

UK Belleek Collectors' Group

Newsletter

*Number 24/1
March 2003*

Spring is here and the flowers are blooming – and so are the porcelain flowers! In this newsletter there is a fascinating and extensively researched article about “The Flowers of Early Belleek” by Dawn Brett who is a relatively new member of the UK Belleek Collectors' Group. There is also advance information about a book by Robin Blackwood (our excellent speaker at Latimer in October 2000 on “Glazed White Wares from the King Street Factory, Derby”); the publicity leaflet – showing stunning flowered and painted pieces in glorious colour – will be available at the Cornish meeting (less than a month away). Enjoy your Springtime reading!

- Gina Kelland

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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:

5/6 April Looe, Cornwall, hosted by the Whitlock Family. Further information is in this newsletter, and you may have already received the papers from Jan giving details of the weekend.

5/6 July, Buckinghamshire, hosted by the Chiltern Chapter. Dinner on the Saturday night will again be at the Upper Thames Sailing Club in Bourne End where we had such a wonderful evening last year. The lunch and the meeting on the Sunday (to include the AGM) will be held at The Saracen's Head in Old Amersham – this was originally a travellers' coaching inn and was built in 1530.

18/19 October, Stoke-on-Trent, hosted by Linda & Eddie Murphy. Details are not yet finalised, but we hope to return to that super restaurant The Izaak Walton Inn, to have a visit to the Portmeirion Factory Shop, and a speaker from the Portmeirion Pottery.

UK Belleek Collectors' Newsletter 24/1, March 2003

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THE WAY FORWARD

The Annual General Meeting is our Group's democratic forum where we make decisions which affect all of our Members. We recognise that improved information communication is a vital part of our *Way Forward* strategy. Therefore it is important that these two aspects are linked to enable us to reach our aspirations in a more cohesive manner. Consequently, in future, all Members will be made aware **in advance** of our AGM of all the motions which are being proposed for consideration. This advance notice will give us all ample time and an equal opportunity to consider the issues, and whether we wish to make our own representation on any of the proposals at the meeting itself.

For this to happen smoothly, the communication process therefore needs to be organised annually as follows :

1. All proposed motions to be sent to the Chairperson no later than four weeks before the date of the AGM.
2. Each proposed motion to be communicated in writing together with a brief explanation of the reasoning behind the proposal.
3. The Chairperson to include all proposed motions on the AGM agenda which is to be sent with the invitation papers at least three weeks before the date of the meeting.
4. No proposed motions to be accepted after the closing date, or at the AGM itself.
5. At the AGM, the Chairperson to ask the Member to verbally present and explain their proposal. Comments and questions to be taken from the floor.
6. The Chairperson to ask the floor for two different households to support the proposal. If adopted, the proposal then becomes a motion for the meeting to vote upon.
7. Motions to be passed by a majority vote of the Member households in attendance.

Our next AGM will be held on 6th July, 2003. Please send to me your proposed motion(s) by **Monday 9th JUNE, 2003** at the very latest. The AGM papers will be posted to all Members during that week.

I do hope this process enables us to be better informed, more prepared and structured in the way we conduct our future business.

- Jan Golaszewski, February 2003.

Wants, Swops and For Sale

Several members have told me about pieces they want, and please also let me have details of any Belleek you might like to swop or sell. If you have something that another member wants please contact me by telephone or email (details under "Contacts" at the beginning of this Newsletter) and I will put you in touch with each other.

- Gina Kelland

WANTED

- 2 ¼" diameter lid for a small size Echinus teapot (or a small white Echinus teapot in any condition but with a good 2 ¼" lid
- 3 Neptune tea plates, green tint, 2nd Black mark
- Neptune sugar, green tint, 2nd Black mark
- Erne creamer, green tint, 2nd Black mark
- Double Shell creamer, 2nd Green mark
- Shamrock Biscuit Barrel lid, 4" diameter, Gold mark
- Fan creamer, any tint
- Cone creamer, preferably pink tint
- Echinus sugar, gilt, perfect condition, 1st Black mark
- Limpet tea cup with cob lustre inside and to handle, 1st Green mark
- Limpet tea saucer, plain, no lustre, 3rd Black mark

FOR SALE

David Reynolds has a fairly extensive list of items he has for sale (too big to include here) – for details, contact him directly or contact Gina to be put in touch with him.

Other News Items



From New Zealand

This picture is from New Zealand, at the Belleek Convention held there last year. No members of the UK Group attended, but Lady Marion Langham and Norman Huntley made the long trip to represent Belleek dealers from the UK and Ireland.

We certainly wish the NZ group of Belleek Collectors well!

News from Belleek Pottery

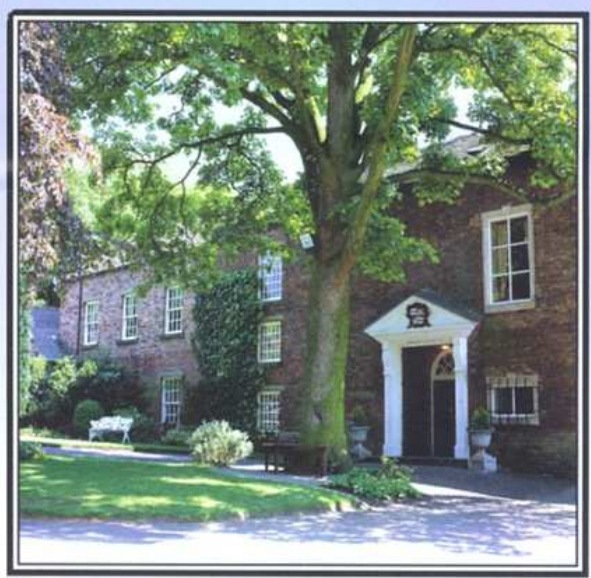
In confirmation of a report in the *Impartial Reporter* on 16th January 2003 (written by Linda McKee), Patricia McCauley emailed Gina to say that 19 workers had indeed been laid off in the Flowering and Basket Making department at the Pottery. Belleek Pottery is continuing its 3-day week operation and this will be reviewed on April 13th. Patricia continues:

"As you know everything is difficult at the moment and with the continual threat of war people are afraid to make commitments to travel which leaves the tourism industry very much unsure but we are hopeful!! Regards to all my friends in the UK, Patricia"

The Autumn 2002 Meeting at Adlington Hall, Cheshire

The UK Belleek Collectors' Group Autumn meeting was held on Sunday 20th October at the Hunting Lodge at Adlington Hall, Cheshire. The meeting was hosted and organised by Chris and David Reynolds.

The Hunting Lodge, Adlington Hall



"EZE"

Firstly, to backtrack a bit.... The previous evening had seen a fairly "riotous assembly" of Belleekers at the "Eze" restaurant in Wilmslow – again expertly arranged by Chris and David, a wonderful evening of delicious food – including Eze's famous Lamb (which was great!) – took place. I

hardly need to mention that this involved highly animated conversations between the Belleekers and was accompanied by excellent wine.... it was followed by more "Guinness and Discussion" at the bar next door for the more "die-hard" members! I note at this point, that you may think this is becoming something of a habit for us UK Group members: well, we prefer to think of it as a *tradition*... long may it continue!



Pictured here, UK Group Members enjoying themselves at "Eze" in Wilmslow, on the Saturday Evening



Back to our meeting on Sunday. This was a special occasion for several reasons, which will become apparent as you read on, but the first special event, which came as a most welcome surprise to those members not “in-on-the-secret”, was the arrival of Maureen and Graham Munton. Maureen and Graham are long-standing members of the group and have an astounding collection of Belleek.

Through ill health, they had not been able to attend a meeting for a considerable time: they have been sorely missed by the Group and individually by a lot of the members – they must be amongst the most individual, welcoming and friendly people you could ever hope to meet, and they would also be proud to be considered as true “British Eccentrics”. It was absolutely splendid to see them in fine fettle at a Belleek meeting again!



Maureen and Graham at Adlington (above) and at home (right)

Our Honoured Guest, Patricia McCauley, from Belleek Pottery

Jan introduced and welcomed Patricia, who is the Manager of the Visitor Centre at the Belleek Pottery, and said that she and her husband, Brendan, are long-standing dear friends of our Group. Jan took the opportunity to warmly thank her and the Pottery for their generous annual Devotee Award gift, which Patricia presented to our 2002 Devotee later that afternoon.



(Above right) Patricia with Simon and Caragh (and Pumpkin Tea-Light – see text in “Bring and Tell”) and later relaxing with Graham and Sheila Houghton and Chris Reynolds

Patricia referred to the rumours of the Pottery’s closure that had been circulating, and said “what’s worse than being talked about is not being talked about...!” She said there had been a 68% decrease in visitors to the Pottery since September 11, 2001. However, staff had been working reduced weeks but currently many are on full time again, and there is a large order for 20,000 flowered lamps for QVC. Belleek wares are also to be sold in Debenhams in Northern Ireland, and Patricia hoped this would lead to sales in other Debenhams stores. Patricia added that staff at Donegal China are still on short time, and that there are a hundred staff employed at Galway Crystal.



Patricia then answered several questions from Members of the Group. She said that mail order is conducted through Cash's and Blarney and that Members could ring and ask to be added to their catalogue mailing list, though prices would be quoted in US Dollars.

Patricia had brought with her two new Pottery designs and explained that the new ranges are to be launched in January, 2003. The new designs are the work of Marie McGrellis and an outside designer. There will also be two

new baskets introduced for next year. In response to a question whether the Pottery might produce more jewellery, Patricia replied that brooches are very expensive to make. Eddie Murphy reminded the meeting that some time ago the Pottery had expressed an interest in his ring's design, based on the 1st Period Black Mark, but had heard nothing since.



Patricia announced there would not be another Member's tea-set made for a while and that the Member's ware for next year would be a single piece. Additionally, two more cups and saucers based on the old designs are to be made for general release and for the Japanese market.

Patricia talked about developments such as plans for the Pottery to have a working museum with, for example, demonstrations of copper plate work. Jan asked whether there were plans to reproduce the historic Armstrong Album in book form. Patricia said she did not know of any such plans but suggested he speaks with Fergus Cleary and/or Angela Moore.



Together with our Graham HOUGHTON, Patricia helped to judge our 'Bring & Tell' which was a light-hearted event full of ingenuity and amusement - congratulations to Jackie Howden who was presented with a sweets prize.

- Gina Kelland and Jan Golaszewski

Pictured here are Group members listening to Patricia's talk (top left), The other pictures show: the Murphys (above right), the McCabes (above left) and the Tubbs family (immediately above)

Bring and Tell

By Graham Houghton



The setting, the Dining Hall in the Hunting Lodge

similar but the theme on that day was Out Of Africa. It was therefore agreed that we would re-launch 'The Bring And Tell' at the October meeting at The Hunting Lodge, Adlington Hall, near Macclesfield, Cheshire. The theme would be the letter S. The idea being that members could be as innovative as they liked and if they wanted, they could get as many Ss into their talk as possible. This would make it both amusing as well as interesting to see how they could bring in the word beginning with 'S'.

Patricia McCauley and I were asked if we would like to judge the event as there was a box of chocolates for the one who was considered to be the best. Since there was no written rules we decided to mark on three factors:

- (1) The presentation.
- (2) Subject interest.
- (3) How the S's were incorporated.

All the pieces were displayed on a table before the 'bit of fun' started and you can see from the photograph there was a very nice display. Jan started the ball rolling by talking about the first piece of Belleek he had purchased to include in his plate collection. We were told that it was a Shell plate, purchased on a Saturday before Sun Set in a well known London Street Market. I obviously can't remember the full extent of his two to three minutes talk about his plate but he managed to incorporate a lot of Ss, I am told he managed thirteen, or was it seventeen? He then picked up another plate from the table and asked the owner to come forward and speak about it. The plate belonged to Chris Reynolds and she came forward and spoke about her beautiful first period Spider Plate that had originally been repaired with Staples during the Victorian era. It had Sub'Sequentially



Jan introduces the Bring and Tell

been repaired and the Staples removed. Since the restoration did not do justice to the piece, Gina had again done a Superb restoration, by Securely fixing the two pieces together with her Special adhesive. She then replaced the Staples with recovered authentic Victorian Staples.

Pat Tubb then told us about a first period Saucer with unpainted Shamrocks around the centre and a Spill that her cousin in America had bought for her in a Small town in New York State called Nayak. It had a very Smudged mark and had lost its legs, the Stumps of which had been Sawn off and Shaved flat.



Chris Reynolds – "Stapled Spider Plate"

Chris Reynolds then came back for a second time to tell us about her three Mugs, a Small Shamrock, Sligo and Santa mug all quite rare.

Tony Fox told us about an earthenware Sick feeders and why Some had their handle on the Side and others place opposite the Spout. His explanation; on the Side was for the patient to feed themselves but if it was opposite the Spout it was for Someone else to feed the patient. He then presented two rare pieces of Belleek; a first period painted Shamrock plate and a very rare Sphinx Serviette ring of the Egyptian pattern. This piece is so rare that

most of us are unlikely ever to see another one for Sale. By the way! He is now looking for a replacement arm and a leg, because that is what he said he had to give for the Serviette ring.

Jackie Howden told us how she was led "a'Stray". She had practised her restoration work on a collector's pieces but would not take payment for the work. The collector was so grateful that he gave her a Small Belleek Shamrock Salt painted in green. That was her first payment for restoration work and the Start of the expansion of her Belleek collection of Salts. Prior to that her collection consisted of various patterns of creamers.



Jackie Howden with Jan, showing Shamrock Salt

Christopher Marvell told us about his gilded Shell Salt and Spoon with orange coral and a mustard pot in blue and pink together with a Spoon which just for the day he called it 'a Salt'. Both items were absolutely beautiful, but for me, the most captivating pieces were the Belleek Salt Spoon and mustard Spoon. So fragile and yet they have lasted So long. Once again, items that most collectors would give their "eye teeth" for and would be very lucky to find one let alone two!



Chris Marvell and Shell Salt



Elaine and Paul Ewings

Elaine Ewings spoke about a very unusual piece. It could have been the Clamshell and Griffin piece but unfortunately the clamshell along with the griffin had become Separated from the base and had been lost. However the base, covered with all the different Shells became quite an interesting item to present to the members.

Simon came to the front of the room next to show a third period Art Deco plate that he thought was the work of S'yril Arnold.

Joanna Urbanek presented one of the largest Shards of pottery that I have ever seen. It was a base of an earthenware Stilton Dish which she had recovered from the Belleek Pottery tip before it was levelled and a new building and car park placed on top of it.

Patricia McCauley, our guest from the Pottery, first presented a Shamrock Pumpkin Tea Light that was then given to Caragh Whitlock as a present for being the youngest collector at the meeting (*see picture on previous page*). Caragh was very thrilled to receive it, but she was a little Shy when asked to respond by her Dad. Patricia then spoke to us about a plate from a new range called Contemporary, designed by Maria McGrellis. This will be one of the new ranges the Pottery will be launching later this year. The pattern is difficult to put into words but is a Series of lines in the form of a Swirl around the centre of the plate Similar to a question mark. The design was well received by the members.

Linda Murphy followed with a Winkle Salt and a beautiful first period plate decorated with black Shamrocks. Eddie presented some earthenware Soup plates that had touched during the firing of the glaze. The distortion in the glaze on the bottom of one was identical to the fault in the glaze on the top of the other one. He said they had Stuck together during the firing. He also presented a rather unusual piece, a trout or Salmon Spawn tray. The explanation given was that the roe (eggs) was placed in the tray, the tray was then placed one on top of the other to form a Stack and water at the required Steady temperature was then passed through the Stack until the eggs hatched. Eddie then presented another rare piece, two candle Snuffers on a purpose made tray. It was rather nice and must have been on the want list of everyone in the room.

Patrick McCabe then spoke about a Harp Shamrock Salt and pepper, which had been given to him but neither pieces had the back Stamp. He was concerned as he was of the belief that all Belleek pieces must have the back Stamp to be genuine. He was told when he made enquiries at the Pottery, that none of the Salt and peppers carried a back Stamp. Their explanation was that there was in'Sufficient room to put the Stamp on the very Small Surface of the base when most of the area was taken up by the hole for the filling Stopper.

Our new member Dawn Brett, who was attending her first meeting, told us about her Shell Salt in a Sheffield plated Stand. Could it be Silver or was it a Sheffield Stainless Steel Stand or Support? No! She confirmed that it was a Sheffield plated Stand.



Diane Wilkinson with Jackie and Jim Howden

Last, but by no means least, Diane Wilkinson gave us some interesting information about a very nice Shamrock Shaped dish made by Nautilus, the Scottish porcelain ware very Similar in many ways to Belleek. She said she had found it at the very large open air fair on the old Swinderby Airfield near Newark.

To save you the bother of counting how many members brought their special items and told their story, if you include our guest and count Eddie and Linda as two, because they each presented items, we enjoyed sixteen presentations. As one of the Judges I can confirm that every one of them was well-presented, very

interesting to listen to, very informative and there were plenty of Ss in all of them. I am told that the highest was seventeen.

It was very difficult to pick the winner as all the presentations were so good, but Patricia and I both agreed that Jackie Howden just had a slight edge and we felt she was the worthy winner. I enjoyed it. I have spoken to some of the members, including some who brought pieces, and without exception, they also thought it was very interesting and enjoyable. So please can we have another one with a different theme at one of the meetings next year.

2002 UK Devotee Award



Patricia then announced our 2002 Devotees - Liz & Eddie RENSRAW, who received an overwhelming number of votes from our Group's Membership. Eddie was our Group's Honorary Treasurer from 1995–2002 during which time his business acumen and guardianship of our finances have been an invaluable contribution to our Group's well-being. Both Liz & Eddie have been active Members since 1990, their enthusiasm, devotion and support of others has been immeasurable throughout these years.

Later in the afternoon, Patricia had to leave us to catch her return flight home. With hugs and kisses, individually we thanked her for taking precious time away from her family to be with us over the weekend. We expressed our gratitude to her and the Pottery for bringing over lots of generous gifts for our meeting. We wished her and colleagues at the Pottery every good fortune in these troubled times. As Patricia sped off into the distance, we took a few moments to reflect on the difficulties being experienced in the ceramics industry generally, and with concern we expressed our optimistic hopes for the future of the industry and particularly for our friends at the Belleek Pottery.

We returned to continue paying tribute to our retiring Treasurer, Eddie, and to wish both him and Liz every good fortune in their new life and home in South West France. We concluded the day by showing our immense gratitude to Chris, & David REYNOLDS, for organising yet another highly successful Belleeking weekend.

- Gina Kelland and Jan Golaszewski



Two pictures of Liz and Eddie Renshaw being presented with the 2002 UK Devotee award by Patricia

The Belleek Christmas Party 2002



The 2002 Christmas Party was a very festive occasion. Expertly organised by Chris and David Reynolds, it was held in a beautiful private room at the "Drum and Monkey" at Alderly Edge, near Wilmslow. The setting was delightful, the food delicious, the entertainment and the company fantastic! We had - as you can clearly see - a very good time indeed...



David and Chris devised a very simple competition for between courses, and members were shown two saucers and a cup which had been broken long ago and repaired with wire staples, (the pieces were possibly early Spode) but only the upper sides were shown and the idea was to guess the total number of staples in the three pieces.



Those stapled pieces: the saucers from above and below

Entries ranged from 12 to 39, the total number was in fact 36

and Linda Murphy was the winner having guessed 38. One saucer had 20 staples and the other 13. The cup handle had 3. The old method of staple repairs is familiar to most members but nobody had before seen such a large number in teaware.



Now, just why is our Karen Kincheloe wearing her bra on the outside? Well, this was yet another devious competition Chris and David had dreamed up!

As you can see, it involved the letter "B" in some way, Gina here is wearing a pretty "Boater (with Big Blue Bow)".

Another possibility.... maybe it was just an excuse to dress up outrageously?

Anyway, it was no contest! David had pretty impressive braces (as you can see here), but the clear winner, by the popular acclaim of all present... was Karen!



2002 Raffle

Our annual raffle took place after the meal with the following results, starting with the First Prize:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Belleek Corn Spill | Simon & Melanie Whitlock |
| 2. Lenox Plate | John Brancker |
| 3. Belleek Shamrock plate | Steve Garnett |
| 4. Belleek Pen | Karen Kincheloe |
| 5. Lenox Spill | Gina Kelland |
| 6. Donegal China Bowl | Diane Wilkinson |
| 7. Donegal China Planter | Liz & Eddie Renshaw |
| 8. Pie Slice | Brian Scott |
| 9. Festive Napkins | Colin Strong |
| 10. Worcester Pot | Brian Scott |
| 11. Lenox Spill | Pat & Phyllis McCabe |
| 12. Donegal China Cladagh Dish | Liz & Eddie Renshaw |
| 13. Belleek Shamrock saucer | Paddy & Tracey McKee |
| 14. Maeve Binchey talking book | Josie Garnett. |



Thanks are due to those members who made the donations of prizes in addition to the main prize which of course was purchased from raffle ticket sales.

Don't forget to start buying your tickets for the 2003 raffle at our next meeting in Cornwall in April.

The following day (Sunday), the celebrations had not finished. Chris and David Reynolds opened up their house to all Group members – more excellent food and drink were supplied and a chance to inspect Chris and David's fine Belleek collection. This was very relaxed and informal, a chance to get together for a chat - and in my case, to recover from the over-indulgences of the night before! (- *your publisher*).

The effort in arranging the Christmas Party and everything else associated with it is very much appreciated. Chris and David have done magnificently to carry on the Belleek UK Collectors' Group "Tradition" of the Christmas Party, which had previously, for the first nine years of the Group's existence, been wonderfully looked after by Maureen and Graham Munton.



- Contributions from David Reynolds, Gina Kelland and Chris Marvell

Pictured on this page: Graham Houghton with Bev Marvell holding the Raffle Draw, aided by Linda (with Bowler Hat, from the 'B' competition) and Eddie Murphy and Sheila Houghton

Lenox china in The White House.

W S Lenox produced his first translucent American china in 1889, and would not accept anything but the best quality. Despite his failing health, W S Lenox still went to his pottery in Trenton, New Jersey every day, even after going blind and paralysed, needing to be carried. Assisted by Harry Brown, he was determined to overcome the prejudice against American made china, and so in 1906 formed Lenox Inc.



Walter Scott Lenox



During the following few years, Lenox Inc. opened accounts with a number of large stores in New York and Philadelphia, including Tiffany's and the business flourished. W S Lenox died in January 1920 and the business continued under the management of Harry Brown, Frank Holmes and William Clayton with the help of William Bromley Sr., who soon afterwards returned to Belleek.

Until the turn of the (20th) century, fine American china was unheard of and there was great surprise in 1917 when President Woodrow Wilson ordered a 1700 piece Lenox dinner set for use in the White House. This service was decorated with the President's Seal, and not the emblem of the United States. The Wilson dinner service was used by his successors, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover.



The artistic simplicity of the tableware designs introduced throughout the 1930's by Lenox under the presidency of Harry Brown and with designs by Frank Holmes took the Lenox trademark onto one in every four pieces of tableware purchased by Americans. In 1935, President Franklin D Roosevelt commissioned Lenox to produce an official service for his table, and using Roosevelt's own design, Lenox delivered a 1722 piece service which continued to be used for 17 years. After redecoration of the White House in 1952 President Harry Truman chose Lenox for his table, and once again the Presidential Seal was used in the decoration.

Whilst Lenox tableware has continued to grace the White House dinners since the 1950's it is appropriate to stop the details here, remembering the vast number of pieces of chinaware so far, because it was written in 1959 that the practice of getting rid of unwanted White House furnishings at sales ceased, and now (since 1959) the procedure is for the President to declare items not fit for use, and they are thrown into the Potomac River.

- David Reynolds

"Flog it!" BBC-2, 25 October 2002



At the start of the programme there was a tantalising glimpse of a Belleek Jardiniere on a shelf, and soon it was seen being lifted out of a bag by its owners who it later became clear were called Marion and



Derek. The Jardiniere (un-footed) is shown at the top of page 104 of Marion Langham's book 'Encyclopaedia of Belleek Flower Holders'.

The programme's presenter was Paul Martin, and some of the items for auction were valued by David Barby who initially talked to the couple. The husband had bought the Jardiniere for himself from an antique shop 22 years ago (for £20) but now wanted to sell it – 'In a way, I think we've had it for long enough'. His wife was positive about selling it: she had been responsible for cleaning it with soapy water, a toothbrush and a hair dryer. Her husband said he wouldn't touch it!



Presenter, Paul Martin



The Expert, David Barby

David Barby pointed out that the mark was the 2nd Black period, pre-1900 but after 1891 he said (not quite right!). He said Belleek was very very good porcelain, absolutely extraordinary. He suggested Belleek was rarely for use, but made for cabinet display. The Jardiniere had been made to hold a pot. He said he found extraordinary the detail around the rim. He described it as heavily embossed with raised flowers, which he thought were incredible.

He said if it was perfect it would be valued at over £1000. However there was a crack inside which showed as a star crack underneath (it had been bought in this condition). They did not usually take in cracked items, but he thought it was such a beautiful piece of Belleek that anybody, a collector of Belleek, would say 'ah well, I'll never be able to afford a perfect one but I can afford this one' and he thought it would give just as much pleasure. He said it was a collector's piece, and 'you only need two people in the auction room'. He projected a price of about £150 to £250 but hoped it would go for more. He felt it should have a reasonable price to attract buyers. Marion and Derek agreed to this estimate, with a reserve.

The Jardiniere appeared as Lot 204 at Bearne's Auctions in Exeter, described as Belleek porcelain with a 'peaked rim'. The bidding started at £75 and quickly rose to £200 where it stuck. Marion was delighted especially as she would no longer have to clean it, and accepted that it would have been worth more if undamaged.

- Gina Kelland

Mystery Items of Belleek...

Firstly: The following cup and saucer were sold recently on ebay....



The cup and saucer look like the typical thin, translucent Belleek parian body – it is marked (2nd Black) and is described as Belleek by the seller, dealer Trevor Houghton, from Sydney, Australia. I missed the item on Ebay, but Trevor emailed me with the information that it sold for \$1515, approximately £1000!

The pattern seems to borrow from Limpet or maybe Low Lily with a bit of Institute thrown in....

What pattern is it?

Has anyone ever seen other examples?

(Degenhardt *does* show a creamer in this pattern.... p97 of his Second Edition)

Secondly:

This picture (right) was handed to your publisher by Georgina Reece, one of our younger members. It has an intriguing glimpse of a beautiful painted plaque in the midst of some other Belleek items – The picture itself seems to be of a display cabinet, and it may be from a museum as there is an (unreadable) paper caption amongst the items.

Unfortunately, the picture is of poor quality, although I have tried to enhance this as much as possible (see the detail of the plaque, below).



Does anyone know where this picture could have been taken?

Is it from someone's personal collection?

What about the fine Plaque, is it Belleek?

Who do you think painted it?

If anyone has any information or comments, please send them to Gina:

editor@belleek.org.uk

Or Chris: publisher@belleek.org.uk



- Chris Marvell

THE FLOWERS OF EARLY BELLEEK

by Dawn Brett



Detail of First Period Henshall Basket: Daisy and "Forget-me-nots"?

I saw my first piece of flowered Belleek early in 2001, a Lily Basket (1865 – 69). Captivated by the impossibly delicate flower work and the beauty of the glaze, it was love at first sight, the decision to buy immediate and without question! Since then I haven't looked back and am now the proud owner of a small collection of baskets and other pieces of early flowered Belleek.

As my collection grew, so did my fascination with the individual flowers and the skilled craftsmen who



modelled them. Every time a new piece came into the house I would start delving into the various Belleek texts in an effort to identify all the flowers. To begin with, most of the flowers seemed easy enough to identify, but many of the smaller flowers didn't seem to be mentioned by name, being referred to as "other flowers" or mistakenly called "forget-me-nots", despite having the wrong number or shape of petals. As time went on, anomalies began to arise amongst the larger flowers too; it seemed that there were many more flowers than we had recorded names for!

Frustrated by the lack of information and curious to know more, I did some preliminary research into Victorian flower work, Victorian horticulture and the Victorians themselves, and discovered the following:

During the mid-1800s porcelain, parian and terracotta flowers were all in their heyday. Everything from tiny earrings in the shape of fuchsias, to huge fountains and urns dripping with flowers, were produced by potteries large and small in varying degrees of quality, although entries in books and journals of the era seem to suggest that the better quality work aimed at botanical perfection.

Below are a couple of entries that I felt might be of interest to fellow flower enthusiasts:

1) From *The Illustrated Guide to Victorian Parian China* by Charles & Dorrie Shinn, published 1971:

Brougham, Mrs. M. (Working period c 1850)

Little is known of Mrs. Brougham of Burslem. William White's 1851 Staffordshire Directory recorded that :

"The elegant Parian brooches, Bracelets, etc., manufactured by Mrs. M. Brougham, of Burslem, have most deservedly received the patronage of Her Majesty, the Duchess of Sutherland, Jenny Lind, and many other distinguished ladies."

This floral jewellery is also mentioned in the *Journal of Design* (Vol. IV of 1850 – 1), but so small are the objects that no maker's name can be expected to be found on these now rare examples of Parian at its finest.

2) From *The Ceramic Art of Great Britain* by Llewellyn Jewitt, published by Virtue & Co. London 1878, and edition revised by Geoffrey Godden published by Barrie & Jenkins 1972

WESTON-SUPER-MARE

The *Royal Pottery* was established in 1836 by Mr. Charles Phillips as a brick and tile manufactory. In the following year glazed ware, for domestic vessels, was introduced, as was also, to a small extent, the manufacture of flower-pots &c. In 1840 the production of glazed ware was discontinued; and, the clay of the locality being found to be admirably adapted for horticultural vessels, vases, statuary, &c, special attention was directed to them, and with such marked effect that, at the Great Exhibition of 1851, medals and certificates of merit were awarded for them. In 1870 Mr. Phillips retired from the business, which was purchased by Mr. John Matthews, by whom it has been very considerably extended; several new branches added; and a new and better taste infused into the art decorations. Notably among these introductions are rustic-work, baskets of artificial flowers, busts, vases, suspenders, &c. Flower-pots, of which from 20,000 to 30,000 are made weekly, and of all sizes from 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches to 30 inches diameter, are a staple production of the "Royal Pottery," and are supplied to H.M. gardens at Windsor Castle, H.M. Commissioners of Works at Kew, Hampton Court, the Parks, &c, the Royal Horticultural Society, and to most of the principal gardens in this country, as well as being exported in large quantities to New Zealand, Port Natal, and Chili. They have the reputation of being the best, most compact, and most durable of any manufacture; and, although of such enormous size, are turned with marvellous precision, and fired without running or casting. Two specialities are the "Oxford Pot" with perforated rim for training pelargoniums, azaleas, roses, &c, without the aid of sticks, and the "Alpine-plant pot." The more notable ornamental productions are figure, shell, and other fountains, of various tiers in height; figures, groups of figures, statuettes and busts; eagles, lions, and other gigantic figures on artificial rocks and pedestals; flower and other brackets; bases and tazzas, pedestals and garden-seats; fern-stands and flower and fern-baskets decorated with wicker-work, fern-leaves, and other ornamentation; crocus pots; suspenders for flowers, orchid pots; window-boxes for flowers; arborettes for architectural decorations &c. The general colour is a delicate red. The greatest achievement of Art in terra-cotta which has ever been gained is the production of baskets of flowers, each individual leaf or flower modelled from nature; and vases decorated in the same manner. Those who are acquainted with the exquisite beauty of the groups of porcelain bisque flowers produced at the old Bristol and Derby works, will scarcely be prepared to believe that they are successfully vied in the coarser material by Mr. Matthews; but such is the case. So true to nature are many of the flowers, and so delicately modelled in all their minutest details, that the most skilful botanist can scarce find in them a deviation from nature. The basket engraved on Fig. 807 is a fair specimen of the Matthews' reproduction of flowers; but the most exquisitely beautiful group yet produced is an example in my own possession – the *chef d'œuvre* of the works.

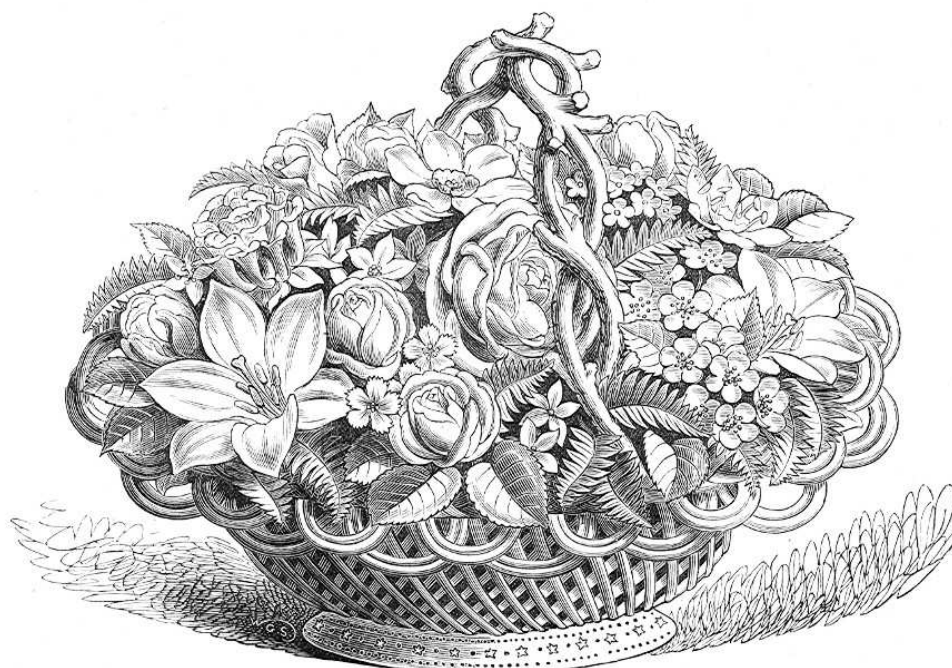
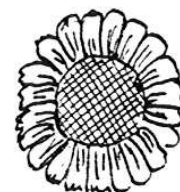


Fig. 807.—Group of Flowers in Weston-super-Mare Terra-Cotta.



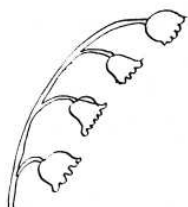
The mid-late 1800s saw the birth of a new social class (up until this time only two classes had existed, the working class and the upper class). With industrialisation came a new group of highly skilled trades and small businessmen. These people formed the middle class. They could afford to buy their own homes, preferring to live in the more pleasant countryside around the edges of the towns and cities, away from the stench and grime, travelling to and from work as necessary.

A new house in the suburbs meant that a garden was possible, a privilege largely denied to those living in the towns and cities. New journals and magazines were published, such as "The Villa Gardener", designed to help such fortunate couples plan and cultivate their new gardens (these ranged in size from about ¼ acre to an acre or more). It is perhaps a little surprising to learn that it was largely the woman of the house who was responsible for most of the planting, weeding, and maintenance of the garden, the men - working long hours in the towns - had very little leisure time to spare for such work.



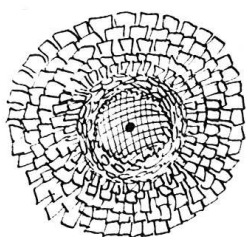
With this rise in the popularity of gardening came a massive interest in "floriculture" (the growing of flowers for their beauty, flowers such as the rose, dahlia, chrysanthemum, carnation, etc.). People who practised floriculture were then known as "florists" (the term not being used to describe people who sold flowers until much later). Floriculture clubs, societies and shows sprung up in profusion and the new craze spread throughout the classes.

Belleek Lily-of-the-Valley, Carnation and Rosebuds



Many employers and ministers actively encouraged floriculture, no doubt seeing it as a more sober and "godly" way of their employees and congregations spending their free time, than the alternative of the local hostelry! Even the very poor, living in the heart of the city, without gardens, still indulged in the growing of flowers by utilising their windowsills. Of course, many could not afford the luxury of real flowerpots and so they used old containers such as wooden boxes often specially decorated for the purpose.

The 19th Century was a time of great rivalry in the ceramics industry with many fine works of art being produced. The most intricate and spectacular pieces were often made at a loss, these were the showpieces in the big exhibitions and served to advertise the manufacturer's skill and prowess, in a world very different from the one we know today. This practice resulted in higher sales of the more common wares, and so the books would balance. Unfortunately this happy situation could not be sustained and as the years passed social and economic changes meant that these top quality wares could no longer be produced at a loss. Frederick Rhead (father of Charlotte Rhead) writing in 1906 commented with sadness that in Staffordshire sons no longer followed their father's trade, resulting in the loss of the very life-force of the Potteries, that body of people with pottery in their blood, from the many generations that had gone before. He also noted how the friendly rivalry that had existed previously amongst the skilled workers, and had served to keep standards so high, seemed to be dying.



Back in 1865, Belleek were introducing their first flowered baskets. If these were to sell, they would have to appeal to the tastes of the middle and upper classes. These people surrounded themselves with beautiful things and fine workmanship and would not be satisfied with anything but the best as there were already many firms of high repute producing similar ware.

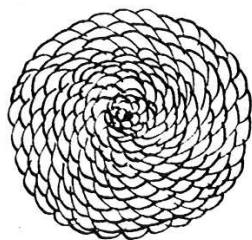
From what I've learned, I feel sure that all of the early flowers made at Belleek would have been based on the popular flowers of the era and that our forebears would have had no difficulty in naming each and every one. With more research it should be possible for us to do the same. This would allow us to describe pieces more accurately, possibly date them more precisely, and, if enough information is forthcoming we may even find ourselves being able to attribute the odd piece or two to a specific modeller!

This research is well overdue, so I am pleased to announce that it is already underway (I became so intrigued and fascinated with the subject during my original quest that I just had to go on!). Contact has already been made with long established seed companies and nurseries, museums, collectors' clubs, etc., and many 19th Century texts have already been studied. The outcome of all this will, I hope, be a truly definitive work on the flowers of early Belleek, giving detailed information about the choice and identity of each flower, dates of production and modeller(s).



Dahlia and shamrocks on the Henshall Basket

There is still much to do, but thus far at least things look promising. A surprising amount



of information has already been learned from books written during the era and the museums have all been more than helpful, but I've been simply overwhelmed by the response of the horticultural trade, various individuals in some firms having already spent many hours searching through archive material on my behalf. At some time in the future I will be asking for your help too, in checking your own collections for the various flowers, as it is essential that all types and variations be recorded and named. I have seen around 40 different flower types thus far, but I am sure there are more out there just waiting to be discovered!

Drawings of various Belleek flowers in this Article are by Jackie Howden

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Staffordshire Pots & Potters by G. Wolliscroft Rhead & Frederick Alfred Rhead, published by Hutchinson 1906

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Catalogue of the 1862 Exhibition, printed for Her Majesty's Commissioners, London

The Pursuit of Paradise by Jane Brown, published by Harper Collins 1999

Belleek Irish Porcelain by Marion Langham, published by Quiller Press

The Illustrated Guide to Victorian Parian China by Charles & Dorrie Shinn, published by Barrie & Jenkins Ltd. 1971

The Victorian Flower Garden by Jennifer Davies, published by BBC Books 1991

Belleek, The Complete Collectors Guide by R.K. Degenhardt, published by Wallace-Homestead Book Company 1993

Sotheby's Irish Sale Catalogue 2002, published by Sotheby's

The Legend of the Plate.

My Willow-ware plate has a story,
Pictorial, painted in blue,
From the land of the tea and tea-plant,
And the little brown man with the queue.
Whatever the viands you're serving Daughter
Romance enters into the feast,
If you only pay heed to the legend,
On the old china plate from the east.

Koong Shee was a mandarin's daughter
And Chang was her lover, ah me
For surely her father's accountant
Might never wed pretty Koong Shee.
So Chang was expelled from the compound,
The lover's alliance to break,
And pretty Koong Shee was imprisoned
In a little blue house by a lake.

The doughty old mandarin reasoned
It was time that his daughter should wed,
And the groom of his choosing should banish
That silly romance from her head.
For years had great artists been stitching
In symbols the dress she should wear,
Her head-band of scarlet lay waiting
She should ride in a gold wedding chair.

He was busily plotting and planning
When a message was brought to him one day---
Young Chang had invaded the palace
And taken his sweetheart away.
They were over the bridge when he saw them
They were passing the big willow tree
And a boat at the edge of the water
Stood waiting for Chang and Koong Shee

The furious mandarin followed
The groom with revenge in his eyes,
But the little boat danced on the water
And travelled away with the prize.
When vengeance pursued to their shelter
And burned the pagoda, they say
From out of the flames rose the lovers---
A pair of doves winged away.

And they flew towards the western heaven,
The pretty Koong Shee and her Chang,
Or so says the famous old legend,
From the land of the Yangtse Kiang:
I wouldn't be one to deny it,
For the little blue dove and her mate
Forever are flying together,
Across my old willow-ware plate.

Author Unknown

- poem supplied by David Reynolds

The Ballymoney Belleek Sale

By Simon Whitlock



BALLYMONEY



'The Belleek Sale'

Important Sale By Public Auction
of a Private Collection of

BELLEEK



together with a collection of
Quality Furnishings
& 30 Lots of Irish Art

THE AUCTION ROOMS

MAIN STREET CAR PARK

Thursday 10th October comm. 7 p.m.

Admission By Catalogue £2

VIEWING: Wednesday 9th October, 3 - 5 p.m. & 7 - 9 p.m.
and Day of Sale from 4 p.m.

Further Details from Auctioneers

028 2766 7676

Last October, I attended what must have been one of the most enjoyable but expensive Belleek auctions ever in Northern Ireland.

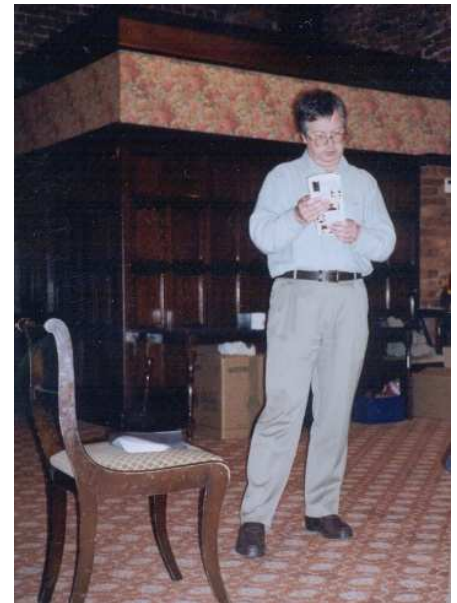
On the Eighth of October, a letter arrived here in Cornwall from one of Mel's 'Belleek Lookouts', i.e. Auntie Muriel. Out of her letter fell a full page article and advertisement for 'The Belleek Sale' on 10th October at Mc Afee Auction Rooms in Ballymoney, Northern Ireland. The editorial was very interesting and many illustrations were of rare and some previously unseen items. It seemed an auction 'too good to miss'.

Thanks to the internet, I was able to book ferry tickets to collect at Holihead ready to travel next day and after a phone call to the auction house, I was fixed up with superb bed and breakfast too. That Wednesday, I arrived in Dublin at 6.00pm. hoping that the bulk of the commuter traffic would be away by then. It took well over an hour to get to the N1 and away due to road works for the new Dublin Port Tunnel Link Road. That delayed arrival at Newry where I stayed overnight.

I planned for Thursday, a leisurely journey North calling in at a few Antique Shops on the way and visits to a few contacts as well. Everyone on the way knew about the auction and some were intending to go as well. That advertising in the North's main newspaper had certainly done the trick.

When I arrived at the preview, the room was well packed with prospective buyers all feverishly examining cabinets and shelves full of Belleek. Having looked at those pieces I was interested in, I slipped away for some food and drink.

Returning at 7.00 the room was packed. It looked like a who's who of Belleek dealers and collectors. I immediately bumped into Roy Hollihead at the doorway who was on his mobile phone at the time and quite stunned to see me there. The O'Neills were there along with the McElroy's from Fermanagh and Keith Johnson from Forge Antiques. The south was well represented too with Tony Honan and Davoc..(can't recall surname). The phones were also booked to collectors and dealers for the auction duration. Lots of bids were on the auctioneer's books from dealers who were away too.



*Simon describing the
McAfee Belleek Auction*



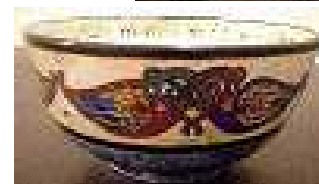
The auction was quite tame until the Belleek lots started. There was a frenzy of arm and catalogue waving as bidders in the room did battle. Green mark jugs made £95 and a Lifford jug made £60. When we came to the first of the rare pieces, it was evident that there were serious buyers in that room. A Michael Collins Commemorative vase with restored chip soared to £825 selling to a phone bidder. Painted pieces sold at a premium too. A pair of hand painted shamrock cream and sugar, lot 26 made £240. These were not the usual toy shamrock but abstract painted Shamrocks.



Most of the surprises were in the Earthenware pieces. Never have I seen chipped and abused pieces fetch so much. A cracked Tea Pot stand



soared to £540. A plain undecorated jug with chip made £170 and plates were reaching the £80 to £100 bracket with ease. A large oval platter with Convolvulus pattern and signed Michael Stevens 6 July 1877 and 2 inch crack made £550. A rare handpainted Earthenware bowl, lot number 226 with hand decorated Celtic design soared to £900..again, the amount of arm and catalogue waving was interesting to watch. The auctioneer at times had 5 or 6 bidders on the go.



Fortunately, there was a break between the Belleek lots. That was when local bidders could find a bargain or two in the furniture on offer.



All the parian did extremely well. Only two lots of Belleek failed to find a buyer. Not bad considering some auctions in the last twelve months.



Some of the highlights were, lot 30 Diamond vase with orange and platinum decoration, £340, Celtic Cross Font 12 1/2 inches tall, £400, Collectors Chinese Teapot £160, Unique Ornamental Angel Figurine 15 inches tall, £5200...this was perhaps the most contested piece of the sale. At the end of the protracted bidding, there was a round of applause as the hammer fell to a collector in the room. Tridacna Tea Kettle £260, Footed Chinese Medium 1st period Teapot £1150, Erne Tray with Butterscotch finish £900, Pair of Unrecorded 'Ring Handle' Vases 13 1/2 inches tall with hand painted flower decoration. One vase was extensively damaged to the rim but well restored £4100 for the pair. Again, a hotly contested lot. Perhaps an oddity for this auction was the £1700 paid for the lithophane of 'The Alms Giver' with a Belleek ® mark for the 1980's. Six Egg cups in the Echinus pattern 1st mark, were part of a much larger Breakfast set which was split up for the auction. The Egg Cups made £525 which was odd as the rest of the set of 29 pieces sold for a reasonable £1150 to the trade.



Most interesting reaction from Gerard McAfee the Auctioneer, was lot 225 a 22 piece Shamrock set with rare, but broken in two, teapot stand. Unable to coax a single starting bid, he said "what's wrong with this set? It is Belleek you know!" Selling for £310, it was a bit of a bargain.



All in all it was a great trip and well worth the visit. I came away almost empty handed but had an enjoyable few days holiday especially with the good weather which was so warm and sunny too. What was unique was the combination of rare and unrecorded pieces that helped to act as a draw to Ballymoney. The publicity machine had worked well and only went to show that Belleek will sell extremely well on its own doorstep. I estimate that the sale of Belleek pieces alone drew in the region of £35,800. Having gathered together this collection over some 30 years, I bet the vendor was delighted with his new found wealth!



Pictured are various Lots from the sale: some are described in the text

LANDMARK COLLECTOR'S LIBRARY
OLD CROWN DERBY CHINA WORKS

*Derby
 Porcelain
 – a new
 Book*



**DERBY PORCELAIN
 THE KING STREET FACTORY
 1849 – 1935**
 Robin Blackwood & Cherry Head



Sampson Hancock, Proprietor

Following the closure of the china manufactory on Nottingham Road, six workers from there, and to whom this book is dedicated, set up new works in rented premises in King Street, Derby. This small concern, which ran from 1849 to 1935, provided continuity of porcelain production in the town of Derby, being the "link" between Nottingham Road and the present Royal Crown Derby factory on Osmaston Road.

This is the first known full-length book to deal with all aspects of the operation carried out at King Street. Chapters are included which cover the History of the Factory, Artists, Modellers and Workers, Recipes and Sales, Marks and Products.

Two hundred colour plates, representing the wide range of shapes and patterns used at King Street are shown, each one accompanied by detailed information about the piece concerned. These illustrations are of interesting wares, which form part of collections held in different areas of the country, some being previously unknown to the authors.

Of the total, more than sixty are of the work that artists were permitted to sign, some of these painters being listed below:

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Annie Bailey | George Jessop |
| Frederick Chivers | William Mosley |
| Harry S. Hancock | Edwin Prince |
| Sampson Hancock | Jack Ratcliffe |
| James Rouse Senior | |

A table covering all the factory's china figures that are known to the authors can be found in the chapter dealing with products.

The illustrations shown in this introductory leaflet have been selected from those included in the book

Landmark Publishing Ltd is to publish "Old Crown Derby China Works, The King Street Factory, 1849-1935" in July as a hardback (248mm by 172mm) on high quality paper, with a laminated wipe clean dust jacket.

Approx: 288pp., 240 colour illustrations.

Retail price: £45.00

ISBN: 1-84306-091-4

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Fresh information is provided regarding the artist who marked his work with the two parallel lines, which are found on numerous King Street products. A full chapter is devoted to Marks, some of which are illustrated at the right hand edge of this page. Detailed information is also provided as to when these marks were in use. The use of other factory's marks on King Street wares is considered along with the practice of applying one of the King Street marks on another manufacturer's products.

Robin Blackwood has taken a keen interest in the activities of the King Street factory since 1988. Cherry Head, a direct descendent of founder partner and later sole proprietor Sampson Hancock, met Robin in 1995. They have pooled the results of their research, and produced this book. It is factual, but written in a manner they hope will be perceived as friendly. They also trust that it will provide interesting reading and be retained as a work of reference for the future.



MARKS

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BCM/PGG

Delf Hawkers

Dawn Brett has found this intriguing article on "Delf Hawkers", the itinerant china-sellers who roamed the remoter parts of the Kingdom from the seventeenth century onwards. It is interesting to speculate if these figures took an important role in ordinary people's lives, particularly in remote places. Certainly, "Hawkers" were significant enough figures in Armstrong's time at Belleek for him to have produced the "Belgian Hawkers", these possibly being modelled by William Boynton Kirk, a sculptor of great repute, who was also probably responsible for the "Figure of Erin".

W.B. Kirk had been employed by W.H. Kerr and R.W. Binns from 1852 at Worcester and was responsible for (amongst other figures) the caricature-like figures of the Midsummer Nights Dream in the famous Worcester Shakespeare Service (1853). The Belleek Belgian Hawkers are also caricatures, suggesting a humorous or "low" theme for these pieces.

Perhaps to Irishmen like Armstrong and Kirk, these hawkers *did* represent an important part of everyday life, maybe to be laughed at in those more sophisticated times, or else perhaps, by the 1870's these hawkers were already becoming a romantic memory, appealing to the sentimental tastes of Victorian society.

Gina has found an interesting postcard (see below), which surely illustrates this sentimental approach. It is a serious card, not a caricature or a humorous view of life – the new middle class (English) Victorians and Edwardians liked to have a "rose-tinted" view of "country life" ("Irish Life" in this case) where they imagined how these things might be (or might have been) – in reality, country life was hard for the working people, and times were changing anyway. Whether the "Belgian" or "Delf" Hawkers were still a commonplace sight in Armstrong's day is open to question. It was, however, probably a sound marketing move by D. McBirney and Co. to produce them!

THE 'DEL'F' HAWKERS

I must conclude this chapter of miscellanies by saying something about the people who bartered Scottish crockery throughout the country, the 'bowl,' or 'mug-man,' whose arrival with his cart of wares was an event at lonely crofts.

A china merchant was a man of substance in the days before communication was so general. I could off-hand mention quite a goodly number who have been Provosts of their town. This prominent position was largely acquired by their extensive dealings not only with travelling hawkers, but also by their wide knowledge of the various places where old rags, scrap metal of all kinds, skins, etc., were principally in request. There was very little money among the country folk, and the 'guid wife' usually replenished her china cupboard by paying for any delf she bought from the hawker in such kind. This trade has to a large extent been killed by motor transport bringing folks even from remote glens to a town to do their shopping.

The following story of one of the best known and largest wholesale china dealers in Scotland is a capital example.

Peter Douglas started a small china shop in High Street, Glasgow, in 1785. His business increased so much that he was compelled to move to more commodious premises in Jail Square, which is contiguous to the north side or right bank of the River Clyde. Some time after this removal he was succeeded by his son William, who carried on the business successfully for many years, and was in course of time succeeded by his sons-in-law David Robertson and Daniel McDougall, senior. The firm's name was now altered to Robertson & McDougall. Meanwhile Daniel McDougall married Grace, a daughter of Douglas. From now on to 1858 the business steadily grew and prospered. It almost entirely depended on the trade of the china hawkers.

Each New-Year the proprietors gave a small treat to their customers, consisting of a glass of whisky and a bun or cake. Subsequently the cake was further enriched by having a certain quota of silver fourpenny pieces included in the baking of the cake, greatly adding to the anticipation of the humble guests.

One year useful presents took the place of the whisky and cake, but this benevolent notion was not appreciated, and the whisky was reverted to at the next Ne'er Day.

The proprietors took a keen personal interest in the welfare of the hawkers. A Private Bank was instituted, and a few of them were induced to lay past a few pence per week. Many, however, did not readily believe that any good could come out of such small economies, and remained thriftless.

For many years a certificate from the firm that, to their knowledge, the holder was too poor to pay his rates was held as sufficient for the exercise of exemption by the authorities, and accordingly the certificate was much sought after and coveted.

Alice Duffy, a successful depositor in Robertson's Bank, having lodged fully £60 in the bank, pressed Robertson for the necessary certificate of poverty. Robertson refused, but so importunate was Alice that at last he made out the following certificate: "Alice Duffy is a very industrious and hard working person who is possessed of ample means to pay the usual poor-rates." Alice could not read any writing, but her faith was unbounded and her air triumphant when she presented her talisman at the fateful official quarter—with what result can be imagined. She had the good sense to see Robertson was right, and thereafter she paid her rates without demur, and continued to swell her balance at the bank.

As evincing the attachment that bound the hawkers to Robertson & McDougall an incident during the 'Bread Riots' may be told here. The mob scoured the streets and harried the shops, leaving everywhere a trail of serious destruction behind it. At a critical moment some rioters voluntarily detached themselves, hurried up the shutters of the Jail Square premises, and kept watch and guard there till the tornado passed by.

Robertson in his lucid style recounts to us his first visit to the Staffordshire Potteries. There was as yet no railway communication between Scotland and England. He travelled by boat to Liverpool, and thence by coach to Staffordshire. "Here," he says, "my hardships and troubles began—a *milky way* of potteries. I had no guide to help me; no roads, for the few tracks that existed had no names or signposts to find the potworks, dotted over the bleak moorland, that I wanted." Veritably an original and faithful description of the 'Potteries' at that time. However, he found good friends in the Hamiltons, pottery manufacturers there, who may have been fellow Scots and had migrated to Staffordshire to seek their fortune years before.

In 1858 Robertson retired from the business, having accumulated a comfortable fortune. The business altered its title to McDougall & Sons, a name still well known throughout Scotland.

Before concluding I must tell how Robertson spent the remainder of his life.

He was born in 1806, and when seven years of age was earning a livelihood as a herd-laddie a few miles from Glasgow. While doing this he showed his bent for natural history. He migrated into Glasgow, became connected, as we have seen, with the pottery trade, and as soon as he could afford it gave up business to pursue his heart's desire.

The shop hours in his days were from early morn till 10 p.m., allowing him no time for study. As he aptly put it, "A true naturalist has no time for money-making." One of his earliest important treatises was one on the 'potato disease,' advocating important preventions for this serious trouble then so rampant in Ireland. He wrote articles on many scientific subjects. Latterly he confined himself entirely to the study of marine biology,

and established the world-renowned marine biological Station at Millport to carry out his remarkable discoveries of the sea and its life. His studies soon made him known all over Europe. He became honoured by many universities and scientific societies, was duly made a Doctor, and recognized as an authority on the natural history of the sea.

I knew him : he was one of the most retiring of men, gentle and simple in his manner. He was a typical self-educated Scot. If he had only received a little more education in his youth he might have written a standard book on the subject he knew so intimately.

He passed away full of honours in 1896, having lived ninety years. His name and memory are still with us, and his friends still speak of him as the 'Cumbrae Naturalist.'

I culled the following extract from a Glasgow journal printed 130 years ago, which forms a fitting final tribute to the 'Hawkers':

"We wish to uphold this work (Delftfield Pottery) as friendly to the price of labour, beginning with the raw material in the quarry, carrying it by sea and land to the mill for pulverization, from thence to the vats for preparation, to the moulds in the hands of the potter, and in due time from the kiln to the warehouse in a mercantile state. The 'firsts' which have come through the kiln's fiery ordeal unhurt are for the table of the great. The 'seconds' or imperfects for the lower, the most numerous class of mankind. These 'seconds' are bought and sold by an order of people considered by our laws to be out of all order. They come under the description of itinerant merchants and tinkers, who, in the summer season, with their horses and asses loaded with kitchen utensils of every description for the husbandman and labourer, as well as the mechanic, perambulate the country. For these wares they receive in part payment old clothes and rags, which are now carefully kept by the cottager's wife for the purpose of upholding herself

and cupboard in the articles necessary for the shelves, and now the tea table. In this instance we find vanity acting an useful part, in furnishing the papermakers with the raw material for that useful art."

From this extract we may safely infer that the pottery hawkers had greatly improved their behaviour and circumstance from the time of James VI., who regarded them "as very incorrigible, and a stubborn sort of persons that regard no laws."

This is the excellent postcard found by Gina, it is a fine quality "Oilette" by Rapheal Tuck and Sons, published just after 1900. The caption *they* gave it is: "*Irish life. Bringing home the turf*", which conjures up a romantic vision indeed...



Another possible caption, given the girl's appearance and thoughts from this article, is:

"Trainee Belgian Hawker??"

Don't Forget.....

Our next meeting in Cornwall is on the 5th and 6th April.

Details from Jan.

Contact Simon if you have questions: treasurer@belleek.org.uk

Cornwall Meeting Information

How can you miss Cornwall in early Spring? Hedgerows starting to sprout with new life, lighter mornings and evenings, warm sunshine and Cornish Towns coming to life with better weather.

Share Cornwall with us and come to the Cornwall Meeting at the Hannafore Point Hotel in Looe. There are links below to many great places to visit too.

See the Eden Project, Lost Gardens of Heligan and other sites in the Duchy of Cornwall. Remember that when booking directly with the hotel, please mention that you are attending the Belleek event, for the special tariff that we have negotiated.



For the meeting we have negotiated a rate of £50 per person, sharing a room. This comprises of dinner, room and breakfast inclusive. If you are attending but staying elsewhere, the cost for a four course dinner is £21 per head so the accommodation staying at the Hannafore is £29 per person.



Hannafore Point Hotel: outside (top), a room (left), the swimming pool (right)

Cornwall is accessible via two main routes, M5 and A38 from the Western and Midlands/Northern Counties and the M1, M25, M3 and A303 then A38 from the North Eastern Counties and London/Home Counties areas. Journey to Plymouth, travel over the recently widened Tamar Bridge to Saltash and follow the signs for Looe.



Average travel time from, for example, Stoke on Trent to Cornwall is under Four Hours assuming no hold ups on the Motorways. Bristol is only two hours from Looe.

More details are available on Simon's special Cornwall Website: <http://www.geocities.com/simel9/belleek.html>

- Simon Whitlock