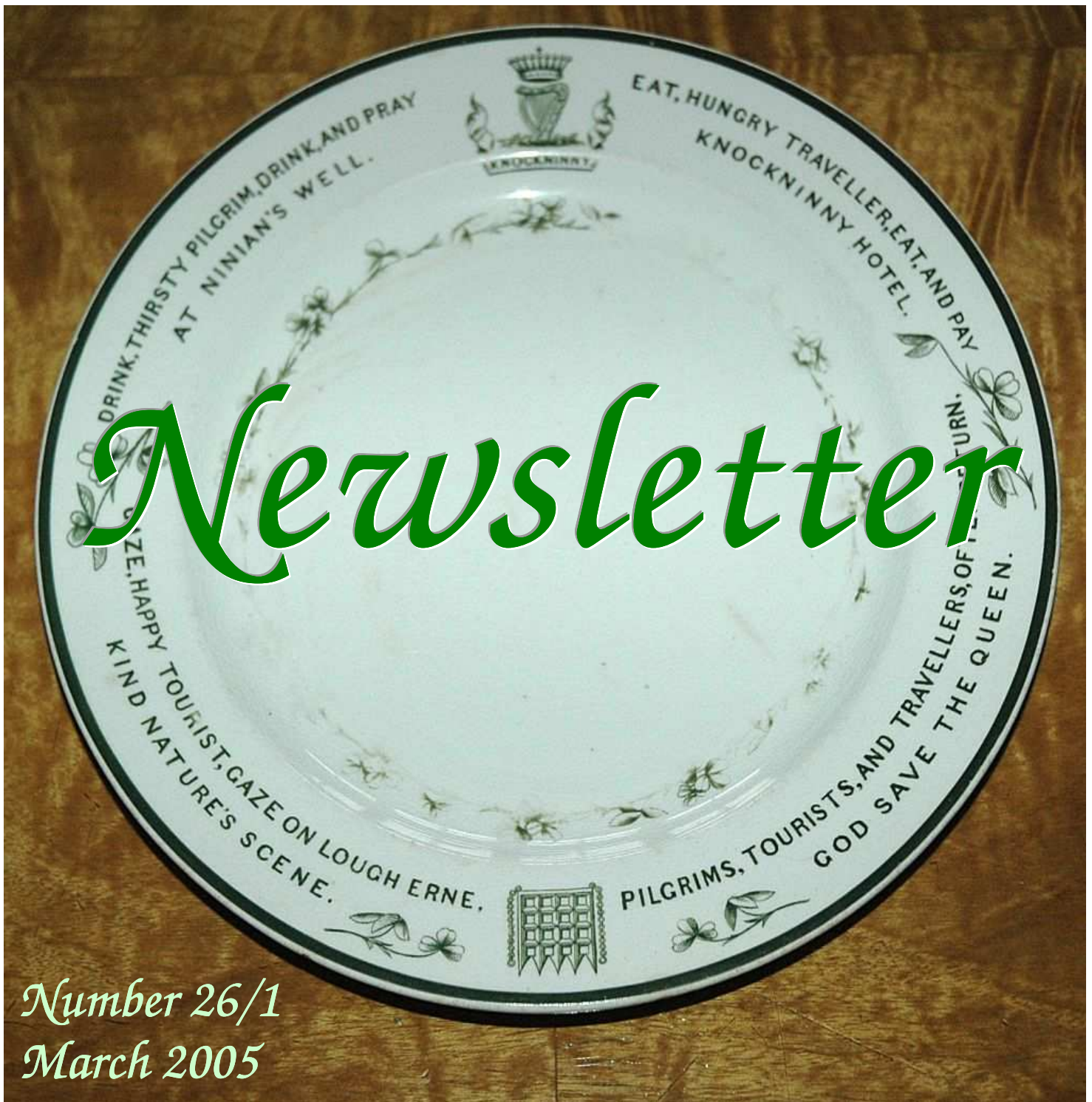


UK Belleek Collectors' Group



Number 26/1
March 2005

Here it is on a plate the first UK Belleek collectors' Newsletter for 2005. You can settle down for a good read, including reports on the Hull meeting and the Group's great Christmas gathering, and lots more information from our dedicated band of Researchers. Follow the fascinating story of the Knockninny Hotel plate, and dream of a cruise on Lough Erne – starting at Knockninny, cruising past the hundreds of scenic islands, maybe visiting Belleek and Enniskillen, and enjoying the spectacular 900 ft. cliffs of this great lake. Sounds idyllic!

- Gina Kelland

Contacts:

Gina Kelland is the Newsletter editor. Please let her have your contributions for future Newsletters, comments, suggestions, letters for publication, criticisms etc. If you want, Chris is also happy to receive material for the Newsletter. **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 editor@belleek.org.uk

Chris Marvell publishes the Newsletter and he and Bev Marvell distribute it. Chris is also setting up a database which will form the Group's "digital" archive, keeping a record of relevant publications and photographs (including photos etc. gathered at meetings and not published in the Newsletter). Some or all of this information will be available on the Internet as our website develops. Contact Chris at publisher@belleek.org.uk

The Group's Chairman is **David Reynolds**, email chairman@belleek.org.uk

Our Treasurer, **Francis Kiddle**, contact him by email treasurer@belleek.org.uk

The position of Group Administrator is vacant at present so email to administrator@belleek.org.uk will come through to Chris Marvell who will pass it on to the most appropriate person!

Our website is administered by Simon Whitlock and can be found at <http://www.belleek.org.uk/>.

There is now a separate email address to make contact with researchers within the group. This is research@belleek.org.uk

Credits

Photographs: Joanna Urbanek, Paul Ewings, Gina Kelland, Chris Marvell, David Reynolds and Eddie Murphy
Articles by: Linda and Eddie Murphy, Brian Russell, Elaine Ewings, Bev Marvell, David Reynolds, Graham Houghton, Myra Roalfe, Joanna Urbanek, Jan Golaszewski and Chris Marvell.
Other material: Mandy Golder

Thanks to members and others who have helped in many ways, and for their contributions and most encouraging comments.

Forthcoming Events

12th / 13th March 2005, Wirral, Merseyside. Hosted by Sheila & Graham Houghton.

Sunday 17th July: Fleet area, Hampshire (to include AGM). Hosted by Máire & Francis Kiddle

As always, members will receive notification and details of meetings 2-4 weeks before the actual meeting in question.

Future Plans

15th/16th or 22nd/23rd October: Group's 50th meeting – dates and location to be confirmed

10th/11th December: Christmas weekend, coinciding with the Stafford Antiques Fair.

Newsletter Deadlines

Summer 2005: Deadline 12th June, Publication 3rd July.

Autumn 2005: Deadline 18th September, Publication 9th October.

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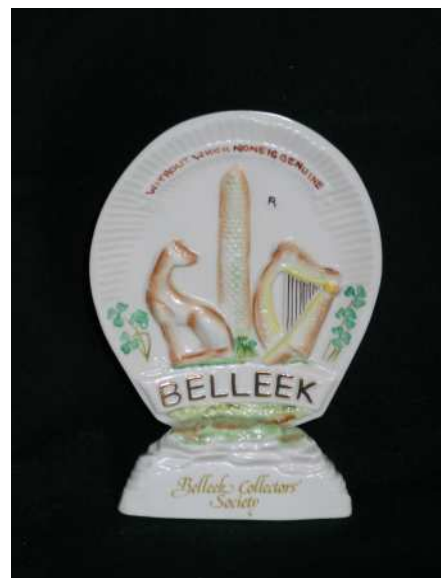
Group Announcements

From the Chairman – the Annual Raffle

I would like to draw to members' attention a couple of changes in the administration of the sale of raffle tickets for the Groups annual draw for pieces of Belleek, with a desired purchase of a 1st period piece, whenever possible for the 1st prize, and historically two minor prizes for 2nd and 3rd place in the draw.

The first change is in the day to day sale of tickets, and as from the March 2005 meeting, Eddie Murphy will be looking after tickets and this will continue at future meetings. Sale of tickets, for whatever reason, (and never intentionally) has been confined to our four regular gatherings, thereby limiting entry into the draw to those members who have attended meetings in a particular year, so with immediate effect tickets can be purchased at any time throughout the year either singly or in multiple numbers and procedures will be kept simple to enable members to avail themselves of this facility.

A member can order tickets from Eddie by telephone or email, and payment by cheque payable to Belleek Collectors Society (UK) will ensure that ticket(s) purchased can be either reserved or posted out straight away. In addition any member unable to attend meetings and returning the apologies slip can enclose a cheque, and request for ticket(s) which remain at £5 each, I can then arrange with Eddie to provide any tickets ordered. Eddie's telephone number is 01782 746201, and his email is eddie@g0vvt.freemove.co.uk or raffle@belleek.org.uk



Members who have seen some of the major prizes won during recent years will realise that here is a great chance to win a significant piece of Belleek, and every effort is being made to broaden the spread, and increase the number of tickets sold annually. The raffle fund is operated independently of the Group's main accounts and is self financing, this means that any increase in ticket sales will increase the amount of money available to spend on prizes.

Every effort will be made to continue purchase, certainly of the 1st prize as early in the year as possible, in order to display it at our meetings, and, so the second procedural change, a photograph of the prize will be published in our newsletter in order to encourage ticket purchases from members who cannot, or do not attend meetings on a regular basis.

Eligibility for entry into the draw remains restricted to paid up members of the Group.

- *David Reynolds* chairman@belleek.org.uk

UK Group Website

If you go and look on the Internet, our Website: <http://www.belleek.org.uk> is undergoing some changes. Simon Whitlock set up the site a few years ago and his sterling efforts ensured that the group had a presence on the Web. Following (and during) the discussions (debates?) on where the Group was going, a lot of support was expressed for this Newsletter (many thanks for that) and also for the development of our Website. Although not all members have (or even want to have!) access to the Internet - don't worry, the Newsletter and other information will go on being sent out in printed form - it was felt that for the future development of the Group and to spread information about Belleek and Belleek collecting in general, the Website was vital. With this in mind, and with the approval of the Chairman and Treasurer, this process of improvement has already been started.

As a technical point (this is a bit boring, I'm afraid) the domain: <http://www.belleek.org.uk>, which the UK Group owns, is now hosted as a site in its own right rather than simply acting as a link to Simon's site. This costs the Group a small amount of money but give us an advert-free site, high-speed downloads and the space to expand if we want to. We now also have mailboxes so that email can be received separately on different topics or directed to different people.

The main point is that *we* now have to decide what we want to put on this site! We already have the Newsletters and Simon's frequently updated Belleek News. we would welcome any suggestions from members about this. Personally, I would like to see (in addition to what we already have) clear information about our Group, a membership application form, a message board (or discussion board on a number of topics) and very importantly our Group's research fully documented and indexed.

- *Chris Marvell* publisher@belleek.org.uk

The Belleek Collector

There has been a delivery problem with "The Belleek Collector": some members did not receive Volume 15, Number 3, 2004, and this was resolved by sending it again to everybody on the distribution list, therefore some people will have received it twice and some will have received it very late. David Reynolds is trying to resolve this problem with the International Collectors Society.

From Jan...

A **BIG** warm thank you to all those Members who voted for me as this year's Devotee.

It has been my honour to have served the Group, and also my privilege to have met so many wonderful Belleekers. I have enjoyed countless Belleeking adventures and occasions with many very dear friends - all of which are cherished memories. I have celebrated, laughed and cried with many Belleekers. Every Member has left their imprint and I have drawn my energy, enthusiasm and inspiration from past and present Members. I remain active promoting our unique brand of fun, simplicity and warmth, and look forward to joining you all in achieving many more Belleeking milestones.

My appreciative hugs and kisses, Jan x.

Jan also sent the following Calendar of Events that may be of interest!

CALENDAR OF AUCTIONS, EVENTS, EXHIBITIONS & ANTIQUE FAIRS (updated 17.01.05)

AUCTION/EXHIBIT EVENT/FAIR	DATES	TIMES Comments	AUCTION/EXHIBIT EVENT/FAIR	DATES	TIMES Comments
London Art Fair	22.01.05	Islington	RA Summer Exhibition	2 07.06 - 15.08.05	Daily 10-6. Fri till 10pm.
Thistle Hotel, Lancaster Gate, Bayswater.	22 - 23.01.05		Newark	09 - 11.06.05	
Ambrose	27 - 28.01.05		Billericy Antiques Circle	13.06.05	Belleek
Newark	03 - 5.02.05		Stafford	17 - 19.06.05	
Stafford	11 - 13.02.05		Detling	23 - 24.07.05	
Chingford Fair	26.02.05	10.30 - 4.00	Belleek AGM	17 & 18.07.05	@ Fleet, Hampshire
Detling	26 - 27.02.05		Newark	04 - 06.08.05	
Mothers' Day	06.03.05		Stafford	12 -14.08.05	
Ambrose	03 - 04.03.05		Michigan Belleek Convention	08 - 10.09.05	
Belleek meeting	12 & 13.03.05	@ Liverpool/Wirral	Detling	17 - 18.09.05	
Alexandra Palace	13.03.05		Chelsea Antiques Fair, Kings Road.	17 - 26.09.05	
St. Patrick's Day	17.03.05		Alexandra Palace	25.09.05	
RI Watercolours annual exhibition	17.03.05		Stafford	30.09 - 02.10.05	
Affordable Art Fair	17 - 20.03.05	@ Battersea 16.03.05 pre-view	England v Poland	12.10.05	World Cup Qualifier
Stafford	18 - 20.03.05		Belleek 50 th meeting	15 or 22.10.05	Location to be confirmed
Poland v Wales	26.03.05	World Cup Qualifier	Newark	13 - 15.10.05	
NEC	31.03 - 03.04.05		Affordable Art Fair	Mid-October '05	@ Battersea
Newark	07 - 09.04.05		Detling	29 - 30.10.05	
Buckhurst Hill Antiques Circle	15.04.05	Doulton	Alexandra Palace	20.11.05	
Detling	16 - 17.04.05		Newark	01 - 03.12.05	
Alexandra Palace	08.05.05		Stafford	09 - 11.12.05	
Affordable Art Fair	19 - 22.05.05	@ Bristol			

Sales/Swaps/Wanted

Rathmore Baskets at Aynsley

For anybody looking to purchase a modern basket, there is currently a sale on at Aynsley China in Longton, with 30% discount off all new Belleek items in stock. The discount on a range of baskets is far greater and virtually 50%. **There is a painted Rathmore Basket reduced from £2700 to £1375.**

Aynsley China Portland Works

Exit M6 Junction 15, follow A500, then A50 for Derby / Uttoxeter, then local signs. Factory Shop Longton (01782) 339420

Aynsley China Limited
Portland Works
Sutherland Road
Longton
Stoke-on-Trent
ST3 1HS



Stop Press

Aynsley Factory Shop in Longton has now increased its discount on Belleek items.... from 30% to 40%!

Belgian Hawkers

I have been approached by a gentleman in Scotland who inherited a pair of unpainted, 1st period Belgian Hawkers, he has no interest in Belleek and wishes to sell them, preferably privately to a collector in the UK. If anybody might be interested in more information or even making a trip to the Scottish Central Region, please let me know and I'll put you in touch. No asking price has been mentioned, but the gentleman wants to secure the best market price for these figures which are offered in perfect condition.

- David Reynolds

News from the World of Ceramics

Donegal Parian China

Firstly, the basic facts as reported by Associated Press

Belleek Plans to Shut Donegal China Plant

Thursday January 13, 12:24 pm ET

By Shawn Pogatchnik, Associated Press Writer

Belleek Plans to Shut Donegal China Plant; Most Workers Likely to Lose Jobs

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP) -- Donegal Parian China, the only porcelain manufacturer in the Republic of Ireland, is shutting down its factory and going back where it started -- to the world-renowned Belleek Pottery next door in Northern Ireland.

Twenty years ago, four Belleek workers broke away to form Donegal China and built a factory in Ballyshannon, County Donegal, just 4 miles (7 kms) from the Belleek plant, which was founded in the 1850s and has a worldwide following today. Donegal China never came close to matching Belleek's sophistication or range and, in 2000, accepted a takeover for a confidential sum. Belleek kept the brand going, but said Thursday it will transfer all production of Donegal-branded china to Belleek's own production floor by March. Most of the 54 people currently employed in Ballyshannon were likely to lose their jobs rather than be transferred. Belleek said operating and manufacturing costs had grown prohibitively high at Ballyshannon.



"The transfer of production to Belleek's state-of-the-art production plant will lead to significant costs savings both in terms of economies of scale and in increased manufacturing efficiency," the company said. "The move will safeguard the future of the Donegal China brand."

Politicians in Donegal, the northernmost county with chronic unemployment problems, said the loss of the Ballyshannon plant was both an economic and symbolic blow.

"Not only did it provide valued employment, but the factory also attracted thousands of visitors and tourists to its beautiful showrooms. In fact, it gave the Donegal name international recognition," said lawmaker Dinny McGinley.

Donegal Parian China, <http://www.donegalchina.ie/>

Belleek Parian China, <http://www.belleek.com/>

Now, for a more local point of view, The Donegal Bay News, Issue 82, 21st January 2005...

Donegal Bay News

Donegal Parian Closure

The new year has started badly for the 55 full and part time employees of Donegal Parian China in Ballyshannon. The factory's owners the Belleek Group have decided to close the factory and move production of the Donegal brand to their Belleek factory. The factory at Portnason that at one time employed 125 people will close for good at the end of March. Redundancies will be inevitable although some staff may be offered positions within Belleek Pottery. This news signals the end of an era for Ballyshannon and brings down the curtain on manufacturing industries in the area. It is ironic to think that Donegal Parian China was established by ex-Belleek Pottery employees and is now effectively being closed by Belleek Pottery. However further revelations from the Belleek Group have emerged in that a large proportion of the Belleek Pottery range is now being produced in China. So now we have the scenario whereby Donegal China will be made in Fermanagh and Belleek will be made in China. It appears that globalisation has hit South Donegal and West Fermanagh.

Finally, the response of Dinny McGinley, the Fine Gael Deputy...

Fine Gael National Press Office Press Release

Leinster House
Dublin 2
Ireland

Contact:
Joanne Lonergan
087 2379458

Dinny McGinley TD
Donegal South West

Thursday, 13 January 2005

Closure of Parian China another blow to South West Donegal - McGinley

Fine Gael Deputy for Donegal South West, Dinny McGinley TD has said that today's announcement by Donegal Parian China that they are closing their factory in Ballyshannon, with a loss of 44 fulltime jobs, is not alone a severe blow to the Ballyshannon area but to all of Donegal.

"For many years Donegal Parian China has been a flagship company within the County. Not only did it provide valued employment, but the factory also attracted thousands of visitors and tourists to its beautiful showrooms. In fact, it gave the Donegal name international recognition.

"This is the latest in a long litany of job closures for Ballyshannon and South Donegal.

"Some years ago Donegal Rubber Company closed with a loss of 100 jobs, Rogan's International Fishing Fly Company closed with a loss of 15 jobs, the ESB has drastically reduced its workforce in Ballyshannon, and the Donegal Democrat has relocated.

"Today's announcement is the latest cut - probably the unkindest cut of all - as the company has decided to concentrate all its production a few miles up the road in Belleek. It is an indictment of the economic policies pursued by this Government and its predecessor that allowed production costs to escalate, even compared to just miles away in Northern Ireland.

"The Government and its Ministers have a responsibility to the county they represent. The haemorrhaging of employment from the area cannot be allowed to continue."

Many members of the UK Belleek Collectors' Group have purchased Donegal China and personally know some of the ex-employees. We are very sorry to see the present state of affairs and would like to extend our hopes for a brighter future to all those involved. It is also to be hoped that Belleek Pottery Ltd. manage to continue their successful operations and will be able to carry on using the skills of the Donegal staff.

Equally disturbing as the Donegal closure is the mention in *Donegal Bay News* that Belleek will be made in China - we have already seen this type of outsourcing decimate the potteries in Stoke on Trent.

Talking of the Problems in Stoke-on-Trent...

...more Royal Doulton News

Irish Post Wednesday, December 22, 2004



Waterford Wedgwood takes over Royal Doulton

CRYSTAL and gifts giant Waterford Wedgwood is the proud owner of several new dining sets — after buying Britain's Royal Doulton firm for £39.9m.

The move is a key part of Chairman Sir Anthony O'Reilly's bid to return the Irish company to profit after a troubled year.

Waterford Wedgwood will pay 12p a share for the lossmaking Royal Doulton tableware group that first started creating dinner services in 1815.

It is funding the acquisition from a £73million rights issue agreed by shareholders last week at an extraordinary general meeting in Dublin.

Sir Anthony said the takeover "would transform the fortunes of Waterford Wedgwood."

But the takeover will see Royal Doulton end production in its factory in Stoke-on-Trent — where it is the only remaining British manufacturer of bone china in the famous Potteries region.

Production will instead move to Waterford Wedgwood's Barlaston facility — lowering costs and increasing production at the Staffordshire plant.

The company will also save further costs through reducing the two group's retail outlets and integrating both their head offices.

It marks the second time the Irish group has tried to influence the destiny of Royal Doulton. Just two years ago it launched a failed bid to buy the Royal Albert brand from Royal Doulton for £24million.

Waterford Wedgwood will be hoping that the combination of the two brands will help to revive sales — as people have turned away from the traditional dining set and formal crystal wear in recent years, hitting profits in the sector.

This year alone Royal Doulton reported losses of £5million on turnover of £116.5million because of worsening sales.

One analyst said: "The market has proved very tough for both firms in the past few years as tastes have changed. This is really the only way forward.

"Together they will be a lot stronger and the deal brings with it some excellent synergies in terms of cross-promotion, branding and shared manufacturing and head office costs.

"If this doesn't work it's very hard to see where they can go in the future."

This follows the now complete dispersal of the irreplaceable Royal Doulton and Minton Museum collections, the closure of manufacturing plants across Stoke-on-Trent, thousands of redundancies in the Royal Doulton Group, the wanton destruction of Minton House in Stoke and many broken promises. The final Doulton factory (and the former site of its visitor centre and museum) at Nile Street in Burslem will close shortly. It is ironic that Sir Henry Doulton's first venture in the Potteries was the acquisition of the Pinder-Bourne company and its works on Nile Street. When the Nile Street works finally closes its doors, it will mark the end of the illustrious Doulton era, although many would say that its end has been ignominious. Even though the Doulton name may continue with items being produced at Wedgwood's Barlaston plant... this is the end.

Fears are now running at a high level about the fate of the Minton archives, which were held at Nile Street - after the demolition of Minton House - up until now in the safe and expert hands of Joan Jones (formerly Minton Museum curator). These records, which surely should be saved intact as items of historical importance, are now in grave danger as they could be sold piecemeal to raise more money for Waterford Wedgwood/Doulton.

The Hull Weekend



One of Paddy and Tracy's "boys"... enjoying a video.



Saturday Evening at the "Green Dragon"

The venue for our Saturday evening get-together and meal was the Green Dragon pub, just a few miles from Paddy and Tracy's house on the North bank of the Humber, just down the road from Hull and the Humber Bridge.





It was, as is our custom, a very jovial and convivial assembly, at a welcoming and relaxing venue with good food, drink and company.

The pictures show us all having a good time on the Saturday evening...



...David enjoying his starter

...Josie contemplating her dessert



..and finally making our way back to our hotels after the party.



The Hull Weekend

...Sunday's Events

The Sunday meeting was held at the historic Cave Castle Hotel. This really is a tremendously impressive venue – the “Castle” is actually a Victorian building but it is the site of a much older structure, dating back to ancient fortifications and mentioned in the Domesday Book (see the potted history on the right).

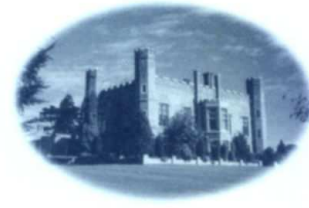


Arriving at the Gatehouse

Our room for the meeting was light and spacious, ideal for our purposes. The staff were helpful, informative and friendly – it was an excellent choice as a Belleek meeting venue.

The meeting began with a talk on Welsh Porcelain by our guest speaker, Keith Treharne. Keith was ably supported by his wife, Tina.

Right, the Hotel: our meeting room was on the ground floor, overlooking the garden.



Cave Castle Hotel & Country Club

History

Completed in 1875, the present building stands on the foundations of an ancient fortification. Mentioned in the Domesday Book, Cave consisted of three manors. The manor Paramount with East Hull being what is now South Cave and Cave Castle.

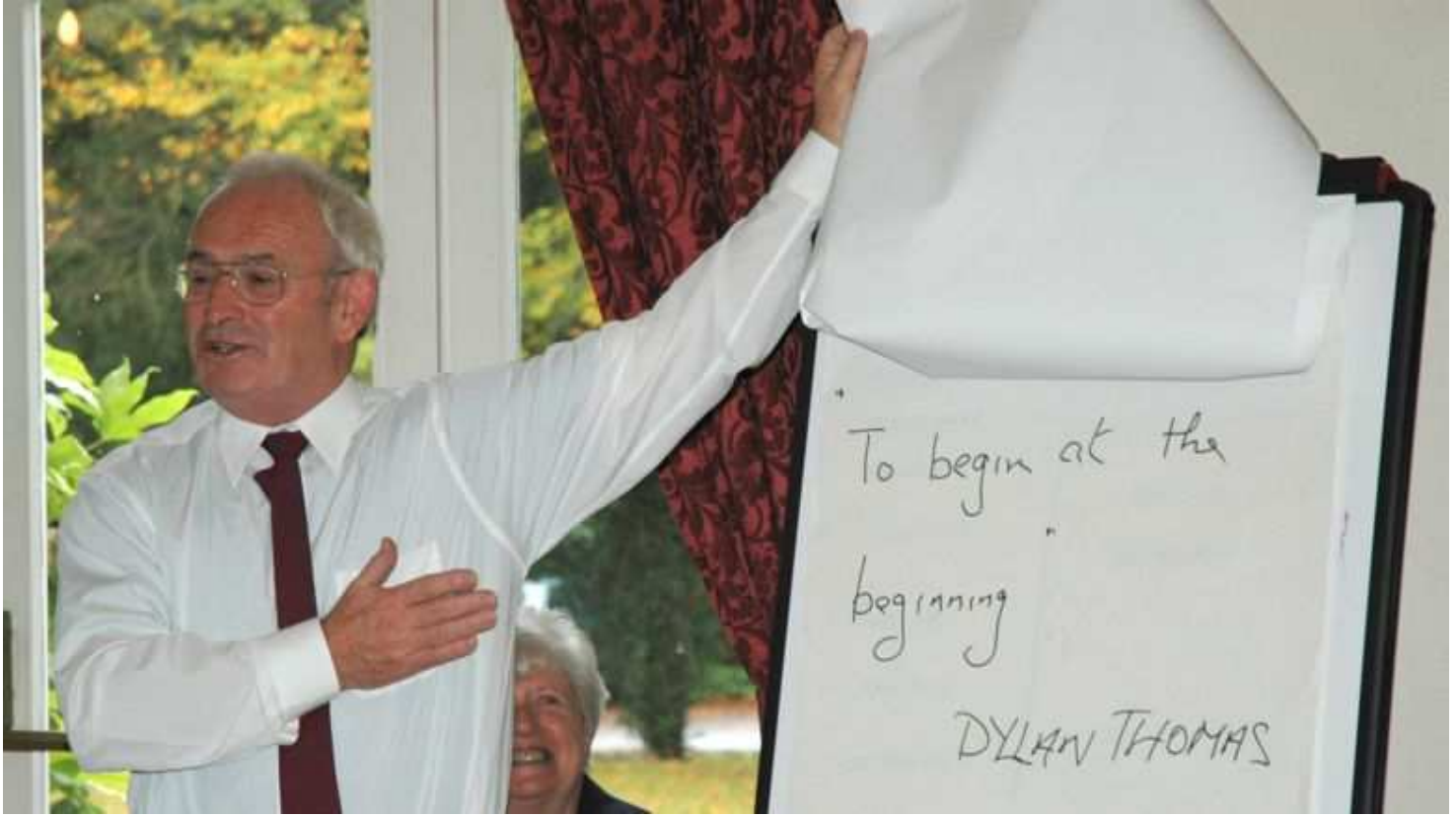
The manor has had many owners including Henry Washington (1663 - 1724), a relative of George Washington. But it was the Bernard Family who, in 1748, bought the castle and united the three manors.

Little is known of the original building, but the cellars with an escape tunnel to the nearby church, pre date 1791 when Henry Hakewill, architect of Rugby School, was commissioned to renovate and extend East Hall, by then known locally as Cave Castle.

The manor remained in the Bernard Family until 1925 when the last of the line, Ursula Mary, sold up due to ill health and left for warmer climates. The house lay until 1938 when Mr. J. W. Carmichael saved it from dereliction, but demolished the north wing, halving the building and dissolving the remaining manor.

Towards the end of the Second World War, Cave Castle became a H2 and officers mess, with prisoners of war being held in barracks built within the grounds. In recent years it has flourished as a Hotel and with the addition of an 18-hole golf course in the surrounding parkland and a new health and leisure complex, a unique and exclusive complex is now provided.

Swansea and Nantgarw Porcelain by Keith Treharne



Keith, quoting another famous Welshman in his introduction...

Welsh pottery, in particular Swansea and Nantgarw. It was the story of one man's obsessive quest to find the perfect porcelain. From about 1670 to 1815 the market had been flooded with porcelain from China. In an attempt to stem the flow, a 100% duty was imposed in 1799. Meanwhile, the English potteries responded with a range of wares, including delftware, ironstone and lustreware, and Keith showed us several examples of these. Many potteries were searching for porcelain to rival that of China, and it was a world of industrial espionage.



William Billingsley (1758-1828) began work at the age of 16 as an apprentice painter at the Derby factory. He became a painter of repute, noted especially for the Billingsley rose. However, he wanted to find the best porcelain formula for painting, and so began his wanderings from Derby to Pinxton, followed by Mansfield, Torksey, Swansea and Worcester. He is said to have walked 400 miles and also became known as "Mr. Beeley" during his travels.

In 1813 Billingsley set up his own porcelain factory at Nantgarw in south Wales, but he suffered heavy losses





and moved to the Swansea plant. Three years later he was back at Nantgarw, where he employed 20 people, 12 of them children. Much of the production was sent to London as white ware for painting, but he was still making a loss, so moved to rivals Coalport. He took the Nantgarw formula with him, but the recipe was never used again. In 1826 all the Swansea stock was sold, and Rockingham continued to search for the very best porcelain to sell to the aristocracy.

Keith showed us some beautiful pieces to illustrate the story, his favourite being a Nantgarw plate with botanical illustration. Finally, Keith's wife, Tina, had a confession to make. She is also a Belleek

collector, and had brought with her a blue tint hexagon cup so that she could appeal for the matching saucer.

It was a sentiment that could be shared by many of those present. As a token of our gratitude, Keith and Tina were presented with one of the group's 1997 Convention plates.

- Elaine Ewings



Sunday Meeting... More on Marks



Following Keith's presentation, Eddie Murphy brought the group up to date on his latest finding on Belleek marks and markings on Belleek-like parianware. An article on the formerly mysterious "A,B,C" marks follows in this Newsletter.



Above, is this Belleek? No, it's "Shamrock China" ... and below, this isn't Belleek either, it's "Shamrock Crest China!"



Following Eddie's talk it was time for Sunday dinner – traditional East Yorkshire fare – roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and very generous portions too...

The Sunday Dinner was served in the Hotel's elegant dining room.

After dinner the meeting continued with the presentation of awards and then the "Bring and Tell"



In the dining room... and Bev, happy with her dinner?



Sunday Meeting – Presentations



David, our chairman called on Patricia McCauley, Belleek Pottery's Visitor Centre Manager to make the presentations. Firstly Patricia made a special presentation to Jan in recognition of his many years service to the UK Group as Chairman and his support of the efforts of Belleek Pottery and of Belleek collecting in general.



Jan

In appreciation of all your work and loyal service to Belleek over the past 15 years and for your dedication and enthusiasm to the UK Group.

You are a truly wonderful ambassador and friend of Belleek

Thank you



The award citation

(above) was read out by Paddy McKee. This award was richly deserved by Jan and the presentation was met with enthusiastic appreciation from all the members present.

Then it was the turn of Paddy and Tracy to be the recipients of an award – as hosts of the meeting – Patricia made what she thought was an appropriate thank-you present!

Pictures here: above left, David introducing Patricia; above Patricia and Jan with his special award. Left Tracy and Paddy with their present; right: Patricia giving Tracy the present.



UK Devotee Award 2004

Patricia then announced the UK Devotee award for 2004. For the first time in the Group's history, there was not really any air of suspense that went with this. The recipient of the award was of course... Jan. Ever since the Group's foundation, we have had a rule, that Jan was always strongest in upholding, that officers of the Group should not be in line to receive the Devotee Award. With Jan's retirement as Chairman, for the first time he was eligible to receive the award and so, of course, he was the natural choice.



Patricia had bought the specially inscribed award over with her from the Pottery.



Following a short acceptance speech by Jan, new Chairman, David thanked Patricia and made a presentation in return to her.



The meeting then continued with the presentation of the Patt Fox Memorial Award.

The Patt Fox Memorial Award

The Award was created by Tony Fox and his daughter Rebecca after the untimely and tragic death in January 1998 of Patt - wonderful Mother, Wife, Friend and active Member of this Group. Patt's Award was always bestowed upon a lady member who has shown care for others, modesty, love of life, joyfulness, and fortitude.

Tony explained that he was born in Kingston upon Hull and was one of the band of brave evacuees sent to the safety of the countryside during the War. The area holds many memories for the Fox Family.



Tony recalled the deceased members of the UK Belleek Group and happy times, when they were part of our throng, were brought to mind.

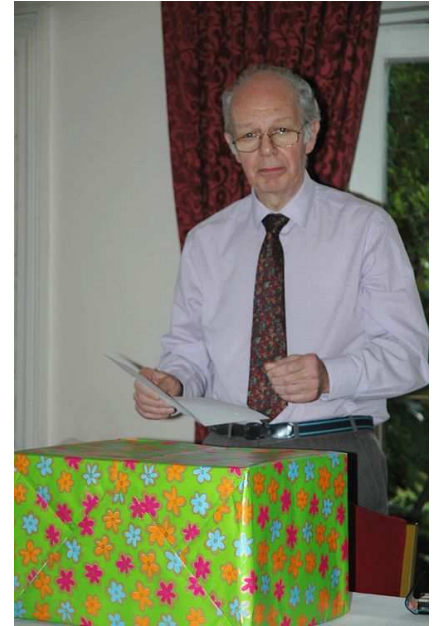
Tony, Rebecca, and the Group's Officers always chose the recipient of the Award. However, in this the last year of the Award, fate forced Tony's hand. He heard that the firm of Fermanagh Crystal, traditionally suppliers and engravers of the Award piece, were closing so a quick decision had to be made.

Tony was unable to contact the Group's Officers at short notice, so he thought back to the nominees for the Award over the previous five years. He remembered the person who had cumulatively received the most votes but had never actually received the Award. So it was

fitting that Patt's Sister, Linda Murphy, was presented with the sixth and final Patt Fox Memorial Award by her niece, Rebecca, who said that her *Auntie Linda* walks in Patt's footsteps.

Patt lived a full life, but never took more than she had to give. The Group will never forget Patt. Her spirit and that of all deceased Members continue to inspire us. We continue on, modestly and bravely to face what life has in store, showing our love..... Long live that legacy. - *Joanna Urbanek*

The six years of the Award each represent a decade of Patt's life. The recipients were: Gina Kelland, Beverly Marvell, Joanna Urbanek, Karen Kincheloe, Liz Renshaw and, in 2004, Linda Murphy.



Bring and Tell – My Best Belleek Bargain



Once again there was an excellent response to the Bring & Tell. There were some interesting pieces with interesting stories attached. It is always difficult, no one wants to open the batting, but Francis Kiddle kindly offered as he said his presentation would be short: and it was. He held up for everyone to gaze upon a beautiful first period decorated Echinus pepper pot, with a silver top. Just to see it said everything, it was a

cracker. He said his wife Máire found it in a charity shop in Farnham, Surry, and bought it for the princely sum of £12. Is that a Bargain?



David Reynolds followed with a printout of a description from Ebay in connection with the sale of a Belleek pipe. The seller had gone to great lengths to condemn the user of such an article as a polluter of the atmosphere, a destroyer of the beautiful countryside, and went on condemning the act of smoking. The seller finished by saying that this pipe however didn't have a hole in which to place the deadly material, or a hole up the centre to draw up the smoke. However before the sale was

over the seller edited the description of the item to say that he/she had been informed that it was not a pipe but an Irish Shillelagh. Belleek has never made a pipe but David said he was very proud to present to the assembled collectors a fine example of a priceless gold mark Belleek pipe without a hole to take the tobacco. For the benefit of those of us who did not know, Pat Russell explained that a Shillelagh is an Irish fighting stick.

Linda Murphy showed us a lovely little 1st Period salt that she bought for £3 having talked the seller down from £3.50. Eddie and Linda nearly missed this bargain because Eddie had forgotten his specs and didn't see the impressed mark. However the day was saved by the eagle-eyed Linda. The moral of the story is if you forget to take your glasses, make sure you take your wife.





Eddie Murphy showed a Belleek Chamber Pot which had a picture of Gladstone inside. He got this along with 3 delft plates for £120 at an auction, and he later sold the plates at another auction for £240. Not a bad bargain, but he had another with a beautiful 1st Period mirror complete with original fittings that he bought for £35. He then showed a County Fermanagh Shell Plate that he saw on Ebay. It had a small chip on the base. The auction was about to finish and no one had bid on it, so he bid. The auction closed almost immediately and it was his for 99 pence. He held it up for us all to see and said he could put up with the chip as that price. Cheap as chips?

Chris Marvell came forward carrying a very large box with items carefully wrapped in bubble wrap. He unwrapped two cups, two saucers, a creamer, teapot, sugar, and tray: a full Cabaret set in the Scroll pattern. This had been for sale at an auction in Capetown, South Africa and was described

vaguely as a plain Belleek Cabaret Set with a scrolling pattern. Chris had to transfer payment in Rand, then arrange to get it shipped to England. Luckily he was able to contact an Engineer who carries out work for him who was going to Capetown in a day or two and would be returning to England within the month. He brought it back for Chris, and when asked what the cost was the Engineer said "give me a beer and that will be OK". So Chris gave him a case of Stella Artois. Now that's a Bargain!



Joanna Urbanek brought along a lovely old Belleek brooch that she bought at the Alexandra Palace Antique Fair. She had arrived late with little hope of there being anything left worth having, and was about to give up but a little voice told her to carry on and she found the brooch on the very last stall and paid the princely sum of £5. It always pays to listen to these little voices.

Jan Golaszewski told about a strange telephone call from Roy Hollihead. Roy asked "Who is your best friend?", Jan said "You Roy". This question and answer was repeated several times until Roy said "Go and get your Dagenhardt book and look on page 43 and tell me what you see".

Jan got the book and there was a beautiful Lace Tray. Jan said "But I can't afford that". "Oh yes you can" said Roy, "I've bought two Bread Plates in the Lace pattern and six side plates. I am going to keep one Bread Plate and side plate, and you can have the other bread plate for £70". How's that for



friendship? Roy also sold on the remaining 5 side plates to members of the group at cost.



Paul Ewings showed a 1st Period Sea Horse Flower Holder which he had bought at an antique fair in the Floral Hall in Southport. The Floral Hall is actually a theatre and the dealers had set out their goods over the tiered seats so it was difficult to see. But Paul managed to spot this superb Belleek piece and after a little negotiation he managed to buy it for £32.



Gwen Wood held up a saucer and asked us if we thought it was Belleek. It was beautifully decorated with almost the whole of the surface covered in a

darker green than Belleek used. It was gilded, and round the edge was a perfect row of small pink/red spots equally spaced, obviously placed there by a Master Decorator. She showed us the mark on the back and it certainly was a 1st Period Belleek mark. Gwen had previously seen a whole tea service in this pattern in a museum. She paid £70 for it: it was certainly a very unusual piece and a bargain at the price.



Our Host for the weekend, Paddy McKee told us that he had been buying on Ebay for about six years and he wanted to give a bit of advice. Not all sellers can spell, so it is worth looking under different spellings of Belleek. He had entered "Belleec" in a search, and came up with a beautiful decorated brooch.





The prize for the Best Bargain was Myra Roalfe who brought along a 2nd Period cream and sugar which were bought for her by her husband Bob as a birthday present. They were the first pieces of Belleek she possessed and started her interest in Belleek. Myra said that for all the pleasure she has had collecting Belleek, and for the enjoyment that she and Bob have had attending Belleek group meetings, and meeting such nice people and making new friends since first acquiring these two pieces, no matter how much they cost they were definitely a Bargain.

Many thanks to the Fox family for judging this Bring & Tell. There were 11 presenters with 14 items of Belleek, and some interesting and amusing stories, and the opportunity to see some rare and beautiful pieces of Belleek. There are still a few members who haven't made a presentation yet: don't forget, you have an interested and captive audience! Give it a go next time, and you are sure to enjoy it.

- Myra Roalfe and Graham Houghton



David getting Myra's prize ready for Rebecca to present... Myra with the prize (a dish)...

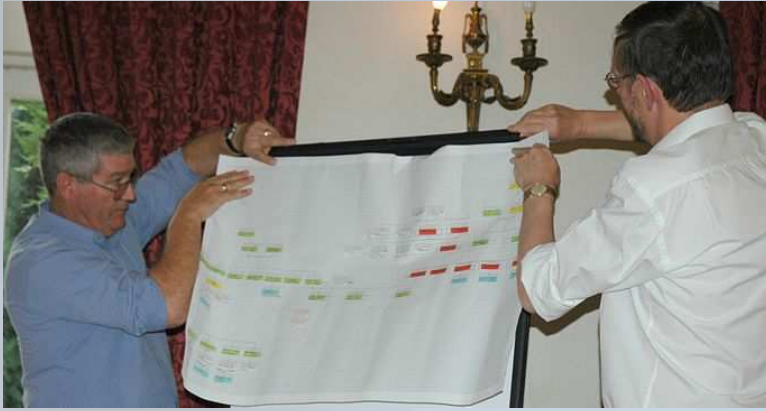


*The pair of Winkles presented by Linda...
...Gwen, Rebecca and Andrew taking in the Exhibits.*



Sunday Meeting – Robert Armstrong Research

The Meeting continued with Brian Russell's presentation of his research on Robert Armstrong's family tree – this is presented in full in a separate article in this Newsletter. Here we see Brian, assisted by Francis, displaying the schematic family tree that he has painstakingly assembled.



After Brian's talk, David gave his closing address and the meeting finished with everyone feeling thoroughly pleased with a really excellent day's Belleeking!



The Christmas Party 2004

The 2004 Christmas Party was held at the "Drum and Monkey" at Alderley Edge. It was organised, as it was last year by Chris and David Reynolds.



In the picture above: the calm before the storm... also, Chris and David, seen the next day, obviously showing no ill effects at all after the Party.

Why has Chris Marvell grown a beard? Is it to be in competition with Bob Roalfe, or is it just a Father Christmas thing?

The McCabes – maintaining our sartorial standards...



What *IS* it about all these hats? Oh, apparently we had a competition for the best headgear... Bev and David here making excellent showings in the impractical headwear stakes... ..and as for Josie, well hers couldn't really be any more colourful...





David getting Elaine to draw a number...

...but is this our Chairman escaping with the Raffle First Prize?

...and here we have Gina, strategically positioned under this mistletoe...



Louisa, Sheila, Linda and Eddie certainly found something pretty amusing!

But Graham and Chris are looking pretty far gone by now – How many pints of Guinness was it now?



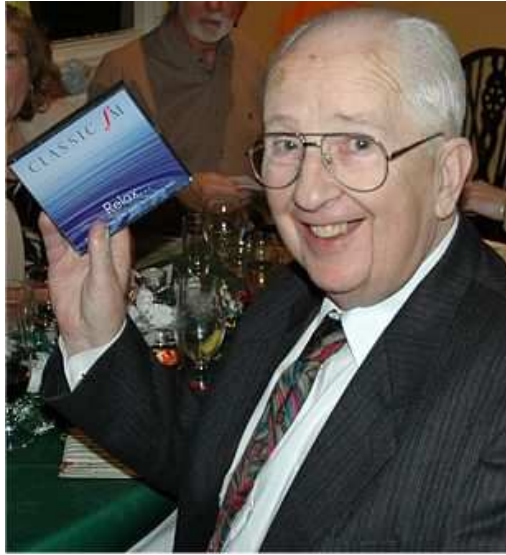
"Damn! **ONE** of us is going to have to change..." Karen and Steve with a headgear conflict.

Phyllis is a prizewinner...

...and so is Myra!

David doing his Father Christmas duties... and **WITHOUT HIS HAT!**





Louisa also getting her pick of the valuable prizes... and Pat's clearly come in for a star item! ...Meanwhile Linda still has 10,000 raffle tickets left to fold...



The time has come! Eddie, our new Raffle Supremo gets Chris to draw for the big prize.



...Here's the First Prize, but Paul Tubb, the lucky winner isn't at the party... I know, let's draw it again!



And Bev's a winner too – judged the best in the Hat competition, here's Paul Ewings... presenting her prize, and Bev, looking very happy with the situation.

Well, that's what I call a good party!

...Same again next year?



Sunday at Chris and David's



The Sunday following the Christmas Party, Chris and David invited Group members back to their house for a relaxing morning and a



delicious lunch... here are some pictures of us checking out Chris and David's Belleek collection: note the extremely rare grass pattern, which not only carries the "Barnicott and Banfield, Sydenham" retailer's mark, but also is marked "3" indicating the colourway, which has pink bows and a green stripe in the normally gilt ring around the indentation for the base of the cup. David has the cup and saucer in this colourway. Oh yes, there was also Harry, a (very well behaved) grandchild in evidence!



Knockninny Hotel – the Plate ... and the Story of John Grey Vesey Porter

This Story starts, in a fairly mundane way with the purchase of a first period Belleek earthenware plate on Ebay. It was clearly an interesting plate, and indeed I had never seen anything quite like it (although I now believe that another member of the UK Group has one of these plates in their collection). It had amusing sayings (four of them) printed round the plate which seemed to mark it out as an eccentric or even oddball offering! The story behind the plate is however even more eccentric than the plate itself, being related to the life of a very interesting and certainly oddball character – a Mr. John Grey Vesey Porter.

The Story is now taken up by Eddie and Linda Murphy...

'After seeing an earthenware plate with a rhyme about a Knockninny Hotel for sale on Ebay and then seeing it in the flesh (so to speak), it inspired Linda and I to do some research. Around the border of the plate was all about the Knockninny Hotel and as we were about to go to Ireland, we decided that we would search for more information on this hotel. We had found the place on the map – in fact a place we had been past many times before, but had never gone to - so off down the lanes around Lough Erne we went until we reached the village of Knockninny. All we had to do then was to find the hotel!

There was, of course, no hotel to be found. We could really see no evidence of it, but there *was* a large house that seemed to be in use as offices overlooking the Lough but set back some way from the water's edge towards the centre of the village, so we got out of the car and went to the door to ask if anyone knew if there ever had been a Knockninny Hotel...

Well, we knocked and knocked, but no answer.... so that was it then. There was nobody about but we spied a telephone on the wall: "lift for service" it said on a plaque, so I lifted the receiver, wondering what kind of service I would get!

A man answered so I asked the question that if this was Knockninny, then was there ever a hotel of the same name?

"Ha, to be sure there was!" he said, "And you are there at it! I can see you..."

What *was* he on about?

"Turn around" he said, "No, not that way, *this* way – ha, there you are... I'm waving at you!"

He was about 200 yards away at the quay tending to some boats. We were standing at the hotel, which had now become a boat hire establishment called "Carrick Craft".



He said: "Stay there and I'll come up to you", and so he did.

He came up and opened the door and then became very enthusiastic because of our asking about the old Knockninny Hotel.

The Hotel, or at least the building as it looks now

"Well, this was it, or to be more correct, this is where it once stood, because it was pulled down and then rebuilt again with the same bricks, you see: the Irish do that!"



What had happened was that when the present owners brought it a few years ago, they had it inspected and discovered that none of the walls actually met! They were put together like cards in a square and it was all about to fall down – hence the rebuild. It was, however rebuilt to exactly the same design as the original building. The founder of the hotel also had two other hotels built along with this Knockninny hotel on two separate islands on Upper Lough Erne (which when you look at Ireland on the map is the one lower down! - even more confused now?)

The man showed us around and kept on talking about the plate, which we had told him about, and said that he had heard about them but never seen one - and also that he would really love one of them! (possible future member here, methinks). He was so helpful, he copied us a lot of information and gave us a pile of leaflets, now passed on to Chris and Beverly, the proud owners of that wonderful plate.

Sadly, old father time came upon us and we had to say our goodbyes. Just before we left he told us that the boat hire company were moving and had already sold the former hotel. We wonder if the next people to own it will be so interested in its history...'

Following Eddie and Linda's visit, the following fascinating history has been uncovered...

Our story begins with the Reverend John Porter, who in 1830 bought the Belle Isle estate for £68,000 from an Englishman, Richard Hardinge. Hardinge was the husband of Mary Gore, daughter of Sir Ralph Gore, who left her the Estate as his only surviving child when he died in 1801. Sir Ralph had been created Earl of Ross in 1772.

The Porters were a clerical family from England, and on purchasing Belle Isle Estate, began the expansion and alteration of the house there, which included the addition of the tower. The Coach House was built in 1856, as were the estate offices and farmyard. The Bridge House was also built around this time as a home for the ferryman until the building of the first bridge in 1880. At this time the estate stretched from Lisbellaw to Lisnaskea, and included a large part of Knockninny.

So the Hero of the story, the constructor of the Knockninny Hotel and the pioneer of Tourism on Lough Erne is Mr. John Grey Vesey Porter (His bust is shown here). Here is a little bit of his history...

JOHN GREY VESEY PORTER was by all accounts not a well liked man, but in working for ultimately his own gain, also brought numerous benefits to the local community. His marriage was childless and would seem, unhappy, partly due to the age gap between he and his wife, but also we can assume to do with JGVP's "contankerousness". The 4th Earl of Belmore wrote of Porter "He is a very peculiar man indeed, and not easy to work with ..."

JGVP & THE RAILWAYS

JGVP endeavoured to benefit the estate indirectly by becoming in 1854, one of the original shareholders of the Dundalk and Enniskillen Railway Company which obtained parliamentary authority not only to make the main line from Dundalk to Enniskillen, but also to make branch lines, among other places, to Lisbellaw (nearest town to Belle Isle) and sensibly enough concentrated on making the line direct from Dundalk to Enniskillen. But the 3rd Earl of Erne who owned Lisnaskea and who was Chairman of the Company, decided to make the direct line to Lisnaskea instead of Lisbellaw.

JGVP & LIBEL ACTIONS

Consequently, Porter opposed the change by way of petition to Parliament and when this didn't work published a "malignant production" accusing Lord Erne of using his position in the Company to promote the prosperity of his own estate. Lord Erne responded by bringing a libel action against Porter and was only awarded damages of £300 as opposed to the £2000 he had claimed.

THE EXTRA MARITAL AFFAIR

A further court appearance was undertaken by JGVP of an altogether more distressing nature. His wife, Elizabeth Jane Hall, whom he married in 1863 when he was 47 and she was 18 formed a liaison with Captain Leonard Poynter of the 16th Regiment, Enniskillen. When Porter found out, he lured Poynter to Belle Isle with the help of his butler and other servants and he was "considerably knocked about, had his hair and one side of his luxuriant moustache cut off, and was then severely horse whipped by Porter himself." Poynter sued for damages of £10,000 and Porter in his obstinacy, rather than settling out of court, appeared at a packed Dublin court room and had to undergo the tales of his wife and the captain at Belle Isle. The stern Victorians found in favour of Poynter but only awarded him a farthing in damages(!)

DIVORCE

JGVP then successfully filed for divorce and his wife and her parents moved to London where Mrs Porter died only in her early forties in 1887.

NEWSPAPERS

He founded the Lisbellaw Gazette and Co Fermanagh Advertiser although these were used as a vehicle for expressing his own opinions. The LG revealed Porter's sympathy for the improvement of tenant farmers and it advocated the reestablishment of an Irish parliament but with loyalty to the British Crown. It was also critical of the Orange Order, some landlords and prominent local people.



THE FIRST HOTEL & PASSENGER VESSELS ON LOUGH ERNE

John Grey Vesey Porter also founded Lough Erne's first hotel in 1870, the "Knockninny Hotel" and operated two passenger and freight steam vessels from Knockninny which he called the "Royal Erne Navy". One of his most memorable ventures however, was the building and running of two steamboats named the "**Knockninny**" and "**Belturbet**". Local man George Johnston, who has lived his entire life in the area, can still recall tales of the days the big boats travelled up the lough from Enniskillen. "The boats could take hundreds of people," revealed George, "and would carry both cargo and passengers. They were a great help to the people in the area. Apparently, it was 6 pence to have your pig transported from Knockninny to Enniskillen, and they say that the local shopkeeper used to drop the takings from the bridge onto the deck of the boat as it sailed underneath him. Someone on the boat would then lodge the money for him at the bank in Enniskillen."

HIS DEATH

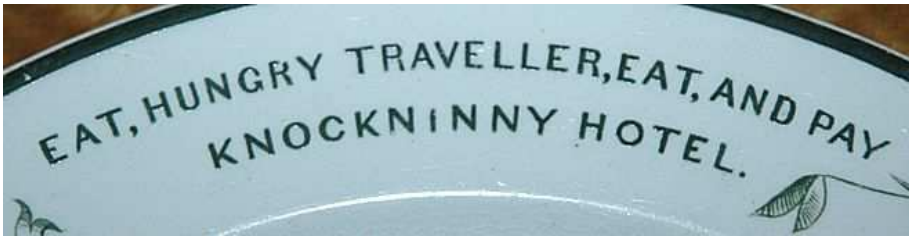
Porter died in 1903, of old age but had also become blind and was succeeded at Belle Isle by John Porter Porter, second son of his sister Adelaide Mary.



Clearly John Grey Vesey Porter, although "contankerous" and eccentric, was a local entrepreneur and businessman of great importance and it seems that when tableware was required for his new venture, the pottery at Belleek was a natural choice to supply it. Hence the quirky and eccentric plates that Belleek produced for his hotel at Knockninny. The plate acts as an advertisement and as tourist information on Porter's venture... we wonder how many of these plates still survive as mementos to his endeavours?

Well, what of the plate. With the Story of John Porter in mind, the sayings on it start to make sense...

...Firstly the Crest of Knockninny, with an Earl's coronet, probably taken from the Arms of the Gore family, Sir Ralph Gore being created Earl of Ross in 1772. John Porter, as owner of the Belle Isle Estate, although it was not his own family's crest, probably thought this appropriate!

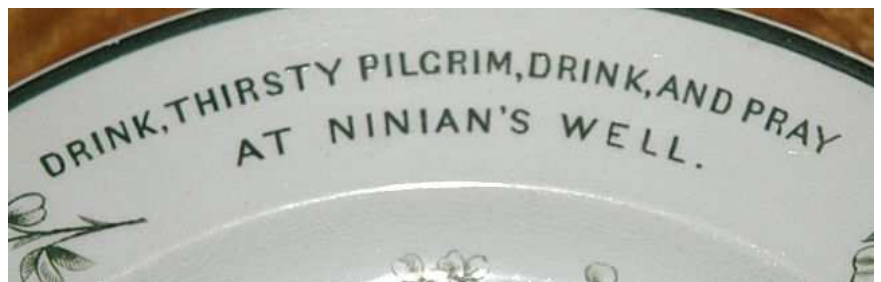


The Hotel, even though built to create and develop the tourist trade on Lough Erne, was obviously open to all. The hospitality offered to the "Hungry traveller" is somewhat tempered by the clear statement that he must certainly pay for whatever he consumed at the Hotel – John Porter was not in the business of giving charity! The plate makes this abundantly clear.

Having got the commercial side out of the way, John Porter is then keen to enthuse on the pleasures of the area! Now we have an advertisement for the beauty of Lough Erne. Porter was hoping to set up a thriving tourist trade by the establishment of his hotels and steamers on the Lough: in this he was only partially successful and it's doubtful, given his extravagant expenditure, whether he ever attracted enough tourists to the area to make the venture pay.



And now, perhaps a religious reference... Did pilgrims go to Ninian's Well? It seems that John Porter, as well as appealing to travellers and tourists, now wanted to make sure that he had the religious element covered! This Ninian's well is in fact a small local shrine, not very impressive but maybe worthy of a pilgrimage to the very devout... In fact, the origin of the well is pre-Christian, relating to the Pagan Celtic Druids of the area: regardless of this, John Porter thought it might attract pilgrims.



Pictured: The "adverts" on the plate... the entire plate is shown on the front cover of the Newsletter



Concerning the religious development of the area, the mission field of St. Ninnidh covered a large area south of Lower Lough Erne. This area, over the years gradually developed into a definite parish known as Inishmacsaint or Inis Maighe Samh. In pre-Christian times this area was sparsely populated. Pagan priests known as druids held sway over the people. The learned class included judges, prophets, historians, poets, doctors and teachers. Their religion consisted of the worship of the old celtic gods. Indeed the name Derrygonnelly, is thought by many to mean "The Oak Wood of the Candle" as the druids often worshipped one of their gods, Baal, by placing a rush candle on the branch of an oak tree. Little is known of druidism in Ireland but it is thought to have had its chief seat at Tara.

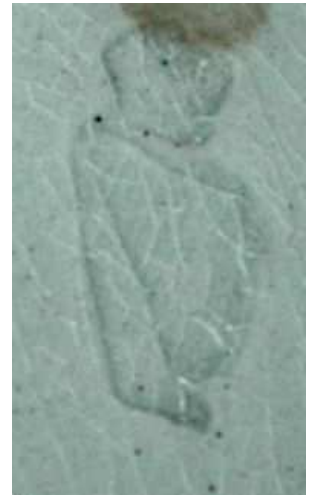
The Saint Ninian's Well near Knockninny

Finally, we have John Porter's resounding message that all three types of visitor should "often return", and the clear loyalist: "God Save the Queen". There was no question where his allegiance lay: as with the founders of Belleek Pottery and most of the other local businessmen of the day, they were strongly Protestant. The money lay with the Loyalists even though the majority of the population was Catholic.



John Grey Vesey Porter and his Knockninny Hotel, along with his other business ventures, would have been extremely well known at the time. In the 1870's, the surrounding towns of Enniskillen, Lisbellaw and Belturbet would have resounded with the scandal that John Porter was embroiled in.

The fact that he controlled two local newspapers would have made him and his very strong views well known throughout the community – certainly as far as Belleek and probably much further.



Whether the order for the plates was of great significance to the Belleek Pottery is not known, although it is probable that a good number of them were supplied. We also don't know if the plates were used solely as tableware at the hotel, used on the Lough Steamers or even sold or given to visitors to the Hotel as a form of advertising. It is most probable that the plates were mainly used at the Knockninny Hotel itself – the example here shows signs of use with crazing and some discolouration as well as rubbing to the pattern in the well of the plate – it is clearly not intended only for use as a decorative piece.

The plate was obviously a special commission, but it was adapted by Belleek from one of their existing designs: the "526" beneath the first black mark refers to a standard colourway on an earthenware plate, a painted rim and the shamrocks in the bowl of the plate (see Bev Marvell's article in Newsletter 25-1 and her extensive information on Belleek painted numbers which is available on the UK Group's Website: www.belleek.org.uk). The crests and the sayings were then added to the standard design at Porter's request.

The "harp and crown" impressed mark is also present, which means it is not from the earliest of Belleek's earthenware production, but dates from after the time when Armstrong perfected his earthenware process and saw fit to add the Crown to the standard impressed Harp mark originally put onto earthenware. This fits well with the 1870 date of the opening of the hotel.

As with a lot of Belleek production, this plate reflects the times in which it was made: the social and economic history of the area is illuminated by it and it is a fascinating relic of these past times as well as a very interesting piece of Belleek's early production.

- Eddie and Linda Murphy, Chris Marvell

The Armstrong Family Tree

Robert Williams Armstrong was the driving force behind Belleek Pottery's designs. He was one of the three founders of the Pottery and was by far the most important of the three in determining the direction that Belleek's design and production went. For such an important person, very little is known or documented about his life and family connections. This article by Brian Russell contains valuable research on Armstrong's family and lays a foundation, which we hope will be built upon, to piece together the details of his life and work.

Left, a Coat of Arms for the Armstrong family with the motto "By Force of Arms" Below, Brian prepares to give his presentation at the Hull meeting.



I would like to start this article by giving some background as to how I came to look into Robert Williams Armstrong family tree. It all started about three years ago after I gave my talk on the Belleek "diamond" registration marks, with the aid of Chris Marvell and his little box of



tricks! (see Newsletter Issue 25-1: "The Registered Designs of Belleek Pottery 1868-1884": this is available in full on our Website at www.belleek.org.uk)

I was asked by Brian Scott if I would look into the history of Annie Langley, Robert Williams Armstrong's wife. This was duly performed and I reported my findings... but this only started me thinking: who were *their* parents? What was his father's name or his mother's? I asked other group members if they knew, but only drew a blank.

By talking to authorities on Belleek like Lady Marion Langham and Fergus Cleary (the present chief designer at the Pottery), I was eventually put in touch with a certain Beccy Stone. She is Robert Williams Armstrong's great great granddaughter and she was most helpful in supplying me with the information from the Price family records. It is to her that I'm eternally grateful in providing key information allowing this research to be done.

The Armstrong Line of descent.

To start the detailed Family Tree we will be going back to the late 1750's, to County Longford where Armstrong's great grandfather comes from. Predating this, it appears that the Armstrongs originally came to Ireland in 1620. The family settled in County Fermanagh and there were seven sons: Andrew, Edmund (who fought at the Battle of Worcester), Thomas, William, Robert, Michael and Archibald. I will not go into detail of each of the sons' histories as it will take up too much space (!) but to mention one of the sons in passing; the fifth son, Robert (of Gallen Priory, Kings Co.). This Robert Armstrong's eldest son, John became a Major General in the British Army and also became Chief Engineer of England: it is clear that the Armstrong family contained persons of leadership and creative potential.

We will now jump ahead to the 1750's and the start of my detailed research. In this research I will give detailed information only for Robert Williams Armstrong's direct line of descent. Let's start with R.W. Armstrong's great grandfather. This is generation 1 of the detailed family tree.

1. David Armstrong of Ardagwilliam and Clonbroney (these I would think are Townlands), Granard, County Longford, married Elizabeth, daughter of Caulfield Woods and Wallis of Drumganna, County Leitrim.

Generation 2: Their Children were:

2.1 James

2.2 Mary

2.3 Francis born 1797-8, died 31st August 1874 (R.W. Armstrong's Father)

Francis Armstrong married twice:

- Katherine Williams of Longford, born 1800, died 1858.
- Miss Hornridge, died about 1870.

(You can see from his first marriage, how the family name “Williams” originated.)

Generation 3: Francis Armstrong had the following children from his first marriage to Katherine Williams:

- 3.1 David, married Miss Gale of Abbeyleix.
- 3.2 A “Roman Catholic”, died in California.

And from his second marriage to Miss Hornridge:

- 3.3 Samuel
- 3.4 **Robert Williams (the one and only!)** (Pictured, right)
- 3.5 Matilda, born 1826, died 1888, married Croker Walshe of County Cork.
- 3.6 Francis Elizabeth, born 1832, died 1911, married William Whitsitt.



(The name Whitsitt will come up again when we look at the marriage of one of Robert Williams Armstrong’s children.)

Now before starting on Robert Williams Armstrong himself, we will look at the antecedents of Robert William’s wife, Annie Nairn. This involves investigating the Langley family as well as the Nairn family.

Langley of Coalbrook, County Tipperary and of Brittas Castle, County Tipperary.

Henry Langley was lieutenant in Captain Thomas Ash’s troop in Oliver Cromwell’s army. He went to Ireland in 1649, obtaining lands in 1655. He was the son of Deodatus Langley, son of the Reverend William Langley, Rector of Prestwick and descended from Langleys of Agecraft Hall, Lancashire.

The Nairn line of descent.

The first traceable Nairn is Robert Nairne, born 1652, later created first Lord Nairne who married Margaret, daughter of Sir John Preston of Mukkersey. He was an advocate by profession. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London for adherence to the Stuarts but after the Restoration became a Judge.

(You will note that there was then an “e” on the end of the name).

In more recent times, we come to George Nairn son of Nairn of Wigan, born 1799, died 1850.

George Nairn married Cecilia Margaret Campbell, born 1791, died 1857.

(Cecilia died at Oak House Battersea on the 4th June 1857, the Campbells came from Herefordshire, descending from Charles Campbell and Miss Beaufort who had previously settled in Dublin where Charles had become a partner in the firm of Graisbery, the King’s printers, from 1782 until 1815)

From the marriage of George Nairn and Cecilia Margaret Campbell came:

- **Annie Langley Nairn, born 1828, died 28th March 1888**
- John Campbell Nairn, born 1831

Annie Langley Nairn Armstrong.



I shall now return to the Armstrong line. As I have already stated, Robert Williams Armstrong came from his father Francis's second marriage. Robert Williams Armstrong married Annie Langley Nairn on the 31st Oct 1848 at St Marks Church Dublin, they had five children as follows (Generation 4):

- 4.1 Katherine Cecilia, born 1850; married Mr Elliott had two sons and two daughters.
- 4.2 Robert William, born 1852, died 1890, never married (is buried in Belleek alongside his parents)
- 4.3 Annie Langley Navin, born 2nd Dec. 1864, died 3rd March 1888 (buried alongside her parents in Belleek); married James Price (aged 18) on the 19th July 1883 at Castle Caldwell. At their wedding, the best man was Walter Price and the bridesmaid was Frances Mary Whitsitt of Aughterdram. The Rev. Andrew Elliott performed the service.
- 4.4 David, born 1867, emigrated to Australia where he married twice.
- 4.5 Samuel, born 1870, married Marian Russell from County Leitrim, emigrated to South Africa. (It is believed he went to Australia after the death of his wife).



Part of R.W. Armstrong and Annie Nairn's Marriage Certificate.

Robert Williams Armstrong died on the 27th January 1884 and an obituary in the Irish Times of 29th January 1884 is as follows:

“Death of Mr R.W. Armstrong, Architect.

We much regret to report the death of the above-named gentleman, at Belleek, on Sunday last. For the promoters of home industries it will be interesting to know that to Mr Armstrong was due the success of the Belleek pottery now in vogue for about a quarter of a century in Fermanagh. The deceased gentleman was of Irish birth but went to London to practise his profession as architect. From the midst of a most promising career, he was induced by Mr Bloomfield, the landlord of Belleek, to come to this country to construct the pottery, and to add his artistic talents to the factory. Up to almost his last days, he was still engaged in his scientific researches. Dying at the comparatively early age of 59, he is much regretted by the neighbourhood at large.”

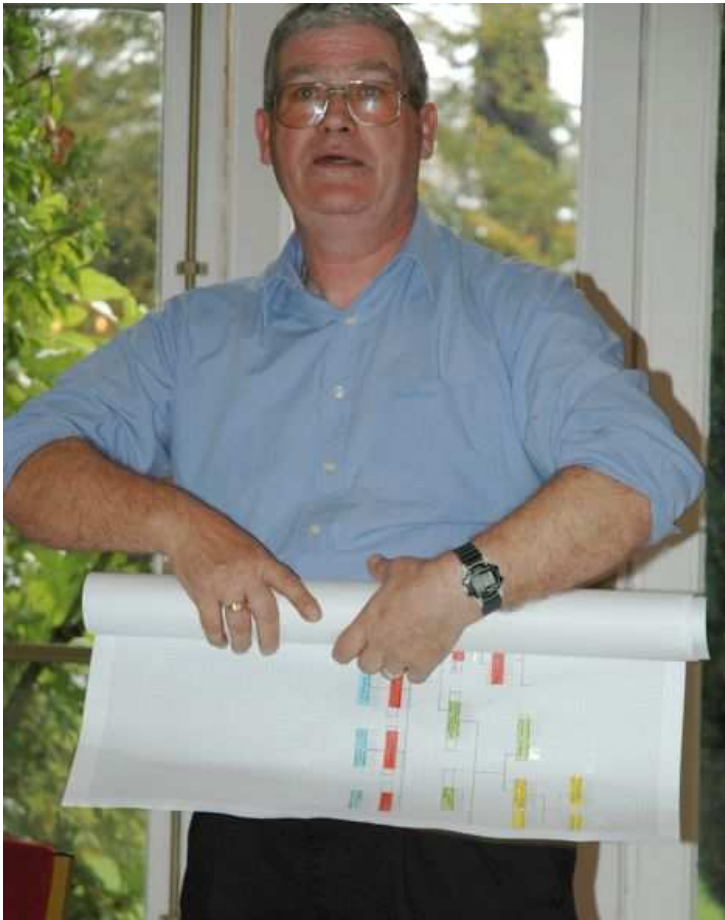
Robert Williams and Annie's eldest daughter Katherine Cecilia was probably born during Armstrong's time in London. She married a local peasant farmer James Elliott on the 28th October 1873 at Donegal town, this was not approved of by her father who disowned her - refusing to talk to his daughter for the remainder of his life. Her mother, Annie, did however keep in touch with her.

Finally, to bring the Armstrong line of descent up to the present day, I would like to return to the marriage of Annie Langley Navin Armstrong to James Price. They had three children as follows (generation 5):

5.1 Anne Ruth Price, born 15th Feb 1888, died 7th Aug 1968, buried Redford Cemetery, Greystones, Wicklow

5.2 James Price, born 23rd Mar 1886, died 26th April 1967, buried 1st May 1967 Farnham, Surrey

5.3 Eileen Price, born 29th June 1884.



Annie Langley Navin died on the 3rd March 1888, 25 days before her mother who died on the 28th March. Both of them both were buried in the family plot at Belleek.

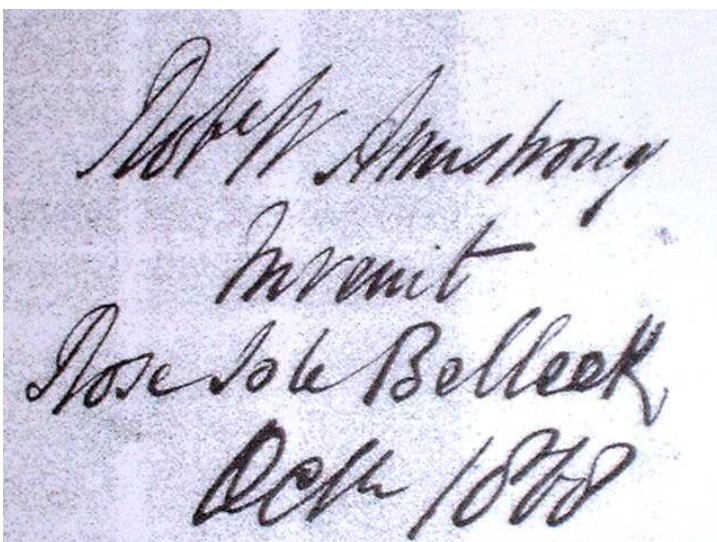
James Price, married twice, firstly to Elizabeth Gausson (one son Charles – generation 6), secondly to Lillian Henrietta Louisa Chermiside (no issue). The Gausson family came from County Derry, dating back to 1754.

My excellent contact, Beccy Stone is the daughter of this Charles Price, the seventh generation of this detailed family tree, the granddaughter of James Price. This makes her the great great granddaughter of Robert Williams Armstrong and Annie Langley Nairn.

I would like, once again, to thank Beccy Stone, who kindly sent me a copy of the Marriage Certificate and supplied the vital information about the Price line of descent. I have certainly had a lot of pleasure in compiling this family tree, talking about it, explaining who was who, who was connected to whom and so on!

In his presentation at the Hull meeting, Brian presented the Family Tree in full diagrammatic form (as can be seen in the picture on the left here). If you would like more information, please contact Brian Russell directly via the UK Belleek collectors' Group email at research@belleek.org.uk

- Brian Russell.



Robert Armstrong's Signature on the British Registration document for the Artichoke Teaware patterns, 1868.

*"Robt. W Armstrong
Invenit
Rose Isle Belleek Octbr. 1868."*

"A", "B" and "C" Marks on Belleek

It all began when Linda and I were digging on the old factory tip at the Pottery – this activity, now sadly terminated by new developments which have caused the old tip to be built over, occupied many happy hours of our time while at Belleek. We (of course) had the Pottery's permission to do this, and while digging we found lots of pieces of earthenware (mainly mugs) and sundry assorted fragments of Parian ware. We found two mugs almost intact: one was whole and the other - well let's say I had to do a bit of restoration on it! Eventually, amongst all the fragments, we came across a couple of pieces marked with the letter "A" in a circle. What was this? Very strange, we were thinking as we found even more pieces - maybe someone had just thrown them there and they weren't Belleek at all, for this mark (we thought then) had never been seen on a Belleek piece... but then we found a piece with the Melvinware stamp which also had the circled "A". It definitely *was* Belleek!

Left: Eddie holding forth during his presentation at the Hull Meeting....

Below: Plain White Belleek Melvinware Plate and its marks



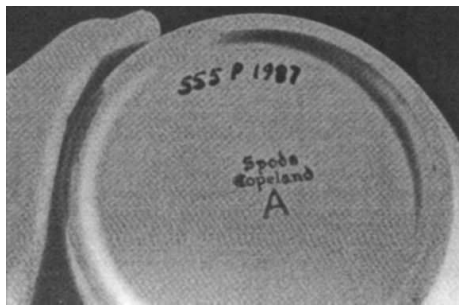
We took the "A" marked pieces to the meeting in Portsmouth (hosted by Pat and Brian Russell) and presented our finds to the Group's members. This generated a whole lot of suggestions as to what the "A" might signify. One theory that was presented suggested that the "A" stood for "Asylum" as it was known that Belleek made earthenware items for these institutions (The Omagh Lunatic Asylum had Belleek plates made for it).

Interesting as this was, the real significance of the "A" was only revealed when Bev Marvell, attending a course on ceramics appreciation run by the Hanley Potteries Museum's Sue Taylor, came across a very similar circled "A" mark. One of the lectures that Sue Taylor gave was devoted to pottery in the 1940's and 1950's: it transpired that the "A" came about due to wartime austerity in Britain between 1942 and 1952.

So, it was all to do with the British war effort! Belleek Pottery, along with many other factories, was, during the period of austerity, allowed to produce only certain undecorated products (utility ware) for the home market although they were still allowed to make more expensive decorated ware to sell overseas to help Britain's wartime

Above, the "C" marked mug found on the Belleek Tip

exports. The "A", along with "B" and "C" stood for the type of utility ware produced. Specifically, the markings signified firstly that the items had British Board of Trade approval to be made and secondly the maximum price at which the item could be sold was set by the letter, "C" being the highest price band, "A" the lowest. It is an interesting point that the final production of decorated parian ware in the third black mark period and almost all of the "fancy" ware produced in the first green mark (1946-1955) must have been destined solely for export and was probably not made in large quantities because of the Board of Trade scheme, labour and material shortages and austerity measures in general. This probably makes first green mark parian ware amongst the rarest of all Belleek production!



Above: W.T. Copeland Jug stamped "A" made between 1942 and 1952

The "A", "B" and "C" designations were not unique to Belleek. In 1941, the Board of Trade drew up a list of factories permitted to continue production of this approved utility ware. The scheme was put into action in 1942. The selected factories were allocated one or more of the price codes: "A", "B" and "C". They could then make specified undecorated ware for sale at less than the maximum set in each price band. Those companies not chosen for the scheme either closed down for the duration, moved production to one of the selected companies or went out of business altogether. The Board of Trade actually mandated the complete closure (at least for the duration) of some factories not selected for the scheme.

The following *types* of ware were allowed to be made under the scheme:

- (1) to be made from a white or light ivory body, glazed with a colourless or white glaze.
- (2) to be made from stoneware in the natural colour of the clay and glazed with colourless or brown glaze or with a brown glaze on the outside and a white or colourless glaze on the inside.
- (3) to be made using a natural clay body with a brown glaze or colourless glaze inside and outside or with a brown glaze on the outside and either a white glaze or a colourless glaze on the inside.

Within this designation, the following *items* were included:

- Cups, egg cups, mugs, beakers, plates, saucers, teapots, coffee pots, jugs, meat dishes and vegetable dishes, sauce boats
- Cooking ware including pie dishes, rolling pins and bowls, and finally,
- Sanitary ware including ewers, basins, chamber pots, hot water bottles and their stoppers.

Note that the Board of Trade seems to have made an exception to the normal "white only" rule for teapots and jugs to be made in brown – clearly, even while saving the country's money, they didn't want to deprive the British of their "brown betty" teapots!

As well as restrictions in colour and material, the items were also highly restricted in the shapes they could be made in. The pieces were strictly utilitarian and decoration was absolutely forbidden. Markings of any kind were very strictly defined to the extent that even the back stamp could comprise only the company name and the price group letter.

In the Board of Trade's original scheme, starting in 1942, Belleek Pottery was selected to make ware in price band "C". Later, in 1945 Belleek is listed as being permitted to make articles in price band "A". There is no mention in the official lists of Belleek being allowed to make ware in price band "B". The scheme officially ended in 1952 and the embargo on decorated or fancy items for the home market was lifted. Belleek Pottery had been one of the lucky companies during this wartime period because many other factories were closed down for the duration. Our personal belief is that Belleek Pottery stayed open because it was the only major pottery in Ireland. Being out of the main centre of Stoke on Trent would also have given Belleek Pottery the advantage of not being likely to suffer in air raids, so it was a policy that increased the diversity of supply. In 1945, the Board of Trade changed the scheme slightly, introducing two new price bands "CY" and "CZ". In June of 1945, as the War was drawing to its end, they even relaxed to the extent that selected companies were allowed to make "fancies" (including tobacco jars, ashtrays and bookends) for sale to the home market – I expect joy was unbounded! Belleek Pottery was not included in this favoured list...

As yet, and as expected, we have not found any Belleek items marked with "B". We have a mug with no maker's mark printed with the "C": this item we know to be Belleek because we found it on the tip! Apart from this, all the Belleek examples we have (or have seen) are marked "A".

Unless you know your Belleek shapes, don't think that pieces with just the "A", "B" or "C" on them will necessarily be Belleek! Remember that many factories made this utility ware during the wartime period. Sue Taylor has given Beverly a copy of the definitive information (Written by Kathy Niblett) about the use of these marks and she has passed this on to us, so if you would like more information, contact Eddie of Linda and we'll try to help out!

- Eddie and Linda Murphy

Reference: "Ten Plain Years: The British Pottery Industry 1942-1952", Potteries Museum and Art Gallery

Another Early Belleek Mark?

29th July, 2004

The IMPARTIAL REPORTER

Belleek stamp thought to pre-date earliest trademark

A unique piece of Belleek pottery, which has been examined by ceramics experts at the Ulster Museum, is shedding new light on the history of the famous Pottery.

The white earthenware circular tea pot stand, depicting a central scene of a round tower, harp and Irish wolfhound in green transfer print on its glazed topside surface, is thought to pre-date the first Belleek Pottery registered trademark of 1863.

Additionally, the teapot base reveals an extremely rare and possibly unique green transfer print-mark with the words 'Belleek, Enniskillen' enclosed in a circle. Experts have confirmed that this is a previously unknown Belleek mark and have suggested that the tea pot stand is possibly an early pilot piece with pilot trademark.

Owner of the piece, Mr. Sean O'Neill, from Randalstown, Co. Antrim is thrilled with his discovery. "I bought the piece about two and a half years ago and was fascinated when I saw the mark on its base. I showed it to Fergus McCleary at Belleek Pottery and the Head of Ceramics at the Ulster Museum and they've both been absolutely astounded by it. They both agree that the mark on the base of the piece sheds a whole new light on the history of Belleek," he said.

The colour picture of the round tower, harp and Irish wolfhound on the top surface of the tea pot stand is similar in design to the central portion of an unmarked Belleek wall plaque currently on display at the Ulster Museum. The Belleek experts have concluded that this triptych image may have originally been used as an artists' design template prior to 1863 when the round tower, harp and Irish wolfhound image

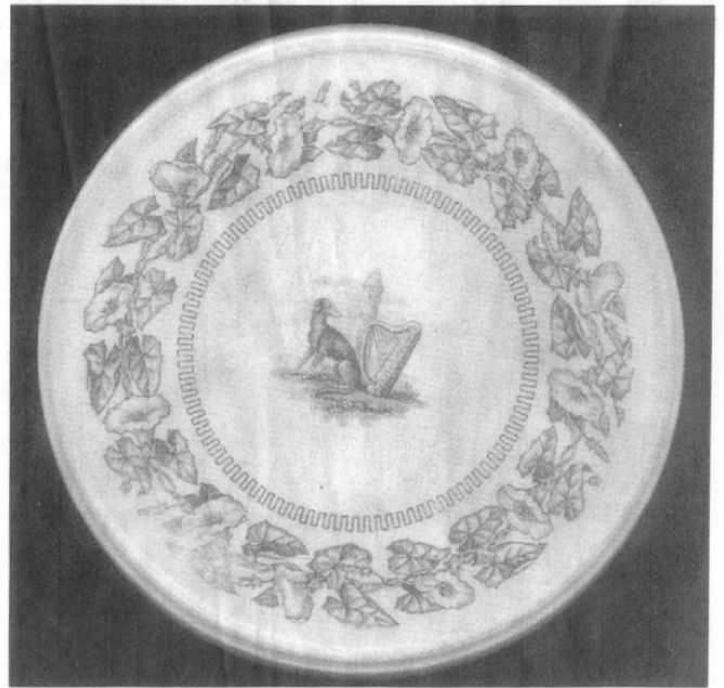
was adopted as the first registered trademark for Belleek.

This mark on the base of the newly discovered tea pot stand suggests that the Pottery founders may have been considering using 'Belleek, Enniskillen' as their original trademark.

"Belleek is the most important pottery factory in Ireland but its history is actually quite grey and bleak. The factory was in operation from 1857-1862 but the first registered trademark was not printed until 1863 so this piece probably dates from the pre-1863 period," said Mr. O'Neill. "It's a startling discovery and adds to the incomplete records of the history of Belleek Pottery," he said.



The early Belleek stamp which pre-dates 1863.



The Belleek teapot base which is thought to be rare.



This article appeared in *The Impartial Reporter* of 29th July 2004. The two other pictures are of an item sold on Ebay in July, 2003. Although this date doesn't correspond with when the item in the article was purchased, it may be the actual piece discussed... if not, there are at least two of them! The item is certainly rare and probably early, although impossible to date accurately without more information. The Wolfhound, Tower and Harp certainly attest to the item's Belleek origin although when the pottery first opened, it traded as "*David McBirney and Co.*" and early earthenware used an impressed harp mark, not present on this item. *It is just possible this item may even predate this.* There are certainly precedents for Belleek using its own trademark symbols as decoration (e.g. on the Belleek Flask, D1523).

A convoluted design similar to this was used as decoration on large earthenware plaques (as one sold in the 2002 Sothebys Irish Sale) - these probably date to later than the 1857-1863 date proposed in the article. The Ulster Museum, Belfast has a 9 1/4 inch square plaque with a design that appears very similar to that on this item (Illustrated in Degenhardt's first edition of the Belleek Collectors' Guide, D1532, page 115).

So why "Belleek - Enniskillen"? There seems no reason why this mark is not genuine, so why was it used? At present the mark is a mystery - if anyone can shed any light on this, please contact the group's researchers at research@belleek.org.uk.



Prices – Interesting Imitation of Belleek at Auction



This picture, from the auction catalogue of Bentley Auctions, London SE6 3BT is described as:

“TEA SERVICE IN THE STYLE OF BELLEEK”

Comprising of Teapot, Sugar Pot, Milk Jug, 2x Cups & Saucers, Tray.

(lot 363. 28/01/05)

This Shamrock Cabaret Set is a copy of the Belleek set made during the first and second periods and appears to be of good quality although there is no information regarding its origin. The auctioneer has advised me that the mark is not very clear but is a crown and harp, however when an identical cabaret set was offered on ebay some weeks ago, it

was offered as being (genuine) Belleek and my request for a picture of the mark brought the following response “ the mark looks like a crown over a harp, printed in green but (seller) unable to photograph”.

It is interesting that there is now be a printed copy of the earliest Belleek impressed mark used on the pieces in this set. Judging by the picture, the tray, teapot, cream and sugar are all the correct shape and proportions as the genuine article, however the cup shape is wrong, as are the handles. Decoration appears to be subtle and well executed compared to the very heavy decoration of imitation Belleek shamrock tea-ware produced in Japan during the early 1950's.

Bentley Auctions have advised me that whilst they maintain 80% genuine antiques in their sales, they accept good quality reproduction items such as this set which is offered as a copy, and have consented to my use of the picture and description from their catalogue.

The hammer price at the auction was £80

www.bentley-auctions.co.uk

If any members have seen similar cabaret sets, or know any details regarding their origin, please let me know.

I now have a picture of the printed mark on the pieces...

- David Reynolds



Prices – Belleek from Lady Marion Langham's Auction



Dowager's expertise

The Dowager Lady Langham, who authorised the HOK sale of the Langham family's collections, is a world authority on Belleek having been collector/dealer for many years and having written three books on the subject. At the sale she only parted company with nine pieces of the Fermanagh pottery, most of which sold above expectations. The best seller was this First Period lace pattern charger, left. Embellished with gilding and featuring the black printed mark, impressed mark and design registration mark, 14½in (37cm) plate was estimated at €500-700 but sold at €4600 (£3130).

This from the Antiques Trade Gazette.

*It appears that the Lace pattern tray was actually **unsold** at this price of 4600 Euros!*

Ebay Report – Items in the Press

Two items this time, an article from the Daily Mail and one from the Antiques Trade Gazette

Daily Mail, Monday, September 20, 2004

Stolen china ended up for sale on eBay



Reunited: Allan Macpherson-Fletcher with a stolen figurine

Daily Mail Reporter

A MAN who lost £10,000 worth of rare china in a burglary tracked it down ten days later on an Internet auction site.

Allan Macpherson-Fletcher was devastated when his country home in the Scottish Highlands was broken into while he and his wife Marjorie slept upstairs.

The thieves got away with much of his 18th and 19th century china, made by Meissen, Worcester and Sevres, which had been valued by Christie's auction house.

Growing anxious that the police wouldn't find the goods, he called a friend in antiques for advice. He told him to check eBay. Within seconds the items had turned up.

'I typed in Meissen on eBay and up came eight pages of goods for sale,' said Mr Macpherson-Fletcher, who leases out his 7,600-acre estate near Inverness for grouse shooting. 'I scrolled down and found a plate with a blue rim which looked familiar.

The site said, "If you would like to see other items from the seller click here", and bingo – jolly well nearly the whole china cabinet came up. Because the thieves had left in a hurry – I think they were spooked by the dogs – they had left some things which we could definitely match with objects in the sale.'

The auctions were due to end in a few hours, so Mr Macpherson-Fletcher asked his stepson Anthony Sherlock, a registered eBay user, to bid on his behalf.

He bid up to £500 for every item, with no intention of paying, knowing as soon as he won something the seller would e-mail his name and address. A dealer offered £520 for one item; Mr Sherlock 'won' the rest, including a Meissen plate for £14.95 and a figurine for £255.

Once they had the seller's name they called the police, who arrested a man and recovered 18 of the 26 pieces stolen.

A man was charged with handling stolen property. Police said he was unlikely to have been involved in the break-in.

The success of eBay, which has nine million UK users, has made it easy to sell on stolen goods. Experts say the problem is 'rampant'.

eBay traders warned over new Second Chance Offer scam

EBAY users are being warned to look out for the Second Chance Offer scam that is among the latest frauds to hit the online marketplace. In this ruse, scammers impersonating eBay sellers target disappointed underbidders of high-price lots claiming to offer them the 'second chance' to buy the lot.

A well-known Belleek specialist recently contacted ATG to relate her experiences as the underbidder of a First Period Belleek figure of a lady with a pink carnation.

Her final bid of \$4200 had left her second-best in the competition for the rare figure so she was intrigued to receive an email (purportedly from the seller) stating that the transaction had fallen through.

"The high bidder had some problems finding the money for the item so we are not going to make the deal anymore," said the message. "If you are still interested with my item please email me because you have the opportunity to buy this item at your bid price of \$4200."

It was suggested that the payment be completed through eBay's Second Chance Offer program that aims to unite seller and underbidder in cases when the 'buyer' pulls out.

Knowledge of an eBay user's bidding history is publicly available on eBay and it is possible to email someone through the site without knowing their private email address.

Less technically-savvy Net users have lost out through the scam but on this occasion the underbidder was well acquainted with the buyer and had discussed the purchase after the auction had ended.

She was well aware that the highest bidder wanted to complete the transaction. Suspicions were confirmed by the fraudster's yahoo.co.uk email address. The item was listed by a US-based seller.

Ebay were slow in responding to the alert but replied later as follows: "The message you received is fraudulent and is not from eBay's Second Chance Offer program.

"Any transaction that does not involve using the 'Bid now' or 'Buy it now' buttons on eBay is considered an off-site transaction. We reviewed your report and found that although the message you received was made to appear as if it had been sent by an eBay user, it was not."

Ebay Report – Exceptional Items of Belleek

Bird Wall Pocket

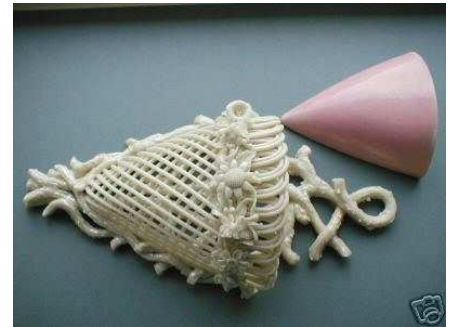
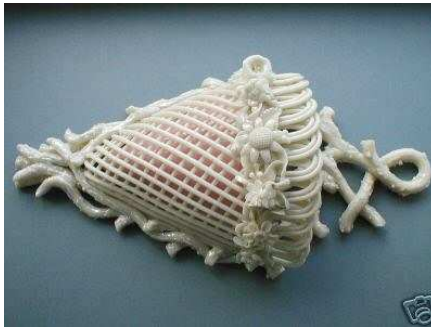
"I believe that this piece is the finest and most beautiful of Belleek workmanship that I have ever seen, and I also think that this piece is certainly unique, as the possibility of recreating the design would doubtless be impossible. The only other two of these I have seen, (one of which is shown in Marion Langhams books on Belleek and Belleek flower holders), and the other being a damaged and heavily restored version which sold on ebay a couple of years ago. As with these other known examples there is no mark, but it is generally accepted that these pieces seemed to be produced as one offs in the early first period, but were then discontinued. The parian has a distinctly first period colour to it, and one of the two birds appears to be identical to the bird that is usually found atop the early Birds Nest Tree Stump Vase. This piece as far as I can tell is in absolutely perfect condition apart from a tiny chip off one leaf, and it measures 13" high and approx. 6.5" at the widest point." **Sold for £1,500**



Woven Wall Pocket and Liner

"This is a First Period Belleek Weave Basket Wall Bracket with Liner in mint condition. This weave basket wall pocket with it's liner is a very unusual combination. This is only the second Belleek 'weave basket' design that still retains it's liner."

Sold for £2,050



Celtic Tray



Up for auction a very unique Belleek Large Platter. I'm not sure of the year or the pattern but this has no cracks, chips or repair. There is a little wear to some of gold in the center and I think my picture shows that pretty well. It just a beautiful piece with all the colors and swirls the mark on the back is wearing I could hardly read the word belleek but with a magnifying glass I did make it out and you can also see the ship motif (sic) and make out the words Co. Fermanagh Ireland. This platter measures 16 1/2 inches in length by 14 1/2 in height.

Sold for \$3,650

This tray, which is undocumented by Belleek Pottery, bears a second period mark. It must have been made in very small numbers and may not have gone into Belleek's general production. Only one other example is known, which was exhibited at the 1997 Belleek Convention in Stoke on Trent.



UK Group Research – Painted Numbers

Bev Marvell has now completed formatting the list of numbers, complete with pictures of almost all the items found with the painted decoration numbers. This complete table is available on our website: <http://www.belleek.org.uk/>. Bev would like to emphasise that although this list is already fairly long, it is by no means complete – she is adding to it as new numbers and decoration ways are found: in collections, at antique fairs, on Ebay and at other auctions.

Please, please, if you have any items in your collection or otherwise known to you, that has a number painted onto it (as on the Thorn cup here), then get in touch with Bev at research@belleek.org.uk. Bev will add it to the list!

UK Group Research - The "Belleek Ireland" Mark

Following Tony Fox's article in the previous Newsletter (Number 25-2) in which a conclusive case was presented for the mark being genuine, with numerous examples of the mark... the following appeared on Ebay in October 2004.

"Up for your consideration is this fine Irish Belleek Celtic Spill / vase. It is the shape of a small pitcher, but we found it in the 1928 Belleek catalog, which calls it a Spill. To the best of my knowledge the Celtic line was introduced in 1926. But I'm no expert on Belleek, so please do your own research before bidding. This spill measures 3 3/8" tall and approximately 2" wide. It is marked with what I believe is the second (2nd) black mark, however I have not seen other second black marks like this one? It is identical to a first (1st) black mark except it reads "Ireland" just under the Belleek insignia. There is no banner swooping around the bottom and sides like most 2nd black marks I've seen. So as I've said, you be the judge. The spill is in very good condition except for one tiny chip in the glaze on the inside top of the spout (see photo). This chip is does not carry over to the front or top of the spout and is only visible when viewing the piece from the back. A very nice harder to find piece. Please see our Me page for more Belleek pieces and all our listings.



On Oct-26-04 at 09:39:36 PDT, seller added the following information:

Addition 10/26/04 - We have had a question as to the authenticity of this mark on this piece and have researched further. Here is what we've found: The Celtic line appears to have been introduced around 1922 according to the "Belleek The Complete Collector's Guide and Illustrated Reference" 2nd Edition. A spill exactly like this one is pictured on page 209, item # D1193. Also we have done some additional research on the web and found a website, Brian J Graham's Belleek Collecting Guide. If you go to his home page and scroll about half way down, you will see a tab for Belleek Special Marks. If you click on this tab and scroll to about the bottom of the page it will show you this exact mark, which he classify's as a mystery mark, but authentic. The person that questioned this mark also questioned the blurriness of the mark. Infact the actual mark is not blurry. The photo I took was blown up to such a degree that the photo became grainy and slightly blurry on me. Hope this clears up any questions or gives you additional sources to research the piece."

The debate on this mark continues.

These comments have already appeared in the "Belleek Collector", in the "Buyer Beware" column. Firstly, the issue was raised in 2003, in Vol 14, issue 2 (right). In Vol 14, issue 3 (below left) and Vol 15, issue 3 (below right) the argument continued. The conclusion reached in all this was that: "The Jury is still out on this one".



BUYER BEWARE !

This new column, Buyer Beware, will be featured in each edition of our *Belleek Collector*. From time to time we have advised our members to be on the look out for pieces that are represented as Belleek or as Belleek from a certain period, when neither is true. We have three Belleek experts that we call upon for their opinions when we picture pieces here. In this issue, we look at a creamer which at first glance looks like a Celtic design with a First Mark bottom stamp. Pictured here are the piece and its bottom stamp.

Fergus Cleary, Head of Design at Belleek Pottery, gives us a little background on Belleek Celtic ware, "Celtic designs were introduced under the management of K.E'leod, the Hungarian manager, from 1922-1925. He hired Madam Boroniu to execute these designs. There were several distinctive categories in this development. (1) Already existing pieces were converted to Celtic designs e.g. Pot sugar & creamer, Cleary sugar & cream set and pieces used previously for Crested ware.. (2) New Celtic gift ware. (3) Celtic Teasets (a) High Celtic (b) Low Celtic. (4) Celtic Teaset using the earlier Ring Handle shape, where a basic outline transfer was printed on the pieces and later decorated by hand. This technique was called print & fill".

However, all of these pieces would have had either a Second Mark (1891-1926) or Third Mark (1926-1946). Which brings us to this creamer; have a close look at its bottom stamp. All of our experts agree that this stamp is not genuine; one feels it may have been hand drawn because the tower looks very different from early marks and certainly they all agree that the word IRELAND would never have appeared under a First period mark. The McKinley Tariff Act of 1891, requiring imports to the USA to specify the country of origin, was the reason the Second Mark came into being, thus the ribbon was added.

Please know your Belleek marks and if you have questions feel free to email your Collectors Society headquarters, with a photograph so we can see what you are looking at. We will do our best to answer your enquiries. (See a complete list of Marks on the back page.)



Based on Tony Fox's article (Newsletter 25-2) in which no less than eleven different items with the mark were presented, each one, on close inspection by group members declared as genuine, each one listed by Richard Degenhardt

Only our second article on Buyer Beware and we are taking another look at last issue's feature. In that issue of the *Belleek Collector* we drew your attention to a Belleek Celtic Spill, a late Second or early Third period piece that had what looked like a First Mark with the word IRELAND underneath. This raised our eyebrows, because, after the First period, all Black and Green marked pieces had the words Co. Fermanagh Ireland on a ribbon as part of the bottom stamp.

One member contacted us since he had a piece with a similar mark, although the word IRELAND is not exactly the same. It is a Salt Hexagon Dish and we have pictured it here with the bottom stamp. There is no doubt that it is Belleek as was the Celtic Spill; we just cannot explain the mark. This piece belongs to a retired potter from the UK, who has advanced the theory that because his piece and the Celtic Spill were so small, a proper Second Mark with elongated ribbon may have been too big. This is quite plausible, yet, there does seem to be room for a ribbon on both pieces, and there are other small sized Second Period pieces with a full Second Period Mark on them. As Fergus Cleary, Belleek Head of Design, would say "the jury is still out on this". There are a great many things we cannot explain or authenticate and we hope to continue to examine them in this column. We invite your comments.

BUYER BEWARE



Hexagon Salt Dish



Hexagon Salt Bottom stamp

and given a "D" number (apart from the very rare Chalice or Egyptian Cup) and each one shown in at least one catalogue that Belleek Pottery has published (except for the toy tea set).

...and the overwhelming evidence is that the mark is genuine.

BUYER BEWARE

In the last *Buyer Beware* column, Vol.14#2, we voiced our concern about a bottom stamp, pictured at right, that was on a Celtic Spill. While we have seen many Celtic Spills with a Second Black Mark, we had never seen a mark like this one. It looks like a First Mark but with the word Ireland written underneath it.



Many members wrote to us telling us that they had pieces with a similar mark. Many members put forward theories as to why such a mark would have been used. In response to this, Fergus Cleary, Belleek Head of Design answers simply, "the jury is still out on this one."

And Finally...



Here's a very welcome visitor. Christine McCormack – on a brief visit to the UK from her home in Greece. Seen here with Jan, after a fish and chip supper with Jan and Joanna...

No, this isn't a very posh fish and chip shop, the venue here is Jan's mother's house.

All Group members of long standing will remember the sterling work that Christine put in over many years as the Group's secretary / administrator. She took on this onerous task right from the Group's first meeting. We all wish her very well for the future and hope that more of us can join in with the fish and chips next time she's in the country!

...And here's another great achievement: Group member Pat Russell receiving a prestigious "We Can Do It" Award recently in Portsmouth, in the category: "Best Street, Crime Prevention."

*****Many Congratulations to Pat!*****



...And Linda (here with her back to us), the worthy winner of the final Patt Fox Memorial Award, hugging her niece Rebecca Fox who presented the award.



Don't Forget...

*Next Meeting: March 12th/13th
Liverpool/The Wirral
Hosted by Sheila and Graham
Houghton.*