



## The Rörstrand Archive and Vindsäter

My research into industrial ceramic print archives has revealed that most copper plates used in the production of printed blue and white tableware have been destroyed - scrapped or sold as souvenirs. The largest and finest collection was held by the Spode Museum in England, but since the closure of the company in late 2008 its fate is unknown. However a few museum collections do still exist - one in Norway (at the *Egersund* Museum), and two in Sweden (*Gustavsberg* near Stockholm and *Rörstrand* in Lidköping). In April and October 2005 I worked in the *Rörstrand* museum at first sorting, and then printing a selection from fourteen crates of obsolete engraved copper plates once used for ceramic decoration.

The *Rörstrand* collection of copper plates is a unique archive. Although not complete (at one time it was customary for retiring factory workers to be given old copper plates as souvenirs) it is still extensive, and includes hundreds of logos and designs used on bottles, cups, plates for shipping lines, cafés and restaurants. There are also extensive remains of the plates used to print every day tableware, and they contain information not present on the ceramic artefacts printed from them. A number of copper plates are for example marked *Wengers, Hanley* (Stoke on Trent, England) indicating that the earliest coppers were imported from England.

One Swedish pattern in particular interested me. Marked on some copper plates depicting pastoral scenes, was the name *Hjelmsäter* - but this was crossed through, and the alternative *Vindsäter* placed alongside. Although the pattern included designs for a number of different objects, no corresponding ceramic artefacts could be found in the museum's extensive collection, and no reference could be found in publications documenting *Rörstrand* production.

An extensive search of charity shops and antique shops in Lidköping on my second visit unearthed a single plate for 20SEK, and later through web searches I located a number of artefacts at *Veras Antik & Kuriosa*, Hällekis - some that are shown here.

Searching for the name *Hjelmsäter* revealed the existence of a farm estate in the Kinnekulle. In November 2005 Edvard Hamilton took me to visit an abandoned farm on the estate - *Vindsäter*.

It is clear that the pattern itself does not faithfully depict the farm or estate, but it is safe to deduce that it was probably named after it. Some of the architecture and landscape depicted are reminiscent of the area, but the pattern also includes a range of Swedish rural architectural styles. The *Vindsäter* tableware pattern is in fact an idealized pastoral confection. It was produced between 1935 and 1947. Examination of the stylization reveals striking similarities with *Enoch Woods English Scenery* tableware and perhaps the engravings and illustrations of Eric Ravillous,

Clare Leighton and other English artists of the period who also worked for Wedgwood.

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