

UK Belleek Collectors' Group

NEWSLETTER

*Number 23/2
September 2002*

It hardly seems 3 months ago that the first new format newsletter was published, now here's another. A lot has happened, including the best attended AGM ever, a successful Silent Auction, a wonderful day in Bourne End with Jackie & Jim Howden, and the exciting – though regrettable – sale of the Minton Museum pieces by Doulton. You can read about all this, and much more, in the Newsletter.

I look forward to receiving articles for publication in your Newsletter, and please continue to send your personal news for publication to our Chairman, Jan Golaszewski.

- Gina Kelland

Contacts:

Gina Kelland compiles the Newsletter, so please let her have your contributions, comments, suggestions, letters for publication, criticisms etc. **If you are sending published articles please either get Copyright clearance or enclose the details of the publisher so Gina can ask for permission.** Gina's email ginak@elmtrees.freeserve.co.uk

Chris Marvell publishes the Newsletter, and he and Bev Marvell distribute it. He is also setting up a database which will form the Group's archive, keeping a record of relevant publications and photographs (including photos etc. not published in the Newsletter). Chris's email gb69@dial.pipex.com

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Credits:

- Photographs by Gina Kelland and Chris Marvell unless otherwise stated
- Twinings Teapot Museum leaflet provided by Joanna Urbanek
- Article on Edmund de Waal (potter who works in porcelain) from Homes & Antiques magazine, provided by Gina Kelland
- Irish newspaper cuttings from Roy & Rose Hollihead

Other credits are given in the articles which include the material credited.

Many thanks to members who have responded so positively to the new format Newsletter and especially to those who have helped by writing reports and articles.

Forthcoming Events:

- 19/20 October, meeting at Adlington Hall in Cheshire.
- 7/8 December, David & Christine Reynolds will once again be hosting our Christmas Party in Wilmslow
- 5/6 April 2003, the Whitlock Family will host a weekend in Liskeard, Cornwall. Amongst the events to look forward to, Brian & Pat Russell – who have done fascinating research at the Public Records Office on Registration Marks – will present a CD ROM of their researches. Chris Marvell has been privileged to have a brief preview, and he was delighted to see it.

(BBC Homes & Antiques Magazine, August edition, published an article by Judith Miller on Belleek. A copy of the article will be available to see at the next meeting in case anybody missed it).

UK Belleek Collectors' Newsletter 23/2, September 2002

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THE WAY FORWARD

At our AGM held last July, we considered our Group's 'Way Forward' strategy. In particular we discussed the implications of our new Newsletter being published on-line and its exposure to the world-wide Belleek fraternity.

On a wave of euphoria we applauded the launch of our new Newsletter format, and we praised the considerable pioneering efforts particularly achieved by Gina KELLAND, Chris MARVELL and Simon WHITLOCK. They are pro-active in producing our Newsletter and maximising our electronic format and means of communication.

However, there were valid concerns expressed at our AGM primarily about legal and security implications. These have now been addressed and I am pleased to assure Members that all future electronic publications of our Newsletter will not compromise individual contributors or our Group as a whole. Arrangements are firmly in place to ensure that we are operating within the law, maintaining security within the information we publish, and that every contributor's permission is sought prior to any of their articles being published on-line.

Each Member household will receive a **paper** copy of the Newsletter. Some weeks later, the Newsletter (modified if necessary) will be published electronically by being added to our web site.

Information communication is a vital part of our *Way Forward* strategy. Our new format for communicating with the ceramic community at large is key in reaching our objectives of promoting awareness of our Group's existence, increasing membership numbers and forging International Fellowship links with world-wide Belleekers. Information technology has revolutionised our world in relation to communication and it is vital for our Group to remain in the forefront of this exciting development. Already our first on-line Newsletter has attracted a surge of interest and praise from home and abroad. Our Newsletter team are continually refining and developing the technology as they strive for perfection. We do need to capitalise on this surge of interest and energy, at the same time ensuring we are operating legally and safely.

I know you join me in wishing our team continued success and I thank you for your continued support in supplying them with your Newsletter contributions for our Membership and our world-wide fraternity to enjoy with keen interest.

- Jan Golaszewski, September, 2002.

Pre Belleek AGM Gathering Saturday 6th July 2002



Above, Jim and Jackie's River; left Belleek – in pink! Below, the garden, the fantastic spread and Belleekers enjoying it all!

M25 bound on beautiful morning, with my trusty navigator, Jan; I sensed that another memorable weekend of 'Belleeking' was underway. A prayer for safety and no traffic jams to impede our journey was thankfully answered and we arrived in good time.

Many keen Belleekers had already arrived at Jackie and Jim's house in Bourne End, Buckinghamshire. A very warm welcome awaited us. How nice it is to meet up with fellow Belleekers regularly. A big thank you to everyone who makes this possible by opening their homes and planning events for us all.



Jackie and Jim's home reflects their diverse collecting tastes. Ancient Pewter to Handbags, Portmerion and Belleek, all displayed with incredible artistry. It is so interesting and helpful to see how others manage their displays.

However, for me, the best was yet to come. The sun beckoned me out into a very charming garden, skirted by the River Wye; what a water feature! - Charlie Dimmock, eat your heart out!



There were more Members to greet, who were already taking advantage of the lovely weather, with some feathered friends paddling peacefully on the fast flowing river. The ducks were an amusing diversion as we had drinks and nibbles (No doubt they felt the same about us!).

Quite soon a groaning buffet table drew us back into the house (This is quite literally true, see the picture above!).



Members caught up on news, Jackie and Jim introduced their various and eclectic collections. Perhaps, it is this very eclecticism which brings us together as a Group. It was a super luncheon, crowned by a wonderful ham; partaken in a beautiful and relaxing location. After tea and coffee and much talk, Jim gave directions to the Upper Thames Sailing Club. The venue for our evening gathering. The Group dispersed, some to discover the Buckinghamshire countryside and prepare for the evening ahead.



It was a balmy afternoon which portended a pleasantly warm evening. The sailing club is walking distance from Jackie and Jim's home, what a good move! Everyone gathered from their various accommodations for 7.30 pm. Once again, the River, boats and wildlife provided a talking point for Members as we stood on the balcony of this beautiful Victorian white weather-boarded building. That evening we were the exclusive guests of the club at Jackie and Jim's invitation.

One large table was laid banquet style, beautifully adorned with Jackie's candle and flower arrangements, above the boat house in the Members' club.

The Upper Thames Sailing Club: Outside(above), inside (below)



Jim appeared, an 'old hand' behind the bar and liquid refreshment flowed in true nautical fashion - 'down the hatch!'

We took our seats and what followed was quite delicious; efficiently and courteously served. The talk was lively. The crested china service (which never goes unnoticed on these occasions) was remarked upon. The USTC had celebrated its centenary in recent years. In any quiet moments, I experienced a calming view of passing craft through the leaded windows.

It was as pleasing an evening as one could imagine. As the sun dipped below the horizon, the distant lights and passing traffic twinkled on the calm waters. Belleekers were treated to prizes from the table raffle organised by our Chiltern friends. Some

strolled along the riverbank taking in the crisp, clear evening air.



Left: Some of the Chiltern Members (and Guests) – excellent company!

The whole day was a triumph of cooperation between Gina, Jackie, Jim, Anne, John, Anne and last but not least, Ray.

As did many, I departed very contented, anticipating the events of the next day's AGM!

- Joanna Urbanek

UK Belleek Collectors' Group AGM, Sunday 7th July



It's very hard to get a complete Group Photo – there's so much going on at the Meeting, you just can't get everyone together – this is the best attempt, the group minus about six!

The UK Group AGM is a very full day, it begins with the yearly "Silent Auction". This year, this was followed by a talk and video presentation by Gina Kelland on "Shipwreck Ceramics".

Silent Auction

Those of you who attend the AGM meeting will know that one of the main events of the Belleeker's year is the Silent Auction. Our Silent Auction truly is silent. Nobody except the auctioneer Graham and Bev the designer and operator of the computer programme on which the items and bids are recorded know the detail of who sold what to whom and at what price, but they are far too busy to take notice. This is to overcome the British reserve about 'doing business' with our friends.



Julia and Georgina unpack their items
Page 8



People bring along their items that are surplus to requirements, hopefully to sell them and replenish their Belleek buying fund, or more often we have noticed vendors buy as much as they sell - almost like swapping something old for something new!

The offering this year was the best (and biggest) ever. A total of 134 lots from 16 vendors. We had to work quite "fast and furious" to process this number of lots in the time available - but obviously the more successful the sale the more there is to do. It helps considerably if the vendor brings a list of items, giving details and the reserve price. This year for the first time, some of our vendors emailed their lot descriptions in advance, which was a great help.

Above, some of the great range on offer; below, the worthy Auctioneer, Graham, encourages buyers



What can we offer you – a nice Covered Basket?

The items covered quite a wide range from early black mark pieces, nice earthenware, crested, Lenox, Bundoran!, teapots, teaware, lonely saucers looking for cups, Xmas plates, no less than 3 baskets (1 covered), etc..

Reserves were from £2 to £425 reflecting the scope and quality. This ensured that there was something of interest for everyone who attended.

We thought vendors had set the reserves quite reasonably and were very honest about any damage.

Yes, this is a Nautilus Trio, not Belleek Hexagon!





Bev, Assistant Auctioneer with a nice Ivy Bowl

As usual, approximately a quarter of the lots were very, very popular attracting up to 5 bids each.

Tip , if you really want to make sure an item goes home with you, decide what it is worth to you, then make a realistic bid above the reserve, those who bid the reserve price will lose out!

A couple of bidders still manage to bid below the reserve, but this has reduced over the years because most people have now got the gist of proceedings.

Just about every vendor had successful sales and many of the Belleek Collectors who attended the Silent Auction secured themselves a 'good buy' for their collection. About 50% of lots entered found a new home.

This is a higher rate of selling than Sothebys managed at this year's Irish Sale!

All in all, a very satisfactory sale, I hope you all agree.

That's all folks. The Silent Auction Team is very happy to find a new home for your surplus goodies.

- *Bye, bye*

from the Silent Auction Team.



Any suggestions for a caption for this picture?

Shipwreck Ceramics

Gina Kelland said she had seen a television programme last year about the wreck of a Chinese junk that was believed to have sunk in the South China Sea, and she and her restoration students had become very interested in the story. There was no date and no name for the ship, but Captain Michael Hatcher (the man who discovered the "Nanking" cargo and who spends his life looking for wrecks and treasure) together with Nigel Pickford (a Marine Historian at the Maritime Museum in Greenwich) did extensive research. The ship was in fact the "Tek Sing" which sank in 1822 on route to Java with a loss of life believed to be greater than that of the Titanic.

Captain Hatcher found the Tek Sing on a reef between Sumatra and Borneo, and anchored a salvage barge in the area with a crew of 50 including experienced divers that he had worked with for some 25 years. Their amazing find was a cargo of Chinese porcelain 18 feet deep; There were 300,000 pieces, 200 to 300 years old.

Gina showed an extract from a video about the discovery and salvage, including a porcelain expert talking about the pieces. She and Jackie Howden brought along pieces they had restored, and just before we broke for lunch the names of everybody present were put in a restored Tek Sing Lotus Pattern bowl for a draw. The winner of the bowl was Brian Henton.



Gina with a Tek Sing bowl



Our Chairman, Jan, with the bowl for presentation.

Pieces from the Tek Sing can be purchased from The Collector, PO Box 335, Tiptree, Colchester, CO5 9WP, telephone number for inquiries 01376 572755, or from specialist dealers such as Robert McPherson at Stockspring Antiques, 114 Kensington Church Street, London W8 4BH. They also sometimes feature on the television shopping channel.

The Business of the Afternoon

Following the Silent Auction and Gina's presentation there followed an excellent lunch (no, it's not quite true that Belleekers eat all the time, but we do like to enjoy ourselves!).



The afternoon began with the business of the Group's AGM.

The Minutes of the AGM have been prepared but will be presented to members separately from this Newsletter – it's not because the Group Business is boring (it's not, honestly!), but because the newsletter is our forum for social news, news and views about Belleek, Belleek ware and pots and potting in general.

The Committee: Eddie Renshaw, Jan Golaszewski and Bev Marvell

An important announcement was made that Eddie Renshaw would be stepping down as Group's Treasurer after many years of faultless and sterling service: the new Treasurer would be Simon Whitlock (he gives a brief introduction later in this Newsletter). A vote of thanks was made to Eddie – he has been a much-appreciated and long-standing member of the Group's Committee.



We continued with introductions of new members and presentations which were made to members of the "Chilterns Chapter" and an all too brief talk (the Business meeting overran somewhat!) by Brian Scott. Brian's article is presented in full in this Newsletter, which, we hope, is some recompense to him for the lack of time for his presentation!

Jackie and Jim Howden being presented with a gift from Ruth Prior, representing the Group.

Their hospitality was wonderful, the work they did to open their house and arrange the Sailing Club dinner on the Saturday was phenomenal. To mention nothing of Jim's skill as a barman!

We would like to thank them and the other members of the "Chilterns Chapter" for putting on such a good show for us all.

Members' Survey Results

Since the AGM in 2001 when a general discussion was opened by the Chairman, Jan, on members' views on the future development of the Group, views of the individual members have been sought. Many discussions, inside and out of meetings have taken place. A survey form was sent out to all members in 2002 and these are the results of that survey.

The analysis of the results is presented here. It shows that the study and discussion of Antique Belleek is clearly the major interest of most members, followed, in second place by the Group's social activities.

Some findings seem a bit contradictory, such as 41% stating that Speakers and research were their favourite activity at meetings but 30% saying that poor speakers were their *least* favourite and 6% saying that research is their least favourite activity. Perhaps there really is no contradiction here.... we like speakers, but they have to be good!

MEMBERS' SURVEY - ANALYSIS

1. Questionnaires returned (%) : 31

2. BCIS Membership (%) : 74

3. Interest (%) :

	Antique	Modern	General	Irish	Social
1 :	68	Nil	11	5	21
2 :	27	11	11	5	42
3 :	5	11	41	32	21
4 :	Nil	32	32	21	11
5 :	Nil	46	5	37	5

4. Favourites (%) :

- Speakers/research : 41
- Socialising : 34
- Silent Auction : 16
- Bring & Tell : 9

Least favourites (%) :

- Poor speakers : 30
- AGM/business : 24
- Time out : 18
- Current wares : 12
- Silent Auction : 6
- Research : 6
- Cost of wares : 6

Improvements :

- More speakers (especially from the Membership).
- More visits to historical places of interest.
- Wider range of venues.
- Re-energise 'Bring & Tell' activity.
- Research discussion groups to be held annually.
- Contacts with other groups with Belleek connections.
- Purchase projector.
- AGM : *am* for business, *pm* for Belleeking.

JMG/July2002

It is interesting that 74% of members have kept up their BCIS membership, even though the topic of "Modern Belleek" was just about the least interesting to the members!

CORNUCOPIAS (or CORNUCOPIAE?)

by Brian Scott

The concise Oxford Dictionary defines 'Cornucopia' as:

"(Art) goat's horn represented as overflowing with flowers, fruit, and corn, horn of plenty; ornamental vessel shaped like this."



In the Dictionary of Worcester Porcelain Vol. 1 1751 – 1851, at p. 118, John Sandon tells us that two sizes of cornucopia are listed as selling in Worcester's London warehouse as early as 1755/1756. "These would be a standard horn shape with spiral moulding and a border of flower heads and leaves below the rim. A rarer version has stronger moulded spiral flutes and a scroll design at the rim. These were made as left and right-hand examples to sell as matching pairs ..."

Brian Scott's Cornucopiae – a left and right-handed pair

The authors of 'The Dictionary of Minton', Paul Atterbury and Maureen Batkin at p.64 state that "a number of interpretations of the horn of plenty were made to serve as match pots, flower vases and wall pockets and that two pairs from the 1860s, in the form of cupids holding cornucopia, were made in majolica." (NB a pair of these, date code for 1867, were auctioned in Bonhams sale E3632 on 28th June and sold for £3400 + 17.5%).

At p.238 they comment that wall brackets serving as supports for vases and statues became popular in the 1840s and that Minton "used the word bracket fairly freely, and applied it also to wall pockets for flowers and wall sconces for candles."

This rather loose terminology is apparent in descriptions of *Belleek* ware.

Degenhardt in the second edition of his book, at pages 175/6, illustrates seven different 'wall brackets' but none of them are 'brackets' as we understand them, i.e. with a flat top surface on which another object can stand. By his own classification system D1518 is described as 'Coral and Shell Wall Bracket' but in the 1928 catalogue (see p.209) it is included with the Statues and Fonts! Confusion reigns! I have a catalogue of the same period with the original *Belleek* stock numbers. D1518 is *Belleek* number 430 – selling at 7 shillings in 'Cob' finish only. This description distinguishes it from No. 437, 'Coral and Shell Font' (D1111), selling at 4 shillings and sixpence in 'Pearl'. In an Abridged Price List of 1st September 1947 the prices, post war, had risen to 19/6 and 12/6 respectively!

This research was prompted by the recent purchase of a matching pair of cornucopia wall pockets. Although not marked the following arguments leads me to the conclusion that these are previously unrecorded *Belleek* pieces:



Detail of the Encrusted Flowers on one Cornucopia

1. *Belleek* made a variety of wall pockets and fonts described as 'brackets'.
2. Cornucopias were a traditional design produced in ceramics by many factories.
3. The spirally moulded pockets of these examples are fired in a chocolate colour and no mark was applied because there was no flat white surface on which to place the *Belleek* black trademark.



4. Chocolate was a standard *Belleek* colour finish. Marion Langham in *Belleek*, at page 27, describing VS18 'Single Boy and Shell', states:

"It is reputed that Queen Victoria particularly liked the 'chocolate' finish. Several *Belleek* pieces have this colour but it was difficult and expensive to produce."

5. We know that this colour was used in production before 1904 because the catalogue of this date illustrates 'Boy Bombineer' (D32) in chocolate colouring. This and other comports with chocolate coloured 'putti' are illustrated in Langham, p.95.

6. Other examples are:

- | | | | |
|------|--------|--|-------------------|
| i. | D11 | 'Double Boy and Shell' | Dagenhardt, p.135 |
| ii. | VS206 | 'Sea Horse Flower Holder' | Langham, p.37 |
| | | a. (reference to 'rare finish') | |
| iii. | VS158 | 'Lizard Vase' | Langham, p.36 |
| iv. | TCH100 | 'Chinese Tea Ware Kettle' | Langham, p.107 |
| | | a. and, of course, 'The Crouching Venus' | |



7. Most of the examples listed above are identified as First Period pieces and it seems reasonable to deduce that production using dark chocolate colour decoration was phased out in the Second Period for manufacturing reasons or due to changes in popular taste.

8. The applied floral decoration on the pockets is typical of the fine quality early *Belleek* style. Each piece has a profusion of different flowers: fuchsias, forget-me-nots, roses, carnations and convolvulus. The leaf-work, with delicate serrated edges, matches that found on the lowest leaves of the 'Thistle Flowered Wall Bracket' – see Degenhardt p.175.



***Belleek* or not *Belleek*, that is the question!**

The three pictures above are courtesy of Marion Langham from "Belleek Irish Porcelain" Chinese Tea Urn, TCH100; Lizard Vase, VS158 and Two Comports, DS27 and DS26

Simon Whitlock is the Group's new Treasurer

Hello everyone, my name is Simon Whitlock and I am your new Treasurer. My aim for the future is to continue with the high standards set by Brian Scott and Eddie Renshaw.

I have now received all the various papers and documents from Eddie and we are in a good state of financial health as confirmed at the AGM. If any of you need to contact me I am on-line at sjwhitlock@btinternet.com or please telephone 01579 346016. My answer phone takes messages if we are not available.

For those of you that we have not personally met, I am married to Melanie and we have one daughter called Caragh, who is well known to anyone who has attended our group meetings. Melanie and I were married in 1988...we received several pieces of Belleek as Wedding presents.

We have been told by Mel's Irish relations that it is lucky to receive Belleek!



Simon is the one on the left! Caragh here is clearly a Belleek collector in the making

However, it was a year or so before that we first bought any Belleek. Just like any collector in the early years, we just went mad. However, Mel's Mum kept advising us to only purchase Black Mark pieces. I think I really became hooked when we purchased in 1989 a Neptune Cup & Saucer for £38 in Winchester. We obtained a copy of Dick Degenhardt's first book in 1990 and we were well on our journey. In 1991, We met our Maureen and Graham Munton who were standing at a fair at Exeter and learned of the UK Group. I did take a further 12 months before we attended our first meeting which was the AGM in 1992. We do try to attend as many meetings as possible.

Our collection has changed over the years. Initially we purchased any Black Mark pieces. With some good sources we gradually changed direction in 1994 when we started to find items such as Thorn, Chinese and Echinus. Thanks to our Ruth Prior, we have taken her advice and when the opportunity arises, upgrade a piece or set and pass on our earlier pieces to another collector for them to enjoy as we have. Sadly our earlier dealer sources dried up but as one avenue closed fortunately another one would open. In the past four years, we have concentrated solely on painted pieces and like Chris and Beverly Marvell have leaned towards tea wares which we love. We owe a lot to the advice and encouragement that we have received from fellow collectors over the years.

We hope that as many of you can make the journey to Cornwall next April. Not only to share our collection, but to enjoy some time in such a great county. Sadly, all the old industries have gone, but Cornwall is surging ahead with high tech industries, Film Studios, it's own University, the University of Cornwall, rejuvenated towns, families moving to the West for the lifestyle, Sand, Sea and Surf and World famous attractions such as the Eden Project near St Austell which is to be featured as well in the next James Bond film. We look forward to sharing Cornwall with you all.

- Simon Whitlock

The Twining Teapot Gallery

Generous grants from the MGC/V & A Purchase Grant Fund, the National Art Collections Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, The Friends of Norwich Museums, The Norwich Town Close Estate Charity, the Sedgwick Group and the Norwich Decorative and Fine Arts Society enabled the museum to purchase the collection. Twinings were directly involved in helping to acquire the Miller collection, now on display in the Twining Teapot Gallery. They have provided funds to house, catalogue and promote the unique collection in The Twining Teapot Gallery.



Spode jasperware, 1810-20. Impressed mark "Spode". Inspired by the fashionable drawing rooms of the period which were decorated to look like ancient Greece and Rome

Twining Teapot Gallery at Norwich Castle Museum opening times: 10am-5pm Monday-Saturday, 2pm-5pm Sunday. For more information please telephone Norwich (01603) 223634.

The shop at the Castle stocks a selection of attractive tea-related products and Twinings Tea, also the definitive work on the subject *Tea Drinking, 'British Teapots and Tea Drinking, 1700-1850'* by Robin Emmerson which is published by HMISO and available mail order from Norwich Castle Museum (01603 223628).



THOMAS TWINING 1675-1741.

The Twining Teapot Gallery at the Norwich Castle Museum displays many of the 3,000 teapots in the collection dating from 1700 to the present day.

Twinings has a small museum behind their famous shop at 216 Strand, London (opposite the Royal Courts of Justice), which tells the story of the Twining family and Twinings Tea for over 290 years.

The shop itself stocks a full range of exotic teas, like Lady Grey and many others, herbal and fruit infusions, gifts, tea bricks and books on tea, including Robin Emmerson's "British Teapots and Tea Drinking 1700-1850".



TWININGS

R. TWINING AND COMPANY LIMITED, SOUTH WAY, ANDOVER, HANTS SP18 5AQ



THE TWINING TEAPOT GALLERY
AT THE
CASTLE MUSEUM NORWICH



THE GREATEST SPECIALIST COLLECTION OF BRITISH CERAMIC TEAPOTS IN THE WORLD

TWININGS



Joanna Urbanek has provided a leaflet on the Twining Teapot Gallery in Norwich where 4 Belleek teapots are on display.

(acquisition numbers:
1992.226.1138,
1992.226.1137,
1946.70.520,
1946.70.594).

THE TWINING TEAPOT GALLERY

The Twining Teapot Gallery at the Castle Museum, Norwich, is home to the greatest specialist



Agateware, Staffordshire, c.1750.

collection of British ceramic teapots in the world.

The story of the British teapot is very much the story of Twinings, who are believed to be the world's oldest tea merchants, and have sold tea at their premises in the Strand, London, since 1706.



Earthenware decorated with coloured glaze, probably Staffordshire c.1760

Front Cover: Unidentified majolica earthenware teapot in the form of a fish, c.1880.

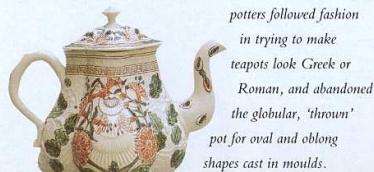
THE TEAPOTS

On display are teapots dating from the early 18th century up to the present day. The drinking of tea was at first a novel and expensive fashion, which explains why such sharp styling and fine craftsmanship were lavished on early teapots. Tea was imported from China together with porcelain teaware.

The delicacy and hardness of Chinese porcelain could not be matched by English potters who worked within a very different ceramic tradition. To rival the Chinese imports they decorated their teapots with coloured clays and glazes.

A soft kind of porcelain was made in England from 1745, but pottery also became whiter and more like the desirable

Chinese porcelain. In the late 18th century potters followed fashion



Salt-glazed stoneware, Staffordshire, c.1760.

in trying to make teapots look Greek or Roman, and abandoned the globular, 'thrown' pot for oval and oblong shapes cast in moulds.

By 1800 the fashionable shape changed every few years. When Jane Austen's heroine in 'Northanger Abbey' admired General Tilney's teaset, he dismissed it as two years old and already outdated. Late 18th century teapots were adorned with elements of Neo-classical design which was derived from ancient Roman and Greek art. By the 1830s this fashion had changed and teapots had become ornate, highly decorated and gilded in a style known as Neo-Rococo.

The 20th century has seen the rise of studio potters who design their teapots themselves and often make them by hand.

THE STORY OF THE COLLECTION

The collection comprising some 3000 teapots is from two great private collections. The most important of the 18th century teapots came to the museum in 1946 by the bequest of Colonel E. A. Bulwer of Heydon Grange, Norfolk, one of the great connoisseurs of his day. In 1988, the museum had the opportunity to purchase the private collection of Philip Miller. The extensive collection was threatened with dispersal and undoubtedly would have been lost to the nation.



Worcester porcelain painted in underglaze blue at the factory and in enamel colours and gilding at James Giles' London Studio, c.1770. Marked with a painted seal-mark in underglaze blue.



Creamware painted in enamel colours, Wedgwood, about 1770. First practical earthenware of a pale colour. Took the world by storm and put local potteries out of business all over Europe.

The leaflet is reproduced here by agreement with the Norfolk Museums Service, who say members of the Belleek Collectors' Group will be very welcome at Norwich.

Image ©
Norwich Castle
Museum & Art
Gallery

Our Second American Tour of the Pottery

by Graham Houghton.

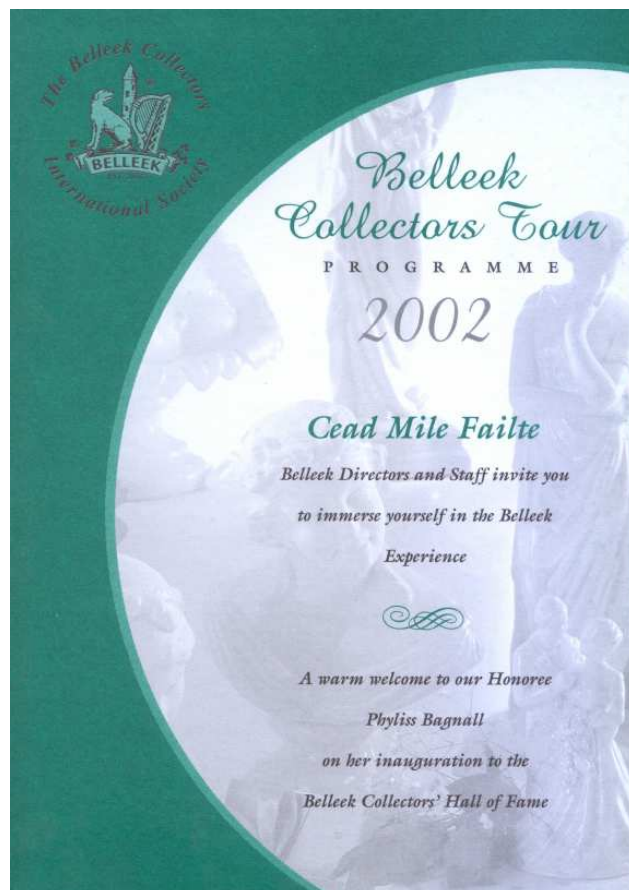
Gina has asked me to put a few words together to record our recent trip to the Pottery and she has promised to provide some pictures to go with it for the Newsletter.

The trip really started following the A.G.M. at Latimer. Gina joined us for the journey home, first to Wilmslow, where we dropped off David and Chris at their house and Gina at a B & B a little further along the same road. Bright and early on Monday morning (5 am to be precise), David and Chris picked up Gina in their Espace. Then they called for us and off we went through Wales to the port of Hollyhead. The weather was fine but as we approached the Menai Bridge there was an illuminated sign warning of high winds, which I thought might make for an interesting crossing. However, when we arrived at the Ferry Terminal with ample time before departure, there wasn't much wind or swell on the sea. The sea crossing and the journey to Belleek was straight forward with nothing out of the ordinary to report except that some of the roads were a lot more bumpy than I remembered from our last visit.

Our first stop was to see Patricia McCauley at the Pottery Visitor Centre to find out what the programme was for the next two days. Then it was a quick visit to Kevin at the gift shop in the Village to see what pieces he had to offer, then to see Brian at Fermanagh Crystal. Sheila couldn't resist buying some of his beautifully cut glasses and most of the members of our party came away with something to grace the mantle piece or cabinet. We popped into Rooney's Bar, which is run by Jackie Doogan daughter of John Doogan the Head Basket Maker, for a sample of her beautifully kept Guinness. It was Gina's first taste of the draft black creamy liquid in an Irish pub. We couldn't stop at one so we tried another, then another.



Some of the "UK Contingent" at Dun Na Si, Ballyshannon



It was now time to book in with John Hurst at his B & B, at DUN NA SI, Bundoran Road, Ballyshannon, next to the Donegal Visitor Centre. John made us all very welcome and we were shown to our room, which was spacious, on suite and two double beds. Just enough time to have a shower to remove the travel film and we were off to Sweeney's White Horse, the pub just down the road for some food. I had half a duck with all the trimmings. It was absolutely fabulous. All the meals were excellent and reasonably priced.

Tuesday started with one of John's famous traditional breakfasts. You can start with cereals and fresh fruit salad if you like. The piece de resistance is his fry, two rashers of bacon, fried or scrambled eggs, two sausages, black pudding, white pudding, potato cake, mushrooms, tomatoes and stacks of toast. It just fits on the plate, enough to last a normal person for the whole day.

We arrived at the Pottery to find that there were twenty-four Americans on the Tour, also representatives of the Toronto Chapter, representatives from the North of Ireland Chapter together with some from the Republic. The U.K. chapter was well represented. There was the five of us, Pat and Paul Tubb and their two sons, Roy and Rose Hollihead. If the dealers such as Lady Marion, Olga and Norman were included the total was about fifty.



The first event at the Pottery was the ceremony of the inauguration of the Honoree to the Belleek Collectors' Hall of Fame. The Honoree was a very nice American lady, Phyllis Bagnall. Angela carried out the ceremony in the Museum on a large rock taken from the bed of the river Erne. Four big strong men, one at each corner carried this into place. Roy Hollihead and David Reynolds was press ganged into this. It wouldn't surprise me if both were now being treated for back pains and suspected hernia.



Above, David with Phyllis Bagnall; above right, with the infamous "rock". Other pictures, scenes in the pottery; the "Dod boxes", basket making, transferring marks, craftsmen at work.



Next was a tour of the pottery, our guide was Angela's daughter who is working at the Pottery to get some work experience. We have done this tour before but it was interesting to see that further improvements have been made to streamline production.



Then it was the tree planting ceremony. As we approached the area where the ceremony was to take place I was saddened to see that the Collectors Garden had been grassed over.

It was now lunchtime and an excellent meal was provided for us in the Restaurant. I thought it was nice that a member of the Pottery staff was



assigned to each table to make conversation and answer questions. The afternoon was reserved for buying new pieces of Belleek in the Visitor Centre. Once we had put in our order we went to visit the Donegal Visitor Centre where again purchases were made.



Belleek Collectors' Tour 2002

Tuesday 9th July

- 9.30 am Arrival of Collectors
- 9.45 am Inauguration Ceremony
- 10.00 am Coffee
- 10.30 am Tour of Pottery
- 11.45 am Tree Planting Ceremony
- 12.30pm Lunch
- 2.00 pm Shopping - Special Gifts at Special Prices
- 4.30 pm Depart for Hotel

6.00 pm - 10.00 pm Join Tony Hearty of Hearty's Folk Cottage along with Eileen O'Neill who will host a Display and Sale of Antique Belleek in the Burns Suite, whilst browsing enjoy the sounds of Traditional Irish Music provided for your enjoyment.



In the search for good pieces of old Belleek it is important to have contacts and one of ours had come up with the information that the owner of the antique shop in Bundoran had negotiated with an elderly lady to dispose of her collection. No time was lost in exploring this news and we went to Bundoran to see what was on offer. There were several comports, two earthenware bowls, one with three holes drilled in the bottom. It had the name of a Mental Hospital printed on it. The shop owner put it over his face and two of the holes lined up perfectly with his eyes. He joked that it was for one of the inmates with an inferiority complex. There was a small plate beautifully decorated by Cyril Arnold, a fine example of a very large early Shell bowl decorated in pink and blue. Needless to say, some of the better pieces were wrapped up and left the shop with us.

Tony Hearty and Eileen O'Neill had a wonderful display of antique Belleek for sale in the Burns Suite at the Manor House Hotel. The prices were high; but that must be expected for the exceptional pieces on display. We managed to buy a decorated Erne cup and saucer. I think most people found something they wanted. Lady Marion, Olga and Norman also had a superb range of antique Belleek for sale in one of the conference rooms near to the Burns Suite.

After breakfast on Wednesday we started with a visit to the Collectors' Room where we tried our hand at fettling and painting pieces of Belleek. There were one or two catastrophes where the inexperienced handling resulted in total collapse of the piece.

After coffee we visited Omagh, where it rained for the whole time we were there. We returned to our B & B in time to get ready to go to the Gala Banquet at the Manor House Hotel.

The Gala Banquet was the best I have attended. The place was ideal, the company and food was excellent. There were several speeches but John Maguire, the Managing Director, explained that their present difficulty was due to a drop in sales as a result of the fall in American tourists to Ireland following 11th September. They were in the process of taking stock and the indication was that the three-day working would soon cease and they would be back to normal working by September.



Graham and Sheila at the Gala Banquet

There was no truth in the rumour that QVC had fallen out with the Pottery. During the next twelve months they had a contract for five, three-hour promotions with QVC.



The speeches were followed by an auction of four unique one-off plates depicting the four seasons. This raised over £2000 for the Degenheart Trust.

Dealers purchased three of the plates and the other one went to a collector from the UK Chapter. Our Taxi was ordered for midnight and I was sorry to leave as the party was in full swing, everyone was getting in the mood for a good night.



Pictures, above: UK Group members at the Gala Dinner; below at Lady Marion's House.



On Thursday we were all invited to lunch at Lady Marion's house where we had a very nice meal and a conducted tour of the Estate. We were introduced to the geese, hens and shown the work she has done to renovate the massive greenhouses and the superb flowers she now grows commercially. We had a most enjoyable day and everyone left with potted flowers and cuttings from some of the more exotic plants.

We were invited to tea by Mr and Mrs McElroy at their beautiful house on the shore of Lough Erne. We were shown some of their wonderful pieces of Belleek. We were also shown the new housing development of ten properties that their son is building about two fields further on along the edge of the Lough. Oh! If only I had the money. We were also invited to Olga's house just up the road but unfortunately we didn't have time.



Friday saw us heading South for a couple of days shopping in Dublin. A special treat for the girls as they have missed out on previous visits. On Sunday we visited an antique fair at Newman House, Dublin, where we bumped in to Denise Jennings a member of the UK Chapter. On the way to the Ferry Terminal at Dun Laoghaire we called at the Blackrock Market to see what treasures we could find before we returned home after having a wonderful time, completely exhausted and very short of cash.

I would like to thank the Pottery Management, and in particular Patricia McCauley, the staff at the Visitor Centre, for the time, thought and effort they put into making this visit so interesting and enjoyable. The Restaurant staff for the delicious food they served to us with a most charming and beautiful smile, even though they were under extreme pressure. Also the Production staff, who took time out to answer our questions, explained and demonstrated in great detail some of the finer points of their work, despite the fact that they were on piecework.

- Thank you all.

Hall Of Fame Honoree's

1986	Fred Gary
1987	Jean Welleck
1988	Prof R.E.Gregg
1989	Josephine Covriveau
1990	Don Clinton
1991	Eugene Krach
1992	Evelyn Twiss
1993	Marian Langham
1994	Max Norman
1995	Del Domke
1996	Sharon Pickerill
1997	Katherine Gaertner
1998	Pat Holm
1999	Linda Beard
2000	Brian Graham
2001	Don Campbell
2002	Phyllis Bagnall

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The Minton Museum Sale

By Chris Marvell

In this article, as they say, some of the names have been left out "to protect the innocent(!)" but I'm sure the gist of the piece is pretty clear. I know that I'm talking about Minton here, not Belleek, but in their day, they were "**The Best**", as were Belleek. You'll have to forgive me for getting a bit misty-eyed about this, for Minton now seems to be a spent force and has only its past glories to look back on. The sacrilege of the owners of the company selling the "family silver" is of course something that we could never see happen at Belleek.



A highly controversial sell-off

Debt-ridden Royal Doulton aims to dispose of the best of its Minton ceramics

By Elspeth Moncrieff. LONDON.

Royal Doulton's decision to sell off the cream of its historic collection of Minton ceramics (formerly housed in the Minton Museum in Minton House Stoke-On-Trent) at Bonhams on 23 July is proving hugely controversial. All the more so since the Ceramics Museum in Stoke-on-Trent has offered a fair market value for the entire collection, so it could have been kept together. The collection is unique in that it contains an example of almost everything Minton made from 1793 onwards, and relates to an extremely detailed archive which contains drawings by leading 19th-century designers such as Pugin and Christopher Dresser.

Ceramics specialist Paul Atterbury, who originally set up the Minton Museum, described the sale as "bare faced asset stripping". He also considers it "immoral," since Royal Doulton has only owned Minton since 1968. Last year the firm moved out of Minton House into new headquarters in Stoke but the museum was closed several years ago. "This is one of the best collections of 19th-century porcelain in the world. It is completely unique because the archive and the collection work hand-in-hand and you can study the whole process from original design to finished product," he added. Jennifer Opie of the Victoria and Albert Museum described the move as "very short-sighted, it is one more failure to preserve the country's heritage and the [V&A] is entirely supportive of the Ceramics Museum's attempt to buy the collection in its entirety. If the collection is dispersed it will be a major loss to ceramics history," she added.

Royal Doulton was faced last January with debts of £24 million. It has cut 1,000 jobs and is closing 100 shops in Britain. It needs £19 million for its reorganisation which it is raising on the stock market. The Ceramics Museum, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, originally offered £1 million for the entire collection, based on a valuation by the internationally esteemed ceramic specialist Geoffrey Gooden. Royal Doulton turned down the offer on the basis that it was not enough and has decided to keep part of the collection which will be displayed in a Minton room in the Royal Doulton Museum while selling 400 of the best pieces at Bonhams. The later pieces have no commercial value, the last pieces of any interest are the Secessionist wares made in the 1920s.

The sale is expected to raise between £500,000 and £600,000, far less than the Ceramics Museum's offer for the entire collection. According to a spokesman for Royal Doulton, the decision to sell the collection at auction is purely commercial. "If the Ceramics Museum wants to buy the pieces, it can bid for them at auction, but we saw no particular value in preserving this collection intact." Ironically, the money raised at auction will make absolutely no difference to Royal Doulton's huge debts or long-term financial viability. According to the Ceramics Museum, a second valuation is now under way but Royal Doulton refused to comment on this or whether a financial agreement to sell the collection intact could still be reached. The English potteries are coming under huge pressure from the Far East where fine quality ceramics can be made for a fraction of the price. Many of them have failed to adapt to changing market forces or invest in new technology; perhaps even more importantly they no longer employ talented designers. Britain has some of the best art schools in the world and increasingly its designers are working abroad as there is not the support for them in the country. The only reason people now buy British ceramics is because of their history and reputation; with the potteries now in decline it is more vital than ever to preserve the material evidence of their history. It is very unusual for so much Minton to come on the market at one time and Bonhams is expecting a huge response from collectors.

According to John Sandon of Bonhams, many of the biggest collectors are in America and Australia. When Minton was first made it was so innovative and of such high quality that it was too expensive for the home market; it was exhibited at all the international trade exhibitions and snapped up by the new millionaires of Australia and America who therefore have a long history of collecting. Many of the pieces in the sale are damaged, Minton had a habit of cracking and splitting when it was fired, others are trial pieces or have unfinished glazes which is why they were retained by the factory and this will have a huge bearing on their value. There are few early pieces in the sale, as these have been retained by the museum. One of the biggest attractions is a Minton majolica peacock which is just under 5 ft tall and is estimated at £120,000. Incredibly coveted is the font designed by Carrière Belleuse and decorated in pâte-sur-pâte by Louis Solon; this has a fire crack and is estimated at £10/15,000. A Sèvres-style vaisseau à mat decorated in bleu celeste carries a £3,000/5,000 estimate. The Henry II ware made by Charles Toft in the Renaissance style is also much sought after and there are fine examples of this.

Among the most important historical pieces is a service made for Lord Milton, decorated with the sketches made on his trip to find the Northwest passage. This was bought back by Minton in 1949 and is now being shamelessly split up, with the plates estimated at £500-1,000 each.

To put you in the picture.... (see previous article in Newsletter 23/1)... Royal Doulton, a formerly great force in the potteries, both in Stoke-on-Trent and in the pottery business, have now fallen on hard times. They need to raise a bit of cash. They just happened to buy the Minton company some years ago, and what's this? Minton has a lot of really great pots – in their museum!

Stopping only briefly to shed a few crocodile tears, the Directors and Shareholders of Royal Doulton swiftly put them up for sale. They have an excuse ready, though.... "We haven't got space for all those pots".... well, the Potteries Museum would have taken them off their hands! By the way, their excuse is actually true: they don't have much space *because* Royal Doulton are guilty of a *second* crime – they have caused the Fabulous 1950's "Festival of Britain" style Minton Headquarters to be bulldozed to the ground – "The best building in Stoke" as one of Minton's (Doulton's) employees tearfully said to me (Yes, he actually had tears in his eyes - and he was right: it **WAS** the best building in Stoke) – once more the need to get some ready cash won the day.

Of course, the people of Stoke will *benefit* from this – in recompense for the loss of their heritage and employment, they get..... (wait for it!).... A new Sainsburys! (I can hear you all sigh with relief – just what Stoke needed - how they managed all those years with only Tesco and Morrisons.....). Argh! It makes you want to cry with frustration! What **ARE** the planners doing? We will probably never know, but anyway, before I start foaming at the mouth and shouting, I'll get on with the story of the sale.....

The Sentinel

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A missed opportunity

DESPITE the fact that dozens of rare pieces of pottery have been bought up by the city council, yesterday's auction of the Minton archive must be viewed as an exercise in damage limitation.

At a time when tourism is becoming increasingly important to the local economy, an historic collection of ware which may have become a significant attraction in its own right has slipped through our fingers.

Yes, it is good news that many of the best pieces have been saved and no doubt they will be given suitable prominence when they are put on public display. But it is a real shame the city was not allowed to purchase the entire archive to preserve its integrity for future generations. Instead, collectors from around the country and overseas have taken their pick.

Royal Doulton's financial difficulties are well-documented and the company has had to resort to selling off the family silver to raise capital. The board argues that the interests of shareholders were paramount and the success of the sale justifies what was a difficult commercial decision.

It is true the auction yielded more than the local bid of £610,000. But not much more. And perhaps the firm which owes so much to the area should have thought more about the value of its standing with the people of North Staffordshire. Pleased as they will no doubt be about the acquisition of a number of fine pieces, many will look upon the auction as a missed opportunity.

Well, this sale was everything that the last Sothebys Irish Sale wasn't (See report in Newsletter 23/1). Every lot was contested, it had tension, intrigue (OK, so maybe it wasn't so different to the Irish Sale), excitement, celebrities, a hero and a villain and even a happy ending (if you want to be look on it in a *very* optimistic light!). If fact, if it were not for the serious aspects of the Sale, it would be appropriate to see the whole proceedings as a bit of a pantomime.

We arrived early but the saleroom was already half full. I was intrigued to see the burly figure of Lars Tharp (form the BBC Antiques Roadshow) sitting with a small group of people at the front of the room. I nearly bumped into John Sandon as he rushed up the stairs to the auction room, seemingly very preoccupied, as well he might be, since he was in charge of the auction. We waited for the auction to begin – we weren't too interested in the early lots as these were flatback figures and other early bisque figures – so we watched with interest, feeling rather like I remember feeling just before an exam when I wasn't sure I had done enough revision.

Lars Tharp bought lot 10: rather than giving his bidding number (713) he half turned to the room and announced:

“On behalf of the Potteries Museum”

So that was their plan! Perhaps Lars would “save” a good number of pieces for Stoke. A good number of people in the room heard and understood what he said and I would like to think that many of them, me included, resolved not to bid against him, so that the Museum could acquire as many lots as possible.

I talked to Lars after the sale, conveniently leaving Beverly to carry on packing up our purchases (Yes, we did manage to buy something!) and congratulated him on this clever tactic: he said:

“Yes, I hoped that would help; John (Sandon) didn't like it, though, he gave me a look and said ‘Next time, just the number will do!’ ”

I should add that at this point (after the sale, when everyone had a chance to relax a bit) Eric Knowles walked up, so I reminded him about our UK Belleek convention:

“Oh, that's right,” he said; “I turned up and they said: ‘Are you one of the Irish Dancers?’ ” - he was smiling.

Sorry about the aside, back to the sale. It continued with just about every lot going for well over high estimate. We managed to get a very nice early vase for a pretty good price, so we could relax a bit – at least we had bought *something* from the sale - a sale which will surely be remembered for a long time! A few lots went cheaply, then we came to a delightful set of plates which I was going to push the boat out for - I was simply blown out of the water by a bidder who we had started to notice was getting an awful lot of pieces. He was prepared to pay double my price – and I was happy to pay three times the high estimate for those plates! This bidder (613) with his alias (632) (he has bidding on two numbers) is *my* Villain of the piece. You get the picture: it's like a pantomime. We have the Hero (Lars Tharp), the White Knight, upholding our national heritage and honour, fighting for Stoke-on-Trent and the Hanley Museum; the Villain, a dealer, avaricious, having no principles and seeking only personal gain (sorry, I'm laying it on a bit thick, here, but we were actually quite upset at certain points in the sale). There was also an “Honest Broker”, John Sandon, who did an expert and excellent job as auctioneer in quite stressful circumstances. In the rooms were obviously a lot of collectors and other interested parties, who quite clearly supported Lars and the Museum, although, like us, had come to obtain their piece of history, if they could. There were other dealers and experts present also. The common factor was that there was no-one in the room that didn't feel strong emotions; either because of the beauty of the china, the tension in the room or the ethics of the sale in the first place.

I failed a couple more times, usually outbid by 613 or 632 (actually the same person, remember) but got a couple of small lots. Actually, this is the crazy thing: in this sale, there were *no* minor lots! Just about every piece had been illustrated in one, two or more reference books and each item was considered either to be a unique prototype or to

Ceramic collection broken up

By Will Bennett, Art Sales Correspondent (Filed: 24/07/2002)

One of Britain's greatest collections of ceramics was split up at an auction in London yesterday despite last-minute attempts to keep it together for the nation. Paul Atterbury, one of the experts on BBC's Antiques Roadshow, condemned the sale, saying it was "the casual destruction of heritage for short term reasons". The Minton Museum Collection, which provided a record of Minton's ceramics from its foundation in Staffordshire in 1793 until modern times, was sold by Royal Doulton for £832,604 at Bonhams in London. A week before the sale the company, which lost £14 million last year, turned down an offer of £675,000 for the collection from the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent. After commissions, Royal Doulton will receive less than the museum's offer. The Potteries Museum managed to buy some of the pieces at the auction including a 5ft 1873 majolica peacock which fetched £117,750, the highest price of the day.

Liam Herbert, head of corporate communications for Royal Doulton, said: "The sale was part of our business restructuring strategy."

From the Daily Telegraph 24/7/2002

was to be split up, with each plate sold separately. I watched in horror as the first single plate sold for £10,500. There were a lot of plates, and it looked like neither Lars (for the Museum) or we had any chance. Fortunately, the buyer of the first plate somewhat ran out of steam (or money!) after about a dozen plates had been sold and Lars managed to get four items... Eventually, the whole service had been sold – it would never be seen intact again – the service was magnificent, truly unique, and now it had been uncaringly scattered asunder.

The climax of this part of the sale came immediately before lunch – the Peacock.

John Sandon started the bidding at £65,000

“£70,000”

“£75,000” – that was the Museum bidding!

We watched, holding our breath and....

The White Knight won (this time, at least)! Lars bought the Peacock for the Hanley museum for £105,000. The room cheered and applauded, Lars looked round modestly as if to say: “It was nothing.”. The sale broke for lunch.

There was actually no time for lunch, we just sat and waited, chatting with Brian, who couldn't stay for much of the sale. We had already done better than we expected, and now we knew the identity of “The Villain” (613 or 632). He was a well known antique dealer, someone who I know well, and indeed he had talked to us quite a bit before the sale, saying, in his slightly humorous and sarcastic way: “Not much of interest here!” He has always told me that his clients give him an open chequebook and he simply spends as much as he wants – I had always thought this was mostly idle talk, but now, he was to be proven absolutely correct. Of course, I can't really criticise him, he was just playing his part as a very good and successful dealer – he just happens to have clients with very deep pockets! For the purposes of this article, though, he can be the villain, as the real villains, Royal Doulton, kept their heads down!

The auctioneer after lunch was not the clear and precise John Sandon but the much less good (in my opinion) Mark Oliver, perhaps he was overwhelmed by the occasion, but half the time you couldn't hear him, or you didn't know if he'd seen your bid!

In the second part of the sale, our Villain swept the board. After the sale, he sought me out and told me that he had spent £380,000 as if it were a mere trifle! It has just amazing, (but dispiriting and depressing as well) as he outbid everyone – in the room, on commission or on the many telephones – he was invincible! In fact, it didn't seem to matter how much a lot went for – he got it! (Belleek dealers have nothing on this man! – sorry, I shouldn't have said that!).

I don't think anyone else got a single piece of Pate sur Pate. The Solon Font went for £40,000 – to him. Another vase which Bev and I would gladly have used our life savings to buy, went for £15,000. Eventually, it almost became a game – even I indulged in it – “let's see how much we dare push the price up” – a very dangerous game indeed, but in this case played without any real risk of being left with a piece you didn't really want, as 632 *always* went one bid more.

represent “the best” of its genre! So I was actually delighted to be getting some of this “history”. It was quite tricky, though, as Bev was looking out all the time to see if Lars was bidding: I was only allowed to bid if he wasn't or had already dropped out – you certainly weren't going to catch *me* bidding against the Museum!

About this time, Brian Scott arrived in the saleroom: we were delighted to see another Belleeker had made it to the sale.

The next “major” lot was the historically significant end exquisite “Milton” service. I have criticised Sothebys (or the sellers) in the Irish Sale for splitting up the Chinese Dejeuner Set (Newsletter 23/1), but this was **as nothing** to the enormity of the sacrilege committed here. This service, which had been purchased intact by the Minton Museum in 1949, commemorating, in its completeness, the entire overland expedition made by Earl Milton to discover a Northwest Passage across the Rockies in Canada in 1862-3, finally delivered by Minton to the Earl in 1867;



Lars Tharp and Pam Mallalieu with "their" peacock at the Auction (Stoke Sentinel picture)

clear that there was more blood to be spilled in the ceramics world – Royal Doulton themselves may well be next. A bright spot was that the Peacock was safe along with a good number of other very nice items. There might be another silver lining - Lars reckoned that the mystery bidder (129) who bought all those Milton Plates was a museum in Canada – and of course, if not Stoke, a museum in Canada is where these plates should be!

No-one seemed to know where Joan Jones was (the Minton Museum Curator) – this was worrying as she had been quoted as saying that if the Peacock left Mintons, then she would too – at least the Peacock was now only a few miles away!



Epilogue

We thought this was basically the end of the matter, but we followed up on the discussion with Lars Tharp at the end of the sale and phoned Pam, the manager of the Potteries Museum in Hanley. We kept in touch and eventually were invited by the Museum to the "Grand Opening" of the "Masterpieces of Minton" Exhibition, as they called it.

We also went to see Joan Jones. She was resigned to Minton's fate. The remaining items of "her" Minton collection are now proudly displayed in a separate room at Doulton's Nile Street factory in Burslem – they looked fantastic. The sad part is that we all knew what the collection had been like before the sell-off. If you get the chance, before Doulton's do any more damage, go and see the new Doulton and Minton museum at Nile Street – it's well worth the effort and I'm sure Joan would appreciate any moral support you could give her.

2nd September 2002



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Assistant Director
Economic Development
Stephen Smith

Our ref: PotsMus PM/BL

Dear Chris & Beverley Marvell,

Magnificent Minton goes on public display

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery has saved some of the most magnificent pieces of Minton ever produced, both for the City of Stoke on Trent and for the nation. This was achieved with the generous and enthusiastic support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, a private benefactor and The Friends of The Potteries Museums.

These rare and beautiful masterpieces including the monumental majolica Peacock by Paul Comolera, a stick stand in the shape of a stork, a terracotta 'Pug' dog and six exquisite pieces from the Lord Milton Dessert Service will all go on public display on Saturday 21st September 2002 at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery.

I am pleased to invite you and your guest to the preview at 12.30pm, which will be officially opened by Antiques Roadshow expert and our special guest Lars Tharp who has played a major role in securing the pieces for the Museum.

I hope you will be able to join us for what promises to be a most enjoyable and memorable event.

Yours sincerely,

Pamela Mallalieu

Pamela Mallalieu
Museum Manager – The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery
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Putting People First

Letter to us from the Potteries Museum



So we went to the Museum's Grand Opening, the UK Belleek Collectors' Group was also represented by Eddie and Linda Murphy. We were all keen to find out more information.

The Museum now has six of the items from the Milton Service – better than nothing, anyway. The service has been split up three ways now, The Potteries Museum has six, a private collector (who bid on the phone) has three and the Canadian Royal Ontario museum has the rest in Toronto.

Lars Tharp was on good form and gave an excellent opening speech, including the story of how "Ozzy the Owl", now residing at the Potteries Museum, was discovered on the BBC Antiques Roadshow by the joint efforts of Henry and John Sandon.

Joan Jones was there, glad that this part of "her" collection was now safe, and a small contingent of people from Doulton's came with her, mainly ex-Minton craftspeople but also Liam Herbert, the Doulton PR man (see his brief statement to the Daily Telegraph, above).

Pam Mallalieu was clearly conscious that there was bad feeling towards Doulton amongst many of the people present and was intent that the opening should not be spoiled by this – the only sour note was struck by the Deputy to the Leader of Stoke City Council who did not spare Doulton's blushes - saying loud and clear the Royal Doulton had great craftspeople but "lousy management" and that Royal Doulton had "let down" the City of Stoke-on-Trent.

There *may* be more good news, or the cynical among us may say that Royal Doulton can't stand any more bad publicity! This is that Royal Doulton may well allow the remnants of the Minton collection to go to the Potteries Museum.

Now, I don't want to get too excited here, as many fine words have been spoken before, only to be reneged upon later, and Liam Herbert, when I asked him, refused to confirm this! This also begs the question of what happens to the other pieces retained at Doulton's, even of what happens to Joan Jones.

It always seems that the City of Stoke-on-Trent gets the bad end of any bargain, but let's hope that the tide has turned and that common sense will prevail against narrow business interests

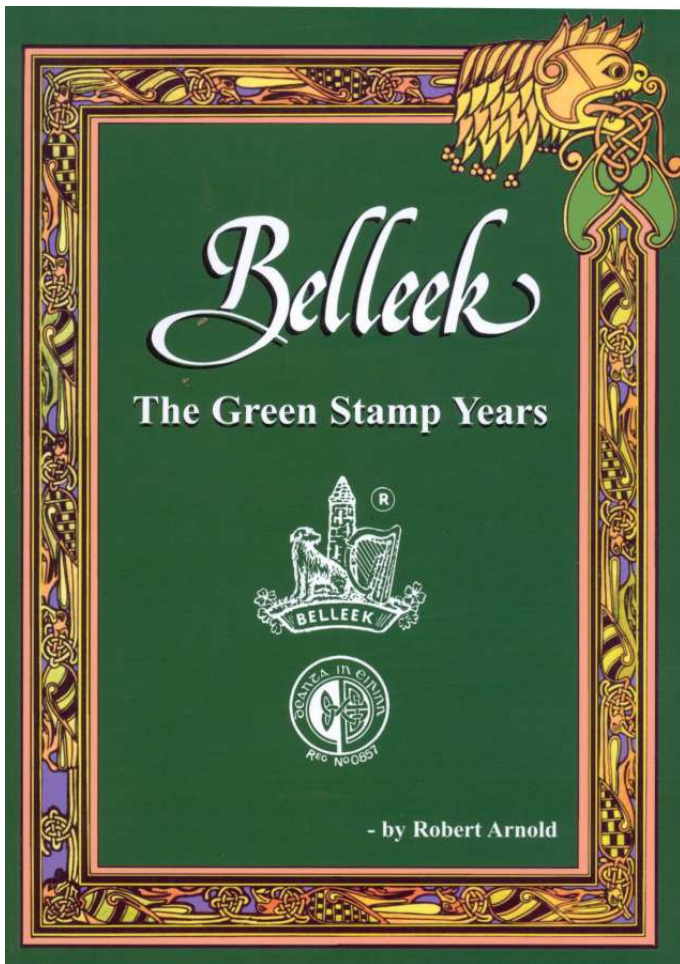
– *it's about time there was some good news from the Potteries!*

Detail from the "Forest on fire" Milton plate

Belleek, The Green Stamp years, by Robert Arnold.

Not since 1992 when John Cunningham published his Story of Belleek (St Davog's Press, ISBN 0 9509834 3 8) has there been any published work not concerned with the products of The Belleek Pottery, and whereas Cunningham covered the history of The Pottery, the village and many of the key names connected with the Pottery, here for the first time is a comprehensive tribute to those workers, of all skills and positions within the business of the Belleek Pottery whose contribution ensured the stability of the Company throughout the years 1934 – 1970.

This book, so well presented by Robert Arnold, is also a tribute to members of his family, so strongly tied to the Pottery, and forever to have an impact on anybody with an interest in collecting items of Belleek Porcelain. Robert's life started on the premises, so to speak, being born in Rose Isle House, home of many Pottery Managers before his Father, Cyril Arnold, and throughout childhood the Pottery was his playground.



And so it is in 2002, that Robert Arnold armed with priceless family records, notes, photographs and related documents comes into print with *The Green Stamp Years*. The period covered by the book is within recent memory, such that so many of the workers named and pictured throughout the book are still living in and around Belleek, and when one reads the names, so many of them are familiar because of the strong family traditions, many of the workers now employed in the Pottery are one or two generations remote from their forefathers from whom they learnt their craft.

Robert includes and identifies everybody as living components of the Pottery, including his own family who came over to Belleek from Stoke-on-Trent, in such a way that simply reading the book inspires a feeling of emotion around the human stories and anecdotes which to him had been a normal part of growing up, but to outsiders with an interest, are visions to be savoured as an integral part of a love of Belleek.

It is not easy to transmit through words my enthusiasm about the contents of this book so I can only state my enjoyment at reading it and recommend it to anybody who has not yet done so.

- David Reynolds

Book is dedicated to Pottery employees

Around 150 people attended the launch of an insightful new book on the world famous Belleek Pottery in the village's Carlton Hotel earlier this month.

Written by Robert Arnold, whose family managed the Pottery from 1934 until 1970, 'Belleek- The Green Stamp Years: 1934-1970', contains hitherto unpublished material from the Arnold family's papers and records of their period in charge of the company, and photographs and memoirs of some of the workers from that time.

Belleek man Packie Slevin, a former employee, provided a number of photographs capturing life at the Pottery dating back to the 1950s.

The occasion was relaxed and informal, said Belleek local historian, Joe O'Loughlin, whose brother Sean, formerly the Works Manager at the Pottery, acted as Master Of Ceremonies. Sean introduced Breege McCusker, who gave the audience a run-down on the author and the book, before Dr Edward Daly, retired Bishop Of Derry, officially launched the publication.

Dr Daly, himself a native of Belleek, said that it was "an excellent book" which evoked many happy memories, with photographs of familiar places and faces. He added that the Pottery had been central to practically every aspect of life in Belleek for almost 150 years, even limiting emigration during otherwise difficult economic times. Every person who had grown up in Belleek was



Dr. Edward Daly, retired Bishop of Derry, speaking at the launch of the new book on Belleek Pottery.

proud of the pottery, said the retired Bishop.

Dr Daly concluded by saying that the most important thing about any company is its employees, and dedicated the book to those current and former employees present at the launch. "This is your book," he said. "I would like to congratulate Robert Arnold. He has done us all a great service."

Dr Daly's parents were very friendly with Robert Arnold's Uncle Eric, who managed the company during the war years. Another interesting family connection brought to light at the launch was the fact that James McGrath, the line editor who designed the layout of the book, was the Great Grandson of James Mulrone, a former Pottery employee mentioned in the publication.

Robert Arnold himself replied to Dr Daly's words,

addressing the crowd who were mostly made up of former Pottery employees and local historians and history societies. One of those present had a special interest in the book and will probably read through it carefully to ensure that there are no spelling mistakes or grammatical errors; Mrs Martin was Robert's former teacher during his days as a pupil at Corry Primary School.

The Arnold family's time managing the company coincided with the use of the famous green stamp on the base of porcelain pieces, hence the inspiration for the title of the book.

'Belleek- The Green Stamp Years: 1934-1970', is on sale in the Pottery Bookshop and other local bookstores around Fermanagh.

Group Information

From Simon, our new Treasurer

We have some Belleek reference books and other material for sale:

- Dick Degenhardt Belleek Second Edition
- Jean Weleck's Anatomy of a Belleek Collector
- Belleek The Green Stamp Years
- UK Group Convention 1997 Videos
- Group Meeting Videos
- Belleek Collector Magazines, some issues now sold out!

If anyone wishes to enquire, please e-mail or write/telephone and I can arrange to post or for collection at a meeting.

I aim to bring a selection of goodies to meetings when I am able to attend.

Newsletter Snippets.....

Story in The Times, 26 August

A lady in Brighton, Mrs. Margaret Cadman, who was an antique dealer and obsessive collector, has died at the age of 94. She had a unique security system: her collection was locked in cupboards and drawers which were painted over so thickly that they could not be opened. After her death the paint was chipped away and a 2000 piece hoard of British and European pottery and porcelain was revealed. It is to be sold at Christies on October 10 and 11 and is expected to make more than £1 million. A very special piece in the collection is a 4 inch high London delft mug commemorating Charles II's accession to the throne in 1660, and that alone is expected to make £60,000.

The Antiques Roadshow

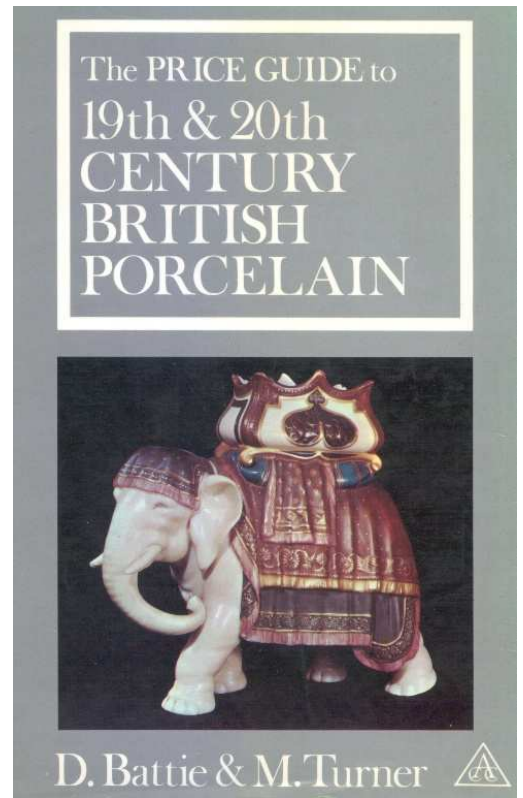
A super booklet is being given away with the October issue of BBC Homes & Antiques. Called "25 Years of the Antiques Roadshow" it tells the story of many of the treasures that have been found. For those of us interested in ceramics there is Ozzy the Owl (of course!), George Jones majolica comports, a Whieldon-type punch pot, the 4 1/2 inch high English delft Turk's Head, and a Meissen tea service discovered in a Children's Roadshow. There is a wide variety of other antiques, together with a section where the experts reveal museums they particularly like and also books they can't live without. There's a section explaining the jargon of the antiques world, and lots of other worthwhile information.

Cheap Belleek – I don't think so!

- by Bev Marvell

As some of you may well know, I collect old books on ceramics / porcelain, preferably Victorian, but really anything that helps me understand how ceramics were considered and prized by previous generations of collectors and connoisseurs

I came across a relatively new book recently which I found gave an interesting insight into how various porcelains were viewed, their merits, pedigree and approximate cost from an era just before the majority of us Belleek collectors had bought and coveted their first piece. The book is 'The PRICE GUIDE to 19th & 20th CENTURY BRITISH PORCELAIN' by D. Battie and M. Turner, published by the Antique Collectors Club. It is with the kind permission of Mr. Battie and the Antique Collectors Club that I can reproduce some of the contents of this book in the Newsletter to share with you.



Today's price
£1,900 -
£3,000
(Sothebys)

Belleek c.1870
Height 13 3/4 ins: 33.5 cm. Early crest and Belleek

An early and rare candlestick with the boy in matt and the rest with a shiny glaze, all well modelled. Pair £200-£300.

£70-£100

a time when Belleek was ever considered cheap or second rate.

The appraisals of the Belleek here I think will confirm that for some considerable time Belleek has been up there with the best, commanding regard and a deep pocket. Some things do seem to have changed however, there was a lot of emphasis on 1st period.

This book was published in 1975, 5 years before price guides took off with the first edition of the Miller's Guide in 1980. It concentrates - as the title would suggest - on British ceramics of the highest quality and merit and as comment and valuation is given by the respected Mr. Battie, I would suggest that it is an accurate reflection of the assessment and tastes of the day, i.e. 27 years ago. Prices were based on auction results.

Just before Chris and I started collecting Belleek, 15 years ago, I remember admiring a Neptune cup and saucer at a Granby Halls fair. This had a price tag of £25 then (OK I would have got some discount!), this was very expensive, but I cannot remember



Today's price £30 (Ebay)

Belleek c.1900
Late printed crest mark

A really badly moulded cup and saucer with wishy-washy pink-tinged rims and of the post 1891 period. Thinly cast with shiny glaze. Also found with green and gilt rims. Plate £0.50-£1; teapot £10-£12; milk jug or sucrier £4-£6; cake plate £2-£3 each.

£2-£3

I don't think the Authors liked this Tridacna cup and saucer much! - hence the "reasonable" price?



Recently on
Ebay: £265

Belleek c.1875

Width 9 1/2 ins: 24.2cm. Printed crest and name

A teapot and cover of unusual design under an iridescent pearl-like glaze. All of good quality. A similar example with the more common shiny glaze £80-£120, coloured £150-£200. It is most important with Belleek that the mark should be the early dog, harp or tower and the name without the words 'County Fermanagh, Ireland' which indicates a date post 1891. Later pieces which look much the same can be a quarter the price.

£100-£150

Second period (and later) Belleek was then apparently considered substantially inferior and the nature of pieces of greatest prize (and price) maybe have changed in pecking order (*see the comment, left*).

I have included representations from other manufacturers for comparison since many of us will be familiar with the esteem in which these pieces are held and their market value today. They serve as a good gauge against which to judge Belleek's progress.



Minton 1870

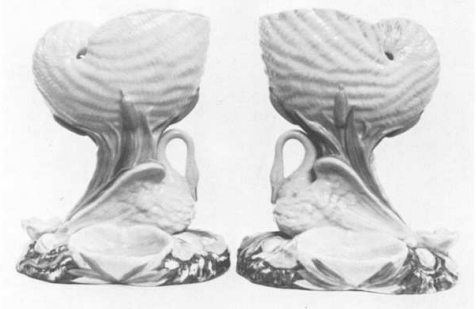
Impressed name, printed retailer's mark, date code

A fine quality service but not decorative enough for display and the crest makes it less desirable for table use. The borders are in turquoise with matt and burnished gilding. Service of twelve soup, dinner and dessert plates, soup tureen, cover, stand, two vegetable tureens, covers and stands, sauce tureen, cover and stand and six meat dishes in sizes, £100-£200.

Tureen £5-£10; Dish £3-£5

It was interesting to note the comment about crests (*top right picture*) maybe depreciating the value of service pieces - this is something that has certainly changed, whether it be for Minton, Derby ..or Belleek. These pieces are now at a premium - but then again, most of us would not dream of buying them now for 'table use'!

I thought this pair of Worcester swans (*right*) looked interesting. I have never seen any on my travels but they look very nice. Even though they were by the respected Royal Worcester their price was not as lofty as for equivalent Belleek items - things have not changed here then!



Royal Worcester 1880

Height 8 ins: 20.3cm. Impressed crowned circle mark, date code

A pair of shell vases weakly coloured in pink and green and reminiscent of Belleek. Not very sharply cast, but not a common form either.

£60-£70



Belleek c.1870

Height 13 ins: 33cm. Impressed name, retailer's mark

A pair of centrepieces from the service of a design ordered for the Prince of Wales, palely-coloured and nacreous-glazed. The prices of this service seem to be more unpredictable than most Belleek, identical pairs having fetched in one season between £150 and £1,200.

£300-£600

OK, what would have been the better investment? A pair of Belleek Prince of Wales comports (or centrepieces) (*illustrated left*) or the Royal Worcester Owen reticulated vase (*illustrated right*)? Twenty-seven years ago, they could be had for very much the same money!

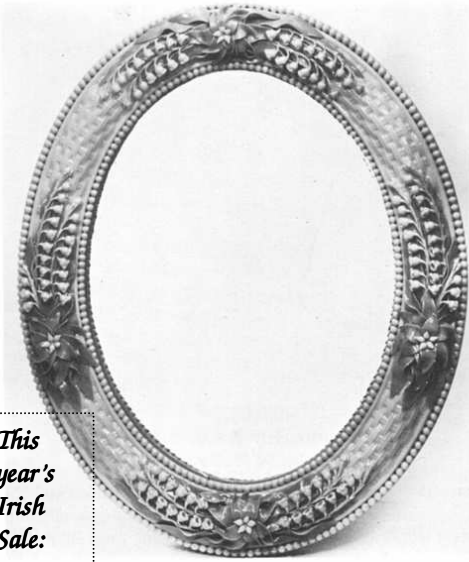


Royal Worcester 1890

Height 7 ins: 17.8cm. Printed crowned circle, code for 1890

A pencil note on the base of this piece records that there are 2,034 perforations. All these would have been cut without Owen using any guide lines to help him. His patterns are fairly standard and even on unsigned pieces his hand is unmistakable.

£400-£500



This year's Irish Sale: £3,300

Belleek c.1895

Length 16½ins:41.3cm. Printed symbol and names

A well decorated mirror frame, basket moulded and applied with sprays of lily-of-the-valley, their leaves in green. The flowers and leaves are very prone to damage.

£150-£200

How about a large Belleek lily-of-the-valley mirror frame (*left*) or a small Minton Louis Solon pate sur pate plaque (*right*)? Again, the same sort of price in 1975 - this time, my money's on the Minton. Pate sur pate by Solon is now quite rightly highly regarded.

– see article on the Minton Museum Sale in this Newsletter.



Mintons 1904-1913

8½ins. x 4½ins:21.5cm x 11.5cm. No mark

A pâte-sur-pâte plaque by M.L.Solon with 'The Ladder to Glory' in white on a green-blue ground. The more usual type of Solon plaque with the background left black, the figures floating in space.

£150-£180

Similar plaques £3,000-£7,000 Today



Belleek 1870-1880

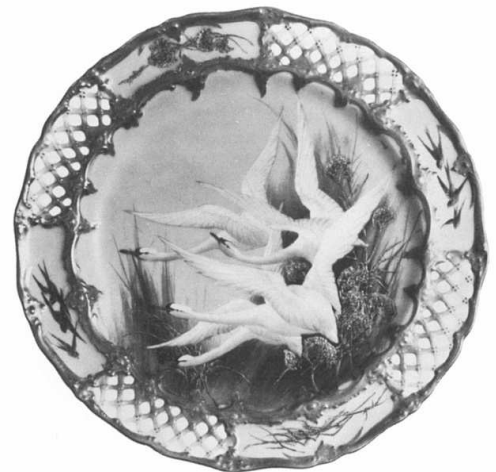
Diameter 10ins:25.5cm. Printed symbol and name

A good cache-pot with crisply modelled flowers at the mouth, the sides with moulded prunus blossom. Several petals are missing from this example as is almost inevitable but a perfect piece £100-£150.

£70-£100

Another example: a Belleek Thorn jardinière (*left*) or a Worcester Baldwyn plate (*right*)? This time, the Worcester would win, but only because anything painted by Baldwyn is now extremely expensive!

Win some lose some, I am sure we could have a lively debate amongst ourselves! What you *can* say is they all were expensive then, but boy, how they have gone up!



Royal Worcester 1908

Diameter 8½ins:21.6cm. Printed crowned circle, date code

Pierced rim and painted in the centre by C. Baldwyn, signed, with his typical swans against a blue sky. The foreground with raised gilt water plants. Baldwyn has a great following amongst Worcester collectors, possibly because there is little of his work about and a representative collection should obviously contain one piece of his.

£70-£100

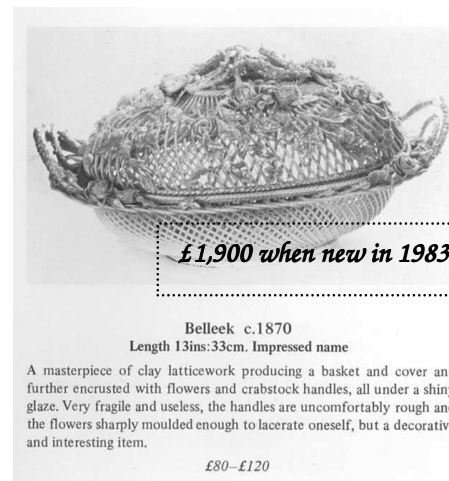
If we carry on to look at how Belleek prices actually have changed since 1975, it's clear that there has been a continual increase. Priorities have however changed a bit as we can see from the following examples. I've used some other sources of information to let me make comparisons: the 1983 catalogue from Belleek Pottery to show the prices of new pieces then (this catalogue is reproduced in full on Robert Ruiz's website: <http://www.robertruiz.com/belleek>). Of course, I've looked at Ebay prices and I've also used some information from this year's Sothebys Irish Sale.

These are the **1983** selling prices for new Belleek (Gold mark):

- Triple fish vase (*left*): \$2,150 (**£1,390**)
- Cherub Candelabra (*illustrated earlier*): \$4,000 (**£2,580**)
- Large Oval Covered Basket (*below*): \$2,950 (**£1,900**)

At this year's Sothebys Irish Sale, these were the prices:

- Triple Fish Vase: **£2,350**
- Cherub Candelabra (coloured, 1st black): **£3,040**
- Cherub Candelabra (plain, 2nd black): **£1,930**
- Small Oval Covered Basket (1st): **£1,650**
- Small Oval Covered Basket (damaged, 1st) **£760**



£1,900 when new in 1983

Belleek c.1870
Length 13ins:33cm. Impressed name

A masterpiece of clay latticework producing a basket and cover and further encrusted with flowers and crabstock handles, all under a shiny glaze. Very fragile and useless, the handles are uncomfortably rough and the flowers sharply moulded enough to lacerate oneself, but a decorative and interesting item.

£80-£120



£2,350 at this year's Irish Sale

Belleek third quarter of the 19th century
Height 16ins:40.6cm. Black printed crest

A rare and desirable piece of Belleek, both for its large size and good coloration; it is also well moulded. An uncoloured example £60-£80 and a late piece with the added County Fermanagh, Ireland to the crest £30-£50.

£120-£150



£380 at the Irish Sale

Belleek c.1870
Printed crest

Compare this with the cup and saucer on page 320. This example is of the earlier period, crisply moulded and well coloured under a nacreous glaze. Milk jug, sucrier or basin £7-£10; cake plate £2-£3. The teapot is illustrated opposite.

£6-£8

- Lily-of-the-valley mirror (green lustre leaves, 1st black)

£3,300
(*illustrated earlier*)



Unsold at £440 at Sothebys this year

Belleek c.1870
Width 8ins:20.4cm. Printed crest

Moulded and coloured grasses, all with a lustrous glaze. Belleek teapots are not uncommon, large numbers must have been sold separately from the rest of the service for decoration, a reversal of most factories.

£20-£25



Failed to sell at £1,600 recently on Ebay

Belleek 1872

Width 10½ins:27.3cm. Printed crest and registration mark

A good piece from the first period, all well coloured and gilt. The use of sea motifs is the most obvious characteristic of Belleek, also the use of nacreous (shell-like iridescent) glaze. It can be found with an elaborate stand in the form of a dragon on four paw feet, £150-£250, but watch for matched-up sections of different dates.

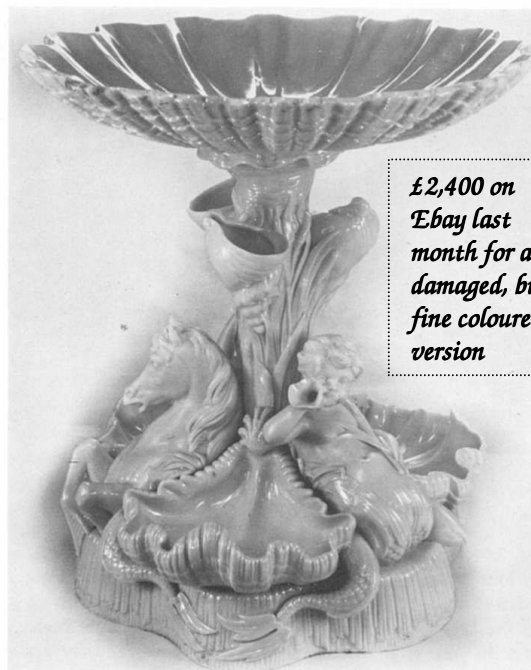
£80-£120

It is interesting to compare the three teapots/kettles shown in this article. On Ebay, last month, a Chinese Tea Urn (plain, lacking silk handle, without base, 1st black)

failed to reach its reserve at \$2,475 (**£1,600**). The Echinus teapot (*illustrated earlier*) was valued at a similar price to the Chinese urn in 1975 – today the Chinese Tea Urn is much the more desirable. The Grass kettle (*above right*) was less expensive and the comment that “large numbers have been sold separately from the rest of the service...”, making the piece less rare, is also interesting – does this also apply to the Chinese urn? Was it too available separately, without a base, if so, would it have had the brass ring normally found around its bottom rim?

Some more Ebay prices:

- Prince of Wales Centrepiece (*right*) (with bronzed figures and pink lustre interior to shells, some damage, 1st black): \$3,716 (£2,400)
- Tridacna cup and saucer (pink tint, 2nd black): \$145 (£93)
- Tridacna cup and saucer (plain, 3rd black): \$46 (£30)
- Grass cup and saucer (plain, unmarked): \$41 (£26) (unsold)
- Grass kettle (plain, 1st black): \$204 (£132) (unsold)
- Echinus Teapot (gilt rim, 1st black): \$411 (£265)



£2,400 on Ebay last month for a damaged, but fine coloured version

Belleek c.1880

Height 12½ins:32.5cm. Printed symbol and name

A fine uncoloured centrepiece, the good nacreous glaze showing off the sharp casting to the full. Typical sea-life influence with the figures from sea mythology, a young Triton, a mermaid and a hippogryph.

£200-£250



Unsold at Sothebys this year at £1800

Belleek 1869

Diameter 10ins:25.6cm. Impressed name, moulded registration

A rare and early piece of Belleek, the lily buds and leaves tinted in pale colours.

£80-£120

Belleek is well represented in the Battie and Turner Price Guide, which is a confirmation of its quality and popularity, as seen in 1975. Belleek is presented as porcelain of the first rank – “up there with the best” – at least when considering the early first period pieces.

Looking at the price increases over twenty-seven years, most items seem to have achieved a tenfold increase with some doing considerably better. Rare and exceptional pieces are becoming more and more sought after with the prices increasing accordingly!

The authors thought that this book covered ‘possibly the most popular collecting subject in Britain today’, well it is good news for us all that this seems to have remained the case.

This hardback book has 500 pages of great information on all major and respected porcelain manufacturers, I purchased my copy for £7, I saw another the other day without dust jacket for £5. If you are interested in ceramics generally then I strongly recommend that you add this book to your library.

Don't Forget.....

Our next meeting at Adlington Hall, Cheshire is on the 19th and 20th October.