



## Arctic Scenery



Arctic Scenery, transferware plate (maker unknown) c.1840

During the mid nineteenth century, fascination with the Arctic was rife so that names of explorers became household names on both sides of the Atlantic. The mystic quest for the 'North West Passage' which would connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans led to the loss of Sir John Franklin and his men who sailed off into the Arctic mists in 1845. Published, illustrated accounts of discoveries and travels were amongst the most popular travel books of the day and inspired a series of printed tablewares entitled *Arctic Scenery*. The engraver not only drew heavily on Sir Edward William Parry's accounts of travels around the northern part of Canada<sup>1</sup> but also inserted exotic animals in the borders from different sources. Described once as a "glorious perversion of geography", the scalloped edge plates featured cartouches of tropical wild cats including ocelot, jaguar and leopard whilst other wares included goats,

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<sup>1</sup> Parry, William Edward, *Journal for the Discovery of a North West Passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific, Performed in the years 1819-20 in His Majesty's ships Hecla and Griper*. London: Murray, John 1821.

Parry, William Edward, *Second Voyage for the Discovery of a North West Passage. From the Atlantic to the Pacific; performed in the years 1821-22-23 in His Majesty's ships Fury and Hecla*. London: Murray, John, 1824.

antelopes and stags. Sources included Thomas Bewick, William Jardine and Oliver Goldsmith<sup>2</sup>



All wares were marked with a printed *Arctic Scenery* backstamp.

One hundred and eighty years later, as global warming ensures that the North West passage becomes easier to navigate as each year passes, the Arctic becomes more and more accessible. Its pristine nature is now threatened on a number of fronts by our thirst for oil. Unrestricted burning of fossil fuels, pumps ever increasing amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere exacerbating Arctic ice melt, whilst oil exploration now directly threatens delicate eco-systems.



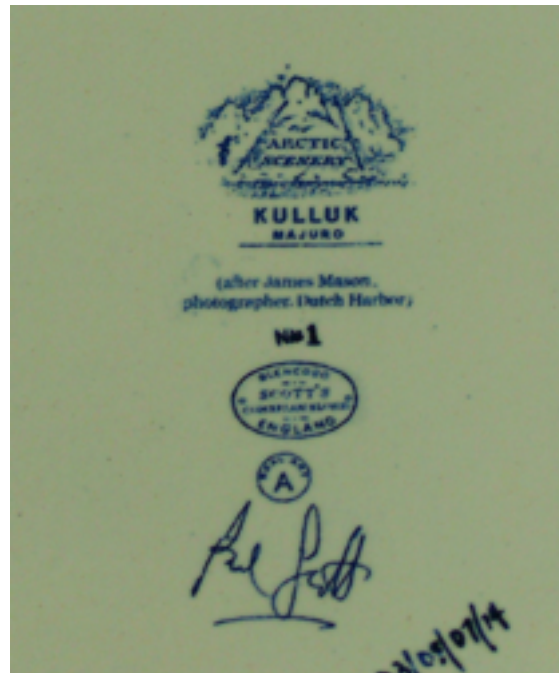
*Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s), Arctic Scenery, Kulluk*

It is against this backdrop that *Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s), Arctic Scenery* updates the original tableware designs for the twenty first century. Using antique, feather edged

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<sup>2</sup> Bewick, Thomas, *A General History of Quadrupeds*, Robinson and Diley London 1790. Jardine, William, *The Naturalist's Library*, London, Edinburgh, Dublin, 1833 - 1843. Goldsmith, William, *Animated Nature* Poole, Philadelphia, 1824.

platters the first of the series depicts Shell's *Kulluk* oil exploration rig. On 31 December 2012, the *Kulluk* ran aground off Sitkalidak Island in the Gulf of Alaska. The rig had been working in the Beaufort Sea, off the Alaska North Slope. She was being towed to a winter home in Seattle when she encountered a storm, and the grounding happened. US Coast Guard evacuated the rig on Dec 29 December, and on New Year's Eve, tug crews were ordered to cut the rig loose, leading to her grounding. *Kulluk's* movement south for the winter was at least in part motivated by an effort to avoid State of Alaska property taxes on oil and gas extraction equipment.



Whilst minimal pollution was caused by the grounding, the incident highlighted the dangers of oil exploration in a delicate and hostile environment. The rig was so badly damaged that Shell admits it may have to be written off.<sup>3</sup>

Paul Scott, February 2014



<sup>3</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/10416879/Shells-Arctic-costs-spiral-as-it-admits-damaged-Kulluk-rig-may-be-written-off.html>