

*UK Belleek Collectors' Group*

# *Newsletter*

*Number 29-2*

*July 2008*



*Simon Whitlock on Crested Ware*

*Part 6 of Teaware: Thistle, Ivy and Thorn*

*Paul Tubb's latest - Morris and Willmore*

*and... Our Spring Mini-Convention in Cornwall*

## Contacts:

**Chris Marvell** is the Newsletter editor. Please let him have your contributions for future Newsletters, comments, suggestions, letters for publication, criticisms etc. If you want, Gina Kelland is still happy to receive material for the Newsletter: she will be assisting Chris with her advice and proofreading. **If you are sending published articles please either get Copyright clearance yourself or enclose the details of the publisher so Chris can ask for permission.** You can contact Chris by email to [editor@belleek.org.uk](mailto:editor@belleek.org.uk)

**Chris and Bev Marvell** publish and distribute the Newsletter. Chris has set up a database which forms 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 - working with Simon Whitlock, we intend to publish all the back issues of the Newsletter and all of the research done by our Group members on our website. If you have questions about the publication and distribution of the Newsletter, contact Chris or Bev by email at [publisher@belleek.org.uk](mailto:publisher@belleek.org.uk).

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Our website is administered by **Simon Whitlock** and can be found at <http://www.belleek.org.uk/>. To contact Simon, the Webmaster, send email to [webmaster@belleek.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@belleek.org.uk).

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## Credits

Photographs:	Pat and Paul Tubb, Margaret and David Montgomery, Jon Rosenbaum, David Reynolds and Bev and Chris Marvell.
Articles by:	Tony Fox, Pat and Paul Tubb and Simon Whitlock.
Other material:	Bev and Chris Marvell.
Acknowledgements:	Jon Rosenbaum, the Enniskillen Castle Museum, the Belleek Collector (BCIS Newsletter), Peter Lomax (in the MQ Magazine of the United Grand Lodge of England), the Goss Collectors' Club. The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Neville Maguire and Viewback Auctions.

## Forthcoming Events

26 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup> July 2008	AGM near Coventry, hosted by the Tubb family
11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2008	Blackpool, hosted by Josie and Steve Garnett
13 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	Christmas Party... near Derby, hosted by Bev and Chris Marvell ... the theme is to be "Oriental".

## Newsletter Deadlines

**Autumn 2008:** Deadline for articles and other material September 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Cover Picture...** A second period Belleek armorial miniature milk churn with the Arms of Belfast.

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## *From the Editor...*

Well, we're coming up to another AGM, so it must be Summer – you wouldn't really know from the weather we're having... oh well, another issue of the Newsletter and I'm very glad to see the flow of magnificent research continues unabated. This month we have an excellent exposition on Belleek crested or armorial ware from Simon Whitlock. He explores the rationale behind these items – the pieces themselves, although made as simple souvenirs and of relatively little artistic merit, are of huge interest, both in terms of social history and the ware itself – they are also highly collectable. Paul Tubb continues his fascinating series of articles exploring Belleek connections – both the people and the factories producing “Belleek” with an exploration of Morris and Willmore, an American “Belleek” manufacturer that maybe only a few of us will even have heard of: the fine quality of their production and interesting history makes them well worth getting to know better. Tony Fox, ably aided by Bev Marvell continue the series of Teaware articles – this time the much decorated Thorn pattern (one of my personal favourites) is featured.

The Stalwarts of the Group have come up with the goods again... as I was saying in the last issue, our research on Belleek is prodigious and the UK Group is now clearly leading the World when it comes to original output. I know (because a few years ago, Jan did a survey on this, and I will assume that our views have not vastly changed) that sitting down and writing a research paper isn't everyone's cup of tea... quite a few of us much prefer the social get-togethers or merely like to stay in touch with friends and the Belleek-collecting World by reading our Newsletter. I have to say that this is absolutely fine... I'm sure however that a lot of Group members have a great article in them and I'd really like to wrinkle this out (This includes you associate members in the USA and elsewhere). Whether it's writer's block, the fact that you've never done that sort of thing before, the fear that we won't find it interesting or that you think you haven't got enough material – well it doesn't matter – we all want to see what you've got.

I know that many of us collect items in highly specialised areas (like the crested items in this Newsletter for instance) or have some other special interest relating to Belleek. This is just what we want – come on: get going! If you want, Bev and I can help out with the writing, pictures and putting it all together. Research may not be your highest priority but it is one of the major items that has truly put our Group on the map. We need the Stalwarts but we also need new blood.

As part of involving more of our Group members in new research, Brian Russell, Bev and I would like your assistance. Brian has obtained copies of very interesting documents but we need help in deciphering and transcribing the difficult-to-read old fashioned handwriting on them. I have included a description of this project later in the Newsletter – I hope at least some of us will find the prospect of many hours of hard toil over these dusty old documents enticing (!) – that's if digital images can be called “dusty”. The documents are copies of Robert Williams Armstrong's actual journals, they are not “diaries” exactly (as they have been described by previous authors) but more of a log of the research and practical experiments that Armstrong carried out during his time at Belleek Pottery. As you will read later in the Newsletter, we think this is a very worthwhile and quite exciting project – if you're that way inclined – and I think that quite a few of us avid collectors are!

Some good news from the Pottery – The Chairman, George Moore has been recognised with a considerable honour – he has been made an honorary CBE (Commander of the British Empire) mainly for his contribution to the economy of Northern Ireland – we have reproduced the news item on this from the BCIS Newsletter.

...And more good news - the next BCIS Convention has now been officially announced: it is to be in Park Ridge, New Jersey in April next year – full details are given on the next page... Meanwhile, in the absence of a BCIS Convention this year, we had our own ad hoc “Mini-Convention”... with attendees from New Zealand and the USA. The Meeting in Cornwall was so successful and enjoyable, made more so by many of us extending our stay, that it really did feel like a little convention. This is of course elaborated on in the Newsletter – so read on...

*- Chris Marvell*

# *News from Belleek Pottery – The 2009 Convention*



## **North Jersey**



*"Let's all put on our dancin' shoes  
And wear our shamrocks green'  
And toast our friends both here and there  
And everywhere between! "*  
(anonymous)

*The members of the North Jersey Chapter of the Belleek Collectors' International Society are pleased to invite you to save the date for the*

## **2009 Collectors' Convention!**

*Dates: April 23, 24, 25, 26, 2009  
Location: Park Ridge, Bergen Co., New Jersey  
Nearest airport: Newark International, Newark, NJ*

*We promise you:  
Great company, good cheer and wonderful conversation about  
BELLEEK!*

It is our hope that our friends from all parts of the Belleek collecting world will join us. There will be before and after the convention side trips offered.

More details will follow with registration information in about a month.

*Hope to see you next April 2009 in New Jersey*

For more details (as they become available), watch the Belleek Pottery website: <http://www.belleek.ie>



## *Belleek Group Chairman George Moore is made a CBE*

In recognition of his contribution to the economy of Northern Ireland and in particular his work to promote Northern Ireland business opportunities to American companies, the Chairman of Belleek Pottery, Dr. George Moore has been made an Honorary CBE.

The investiture took place at the British Embassy in Washington D.C. in February.

We would like to pass on warm congratulations to Dr. Moore on his receipt of this great honour.

The news extract shown here is reproduced from the latest edition of the Belleek Collector, the BCIS Newsletter which is available in full to BCIS members on the Belleek company website:

<http://www.belleek.ie>

### **BELLEEK POTTERY OWNER, GEORGE MOORE, AWARDED CBE**

In December 2007, as part of an historic program in which the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Dr. Ian Paisley, and Martin McGuinness, Deputy First Minister, jointly promoted Northern Ireland to US politicians and business leaders in New York and Washington DC, Dr. Paisley announced that Her Majesty, The Queen, recognized Dr. George Moore for his contribution to the Northern Ireland economy and for his international work on behalf of all of Ireland with an Honorary CBE – Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

Announcing the award to US business leaders, Dr. Paisley remarked: "I also want to say that we all owe a great deal of gratitude to Dr. George Moore, Chief Executive of TARGUSinfo and also Chairman of one of our oldest and most successful companies, Belleek Pottery. George has invested a lot of his time in getting us to this stage and was instrumental in making this visit happen. His contribution to our economy and to our international work was recently and deservedly recognized by Her Majesty the Queen by awarding George an Honorary CBE — Commander of the British Empire. George, on behalf of the Executive I want to congratulate and I want to give you my personal thanks for all your help and support."



George Moore with British Ambassador to the US, Sir Nigel Shienwal, at his investiture - British Embassy, Washington DC, February, 2008.

Dr. Moore remarked: "I am deeply honored by The Queen's award ... and I am delighted that I had the ability to promote American business development and investment in Northern Ireland. I am more delighted to witness this historic occasion where Dr. Paisley and Mr. Martin

McGuinness are unified and aggressively promoting that Northern Ireland 'is open for business'.

Continuing a lighter note, Dr. Moore remarked: "In the 1970s, I was early in promoting cross-border cooperation between the North and the South when I married into N. Ireland; my wife, Angela is originally from Newry — many friends say I married UP! — I certainly agree."



## *The Belleek "Mini Convention" in Cornwall*



Our regular springtime trips to Cornwall have become something of a tradition for the UK Group. The Cornwall meeting is certainly looked forward to by us and, along with quite a few other Belleekers, we had decided to make a little holiday out of the meeting, travelling down early and staying for a day or so after the main event. Realising this, Simon had arranged evening meals on the Friday and the Sunday. This sense of good-feeling and that it was a special occasion gave the meeting more of a feel of a convention than a simple meeting – hence the title of this article. The picture above shows the Hannafore Point Hotel and the entrance to Looe harbour. As its name implies, the Hotel where we stayed and which held our meeting is on Hannafore Point, a promontory at the mouth of the Harbour, a short walk from the thriving fishing village of Looe.



### *Friday- Hannafore Point Hotel and "Trawlers"*

We arrived early on Friday afternoon and established ourselves in a fantastic sea-view room at the Hannafore Point, then set out to reconnoitre the surrounding area, walking along the coast and into the pretty village of Looe. It was a beautiful day and we explored the village and treated ourselves to a Cornish cream tea in a beachfront café the opposite side of the Harbour to the Hotel.

*Looe Harbour and Town*





*Another view of the fish dock in Looe Harbour – the town is not just a pretty tourist destination, the fish dock was modern and impressive with daily landings of wonderful fish – Sea Bass, Gurnard, Scallops among many others – this makes for really excellent seafood in the restaurants which pride themselves on serving the freshest locally caught fish. This made the food more than usually excellent!*

Dinner on Friday evening was at Trawlers restaurant, actually located on the fish dock, maybe 20 yards from the point where the fish was landed,

packed in ice and sold in the covered fish markets. This gave the restaurant a major advantage in getting the freshest fish and this was indeed demonstrated with some of the best fresh fish that we had ever tasted. This was served in the front room of the restaurant overlooking the harbour in a modern Bistro atmosphere.

*(right) Chris standing outside Trawlers*



*(left) quite a few of us had the same idea – arriving early on the Friday – it proved an excellent decision.*

*(below left) inside Trawlers*



*(right) we treated ourselves to some of the local Cornish wine (Yes, I didn't think they grew grapes in Cornwall either!). This came from the Camel Valley Vineyard a few miles North of Looe and was pretty good, especially the sparkling wine.*





## *Saturday with Melanie and Simon*

Well, just take a look at this! – I sometimes think that we don't put the Belleek first at all... the Belleek is just an excuse for us to indulge in food and drink. Melanie and Simon and Anne Ewing had just rustled up a "small buffet" for us on Saturday lunchtime.



This was indeed a fabulous spread – again with the emphasis on local delicacies such as Pasties and cream scones. The hospitality was wonderful... but Melanie, Simon and Anne are not just excellent hosts and cooks, the Belleek that they have collected over the years is simply staggering. They have some of the rarest and most unusual items.

In the pictures here you can see us making the most of the wonderful opportunity to see one of the best collections in the UK.

Some of the items are so difficult to find that "hen's teeth" doesn't come close to describing the rarity – how many of us have even seen a single piece of Tall Celtic teaware, let alone a complete teaset with decoration of a type that has never been recorded?



*Above Bev, Eddie, Linda and Margaret and David Montgomery; below this, Maureen and Robin*

*On the right, part of the previously unrecorded Tall Celtic teaset*







*Rare and delightful pieces of Belleek –*

*Above: shell saucer, lace creamer, highly unusual Chinese teapot or kettle, gilded lace cup and saucer and small flowered items.*

*Left: rare (but damaged) amphora vase on flowered base.*

*Right: Lizard spill in "Raphaelesque" colours.*

*Below: Dolphin comport, gilded and purple lustre.*







*A few more pictures of us enjoying ourselves.. including two of the younger members with Grandma.*



And finally, something you don't often see – a rank of Belleek “Limoges” enamelled dog-rose egg cups... Sorry, I'm really not sure what the collective noun for egg cups is! These are part of a wonderful breakfast service that Melanie and Simon have: it is one of the most complete that has been collected anywhere. This is just one of many marvellous pieces that we were privileged to see at Melanie and Simon's home. The food – did I mention it? – was superb, the friendship and hospitality were tremendous - but what I said at the start was wrong: the amazing Belleek, which is after all the reason why we had gathered together, still stole the show.





## *Saturday Evening at Smugglers Cottage*



Dinner on Saturday evening was at Smugglers Cottage, a locally famous landmark, now a charming restaurant with old beams and a maritime character. The building dates from the 15th century building and has great character. We set out in the setting sun on a beautiful evening for the walk from Hannafore Point to the centre of the old town.







Pictures here of our Saturday evening revels –

*Top, arriving at Smugglers Cottage.*

*Above, Chris was not the only photographer.*

*Above left, happy Belleekers leaving the restaurant.*

*Left and below, back at the Hannafore Point Hotel, we relax and have a few more drinks.*





## *The Sunday Meeting*



Most of us were up bright and early on the Sunday – there was a lot to be done. After a substantial breakfast we started the meeting with Paul Tubb

### *Paul Tubb's Update on his Latest Findings*

Paul filled us in on the latest findings about Henshall, Gallimore & Swann that Pat and he had made. Most of this information has been covered in the previous Newsletter (April 29/1).

Paul was then given a 'thank you' of a bottle of wine.



*Above: Paul expounds on Gallimore*



*Left: a decorated American Belleek bowl and its mark.*





*Sarah and Gwen examine the bowl Paul has brought along*



*Ott and Brewer "Tridacna" form bowl.*



Following Paul's update on the histories of the Belleek workers in the USA, we took a short break for elevenses before Simon's presentation on crested ware.

*Margaret and Eileen taking a break.*

## *Simon Whitlock's Talk on Armorials and Crested Ware*

Simon thought this topic would be apt because we were at the 'sea side'. Simon has produced an expanded and updated version of his talk as the article on crested ware in this Newsletter.

*Two W.H. Goss crested pieces*







Simon was given a 'thank you' of a bottle of wine. Here he is discussing an item with Francis and summing up at the end of the interesting talk. After Simon's talk, which was very well received by the Group, we paused for a group photo before lunch in the Hannafore Point Hotel restaurant.



*Above: The UK Group attendees in the Hotel lobby, (Chris, the photographer has been added by the magic of computer imaging!)*

*Left: the Hilliard family at lunch.*





*Some more of the Group get ready for lunch*

After lunch, Brian Russell gave us the latest information on his research. This involved his work on the Belleek Masonic designs (as published in the last issue of the Newsletter 29/1) and his discovery of copies of R.W. Armstrong's diaries in Fergus Cleary's keeping – more on this follows towards the end of this Newsletter.

## *Brian Russell's Latest Research*

Brian spent 3 days in Dublin where he visited Rebecca at Grand Lodge (see 29/1) in the course of his Masonic research.

- At the National Archives he found the 1877 rent rates for Belleek Town and how much was being charged for china clay per ton. The rent rates give the names of who was living there at this date.
- Found a copy of the marriage certificate of Armstrong's parents
- Found David McBirney's will, there was no mention of the Pottery in this, but it does mention his brother William.
- Found accounts for McBirney & Co (the Dublin retailers), but again there is no mention of the Pottery, so we can assume that the Pottery was probably David McBirney's own unrelated private venture.

Rebecca has since told Brian that the designs and motifs on the tureens and meat plates seen at the Grand Lodge are symbols of the 'High Order' in Ireland and England.

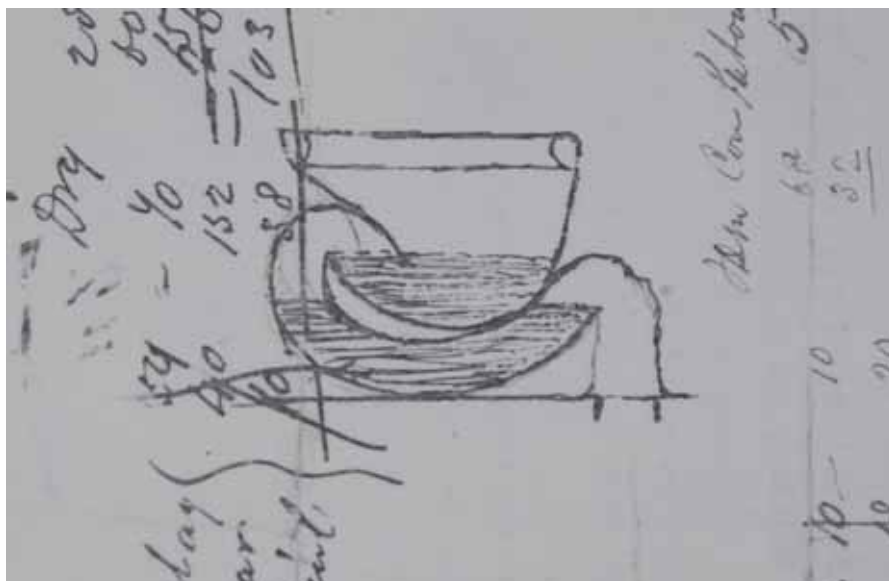


*Brian with the boxes containing Armstrong's Diaries.*

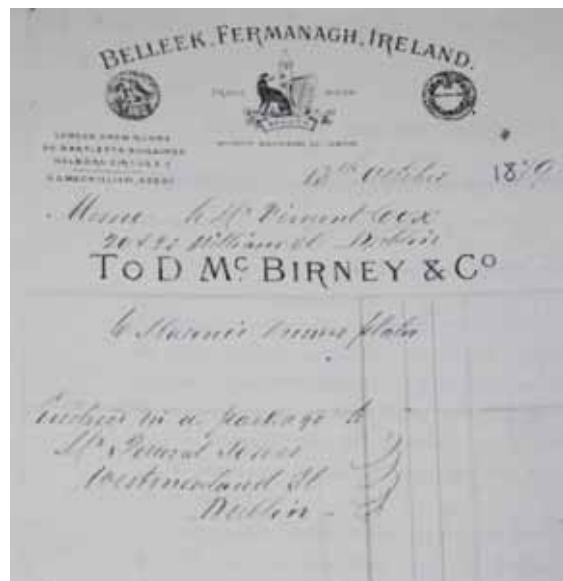


Brian also went to Fermanagh to view more Masonic plates at another Lodge. He then went to visit Fergus at the Pottery for a chat. Brian mentioned to Fergus that he was trying to get copies of the famous and elusive Armstrong's diaries from the Powerhouse Museum in Australia but was not making much progress. Fergus said 'just wait a minute' and to Brian's amazement, popped out and came back with 2 dusty boxes containing 4 Armstrong diaries for Brian to take away and digest! These were Richard Degenhardt's own personal copies that he left with the Pottery when he finished his research for his books. Included with the diaries (approx 600 pages) were:

- Lists of retailers that the Pottery supplied in London 1877/8
- 'With Compliments' slip for a Masonic dinner plate order 1879, Note that the motto on this headed paper still had 'Without which None are Genuine'!
- Armstrong's design for a toilet
- An 1875 price list that includes tiles! The printed Belleek Pottery heading on this had been crossed out and 'The Belleek Pottery Co.' hand written over.



*A rough sketch in the diaries by Armstrong – of a toilet!*



*A memo written on a McBirney and Co. order.*

Eddie gave Brian a 'thank you' of an 'IOU' for a bottle of wine (sorry Brian!)



## *Bring and Tell 'I do like to be beside the sea side'*

David & Margaret Montgomery were asked to be the judges (as they had come the greatest distance to be at the meeting).

**Karen Kincheloe** – Showed a postcard of daffodils. Whilst touring around the Isle of Saint Martin (one of the Scilly Isles) recently she had seen lots of bunches of daffodils for sale and had ended up with an enormous bunch which had filled up all the receptacles that her hotel's reception had. She also had a handful of limpet shells that she had collected.

*Above: Eddie introduces the Bring and Tell.*

*Right: Karen with Daffodils.*





**Jane Gower** – When she met her husband Ian he told her about how he used to have a large collection of Belleek (alas no longer) and had bought her a present of her 1<sup>st</sup> piece of Belleek – a pink boat shaped Tridacna sugar. This has turned out to be the start of their 2<sup>nd</sup> collection. She is now an ‘eBay widow’ and although Ian might sell some bits from his new collection this piece will not be for sale!

**Pat Tubb** – Had a postcard album of Newcastle (Northern Ireland) from the last century to the present day. The views here are beautiful and her mother had to revisit frequently for a ‘fix’ of the sea and mountains. Pat also bought a plate to show us – it had been painted by Mary Lovell, the lady who demonstrated her skill at our last Coventry meeting. It had been especially painted for Pat on a Belleek blank.



**Francis Kiddle** – had a Southend-on-Sea Armorial pot, BII. He mused: ‘why did they make these?’.

Now thanks to Simon’s talk he had a better idea. (Simon discusses this in his article which follows in this Newsletter.)

**Simon Whitlock** – also had an armorial, a ring handle sugar with Perth, BII, he remembers happy times there.







**Brian Russell** – He & Pat hadn't been to an antiques fair for some time, but had fancied an outing last Christmas. Brian wandered around and spotted a rather nice 'plate', keeping quiet for fear that his excitement might show, he was told by the dealer that the £45 price could be reduced to £40 because of the 'bit of damage'. He immediately found his wife, Pat and dragged her to the stall for her approval – it was an Echinus tray, BI, with pink painted coral – she definitely approved!

**Sarah Wood** – Her mum Gwen trawls eBay for goodies and if Sarah is lucky this means she gets 'little' prezzies. The last piece was a lovely Nautilus creamer with turquoise handle, BI. She also admitted to her 'terrible' habit of going to auctions and buying too much by way of job lots. She showed us a piece from one of these, a lovely



tall comport with rich turquoise glaze. It was not marked, but did have a registration diamond, we thought it might be Copeland?



....and the winner was Brian for his mega buy of the Echinus tray.

## *Eddie's Quiz*

There then followed a quiz thought up by Chairman Eddie Murphy.

There were 23 questions (for a total of 30 points) on Belleek and the talks we had just had (to make sure we had been paying attention). There was a bit of banter over the answers, it was great fun. The winner was Simon with 26 points (well done!) and an extra prize for Pat for the most ingenious answers (for example, the extra ingredient in the parian mix could be pocheon!).



## *Closing Announcements*

Next meeting – AGM at Coventry 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> July. We would all get free tickets to the NEC 'Antiques for Everyone' fair on at the same time and not a great distance away.

Brain Russell, the Group's Treasurer – reported that the Group now had an online bank account to make doing the accounts more efficient and to earn us more interest. Brian will in the future give members new bank standing order mandates, it will be appreciated if these could be filled in.

Finally - the presentations were made....



So it was all over... but for some of us not quite. We stayed for the evening dinner...

## *Dinner Sunday Evening at the Old Sail Loft*

Dinner Sunday night was at The Old Sail Loft (one of the oldest buildings in Looe, still largely preserved in its original form. The cellar & loft are known to date back at least 450 years) – and your photographer took a rest and left the camera back at the hotel – a very relaxing dinner was had by all!

# *Belleek and the Crested Revolution*

*By Simon Whitlock*



During the last five years I have been researching armorials for sale via eBay, fairs, auctions and pieces in personal collections to try and understand where Belleek fitted into the great 'Crested Revolution' started so successfully by W.H. Goss.

The study of this area of Belleek's output is fascinating and has produced a few surprises too. For example prior to my talk to our group at the April Cornish Meeting a new discovery was made in the previous week which turned the results of my research partly on 'its head' ... and if that wasn't enough, a 'crested' piece was shown to me 5 minutes before starting the talk which again changed what I had been prepared to say... so I hastily had to revise my notes. So this article is 'work in progress' and will be altered as new discoveries are made and pieces surface which will help us to understand 'Belleek and the Crested Revolution'. I hope in a few years, after more research to update this article.

*Above: Diamond Top Vase, Belfast; 'Lipped' Creamer, Enniskillen; 3 Handle Tyg, Killarney; Skillet Jug, Cork*

## *So why did small Armorial pieces become such a big hit?*

The Industrial Revolution and the coming of the railways opened up far quicker mass travel to everyone. In particular, in 1871, the start of the Bank Holiday granted by parliament, gave workers time off and it led to the development and continual growth of seaside resorts like Blackpool, Brighton, Southend-on-Sea and many many more across England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. A day trip or longer holiday to the seaside was now possible. Armorial pieces were small, inexpensive and easy to carry and were appealing to the masses. By 1910, 95% of homes had at least one item of armorial ware on display.

As we know Goss tackled the 'Armorial' market very thoroughly and created a network of agents - one in each town, village or resort - to sell their wares. For example, in Douglas, Isle of Man, their appointed agent was J. Clague who sold an almost-Belleek-like skillet pot.

*Quite often armorial pieces carry a special 'manufactured for' marking or just the name of the retailer such as this Nautilus/ Possil Pottery 'East Stonehouse Plymouth' jug with 'Gaylard and Company' marking.*





## *Belleek and the Market Place*

To put Belleek into context in the market place we need to remember that from 1884 with the formation of The Belleek Pottery Works Company Limited, profit for shareholders became the main concern of the new management. It is likely that Belleek Pottery was looking for areas to expand production and therefore their profits. At this time Belleek was heavily into Earthenware of a more basic quality for the mass market but also looking at boosting parian ware and expanding further into painting pieces too. They were also innovating with new designs such as Shamrock and Neptune at the tail end of the first period to expand their output. Armorialials would have been a potentially 'good earner' for the pottery as these were generally uncomplicated simple items to make: they could take an existing shape and simply add an armorial decal and infill that decal with paint. The small size meant that Belleek could produce a significant number of these items in one firing.

Another niche market for Belleek was the adorning of pieces such as Shamrock Mugs, Skillet Pots and Cleary jugs with green or black place names but without colourful crests. These might either have just stated an actual town name such as the Cork example here, or maybe a special Shamrock mug as shown here with 'Ballymaclinton', a village invented for the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition. The Cork example is quite unusual as it is quite highly decorated with a shamrock garland/wreath.



Our thanks to Neville Maguire and Viewback Auctions for use of this image.

## *W H Goss*

Generally the Market for armorials was huge...we only need to look around today at any Antiques Fair to see a diverse range of items for sale. However, the sheer quantity produced has pegged back prices as low as 50p upwards to £700 depending on the item today.

The main producer was 'Goss' which was the product of the Falcon pottery at Stoke on Trent owned by William Henry Goss. Other producers included Willow, Shelly, Carltonware, Arcadian, Nautilus/Possil to name a few....however, let's look in a little more detail at the main player in the market place.

Here is an extract from "[http://www.gosscollectorsclub.org/contents\\_g.html](http://www.gosscollectorsclub.org/contents_g.html)" !

*"In the early 1880's William's eldest son, Adolphus, joined the firm. He had been raised in a home adorned with his father's collection of antiques. In those days an antique was a Greek or Roman pot and William was a keen antiquarian. As a child Adolphus was encouraged by his father to take an interest in heraldry and he was soon to suggest to his father that the company take advantage of the new niche market of seaside souvenir collecting by producing miniature copies of Greek and Roman pots and vases decorated with the coat of arms of coastal towns to be sold as "seaside souvenirs". This caught on in a big way and by the turn of the century had become a collecting craze. From seaside resorts virtually every town and city in the land now had its arms produced and sold by a Goss appointed agent."*

Let us take a look now at two stunning pieces of Goss, with Dublin crest. The bowl has a Gosshawk and impressed mark dating it to the Goss first period 1858 to 1887. The detailing is very similar to that seen on

gilded Belleek Grass ware where the two rope ends are finished with dots which can be found on the lids of Grass tea kettles. Interestingly, the 'Dublin' crest used by Goss (below) is totally different to the Belleek versions (which are shown later).



*"After the Great War the interest in heraldic porcelain began to wane and in 1929 the Goss family sold out to a competitor who continued to use the highly respected Goss name to market inferior ware. Despite this, dedicated Goss collectors still regard any piece of china or pottery carrying the Goss trademark as genuine Goss. The use of the trademark fell into disuse after 1938."*



A surprising end to a great success story... the success of Armorials had been huge...in their heyday production space at Goss had increased 3 fold to cope with demand, unfortunately Goss were too focused on their 'armorial output' and did not diversify in time to halt the slide into extinction.

Goss though in their heyday created 10,000 different decorations for their pieces. Typically in classical shapes of Greek or Roman antiquities or later items such as churches, monuments, ships, cars, WW1 tanks etc.

Here is an interesting snippet I discovered while researching Goss on the internet: it is an extract from a letter by Peter Lomax and published by the United Grand Lodge of England in their MQ Magazine, we gratefully acknowledge their permission to reproduce this.

*"For the past 25 years I have collected one particular model, the Goss Carlisle Salt Pot, initially to see how many different crests or transfers I could find. Some 696 later, two stand out of the rest." They are Masonic decorations, probably among the rarest of designs sought after. Transfers showing the square and compasses, the sun, moon and stars, sprigs of acacia and the arms of the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland and Ireland are among a variety of designs produced by Goss. A few have been found that commemorate a ladies festival, showing the Lodge motif and giving the name of the Master in that year. A few examples can be seen in the Great Queen Street museum. Prices for pieces with Masonic decorations have ranged from £150 to £200 each, until recently, when these two pieces auctioned on ebay for over £700 each."*



*The two Masonic pieces*



## *So let us turn now to BELLEEK*

The only retailer type mark seen so far on Belleek crested is that of Robinson and Cleaver (Belfast). However, this was a mark that was used on all goods sold through the store and not exclusively for armorial wares.

## *When did production start?*

We need to consider the change of ownership at the pottery in 1884 following the deaths of the founders. The new company was there to make money, but likely in the first few years after 1884 to still be finding its feet. There is no mention or illustration in the 1904 catalogue of 'armorials', but it is fact that Belleek started to seriously manufacture Armorials during the second period. If production had started in earnest earlier then we would expect far more first period pieces to be around today. Part of my research has been to log each piece I have seen and the mark that has been on the base. To date, I have seen two first period examples and 130 second period examples. Therefore, I believe we are looking at 1889/90 as the likely start point.

## *Let's look at some pieces*

Belleek tended to adapt or use their existing ranges such as Celtic. The tall jug shown here is an armorial adapted into a Celtic piece which can be seen in the 1949 catalogue. Pieces adapted for armorial use included Shell Plates, Specimen Vases, Toy Shell Jugs, Cleary Jugs, Tridacna, Ring Handle, Hexagon and Neptune tea ware. Also, swans and pigs to name a couple of 'animal' pieces.

Various vases were also pressed into service as Armorial ware. Belleek however did produce a range of shapes which were solely intended for crested pieces with some being modified and re-used in later periods such as the Celtic tall jug (right) - presumably as and when their moulds were located in the archives.



*Examples of the various shapes used for Armorials*

## Let's look at the Crests discovered so far...

### Ireland:

#### 20 towns/cities identified -

Winner in popularity has to be Dublin with 32 examples. However, this is divided between two distinct versions as shown here ....

*City of Dublin (left) and City Arms Dublin (right)*



In descending order of popularity and numbers seen so far, we see for other Towns:-

- Killarney 15
- Belfast 9
- Limerick 4
- Portrush 4
- Kilkenny 3
- Enniscorthy 3
- Enniskillen 3
- Waterford 3
- Newry, Cork, Ballyshannon, Larne 2
- Tramore, Drogheda, Ennis, Blackskull, Athlone, Ballymena, Portstewart, Bundoran 1

Here is an unusual Bundoran piece that sold very recently on eBay. The only example seen so far. Our thanks to ebay seller icklebetty



### Scotland: 11 Scottish Cities/Towns -

In descending order of popularity:-

- Glasgow 4
- Dunoon, Berwick on Tweed, Rothesay, Dumfries, Perth, Maxwelltown, Gourock 2
- Ayr, Creiff, Helensborough 1

Likewise recently, this Dunoon Fan Cream was sold on eBay. Our thanks to ebay seller millersbank.

As well as towns and cities, some 'Special' crests were produced. These include ...Robbie Burns, and 'Crest for Scotland'. Numbers seen so far:-

- Arms for Burns 7
- Scotland Crest 4





## England: 3 Towns Identified -

- Ipswich
- Croydon
- Southend on Sea

5 minutes before starting the talk at our Cornish meeting, Francis Kiddle asked if his Southend on Sea piece may be useful to illustrate a point in the talk (right). This discovery did dramatically change my talk as the number of English Crested pieces had just gone up by 33%. Until then there had just been two 'English towns' those being Ipswich and Croydon.

I had found these 'English' pieces slightly puzzling. The reason for this was that these pieces were quite far south on the map - I was expecting to see examples which were closer to the Scottish borders. The Croydon piece was also interesting as it came with a First Period Marking. In the image shown below hopefully you can see some red marking to the base which is something not seen on other Belleek pieces.



*Pictures left to right: Croydon jug, jug's first period and 'red' mark, Willow Art Company jug*

Initially, I was a little unsure as to whether this was a genuine Belleek piece or not. The reason for this assumption was that the piece used seems to be a 'Willow' shape as shown here (above right).

However, since presenting the talk, my thoughts have been influenced by the 'Aynsley' plate in our own collection and illustrated in Neville Maguire's book 'Belleek in Context'. It is well known that potteries would buy in blanks and the 'Aynsley/Belleek' plate is a perfect example. On the base of that plate are two markings. One an impressed 'Aynsley' mark and then a Belleek black first period mark with black painted number underneath. At this stage I don't think we can entirely rule out the possibility that for whatever reason, Belleek 'imported' this Willow pattern and finished it as 'Belleek' with a first period mark and the Croydon crest. (A practice that other potteries still carried on well into Belleek's second period). Was this a test/trial special order?



First Period marked pieces are exceedingly rare. Apart from the Croydon piece, there has been just one example to surface, a 'Killarney' tyg which sold on eBay in April this year. The discovery of these two first period examples do highlight the sheer rarity of Armorialials in the first Period and backs up the theory that virtually all production was post 1891.

One thing is for sure. Belleek's output compared to say Goss was quite limited. Using sightings so far, 120 second period examples and only two first period examples have been recorded. One thought is that as Belleek's network of retailers was a lot smaller, they had fewer outlets unlike Goss' extensive network... Belleek would therefore have had a firm foothold in their home market with their regular stockists in Ireland and to a lesser extent 'over the water' in Scotland.

Turning back to the spread of towns/resorts seen so far, I wondered whether there would be any pattern that would have emerged regarding location or whether there would be a concentration in certain areas. Production seems slanted naturally towards Ireland, followed by Scotland. Maybe by the time Belleek decided to enter the market, Goss and their rivals had really 'sown up' the towns/resorts and it was hard to get retailers, other than those carrying Belleek already, to take their pieces. Also, there could be the question of price. Were the Belleek items too expensive? Were they over-priced compared to their rivals? These are all factors which have never really changed over time and they are still relevant today as we continually see the shift in production from the UK to cheaper locations as businesses either want to maximise profit or cut their costs.

As it is likely that we are looking in the main at the Edwardian period (1901-1912) then it is probable that production was contracting and 'Armorial' collecting generally on the wane - did Belleek step in to supply when other potteries stopped producing? What is sure though, in comparison to the huge Goss output, is that Belleek's output was miniscule. To illustrate this point, there were 696 crest variations on one particular Goss piece compared to the maximum number of only 7 crest variations identified so far - on Belleek's 3 Handled 'tyg'.

## *More Pieces*

Starting with Tea Ware, I am rather surprised that Tridacna and Neptune wares were chosen. The actual design of these pieces was not ideally suited as can be seen on this Neptune teapot.

The ridged shape of the teapot body distorts this Ayr crest badly.



The Hexagon and Ring Handle patterns were far better wares to use as this Waterford Ring Handle cup shows.

The one pattern which was a favourite for Scottish towns/resorts was Thistle. Again, not the best design for armorials, but a perfect choice for Scotland.





One of the most unusual Tea Ware designs has to be this Kilkenny 'Forget Me Not' or heart shaped cup and saucer.

*Heart cups and saucers: second period (left and right) and brown mark (right below)*



The design was never widely used or documented in any early catalogue but was well suited as a vehicle for an armorial design with a specific smooth heart shaped area for the crest. The design remained hidden in the mould archives until it was 'dusted off' and according to Fergus Cleary was reintroduced in 1979. The 'heart shape' to the cup was removed but remained on the saucer. The handle was redesigned. The cup and saucer, I understand, was given the 'Forget Me Not' pattern name. It does not appear to have been a great success when reintroduced in the gold period and only an odd example surfaces from time to time. Thanks to John Shaw and eBay seller squarebiz99 for these images



Some of the adapted pieces from the Belleek range are shown here.

*Left: Tridacna cup (unidentified) and saucer Ayr  
Below left: Bowl, Perth  
Right: 3 Handle Tyg: Killarney*

*Below: Diamond Top Vase, Belfast; Skillet Jug, Cork; 'Lipped' Creamer, Enniskillen*



Others not illustrated include Specimen Vase, Menu Holder, 3 Leg Skillet Pot, Skillet Jug, Shell Jug, Shell Sugar, Fan Jug, Small Cleary Jug and the Open Churn.

Some of the fresh designs were; (shown on the previous page) diamond vase, and Small Jug, Belgravia Shape Jug, Wine Pourer, Small Tea pot, Churn, Handled Specimen Jug, Shamrock loving cup, 3 Handled Tyg. Some of these are copies of shapes used by other potteries as well at the time.

*Below: 'Scroll' Handled Vase, Dublin; Small Vase, Athlone, Tall Ewer Jug, Londonderry*



This teapot (right) seems to be a totally new design used solely for Armorials. Crests so far include Ipswich, Dundalk and Limerick.

*Teapot with crest for Drogheda (right)*



The Barrels shown here (above) illustrate the way Belleek adapted and re-used pieces ...originally an 'Armorial' after removal of the top section, this barrel became a souvenir piece for the Bushmills Whiskey Distillery. The barrel was originally re-introduced during the Gold Period. The examples here are: Second Period 'Arms for Burns' (left) and 2000 Millennium 'Bushmills Distillery' (right).

The most popular shape for Armorial Belleek is this small Shell cream (right) with 14 examples spotted so far. This example shows the popular 'Killarney' crest





## Other pieces

...Have included animals such as the Swan and Pig.

*Swan with crest for Killarney shown here with Second Period mark.*



## Summary

So in summary, there are lots of unanswered questions! I don't think we will ever get all the answers because as we know, early history and specific information on topics like this have been lost or never documented. However, it is highly likely we will continue to see pieces come up for sale that we have not seen before. With more research I expect to build up a better picture for the future.

Shortly after completing the talk, David Reynolds mentioned the interesting fact that wherever Goss agents called to sell their wares, if that town or village did not have a crest, the agents would get a fictional design made for that town. In time, I will attempt to find out if and how many of any armorials used on Belleek pieces were fictitious.

There are a few other areas in which Belleek involved themselves in 'giftware' adaptations of regular pieces. These could in the future form the basis of a talk in their own right. Rather than town or resort crest, exhibition pieces or tourist attraction specials were manufactured. Here are a few examples.

*Blarney Castle on a 'Belgravia Cream' shaped jug,*



*Franco-British Exhibition in London 1908  
featuring The Clinton Soap village of  
Ballymacclinton*

Occasional royal commemorative such as this King George the 6th 1935 Silver Jubilee piece (below, left).



And finally ...The pottery is still involved in 'special' commissions or commemorative pieces and one of the latest was our very own 50th Meeting plate with a production run of 75 pieces (above, right)

**Thank you to all who have supported me with information and images which have been used here or on our web pages. In time I will build a 'crested' gallery for our website.**

**Thanks to Neville Maguire, David Reynolds and Francis Kiddle for snippets of information, images and support with this article.**



Please get in touch with Simon via the enquiry form on our website [www.belleek.org.uk](http://www.belleek.org.uk) or by email to [webmaster@belleek.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@belleek.org.uk) with your finds or comments.



# *Morris and Willmore*

## *The Columbian Art Pottery and its connections with Belleek*

*By Paul W Tubb*

“In the latter part of 1892, Messrs William T Morris and F R Willmore commenced the erection of a pottery in Trenton for the manufacture of art wares. The former was at one time connected with the Belleek works, Ireland, and the Royal Worcester Porcelain works, England, and recently with the Ott & Brewer Pottery of Trenton. Mr Willmore was also for many years employed as a decorator at the two last named establishments. Their new works, which they have named the Columbian Art Pottery, were finished in the early part of 1893. Thin Belleek china and ivory ware, of a fine quality, are made here in original forms and decorations, and include articles of utility and ornamental pieces, such as candle-sticks, umbrella holders, jardinières, tea-pots, and specialities.”

This paragraph is taken from E A Barber's book of 1893 on the Pottery and Porcelain of the United States of America [1] and identifies Morris, at least, with having been at work in Belleek at some time prior to his coming to Trenton, New Jersey. It also identifies both men with having worked at the Worcester factory and with Ott & Brewer in Trenton. Given Barber's proximity to the events he is recording, his evidence is worthy of the greatest respect.

This look at the lives of William Thomas Morris and Francis Richard Willmore in the public records of England, Ireland and the USA is offered as a basis for further work in this regard. I must say at the very outset that I have been unable to find any evidence of Morris having been at Belleek from the public records we have consulted. However, as the subsequent review of his life shows, there are times when he may well have been in Belleek and the evidence of Barber quoted above is very potent.

So, let us look at his life, and we find that his birth occurred in Thomas Street, Middlesboro, Yorkshire on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1850 whilst his father, also named William, was employed as a Potters Model Maker somewhere in the locality. It may have been at the newly opened Staffordshire Pottery Works that was soon forced by an injunction from Stoke on Trent to change its name and became the Stafford Place Pottery. I am grateful to Gwen Wood for the information that Thomas Street has been 'redeveloped' a number of times since 1851 so I cannot give you any indication of how it might have appeared to the Morris family.

Readers of this series of articles may remember that we discovered Sam Scarlett's oldest sister with her husband in Fordham Street, Middlesboro and possibly engaged in Pottery work at the time of the 1851 census [2]. In that same census return the Morris family are found to be still in Thomas Street, and from the entry we learn that the father, William, was born in Tunstall, Staffordshire and the mother, Catherine nee Adamson, had been born in Scotland. So, too, was their eldest child, Mary, which seems to indicate that, like William Wooliscroft, William Morris Senior had searched for work in Scotland during the 1830s. It seems likely that he had met and married Catherine whilst there and Mary was born in 1833.

Following Mary there were three other daughters, Jane, Sarah and Catherine all born in Middlesboro between 1839 to 1848, before William Thomas came along in 1850. It would appear that the family moved about in search of work as, at the time of the 1841 census, they are living at Mason's Row, Fenton Vivian, Stoke upon Trent. There was another daughter, Ann, with them at that time who was noted as just 4 years old. I think that in 1851 she is recorded as a house servant in the village of Bishopston, County Durham. She, too, had been born in Middlesboro.

It would appear, too, that William Thomas completed the family as, in the 1861 census, they are recorded living back in the Potteries in Thomas Street, Penkhull with no further children. The father is recorded as a Potters Mould Maker. To ascertain roughly when the family returned to Stoke on Trent I found Mary's marriage to a

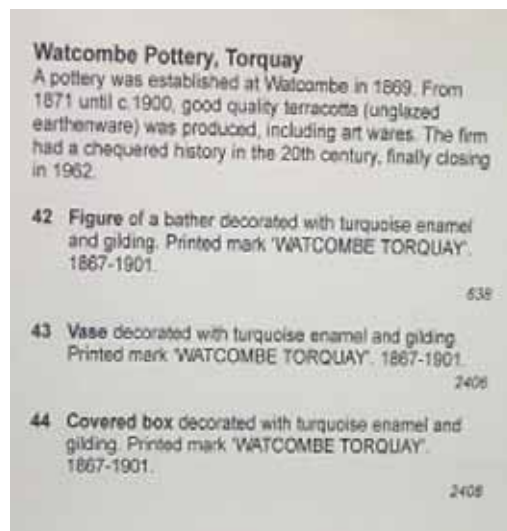
Hugh Lockett at Middlesboro in the autumn of 1851 and the birth of their first child, Enoch Lockett, at Stoke on Trent in 1854. This family, with two further children, are in Fenton at the time of the 1861 census and are living with William Thomas and Catherine at 13 Herbert Street, Fenton in the 1871 census. I would surmise that the family moved back to the Potteries area early in the 1850s so that the early life of William Thomas would have been largely in Fenton.

The Scottish born mother of the family, Catherine, died at their home in Herbert Street, Fenton on November 28<sup>th</sup> 1868 aged 60 and William Thomas is the informant noted on her death certificate as living at the same address. Their father went off at about that time, I surmise, to work with other Staffordshire men at the Torquay pottery in Devon. He is recorded in the village of Coombe Pafford at the time of the 1871 census, lodging along with two other Staffordshire Potters in the house of a local labourer. I think that he died in the Newton Abbott Registration District early in 1878 aged 67.



*Three examples of  
Torquay Pottery .*

*Permission to use these  
images from the Potteries  
Museum & Art Gallery,  
Stoke-on-Trent, England.*



With mother dead and father in Devon, William Thomas appears to have assumed the headship of the family left behind in Stoke. He is noted in the 1871 census as head of a household that includes only his unmarried sister, Catherine. Their older sister Mary Lockett with her three children is also in the house. Mary's husband, Hugh, is back with his mother and brothers elsewhere in Fenton and, although both are noted as married, it is possible that some sort of separation may have taken place.

William Thomas and his sisters are living at 13 Herbert Street, Fenton, which had presumably been the family home, and his occupation is noted as Potters Mould Maker, Unemployed. Catherine is a Potters Paintress, Mary a Potters Enamel Liner and the two eldest of her boys are also employed in the pottery industry. Mary is recorded as another Head of Household so that it would appear that within the one house there were effectively separate living arrangements.

It is the fact of William Thomas being unemployed that interests me because at just twenty years of age it would not have been a condition that could long endure. It raises the possibility, at least, that it was soon after, or just before, the census was taken in 1871 that he might have been in Belleek, or even in Worcester. We know that at that time there were a number of Staffordshire men at work in Fermanagh and that there were regular comings and goings between Stoke on Trent and Belleek. If indeed, as Barber asserts, he did train in Belleek before going to America this period of his life would seem to be the most likely.



There is evidence from the American census returns that William Thomas emigrated to the USA in 1873 and that he probably never returned to England or Ireland. Soon after reaching New Jersey he married Ellen Wootton who was also from a potters family in Penkhull, Stoke on Trent and they started their family among the pottery workers in Trenton NJ. Ellen had arrived at New York on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1873 aboard the SS City of Montreal but we have been unable to ascertain with any certainty when and on board which vessel William Thomas arrived.

It is not clear with which pottery company he first found employment in Trenton, but Barber is sure that he did at some time in the 1880s and 90s work at Ott & Brewer. It is, perhaps, fanciful to imagine that his experience at Belleek may have been instrumental in Ott & Brewer seeking, in 1882, the expertise of the Bromleys from Belleek to perfect their parian pottery body.

The family are recorded in Trenton in successive census returns starting in 1880 when they have three children, Bella aged 6, Willie aged 5 and Frank W aged 2. Unfortunately nothing of the New Jersey 1890 census has survived, but in the 1900 return they are living at 1245 Greenwood Avenue, Trenton, with only Frank and Sarah listed as their children. William Thomas is noted as a Pottery Manufacturer and the marriage had lasted for 26 years. Frank is now said to be a 24 year old Modeler and Sarah a 22 year old Teacher. William omits to record his mother's birthplace as Scotland, although he had got this right in 1880. We cannot find any certain trace in the census index of Willie and, perhaps, Bella is now known as Sarah but we are confident this is the correct family.

Our confidence stems from the 1910 census which records the family at 1115 Greenwood Avenue where William and Ellen live with Bella, Frank and a niece, Isabella Moss. William Thomas is a Potter and an employer. Bella is a school teacher and Frank a potter. Ellen records that she has had three children in the marriage but that only two are now alive which probably accounts for us being unable to find Willie in 1900. Isabella is a daughter of Ellen's sister, Sarah, who had married William Henry Moss in 1879.

In the 1901 UK census this Isabella is noted as the seventh of eight children and, when their father died in the early part of 1906, Sarah must have struggled to bring up her large family even though two of the older ones were themselves married. Isabella arrived at New York aboard the Cunarder 'Carmania' on May 30<sup>th</sup> 1906 after an eight day crossing. She was just 8 years old and appears, from the manifest, to have been unaccompanied. The manifest also tells us that she is on her way to her Aunt, Ellen Morris of 1115 Greenwood Avenue, Trenton NJ and that this aunt is her adopted mother.

Just over twelve months later she is again on board the RMS Carmania arriving at New York on August 27<sup>th</sup> 1907 and this time she is accompanied by Isabel Morris, her cousin, and she is again on her way to 1115 Greenwood Avenue. Her mother Mrs Sarah Moss of 21 Frederick Street, Fenton, is her nearest living relative and her uncle, William T Morris, is noted as her adopted father.



*The RMS Carmania*

Clearly, at the time of the 1910 and subsequent census returns, William Thomas is not prepared to call her his step daughter so that maybe the 'adopted mother' bit was used to get her onto the boat in the first place. This

is, of course, purely speculation on my part, there is nothing in the records which can provide certainty on the matter. In addition, I can find no death reference at this time for Sarah Moss, her actual mother, in the indexes. However, there is a Sarah Moss death recorded in early 1911 which I feel certain is the sister of Ellen Morris because in May that year, again on RMS Cameronia, Lydia Moss arrives in New York with the ship's manifest declaring that she is on her way to her uncle, William Morris at Greenwood Avenue, Trenton. Lydia is five years older than Isabella and gives as her closest relative a Mrs F Brough of 23 Frubrick Street, Fenton which turns out to have been her oldest sister, Phoebe, who had married William Henry Brough at Stoke in the autumn of 1904.

The 1920 census more or less repeats the 1910 information, but Bella is again recorded as Sarah and is now a school principal. Frank, like his sister still unmarried, is a foreman in the pottery and his father is a Pottery Manufacturer. They are all living still at 1115 Greenwood Avenue and Isabella Moss remains with them as a niece and works as bookkeeper for the gas company. 1115 Greenwood is today the address of the Brooks Public Library for that part of Trenton.

Lydia is not with the family in Trenton at the time of the 1920 census but reappears in the 1930 census by which time William Thomas is dead and Ellen styles herself, 'Widow'. Lydia is a trained nurse and working at a hospital whilst Isabella, also still single, is a public service bookkeeper. Neither Frank nor Isabella Morris are married either and both remain at home, Bella continues to be noted as a teacher although Frank is unemployed. Nan Brennan of Chicago has sent us a copy of the entry on Isabella Moss in the Social Security Death Index which shows her to have been born on March 16<sup>th</sup> 1898 and died in Trenton on November 15<sup>th</sup> 1987.

I have not yet found exactly when William Thomas Morris died during the twenties, nor where he is buried. The Columbian Art Pottery Company had ceased production in 1902, according to Gaston [3], but Morris is described in later census returns as a Pottery manufacturer or employer. It does not say in these returns exactly which pottery company he was involved with, and the 1920 Trenton Trades Directory simply calls him a Potter. The Trenton Evening Times of March 10<sup>th</sup> 1903 carried an advert from Morris & Willmore to recruit a Sagger Maker, so that the company, which went at that time by the name of Morris and Willmore, was still in business in 1903. Other scraps gleaned from the newspaper columns on line leads me to think that the Columbian Art Pottery Company did, indeed, come to an end in 1902 or 03 but that Morris and Willmore immediately set up the Morris and Willmore Company in its stead, almost certainly utilising the premises, machinery and workforce of the earlier company. What inspired this 'restructuring' is not clear but it looks as if it was just as successful as many other such refinancing operations of more modern times.

The newspapers also record the social life of the family in Trenton with many references to their being involved with the Grace Presbyterian Episcopal Church. For instance, Mrs William T Morris is listed as a committee member for their Oyster Supper in October 1915 as was Mrs E Swann. Miss Isabelle Morris and Miss Nellie Willmore were in charge of supper tables at the same event. It would appear that the English pottery immigrants were making a valuable contribution to the social life of the city.

There is also mention of the Morris & Willmore factory being expanded in July 1901 and of a works outing to the Interstate Fairground in September 1899 when the decorators beat the casters in a baseball game. In September 1897 the paper records that William T Morris, of the Columbia Art Pottery, now rides a bicycle to and from his home on Hamilton Avenue.

It is clear from these newspaper cuttings that the Morris and Willmore families were very close whilst the two fathers were partners in the pottery industry. So let us look at the path Francis Richard Willmore had taken to this successful time in the lives of the two men.

Francis Richard Willmore was born in the Worcestershire village of Feckenham on September 7<sup>th</sup> 1849 to John Hands Willmore and his wife Ann, formerly Jeffs. Both John and Ann had themselves been born in the same village and married there in the summer of 1843 and set up home there as they are recorded in the village at the time of the 1851 census with four children of whom Francis is the youngest.





*Feckenham Church where F R Willmore would have been baptised and his parents were married.*

The village is a fine example of the quintessential English Village and would not have changed much outwardly in the intervening one hundred and fifty years. There are Jeffs graves in the graveyard, possibly related to Francis's mother, but no Willmores that we could see. John is recorded in 1851 as a farmer, as he is on Francis's birth certificate, but the changes to agriculture in England at that time – witness the Chartists etc – must have taken a toll on John's chances of continuing in that career and he has become a village policeman in Tardebigge, Worcestershire, by the time of the 1861 census when the family are recorded as living in the police house there. This must have seemed an attractive job for a man with a young family who had just lost his livelihood and his house.

John had moved the family again and into the city of Worcester by the time of the 1871 census when they are to be found at 48 James Street in the St Peter's district of the city. John is working as a gardener, his son George as a solicitor's general clerk, whilst our Francis is a china painter. It is clear that neither son has looked towards agriculture for their living but had taken advantage of the opportunities for other forms of employment offered by the city.



*The Village Green at Feckenham*

Ten years later Francis is still with his parents, the last of the children so to be, at 21 Lowesmoor, St Martin's, Worcester and father, John, is listed as a greengrocer. Francis now calls himself a China Decorator and it would appear that he had taken the advantage of his skill in this area to progress his career within the famous Worcester pottery works at a time when the factory was turning out works that are as admired today as they were when first produced.

The mother, Ann, died at the house in Lowesmoor on January 6<sup>th</sup> 1882 from cancer of the pelvis at the age of 60 with her husband being the informant noted on the certificate. It must have been at about this time that Francis decided to try his luck in the pottery industry of Trenton. I have not found record of his passage for certain but think that the Fred Willmore and Alice Willmore who arrived in New York aboard the SS Oregon on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1884 may well be our Francis and his new bride Alice. He is noted as a Decorator and he married Alice either just before or just after they got to America. I cannot find any reference to this marriage in the English indexes, but it could have taken place on board during the voyage or their intention to marry in America was presumed when they went aboard as Mr & Mrs Willmore.

The father he left behind in Worcester is living with his daughter, Maria Beard, at 51 Chestnut Street, South Claines, Worcester in 1891 but is resident at St Oswald's Almhouses, Worcester at the time of the 1901 census and is noted as being blind. He died in Worcester in the autumn of 1902.

Francis and Alice with their daughter, Nellie, are recorded in the 1900 US Census at Hamilton Township and he is noted as a Potterman. Nellie had been born in March 1888 but they had lost one child. Francis says that he immigrated in 1883 and Alice in 1884, so did Francis return to England and bring Alice back with him on the 'Oregon' in 1884? If so, this would seem to indicate that he had found work in the Trenton pottery industry quite quickly and was sufficiently well regarded to take the time off needed to return to England and back in 1884.

By 1910 the partnership with William T Morris was well established and Francis, Alice and Nellie are living at 926 Prospect Street in Trenton and he has now reverted to calling himself a Decorator. This may give us a clue as to the respective primary strengths that the two partners brought to the business. Other details listed remain as they had been ten years earlier except that Nellie is now a stenographer in an advertising firm.

A further ten years bring the family to 1920 and they are now living at 1807 Greenwood Avenue in Trenton, still just the three of them together. Increasing age is affecting Francis's memory and he gives himself and Alice a few less years than he should and also changes the date of their immigration. Nellie is still a stenographer, but is now employed by a sign writer. Their house is owned outright with no mortgage, a situation far removed from that of an agricultural worker in rural Worcestershire.

Just like his partner, William Morris, Francis died at some time in the 1920s because Alice is noted as a widow in the 1930 census when living with their unmarried daughter, Nellie, at 1823 Greenwood Avenue. As the head of the household Alice has corrected the arithmetical errors of ten years earlier or, perhaps, Nellie has done it for her. Nellie is a secretary in a bank so that accuracy with figures may have been second nature to her.

We have seen earlier some glimpses of the social life that Nellie led and she is often recorded in the newspaper as being involved in musical entertainment either as a singer or player of instruments. It may seem remarkable that neither the Willmore daughter nor the Morris children or nieces married but were content to remain within the family home.

This initial look at the lives of these two men has not been able to substantiate what Barber wrote in 1893 about their earlier careers. Certainly Willmore worked for a long time at Worcester, and Morris may have worked at both or either of Worcester and Belleek but it would have been for only a short time at either and he was still a young man when he emigrated in 1873 at the age of 23.



I think it fairly certain that they met at Ott & Brewer in the 1880s and that they produced Belleek type ware at their factory after the partnership was formed. This in itself may be taken as evidence of a close association of one of them, at least, with the style and substance of the Belleek pottery in Ireland whose work was being copied by a number of Trenton manufactories at this time. Every now and again pieces of their work appear on ebay and, I am sure, in US antique shops but, like Belleek themselves, it is not all parian ware although generally very decorative.



*Left, a dessert plate by Morris and Willmore, gilded and decorated with a bird and flowers. Thanks to eBay seller "rubyanglerunning" for permission to use this picture.*

These lives provide a fascinating glimpse of the sort of interconnections between pottery centres around the world and the influences that thereby are brought to bear. That two men, born within nine months of each other in Middlesborough, Yorkshire and Feckenham, Worcestershire, should meet in Trenton New Jersey and forge an artistic partnership to produce Belleek type ware is the stuff of story tellers.



*Right, one of the marks used by Morris & Willmore for their Belleek type ware*

## References

### Resources available for public searching -

England & Wales Census returns per [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk)

United States of America Federal census returns per [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)

Ship Passenger Lists – Arrivals at New York per [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)

Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes for England & Wales made available by Office for National Statistics.

Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes for Ireland, from 1864, available in Dublin & Roscommon.

### Books, Articles etc. -

[1] Edwin A Barber "The Pottery & Porcelain of the United States"; G P Putnams Sons, New York 1893

[2] UK Group of Belleek Collectors Newsletter Vol 27/2 July 2006

[3] Mary Frank Gaston "American Belleek" Collector Books, Paducah KY 1984

In addition I have, as so often, been greatly helped by two of my correspondents in America, namely Nan Brennan of Chicago IL and Faith Ann Dressler of Florida. Without their looking up of information on line in the USA this article would not have come to fruition.

On this occasion, too, as mentioned in the text, I have been much assisted by Gwen Wood, a UK group member, who has delved into the archives of Middlesborough for me.

All remaining inaccuracies are entirely my own.

# *Belleek Black Mark Tea Ware - Part 6*

## *Floral/Plant Concluded*

*- by Tony Fox*

Part 6 deals with the three remaining patterns in this group i.e. Thistle, Ivy and Thorn which together with those patterns covered in Parts 4 and 5 constitute the eleven patterns comprising the floral/plant design motif group.

### *Thistle*

The design motif on this pattern is based on the head of a thistle with an interlaced radiating effect on all the pieces. The handles on the teapot, teacups and cream are quite ornate and have projecting spurs on the top and bottom sections. The saucers have a distinctive everted rim. The tray is of a simple oval shape with a chevron geometric pattern to the centre, it also has an everted rim (like the saucer). The Corrigan Manuscript [a] says this is a first period design.



*Tray Pearl  
BI (above)  
and detail  
of the  
chevron  
central  
design  
(right)*



*Teacup and saucer (above) showing everted saucer and vertical cup rim,  
BI*



The upper section of the teapot, cream, sugar, teacups and slop bowl to the rim is almost vertical and carries a fine fluting effect

*Dejeuner set, pink tint and gilt, BI  
(right)*

The Corrigan Manuscript [a] also states it could be produced in eggshell.



## *Decoration:*

Ivory, pearl, cob, pink tint with and without gilt rim. No other colour tint has been seen, although the Corrigan Manuscript [a] says it can be tinted green. An example with a crest (of Maxwelltown) can be seen in Marion Langham's book [b].



*Teapot (above) showing spurs to handle, pink tint and gilt, BI*



*Cream, sugar and cup and saucer (above), pearl and gilt*

## *Periods:*

First and second periods.

## *Forms:*

Tray, Teapot, Cup and saucer, Sugar (large, medium), Cream (large, medium), Slop bowl (large). The Thistle pattern has an adequate number of tea ware items and as such there are sufficient pieces to comprise a dejeuner set. However, there is no evidence, to date, that this pattern had a kettle.



*Dejeuner set, Pearl, BI and BII*

## Ivy

Evidence suggests that this design was introduced at the end of the second period and beginning of the third period, it initially appeared in the 1928 New Illustrated Catalogue. It should not be confused with the Ivy sugar and cream available from the first period onwards in three sizes sold under the banner of 'Sugars and Creams' and illustrated in the 1904

catalogue, these have a similar ivy relief design but are a different shape from the Ivy pattern tea set (see picture below).

*Tea set (right) with gilt BII, bread plate without gilt BIII*



*Ivy tea ware sugar, BII v's earlier sugar BI – note the dissimilarities*

The design motif is similar to the Shamrock pattern except with ivy leaves supplanting the shamrocks. The ivy leaves and handles are hand painted. The pieces are also similar in shape to the Shamrock pattern except for the teacups and slop bowl. The handles on the teapot, teacups, cream and covered sugar are spiral wrapped in a rope formation. It is always finely potted and crisply painted.

*Ivy v's Shamrock – note the similarities (left)*

*Teapot spiral rope handle (right)*



It is surprisingly difficult to find examples of Ivy pattern considering it was still being advertised in the 1931 and 1937 catalogues.



## Decoration:

The usual decoration way is a mix of shades of bright green and mid brown/subtle green handle, with either black or gold berries, cob interior, with or without a gilt rim. Can also be seen with cob leaves and handle. It should be noted that the earlier cream and sugar, sold separately and not part of a tea set, can be seen in a variety of decoration ways (pink, pink lustre, turquoise), but these have not been seen on the Ivy tea ware proper.

*Right, green and gilt decoration: with gold berries BII, with black berries, BIII*

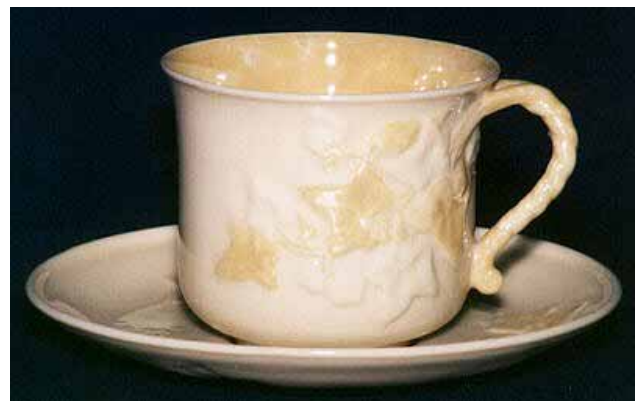
## Periods:

Second (rarer) and Third periods.



## Forms:

Teapot, Cup and saucer, Sugar, Cream, Slop bowl. The Ivy pattern has a limited number of tea ware items and as a consequence there are insufficient pieces to form a dejeuner set. There is no evidence, to date, that this pattern had a tray or kettle.



*Cup and saucer, green and gilt, BII, Teapot BIII (above)  
Teacup and saucer, cob, BIII, Slop bowl, green, cob and gilt (right)*

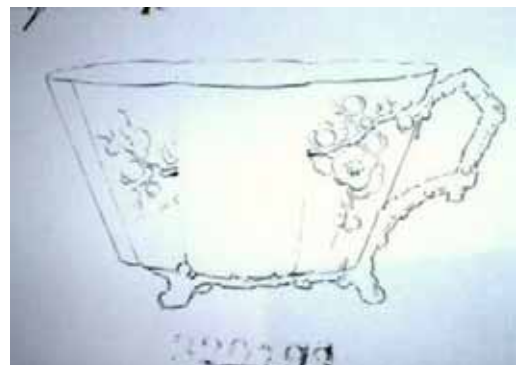
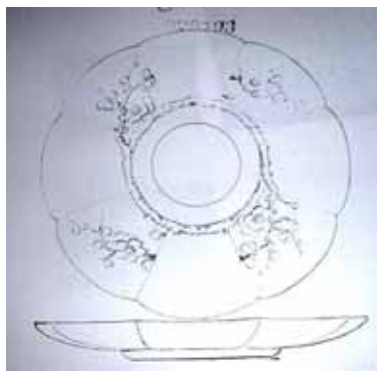


# Thorn

Registered in 1878 the Thorn pattern is a veritable tour de force in the annals of Belleek black mark tea ware. Armstrong refers to this as 'Japanese Thorn' probably because it followed the prevailing fashion for the Japanesque. The design motif resembles oriental ware with moulded panels carrying hawthorn blossoms, the centre of the saucers and plates have a spider and web. All the pieces, except tray and plates, are of octagonal form and the teapot, kettle, teacups, cream, sugar and slop have 3 feet. The tray is a rounded square and the saucers and plates are round, all with finely scalloped edges.

*Tray, pink, gold and gilt, unmarked*

*Registered design documents (below): 'Ornamentation claimed for David McBirney and Robert Williams Armstrong Trading as D McBirney & Co, potters, Belleek, Fermanagh, Ireland, in class No 4': Tray #322477 13/06/1878; Cup and saucer #320793 27/04/1878,.*



All handles take the form of thorn branches.

*Teacup handle*

Unusually, the kettle, teapot and cream use the same mould.

*Kettle, large teapot, small teapot, large cream, small cream – note the re-use of moulds*

*Applied registration diamond*







*Top: Dejeuner set, including kettle and bread plate, pink, gold and gilt No.42, BI*

*Above: Dejeuner set, with slop bowl, bright blue and gilt No.14, BI.*

*Above right: Tea set, bronze, pearlescent pink, black and gilt No.4, BI*

Even though Belleek had the protection of registration, this did not stop Ott and Brewer (1883 - 1893), USA, copying this pattern. Their version is not an exact copy, it is less detailed and slightly smaller



*Right: Cups and saucers: Belleek BII and Ott and Brewer*



## Decoration:

Of all Belleek's parian tea ware patterns, Thorn shows the greatest variety of decoration ways and colours, some amazing, some subtle, some garish. Nearly all examples have the decoration way number painted under the period mark, but very occasionally, especially in the second period, this is missing. The most common decoration ways are: No.10, 14 and 42 as described on page 69 of the 1904 catalogue. For an illustrated list of all 31 different Thorn decoration ways discovered to date, see Bev Marvell's list of decoration ways (on the UK Group WEB site). So far we have seen examples of No.: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and various others up to No.82, we must assume that there is a No.1 and No.3 awaiting discovery!

### 1904 Catalogue

#### Thorn Tea Ware.

Nos.	DESCRIPTION.	No. 10.		Tinted and Gold.		No. 14.		No. 42.	
		s	d	s	d	s	d	s	d
758	Tea and Saucer ... each	3	9	4	6	6	8	6	8
759	Teapot ... "	5	0	6	0	8	0	8	0
760	Sugar, small size ... "	1	6	2	0	3	9	3	9
761	Cream, " ... "	2	6	3	0	2	3	2	3
762	Tray ... "	21	0	22	6	34	0	34	0
763	Set complete ... "	45	0	52	0	75	0	75	0
764	Breakfast and Saucer ... "	4	6	6	9	9	0	9	0



The 1904 Catalogue decoration ways: Cup and saucers BI: Cob No.10; Blue 2-tone and gilt No.14; Pink and gilt No.42



Thorn can have a monogram, but this is exceedingly rare.

*Cup and saucer, blue, gold and gilt with monogram, No.44, BI*

Belleek also made "Harlequin" tea sets (many different colours together):

*This Harlequin set includes: large teapot, slop bowl, 6 different colours of branches (orange, pink, green, burgundy, light blue, dark blue), all with the same theme of gold and black flowers (no gilt rims), all BI.*







*Cup and saucer, chocolate and gold, No.6, BI*



*Cup and saucer, bright blue, gold and black, No.24, BI.*



*Saucer, unusual pink ground, brown, bright pink and gilt, No.27, BI*



*Cup, blue 2-tone, No.36, BI*



*Cup, light blue, No.38, BI*



*Cup, blue, gold, black and gilt, No.44, BI*



*Cup and saucer, pink, No.54, BI*



*Cup and saucer, bright blue, cob and gilt, No.72, BI*





*Plates BI: Blue, gold, black, No.19;*



*Dark green, gold, black, No.23;*



*Burgundy, gold, black, No.25*



*Plates BI: Blue, gold, cob, black and gilt, No.44;*



*Orange and gilt, No.66;*



*Orange, gold, black, No.82*



*Kettles BI: Gold, pewter, gilt, No.5;*



*Cob, No.10;*



*Pink, gold and black, No.12*



*Kettles BI: Silver, No.13;*



*Brown 2-tone, turquoise, yellow, gilt, No.16;*



*Cob and gilt, No.31*



## *Periods:*

Usually first period, but can be seen less commonly in the second period which tends to be less finely potted.

## *Forms:*

Tray, Kettle (large), Teapot (large, medium and small), Cup and saucer (usual and breakfast), Sugar (large and small), Cream (large and small), Slop bowl (large). The Thorn pattern has an extensive range of tea ware items and as such there are an adequate number of pieces to comprise a dejeuner set together with accessories, i.e. kettle and slop bowl. The dejeuner set always utilizes the small teapot, cream and sugar.

There are 3 sizes of tall jugs (for milk?) that were sold separately



*Tray, pewter, orange, gilt No.2, BI*



*Cream, chocolate, gold, gilt, No.6, BI*



*Trio, gold, pink, gilt No.9*



*Sugar, blue 2-tone, No.14, BI*



*Slop bowl, pink, gold, black No.12, BI*



*Teapot, light blue, No.38, BI*



*Tea set, pewter, gold, gilt No.5, BI. Also with cup and saucer (centre front), black, orange/pink, cob No.8, BI*

## References

- a. Corrigan Manuscript – Campbell and Jenkins
- b. Langham – Belleek Irish Porcelain
- c. Degenhardt – The Complete Collectors Guide and Illustrated Reference, 1st and 2nd editions
- d. Fergus Cleary – The Belleek Pottery Old Photograph Album
- e. Various old Belleek sales catalogues (1904, 1923, 1924, 1928, 1931, 1937).
- f. Bev Marvell – Belleek Painted Numbers, see UK Belleek Collectors' WEB site
- g. Brian Russell – The Registered Designs of Belleek Pottery, see UK Belleek Collectors' WEB site

## Questions raised Part 5

- Harp Shamrock:
  - What BI examples can we find?
  - Are there any non-BIII examples of the kettle or slop bowl?
  - Can we find an example with a different decoration way?
- Lily (High):
  - Are there any non-BII examples?

## Questions raised from this article Part 6

- Thistle
  - Can we find an example with a colour tint other than pink?
- Ivy
  - Can we find an example with a colour other than green or cob?
- Thorn
  - Any BIII examples?
  - Any examples of pieces that have no feet that we expect to have them?
  - We would love to find a No.1 or No.3 decoration way – do you have one?

*Does anybody have tea ware with a colour/decoration way not listed in these articles?*

## Patterns to be covered in Tea ware Part 7

Start of the Geometric/Abstract design motif group:

- Hexagon
- Erne
- Fan

**This article describes what we know TO DATE**, please if you have further information get in touch with Tony at [research@belleek.org.uk](mailto:research@belleek.org.uk), he would be very grateful to receive it.

***WE NEED YOUR COMMENTS & HELP – ANY FEEDBACK WOULD BE GREAT!***

...And a **very big thank you** to all of you whose pictures I have included.

**- Tony**



## Auction Report- some exceptional Items of Belleek

### IRISH BELLEEK BUNDORAN CHINA MILK JUG [SUGAR] UNUSUAL PIECE

VINTAGE BUNDORAN CHINA HAND MADE PIECE FROM DONEGAL IRELAND WITH ALL THE FAMOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BELLEEK PIECES THAT COMES FROM THE BEAUTIFUL FERMANAGH LAKELANDS OF IRELAND,

*Sold for ; Cream £ 23.00, Sugar £24.67*

*EBay seller inyanga85*

*Period N/A*



### Vintage Belleek Catalog Parian China Ireland 1937

The Illustrated Catalogue of Belleek Parian China Manufactured by Belleek Pottery, Ltd. Belleek, Co. Fermanagh, Ireland. 1937.

Softcover. 40 Pages. .. plus 4 pages of color photos ... Price list booklet is included in special pocket inside back cover. Covers lightly soiled/worn and foxed inside. Otherwise good, used condition.

*Sold for US\$24.67*

*EBay seller 17rainydays*

*Period Third*



### 1947 BELLEEK PARIAN CHINA CATALOG w/ PHOTOS

Original, 1947, Illustrated Belleek Parian China catalog. This 40 page issue starts on page 7 (it doesn't appear to be missing pages 3-4-5), and has B & W and some color photo/illustrations... over age, staining & writing, some page tears, corner holes for string, some spine splitting, no brittleness, price list pocket is empty

*Sold for US\$61*

*EBay seller boom.sold*

*Period Third Black*



### Belleek Trumpet Cream Coral Vase 2nd Period Black Mark

.. 5" tall by 8" wide by approximately 4" front to back. .. white with a faint yellow glaze .. so fine you can see light through it! .. a piece of porcelain has chipped off one of the small trumpets..a crack following down the small trumpet that is visible from the inside.

*Sold for US\$61*

*EBay seller boom.sold*

*Period Second Black*

**BELLEEK TRIDACNA TEA SET WITH TRAY. 3RD PERIOD. 1926/46**

Tridacna tea set by belleek carries the 3rd period back stamp....perfect condition.

*Sold for £375*

*EBay seller grimwade1*

*Period Third Black*



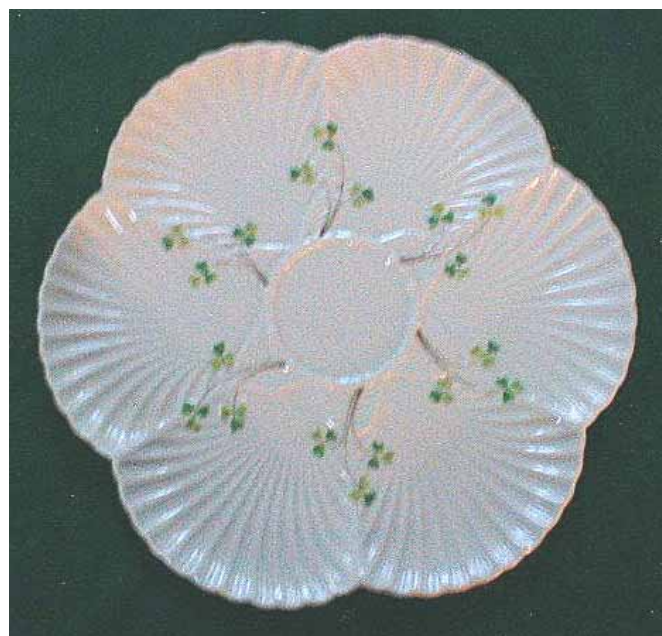
**Stunning Irish Belleek Tea Tray Harp Shamrock**

VERY RARE 2nd Black Mark Stamp, ....It is in perfect condition for its age, and the only concern I will mention is a small firing mark in the underside, at 1st look it looks like a crack, but closer inspection reveals, a dust or other imperfection during the firing process. (It's under the glaze)

*Sold for US\$1225*

*EBay seller alwaysaftermeluckycharms*

*Period Second Black*



**RARE BELLEEK TEAPOT CREAMER & SUGAR 2ND BLACK MARK**

... don't know the name of the pattern....All three pieces are pristine, perfect, no signs of use

*Sold for US\$810*

*EBay seller algonquin301*

*Period Second Black*



**Belleek Blue Shell Plate 5" 2nd Black Mark RARE**

... 1st Black mark but it is very worn and you can see only letters "ELLEEK" in the ribbon below part of the wolfhound/harp/tower. My mother has a matching plate bought from same estate and her mark is a clearly marked 2nd Black Mark. ..It is not as thin as most of the other black mark pieces I have collected over the years but is still a lovely and unusual piece of Belleek... excellent condition.

*Sold for US\$282.95*

*EBay seller zzzelloitd*

*Period Second Black*





**Very Rare Belleek 2nd Period hand painted cup & saucer**

... handpainted cup and saucer set .....Both pieces are in excellent condition with no chips cracks, crazing or repairs.

*Sold for £207.50*

*EBay seller weeshred*

*Period Second Black*



**Belleek Rare 2nd period Painted Creamer MINT**

...delightful Antique Belleek Painted Cream Jug with nicely painted coloured flowers 2nd black printed marks MINT CONDITION

*Sold for £114.95*

*EBay seller ardlongfield*

*Period Second Black*



**Belleek "Heart Shaped" Cup & Saucer**

Cup Has Yellow Luster Handle & Saucer Has Yellow Luster Heart Impression. Excellent condition, no chips or cracks. Has Brown Marking.

*Sold for US\$69.67*

*EBay seller squarebiz99*

*Period Brown*



**1865 Belleek Porcelain Teacup Saucer Cup Gaelic Private**

...rare Teacup and Saucer set that is very early. I believe it is some kind of early restaurant ware or used by a hotel because it has an unusual mark that shows an arm rising out of a crown clutching a dagger. ... has the first period black Belleek mark ... excellent condition

*Sold for US\$383*

*EBay seller bleeding\_gums*

*Period First Black.*



**RARE BLUE  
CELTIC  
DEMITASSE C&S -  
2ND BLK &  
MYSTERY MARK**

....pattern was put into production, on ring handle Belleek, during the third period and it is very rare to find pieces marked with a 2nd. black mark, which is what the cup is marked - even more unusual is to find a celtic piece with the "MYSTERY MARK" which the saucer is marked with..... background color BLUE is quite RARE,



*Sold for US\$127.50, EBay seller paleopink  
Period Second Black*

**Belleek Celtic Aran Candleholder - 3rd Mark (black)**

This Belleek Celtic Aran Candleholder is from the period 1926 - 1946, and carries the authentic 3rd (black) mark.

*Sold for Euro\$200*

*EBay seller spiritofbartman*

*Period Third Black*



**RARE IRISH  
BELLEEK BLACK  
MARK CELTIC TEA  
SET SUGAR DISH**

A lovely rare Irish Belleek Celtic pattern teaset covered sugar bowl. Condition Excellent.

*Sold for £252*

*EBay seller antiques-and-arts*

*Period Third Black*



**Belleek Footed Creamer with Rare Factory Mark  
Early**

Three inch tall footed creamer with Rare Black Mark produced for Feeney and Company Buenos Aires. Mark is a variant of Second Black Mark dating piece to 1891-1926.

*Sold for Euro\$200*

*EBay seller spiritofbartman*

*Period Third Black*





### Beautiful Belleek Rathmore Basket - Unpainted

...beautiful Belleek Rathmore basket that is unpainted and has a pearlized look. This basket has the most beautifully made flowers. It has "sugared" handles. This basket measures 11-1/2" long by 6-5/8" deep and has one strip on it that has Belleek Co. Fermanagh Ireland....[Faults]

*Sold for US\$2816, EBay seller zel1*



### Belleek Wall Pocket 1891-1926 2nd Blk Mark

...Early Belleek wall pocket. A pair of graceful swans are the focal point...about 8 5/8" tall and 5 1/2" across...second black mark....

Excellent condition.

*Sold for US\$2816*

*EBay seller zel1*

*Period Second Black*



### IRISH BELLEEK NEPTUNE SCENT BOTTLE - 2ND BLACK MARK

...Neptune Scent Bottle is quite scarce ... glaze work is outstanding being the typical lustrous Belleek finish with iridescent highlights. ..6 1/2" tall.

There are no chips, cracks, or any other damage

*Sold for US\$272.95, EBay seller jonlr*

*Period Second Black*

### RARE BELLEEK ROSE & BRIARS CARD HOLDER 2ND BLACK MARK

..free standing example of the classic rose and briars that belleek used..actually a placecard or menu holder.. 3" tall by 3" wide .. with the second black mark, dating ...condition is EXCELLENT, for it's age and fragility. There are a couple very light petal nicks.

*Sold for US\$760, EBay seller the\_unique\_booktique*

*Period Second Black*



### Belleek - rare 1st mark 'Strainer' (1863-1890)

rare Belleek earthenware strainer, 1st mark ..size is an impressive 270 mm x200mm ...condition is excellent

*Sold for £138, EBay seller ickle\_betty*

*Period First Black*

### **Belleek Crested China ENNISKILLEN 2nd Period**

..no cracks or restoration the colours are bright . There is a chip to the rim approx 1mm across which I think was possibly done in the manufacturing process as there is a build up of glaze along side it and a fleck of additional china under the glaze below the chip.

*Sold for US\$272.95*

*EBay seller crestedhawk*

*Period Second Black*



### **BELLEEK CRESTED JUG - BELFAST - ROBINSON & CLEAVER**

The Jug is approx 2 1/5 cm tall. Jug bears the Coat of Arms of Belfast and was made for Robinson & Cleaver who traded in Donegall Square Belfast from 1888 until the 1970's. There are no chips, cracks or crazing.

*Sold for £88*

*EBay seller olympic-seller*

*Period Second Black*



### **SUPERB RARE BELLEEK CRESTED CLUB VASE - ARMS OF BELFAST**

Club Vase with crest of Belfast named below the crest and, unusually, on the base as well.. ex factory condition .. one or two firing specks just below the crest.

*Sold for £82*

*EBay seller gossman2*

*Period Second Black*



### **Antique Belleek - crested ware 'Bundoran' 1890-1926**

rare Belleek crested ware vase 45mm high, 2nd black mark ...crested ship at sea and word 'Bindoran' must be 'Bundoran' mis spelling! ..fine condition

*Sold for £107*

*EBay seller ickle\_betty*

*Period Second Black*



### **Antique Belleek - crested ware 'Althone' 1890- 1926**

rare Belleek crested ware vase 70mm high, 2nd black mark...crested coat of arms for Althone..fine condition

*Sold for £97.01, EBay seller ickle\_betty*

*Period Second Black*



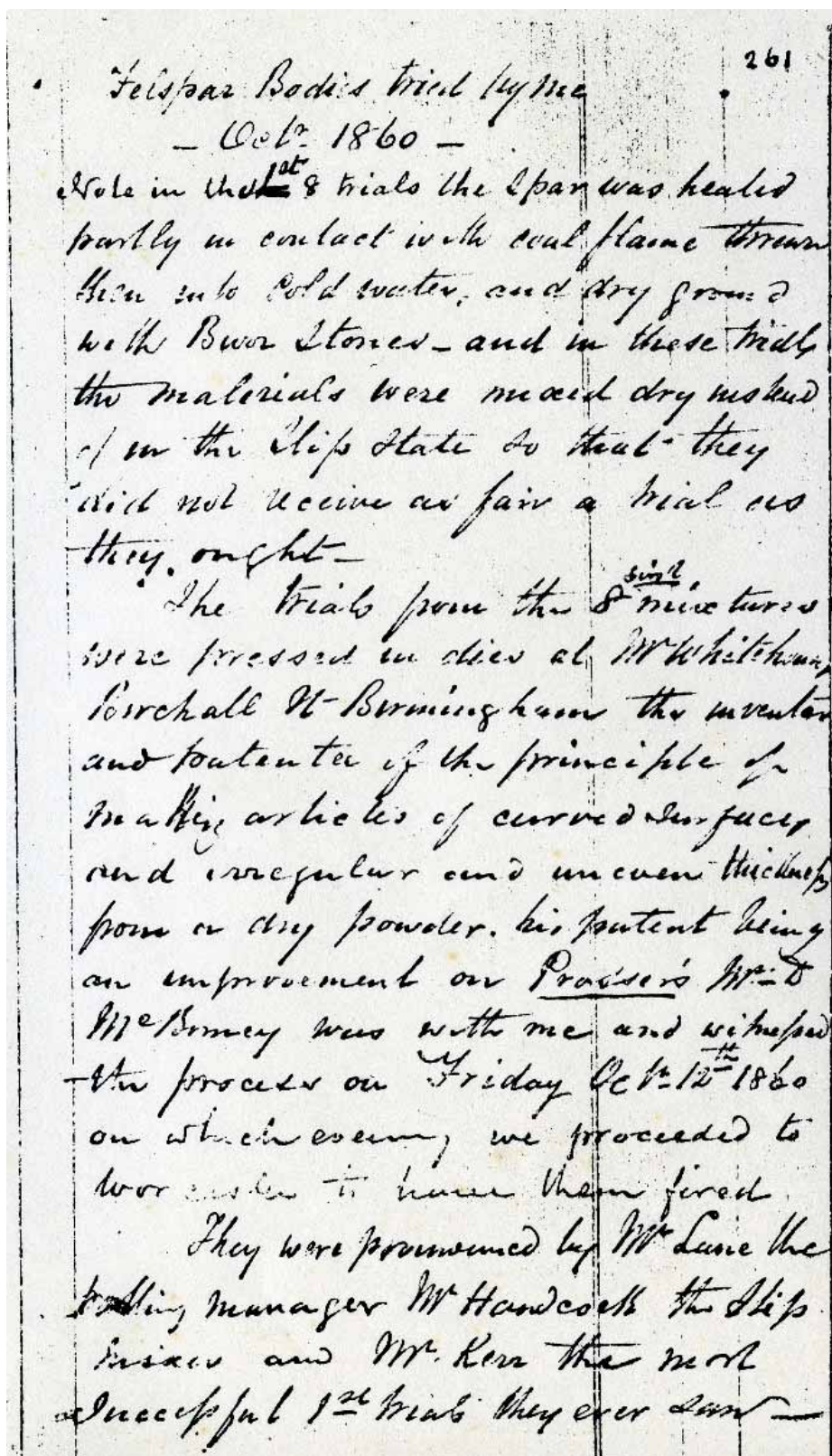
# The R.W. Armstrong Diaries

The manuscript on the right is a page from a journal written by Robert Williams Armstrong. This journal forms part of a collection of "diaries", believed to be eight in total, which were taken to Australia by one of Armstrong's descendants and were eventually given to the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, where they remain to this day. It is believed that the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin has a copy of these documents.

When he wrote his original book on Belleek, Richard Degenhardt obtained his own copies of the diaries from the Sydney museum. Then, working with his wife Margaret, meticulously went through each page, searching for information suitable for publication in the book. The Degenhardts actually found little of what they thought was suitable material for a book on collecting and although containing interesting snippets, the diaries were largely dismissed as being a "book of recipes" or a seemingly interminable list of the experiments that the determined and dedicated Armstrong carried out between 1860 and 1880 or thereabouts.

Richard Degenhardt, having finished his research, placed his copies of the diaries in the Pottery, where they have since been kept safely by Fergus Cleary.

Our Group member, Brian Russell has, over the past few years, enthusiastically researched everything he could find about Armstrong: from Armstrong's days as an architect in City Road, London, his family in Belleek to his descendants up to the present day. Brian has been tireless... so it is perhaps no surprise that when he turned his attention to finding Armstrong's diaries, first attempting unsuccessfully to obtain his own copies from the Powerhouse Museum, it was he who unearthed the copies still held at Belleek. Through Brian's efforts, we have now the opportunity to review this important primary source of information on the early days of Belleek Pottery. It is not certain that we have all of the diaries: we need to do more research on this as Fergus believes that we may only have four of the eight books which exist. Unfortunately, valiant attempts by Brian Russell and David Montgomery to elicit the help of the Powerhouse Museum have so far been unsuccessful – they are unwilling to allow their copies to be scanned or photographed



as the pages are now very fragile and in need of conservation. There is also the question of money: using the Museum to scan the documents would be prohibitively expensive, costing thousands of pounds!

We do however have the copies that Degenhardt made. We have now scanned all these pages into digital images which will be available to any interested Group members (when we have them organised). There are in total over one thousand pages. This is a lot of information and it took *weeks* to scan them into the computer. Armstrong's handwriting is sometimes no better than a scrawl, the originals were in some cases faded and damaged and they are scans of photocopies made in the 1970's that are in themselves imperfect and that have also deteriorated. The pages mostly contain lists of materials with complex chemical formulae and difficult names. The nomenclature and style of handwriting are (of course) from the mid-Victorian era.

So we now have as digital images over 1000 pages of sometimes almost indecipherable text! Most of it would only interest chemists or potters but it does also contain some wonderful information that has never before come to light about the history and ware of Belleek Pottery. **The point of this little article is to ask for volunteers to decipher and transcribe the material.** Some Group members have already expressed an interest, including (I think) Pat Tubb and Tina Traherne, who has a knowledge of "old style" handwriting: we would like to involve as many of us as possible (including overseas members). This project – to transcribe the journals – will be discussed at the next meeting if time allows.

As a taster for the project, I have had a go at deciphering the page shown here – it is one of the more interesting ones, dating as it does from October 1860. This is a time before Belleek Pottery was making Parian ware and what Armstrong has to say is highly illuminating on the progress he and the Pottery were making.

#### **Felspar Bodies trial by me**

- Octr. 1860 -

Note that in the 1<sup>st</sup> 8 trials the spar was heated partly in contact with the coal flame thrown then into cold water, and dry ground with xxxx stones and in these trials the materials were mixed dry instead of in the slip state so that they did not receive as fair a trial as they ought.

The trials from the 8 xxxx mixtures were pressed in dies at Mr. Whitehouse Xxxchall St. Birmingham the inventor and xxxx of the principle of making articles of curved xxxx faces and irregular and uneven thicknesses from a dry powder. His patent being an improvement on Prosser's. Mr. D McBirney was with me and witnessed the process on Friday Octr. 12<sup>th</sup> 1860 on which evening we proceeded to Worcester to have them fired.

They were pronounced by Mr. Lane the xxxx manager Mr. Handcock the slip Mixer and Mr. Kerr the most successful 1<sup>st</sup> trials they ever saw.

Here, in this single page, Armstrong jubilantly tells of his first trials for what he calls felspar (feldspar) bodies. It is clear that he did not at this time (October 1860) have the facilities to mould or press the mixture himself, nor did he have the facilities to fire the resulting samples. Armstrong uses a company in Birmingham to press the trial samples into dies (moulds) and then goes to Worcester, presumably by train, to the Royal Porcelain Works where the owner, Mr. W.H. Kerr himself, takes an interest in the results of the firing of the samples.

Armstrong has David McBirney with him on this trip. This makes it a very important trip as McBirney must have been keen to see how his money was being spent. Armstrong shows him the pressing process in Birmingham and then the firing of the trial items in Worcester. Armstrong seems happy with the result of the trip and maybe one of Armstrong's objectives would have been to show McBirney how he was progressing and to get his continued approval for the work. It appears important to Armstrong that Kerr and his expert craftsmen at the Worcester Royal Porcelain Works were impressed. It was possibly even more important that David McBirney in person saw that they were impressed, thus giving him confidence in Armstrong's experimental work so far and hope for great success in the future. At this stage in 1860, McBirney had already spent an enormous amount of his money on the Belleek Pottery and he had by then very little to show for his investment.

As you can see, I couldn't read all the handwriting! What I could read, I found very interesting – there are more than 1000 pages to go.... **help, please!**

- Chris Marvell



## *And Finally... ...A Beautiful Scent Bottle... but is it Belleek?*

In April, the following email was received at [research@belleek.org.uk](mailto:research@belleek.org.uk)...

*"In unpacking some of my mother's Belleek I have come across a very interesting perfume vial. It is unmarked and not found in any of the standard reference materials. Marion Langham does show a very similar piece on page 49 of her book. She identifies it as a scent bottle MI.006. I have attached a picture of my item. I would appreciate it very much if you could pass this on to anyone that might be able to shed some light on whether it is Belleek. Thanks so much for your help. Best Regards, Jon Rosenbaum, Irvine California."*

The following reply was sent:

*"Your scent bottle is a wonderful item, particularly as you have the stopper for it - it is a spectacular and I'm sure, valuable piece... the question (as you say) is: Is it Belleek?"*

*Having consulted our records and reference books, our findings so far are as follows:*

*Yes, Belleek certainly DID make these reticulated-centre hollow-rim scent bottles and we have seen one of them in the Enniskillen Castle Museum in Northern Ireland (well worth visiting this museum if you get the chance, they have an excellent display of Belleek). I'm sure their example is the same design as the one as in Marion's book. The one in the Museum is definitely Belleek and is complete with a fitted case, lined with green velvet embossed with a gold Belleek first period mark (not the more modern gold mark, you understand, it is most decidedly a first period piece!) [Illustrated on the next page]. This one is similar to yours but not the same. A major difference is that the Enniskillen one has a small gilded metal stopper which is clearly correct as it fits snugly in the case, whilst yours has a spectacular reticulated parian stopper.*



*Jon Rosenblum's superb Scent Bottle – but is it Belleek?*



*Worcester (Grainger and Royal Worcester) made very similar scent bottles (at about the same period that Belleek were making them). Royal Worcester made a "ring" scent bottle like this as a commemorative of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887: this has a gilded metal stopper in the shape of a crown."*

*The Royal Worcester Scent Bottle and its fitted velvet case (1887)*



### *The Royal Worcester Scent Bottle*

*"It is very difficult to say whether yours is Belleek or Worcester but as it is **not** the same design as the known Belleek pieces and is unmarked (although it would indeed have been very difficult to find a place on which to put the mark and all other known Belleek examples are also unmarked, the identification being the Belleek mark printed onto the bottle's fitted case). Our opinion (so far) is that it is most probably Graingers Worcester or possibly Royal Worcester, made in the 1870's. There was in the those days a fairly close association of Armstrong at Belleek Pottery with the Royal Porcelain Works at Worcester and there was definitely some crossover of designs between the two factories. It might be we get some more feedback on the item if we ask the question: Worcester or Belleek? in the Newsletter..."*

So here we are... we have a very nice item that looks as if it could, indeed *ought*, to be Belleek – but we don't know if it is. Does anyone reading this know better? Jon Rosenblum has asked the question and we have made an attempt at answering, but at the moment we are no closer to the true identity of the piece. Can you help? If so, get it touch by email at [research@belleek.org.uk](mailto:research@belleek.org.uk) and the information will be sent to Jon.

*The Belleek Scent Bottle as displayed at the Enniskillen Castle Museum in the 2007 Belleek 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibition. On loan from the Ulster Museum in Belfast.*

