in which they were read. The same mark might be read as both a mark of production and a mark of commerce, depending on its audience.

This changing context is crucial. One bottle was involved in multiple transactions and as such, the branding upon it had multiple readings. Joseph Bourne’s pottery stamp was at first a mark of production but took on a commercial role when read by his customer – the blacking manufacturer or drinks merchant who would later fill the bottle with their product. In turn, the customers of these retailers might see Bourne’s stamp again as proof of origin and production. To all involved, it also represented an expected standard of quality. Consumers of ginger beer, for example, would not want their drink to be retailed in a bottle that had formerly held another drink that left residual traces, and thus tainted their drink. Use of a bottle that did not absorb its contents was therefore crucial. This concern would have been passed onto the merchant of drink who would have sought such reassurances that the bottles he purchased of a potter would not do this. Marks of production, therefore, represented trust in an expected quality (and therefore, origin). This trust was aggregated

¹⁷⁵ For example: Fanselow, ‘The bazaar economy or how bizarre is the bazaar really?’, , p.252; Akerlof, ‘The market for “lemons” : quality uncertainty and the market mechanism’, p.499; David Wengrow, ‘Prehistories of commodity branding’, *Current Anthropology* 49:1 (2008), 7-34; David Wengrow, ‘Introduction: commodity branding in archaeological and anthropological perspectives’, in Andrew Bevan and David Wengrow (Eds.), *Cultures of Commodity Branding* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2010), 1-33.

throughout the life of the bottle, and since stone bottles were frequently recycled, this interpretation of the mark was repeated over and over again.

This aggregation of trust is further demonstrated with the marks of commerce found upon earthenware bottles, their packaging and advertising. On the bottles themselves, these were layered: Robert Warren's bottles, for example, had his details type-impressed into the bottle itself, as well as on a label that would have been stuck upon it. The label itself contained multiple devices that came to represent Warren's proprietary branding; a signature, a pictorial device of '30' and the image of a man shaving by the reflection of his boots. This was repeated upon marketing and advertising material, and thus through repetition reinforcing the link between Warren and these avatar-like devices.

Joseph Bourne, too, repeated his stamp in various other locations aside from his product, such as trade catalogues and bill heads. It was important to deploy the mark in a controlled manner so as to carefully manipulate the way in which it was interpreted. Also affecting the way in which a proprietary mark was read was the way in which retailers and producers chose to appropriate already-established symbols, such as royal or institutional emblems. By doing so, proprietors of even mundane goods attempted to boost this intangible trust element of their mark through 'borrowing' or affiliation with the trust that those devices held, and thus influence the decision-making process of consumers. Branding in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, therefore, was a multi-layered, multi-dimensional process.