

*UK Belleek Collectors' Group*

# *Newsletter*

*Number 30/3*

*October 2009*

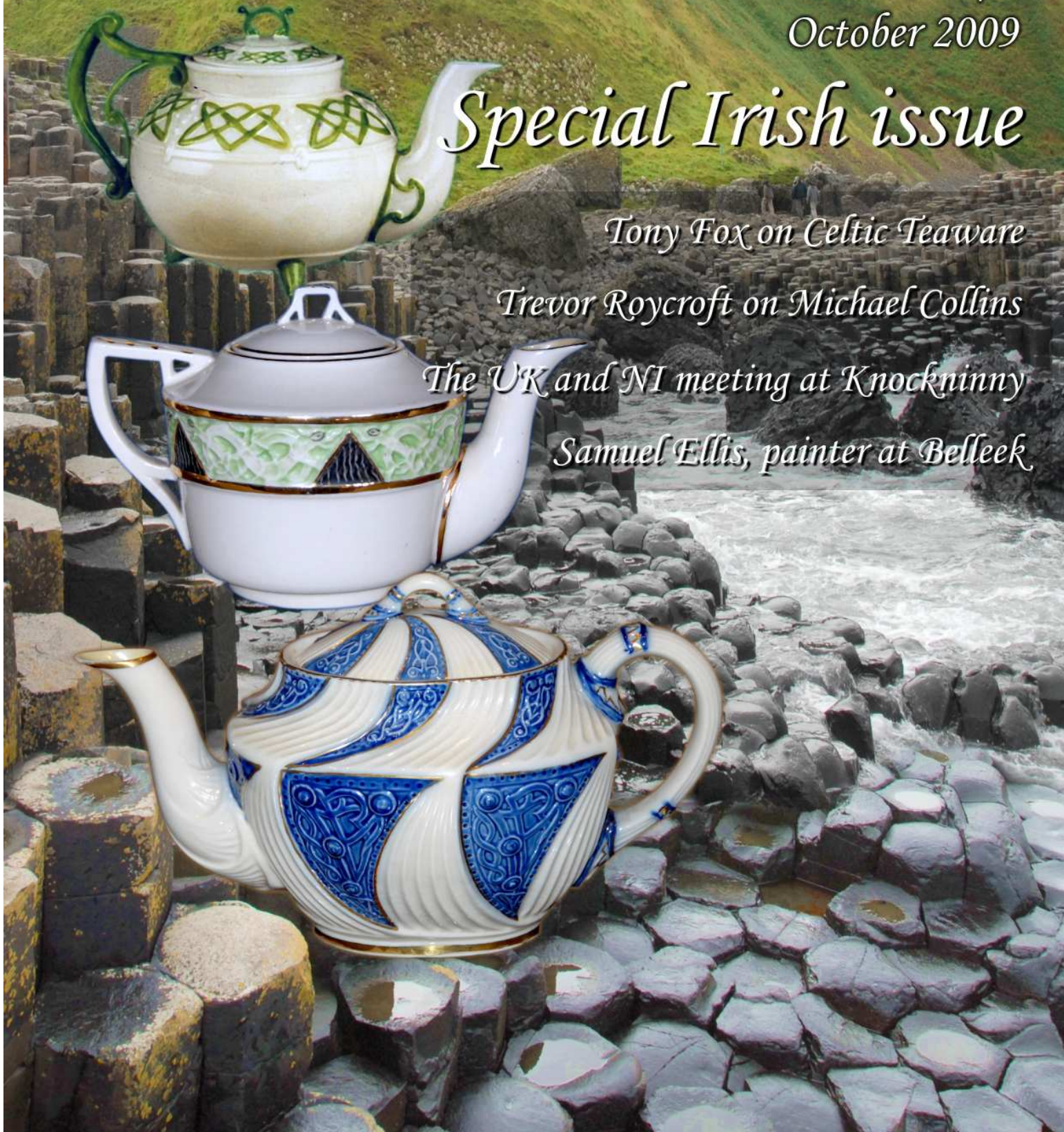
*Special Irish issue*

*Tony Fox on Celtic Teaware*

*Trevor Roycroft on Michael Collins*

*The UK and NI meeting at Knockninny*

*Samuel Ellis, painter at Belleek*





## 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 sending an 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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The position of Group Administrator is vacant at present so email to [administrator@belleek.org.uk](mailto:administrator@belleek.org.uk) will come through to Chris Marvell who will pass it on to the most appropriate person.

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

There is a separate email address to make contact with researchers within the group. This is [research@belleek.org.uk](mailto:research@belleek.org.uk). For information on the annual raffle or to buy tickets, contact **Linda Murphy** at [raffle@belleek.org.uk](mailto:raffle@belleek.org.uk).

## Credits

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## Forthcoming Events

17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2009	Autumn Meeting, Bristol, hosted by Maureen and Robin Wootton
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> December	Xmas Party – following the Bowman's Antique Fair at Bingley Halls at the Izaak Walton Inn, Cresswell, Staffordshire
13th and 14th Feb. 2010	New Zealand Belleek Collectors Group, Tauranga, North Island, NZ, hosted by Margaret and David Montgomery

## Newsletter Deadlines

**Spring 2010:** Deadline for articles and other material is 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

## Cover Picture. . . Three Belleek Celtic Teapots at Giant's Causeway!

All three teapots are rare – their decoration makes them even more unusual.  
A Celtic Pot teapot with green tracery, a Tall Celtic teapot in green blue and gilt,  
and an extraordinary oval shape Low Celtic teapot in dark blue.

*This publication is made on behalf of the UK Belleek Collectors' Group. It is dedicated to improving our knowledge and appreciation of Belleek, the Ware and the Pottery. It is not for profit and intended for the members of the Group and those with like interests. We try to acknowledge and obtain permission for any material or images used. If however you feel that material has been used which breaches your copyright and this causes you a problem, please get in touch with the editor at [editor@belleek.org.uk](mailto:editor@belleek.org.uk) and the item will be removed.*

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## *From the Editor...*

Following the excitement of the New Jersey Convention and our Group's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, you might think that we are "back to normal" for this issue of the Newsletter. Not a bit of it! This issue is devoted to the country of Ireland and some interesting Irish Issues. The reason for this? Well, it isn't Saint Patrick's day, but another Irish Saint, Saint Ninnidh (Ninnian) who spread the gospel in Ireland some hundred years after Patrick, features in one of our articles – this article being inspired by the UK Group's first ever foray to a meeting in Northern Ireland, at Knockninny on the shores of the beautiful Upper Lough Erne in County Fermanagh. This meeting was attended by members of our UK Group and members of the Northern Ireland Group and was held on September 12<sup>th</sup> at the historic and picturesque Knockninny Hotel. On the Sunday following the meeting, Patricia and Fergus had arranged to open up the collectors' room at the Pottery for us and this too was very entertaining and enjoyable. A full account of this meeting and the history of the Hotel is given in this issue of the Newsletter.

On a much more serious note, Trevor Roycroft, one of the Group's most avid researchers has sent us an enthralling account of how his father came to be caught up in one of the most important events in recent Irish history at a time of great trouble, upheaval and uncertainty. Trevor links his family's experiences in the town of Skibbereen, Co. Cork at the height of the violent troubles that in 1922 threatened to overwhelm Ireland following the treaty to create the Irish Free State and the partition of the country. Michael Collins was one of the pivotal figures in all this (on the Republican side) and in his article, Trevor relates his father's experiences and Collins' violent death leading to the production by Belleek Pottery of Michael Collins memorabilia. In the Ebay auction report in this Newsletter is another mug – this time commemorating the Unionist Sir Edward Carson - although this may not actually be Belleek as it is unmarked. It just goes to show the political tightrope walked by the Pottery at this time...

Staying firmly with the Irish theme, we come to arguably the most Irish of all Belleek teaware patterns. It is not just one design but at least four. These are all of course on a Celtic theme, but more specifically on the theme of the Book of Kells, the most important Irish manuscript from the middle ages, a remarkable illuminated and illustrated copy of the Gospels in the medieval Irish Celtic style. The four Belleek patterns were designed in the early 1920's, paradoxically by a Hungarian designer, at the height of the revival of interest in all things Celtic. The patterns are of course the Celtic decorated ring handle teaware, the "Celtic Low" with its bold swirls, the rare "Celtic Tall" and the even rarer "Celtic Pot" or 3-legged Celtic design. Starting in the second period, along with this teaware, a number of other Celtic designs were also made: pots, vases, a salad bowl and a fruit bowl, some of them strikingly decorated in black and gold. These Celtic designs are really the first completely new range of designs that the Pottery made since the days of Fred Slater and the 1900 Paris Exhibition. The Pottery had gone through hard times during the First World War and had been reborn as "Belleek Pottery Limited" in 1920. The new Celtic designs are amongst the most original that the Pottery ever made and marked a new direction from their traditional naturalistically shaped pieces. That the designs reflected the company's Irish heritage made them even more significant and appropriate. Tony Fox's very full article on all aspects of this Celtic teaware follows in the Newsletter.

Paul Tubb continues his investigations into the lives of the workers at Belleek Pottery. This time he considers Samuel Ellis, a painter of considerable talent, apparently recommended by David McBirney himself!

Now an apology – all the excitement in Ireland has caused me to be delayed in producing a version of Armstrong's diary: we are still missing a few little bits in the transcriptions and I hope to discuss this with those interested at the next meeting. The ETA of the "full" version is now probably more likely to be early next year.

Finally, I don't think I can let this issue (which involves the village of Belleek itself) pass without mentioning what is a highly creditable and indeed absolutely breathtaking achievement. This is the new window (or windows) at the Church of Ireland church in Belleek. I had heard a lot about the window and it has featured in the previous two Newsletters. We all walked up the hill at Belleek, entered the Church and were stunned by the beauty, design and artistry of the new window. It is appropriate, wonderfully executed and truly magical – a tour de force worthy of the greatest achievements of Belleek Pottery – go and see it if you can!

*- Chris Marvell*



## *Richard Kennedy Degenhardt Belleek Collectors' Scholarships*

Ceramic artist Helen Moore and Celtic scholar Sarah McMonagle are this year's winners of the Richard K. Degenhardt Belleek Collectors' Scholarships. The presentation was made on 6<sup>th</sup> May at the University of Ulster.



*Dr Linda Beard, Helen Moore, Sarah McMonagle and Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Barnett*

The international scholarships of one year's duration awarded annually to outstanding Ceramic and Celtic Studies students from the University of Ulster. The awards were established to enhance students' opportunities for personal as well as educational development.

Dr Linda Beard, Founder and Chair of the Richard K. Degenhardt Endowment, presented the awards of £600 each to the winning students at a special ceremony at Ulster's Belfast campus this week.

"No one could have imagined just a few years ago that our students could travel to such far flung places and do such groundbreaking work. One of the scholars told me that winning this award had changed her entire life - Richard Degenhardt would have been thrilled with that accolade," said Dr Beard. We have now presented these awards for the past eight years, with 19 recipients in total. This is a wonderful living memorial to my friend and unique individual, Richard Degenhardt."

Helen Moore, from Newcastle County Down, is a final year undergraduate student studying for a BA Fine and Applied Arts. She will use her award to visit the International Ceramic Research Centre at Guldagergaard, Denmark, where she will attend a throwing workshop with Takeshi Yasuda, a former Professor of Applied Art at Ulster and current Director of the Experimental Porcelain Factory at Jingdezhen in China. Helen will also visit the National Gallery and the National Museum in Copenhagen and will visit Stockholm to view an exhibition by Swedish ceramic artist, Eva Hild.

Sarah McMonagle, from Cavan, is currently working on a PhD thesis which examines the Irish Language in Post-Agreement Northern Ireland and looks at multiculturalism, multilingualism and language endangerment. She has also worked as a research assistant in the development of a Languages Strategy for Northern Ireland, commissioned by the Department of Education. She will use her award to travel to the United States to attend the 29th Celtic Colloquium at Harvard University. This will give her the opportunity to introduce her work to Irish and Celtic scholars in North America, to gain first hand information from scholars working directly within the field and to make connections which will be of significance for her future academic career.

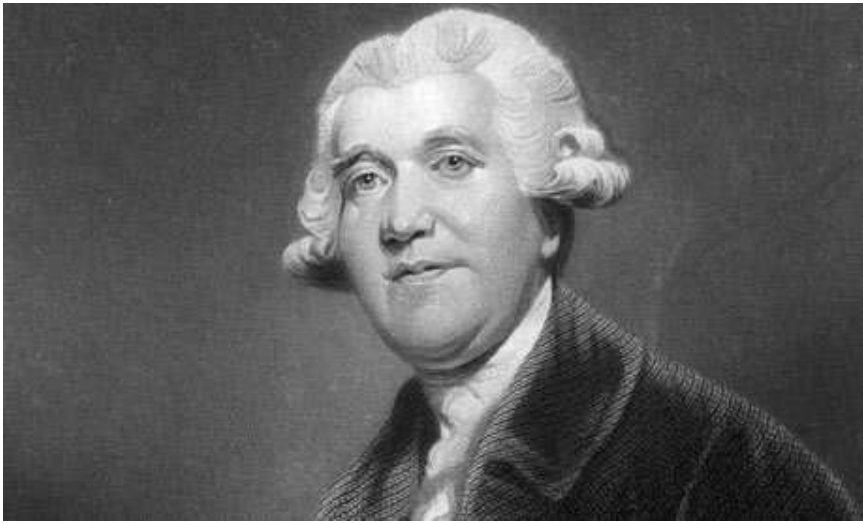
Established in May 2001, the Richard Kennedy Degenhardt Belleek Collectors' Scholarship Endowment Fund has provided 19 outstanding University of Ulster students with the opportunity to expand their knowledge and undertake research they would not otherwise have been able to carry out.

The scholarships are funded through the generosity of many individuals and groups, including Belleek collectors world-wide, international Belleek Chapters, special friends and family of Richard K. Degenhardt, the Belleek Pottery and the Belleek Collectors' International Society.

The awards are named in memory of the late Richard Kennedy Degenhardt who was instrumental in establishing the Belleek Collectors' International Society. The scholarships are a tribute to his definitive knowledge of Belleek Pottery, which remains renowned among collectors world-wide today.

Courtesy of the University of Ulster. [www.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.ulster.ac.uk)

## Waterford Wedgwood: 250 years of history



*Josiah Wedgwood. Source: Hulton Archive/Getty Images*

Wedgwood traces its origins to England in 1759 while Waterford started in Ireland in 1783. The two companies, which are among the world's leading brands of fine crystal and china, merged in 1986. In 1998 the business acquired a controlling stake in German china maker Rosenthal. Headquartered in Dublin, Ireland, Waterford Wedgwood is represented in more than 80 countries and employs around 9,000 people around the world.

Wedgwood was founded in 1759 by Josiah Wedgwood, who is now remembered as the "Father of English Potters". He was the youngest of 12 children born in Burslem, Staffordshire, in the heart of the English potteries and serviced his apprenticeship as a potter before setting up his own business. After he manufactured a cream-coloured tea and coffee service for Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, she allowed him to style himself "Potter to Her Majesty" and to call his new cream ware Queen's Ware. Josiah also created Black Basalt, a fine black porcelain, which enabled him to produce copies of the newly excavated Etruscan pottery from Italy. His invention of a new stoneware called Jasper has been described as the most important development in the history of ceramics since the Chinese discovery of porcelain nearly 1,000 years earlier. He employed many notable artists including George Stubbs to design bas-reliefs, often imitating classical Greek motifs.

In 1766 he built a new factory in Staffordshire which he called Etruria, as well as a Georgian mansion, Etruria Hall, for his family. The opening of Etruria on 13 June 1769 was celebrated with the throwing of six so-called First Day's Vases. His business partner Thomas Bentley, a Liverpool merchant who sold Wedgwood ceramics, turned the potter's wheel. In 1774 they supplied a 944-piece dinner service, which became known as the frog service because of its green frog emblem, to Empress Catherine II of Russia.

The 19th century saw the introduction of the first coloured earthenware and the manufacture of bone china. Wedgwood provided a bone china dinner service ordered by US President Theodore Roosevelt for the White House. During the 1930s, the fifth Josiah Wedgwood decided to build a new, modern factory at Barlaston in Stoke-on-Trent. Production started in the 1940s and has continued at the site ever since.

The Waterford company was established in 1783 in the Irish port of Waterford by two brothers, William and George Penrose, who were developers and among the city's main exporters. Their vision was to "create the finest quality crystal for drinking vessels and objects of beauty for the home". They employed 50 to 70 people, led by a fellow Quaker, John Hill from Stourbridge in England. The crystal was delivered to Spain, the West Indies, New York, New England and Newfoundland. But the company failed due to a lack of capital and excessive taxation. In 1947, the business was revived when a small glass factory was set up in Waterford not far from the site of the original.

Each piece produced by the company can be recognised by the "Waterford" signature on its base. The Lismore pattern has been the biggest selling pattern of crystal in the world since its introduction in 1952, according to the company.

*(The above article courtesy of The Guardian)*

2009 marks the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wedgwood's foundation and although celebrations have been muted by the recent administration and sale of the Company, special events have been organised in the USA and the UK as well as Wedgwood producing items of commemorative ware. Details follow on the next page. In addition exhibitions and events are planned at the Potteries Museum in Hanley.

[www.stoke.gov.uk/.../museums/potteries-museum---art-gallery](http://www.stoke.gov.uk/.../museums/potteries-museum---art-gallery)



# Wedgwood Exhibition in Washington D.C.

**The Wedgwood-250 Exhibition Committee**  
presents

## Wedgwood

**250 Years of Innovation and Artistry**

a major exhibition celebrating the 250th Anniversary of  
Wedgwood  
1759-2009

**3 October 2009 - 27 February 2010**

**At the Daughters of the American Revolution Museum**

**1776 D Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006**

For hours and details, call (001) 202.628.1776 or visit [www.DAR.org](http://www.DAR.org)



## Wedgwood Special Commemorative Ware



To celebrate its 250th anniversary, Wedgwood has produced a special commemorative range, in addition to the new tableware and gift launches.

A small capsule collection of desirable items at accessible price points, provide the 'fun' element to this prestigious occasion. All items are inspired by the four key platforms synonymous with the brand: iconic imagery, heritage, Englishness and of course blue!



Fine bone china mugs have been created to celebrate three important occasions – the great innovation of Jasper, which has become synonymous with Wedgwood the world over; the Wedgwood cameo in a variety of guises and finally the 250th Wedgwood timeline depicted via the Wedgwood backstamp, which is not solely a label of recognition but also the ultimate mark of quality and design.

Inspired by a quirky figurative piece from the Wedgwood Museum Archive, the Crowns in two colour-ways can be used as witty tea light holders or trinket boxes as well as a symbol recognising Wedgwood's longstanding connection with Royalty. Available in the brand colours of blue and white or the more 'bling' version in blue and gold, these crowns are a great gift to give or commemorative piece to save.



And finally a range inspired by the past Wedgwood designs of two great British Illustrators, Professor Richard Guyatt and Eric Ravilious. A trio of Queen's Ware gift items, featuring quintessential English sayings including 'Just my cup of tea' and 'For Queen and Country' decorating a large mug and two different sized ceramic trays. The result is a nostalgic, classic and collectable range.

Contact Details: Jo Riley, Wedgwood. Telephone: +44(0)1782 282207



## *The Summer AGM in Coventry*

As is now becoming almost a custom, this year's AGM and summer meeting was held at in the environs of Coventry. On the Saturday morning and afternoon, we visited the Tubb household for refreshment and re-aquaintance with their interesting and varied Belleek collection... and in the evening we dined at the Greyhound pub – again a favourite haunt of the Belleekers! Here is the story of the day in pictures.

### *Saturday afternoon with the Tubbs...*



*...and the evening at the Greyhound...*

*... Georgina has canine friends in every location!*



*...unusual commemorative harps...*

*...another beautiful English summer's day (quite amazing!)... the evening sun is still shining as we arrive at the canal-side pub.*





*A jovial evening – a lot of chat and quite a bit of liquid refreshment!*



*Finally, time to go home – an attempt at a group photo as we left...*

*..and my attempt at an artistic photo – the cast iron canal bridge and its reflection...*



*The Summer Meeting (Sunday) began with the Silent Auction...*



*...there then followed a talk by Chris Marvell on "The Birth of Belleek" – this was the talk which Chris had previously given at the New Jersey Convention – it covered the history of the early years of the Pottery... the content of this talk will be presented in an article in a forthcoming Newsletter.*



*This was followed by a traditional Sunday lunch. The venue at Weston hall is excellent in that the meeting, lunch, Silent Auction, talks and refreshments are all in the same room.*







*Following dinner, the meeting continued – Eddie made the unexpected announcement that the name of the UK Collectors' Group had been sent to the Moon – and he had the certificate to prove it (from NASA) (above) - The AGM then took place: minutes of the meeting have already been distributed to Group members. Following this, the presentations were made – here Eddie is thanking Paul and Pat, Bev and Chris, Myra and Simon (in the pictures anticlockwise)*





*At this was a special meeting for the Group's twentieth anniversary, we finished with a celebration of this:*



*A cake (of course!) to celebrate the 20 years... Joanna and Bev reminisce... the traditional Group Photo on the lawns at the Weston Hall Hotel... Jan, as the Group's founding Chairman, cuts the cake... and finally five of the Group's founder members: David missed the inaugural meeting in 1989 due to transport problems, but Bev, Jan, Julia and Chris were all there.*





## *'You did say 50 boxes???'*

*By Simon and Melanie Whitlock*

For our summer holiday this year we chose a short break in Scotland and then over to Fermanagh for two weeks based in and around Belleek. As we had taken Caragh in 2004 to Tobermory to see where BBC children's TV 'Balamory' is based, it was Elinor's turn this year. We chose the worst day of the summer to travel northwards with torrential rain from Devon to Birmingham. Our journey to Scotland was broken with an overnight stay at Stoke where we met up with Eddie and Linda Murphy for dinner and to view their ever expanding collection. We had a great time in Scotland with more settled weather at last. We called in to some of Scotland's antique shops en route before returning to our base outside Glasgow. The journey to Oban is very scenic but twisty and windy too. Oban is always a welcome sight after some two hours of driving. When finally docked at Craignure on the Isle of Mull you know the trip has been worthwhile. The scenery is stunning. Tobermory is also a gem tucked away at the top of the island. Elinor enjoyed her look around as we did too. Tobermory is so peaceful and the views from the top of the village are great.

Soon we were heading down from Glasgow to Cairnryan for our ferry. Arriving at the port, we were told our ferry was some 5 hours behind schedule due to no sailings the day before as it was too windy. No choice but to sit it out patiently. Some other drivers, not so patiently. We arrived at Belleek at 12.30 in the morning to a welcoming log type fire in our 'home' for the next two weeks. Mel's sister Ann and mum came over too joining us at the ferry and then driving in convoy across Ireland. We were extremely tired but not totally exhausted for Ann to spot a dresser full of Belleek and Melvin Ware (**Right**) in our holiday home!

We had a great few days touring. We noticed such a difference in the euro/sterling rate. Everything was so expensive in the euro zone especially petrol. Enniskillen has become a magnet with so many people travelling from around Donegal and Sligo for their shopping and holidays. When we saw Fergus Cleary at the pottery he mentioned that quite often they head to Omagh for their shopping as it's easier to get in and out of. As usual on our travels, we called in at Antiques shops wherever we could. As we had only arrived a couple of days previously, we asked in one location whether they may get any more pieces in during the next two weeks. Yes, was the reply, they had some and it was earthenware. We chatted a bit more and I think my jaw bounced off the floor when the magnitude of pieces available was revealed. 50 boxes full!! This was a major collection which was available for sale. We called back a day or two later and had a look at some mugs and bowls from the collection. There was so much that we made an appointment to visit again. We found platters in all sizes, comports, servers, ladles, pie dishes, candle holders, mugs, bowls, plates and so much more including a Shamrock parian tray set all third period.





We thought these images accompanying our little story would show far more than written words can...



*...Yes, the pictures show that this is certainly a fabulous hoard of Belleek Earthenware*

*-Editor*





In between trips to look at Earthenware, Caragh and Elinor enjoyed seeing their second cousins again and we visited Yeat's Grave, Sligo, The Giants Causeway, Florence Court and many other wonderful places. Florence Court held a 'theme weekend' and we all tried our hand at archery (*Melanie is pictured here in action*). Caragh was asked if she would like to join the local 'Marble Archers' as she was very good. In the house, we were met by a guide who talked 'in character' as though we had visited in the mid 1930's when there had been some interesting scandalous family events. Mel spotted a Belleek Triple Flower Holder, second period in the upstairs hall area. Checking when home, Marion Langham showed this vase on page 93 of her 'Flower Holders' book as being 'another piece that has yet to be found'. It is also illustrated in the Armstrong Album compiled by Fergus Cleary. We could not take a photo due to the National Trust's blanket ban on photography indoors.



We also looked in to the Belleek pottery and went on one of the tours. The pottery was on short time when we were there so not too many workers but good to see Brendan McCauley in the mould area. Interesting to hear that some of the Belleek Living is being produced at the pottery and that John Doogan is back producing limited edition baskets. (John now owns 'Doogies Bar' in Derrygonnelly so shares his time between the two ventures and yes, he does pull an excellent pint of Guinness. Mel enjoyed her Baileys too...cheers John)

We really enjoyed staying at our holiday home near Belleek, it was really comfortable and a home from home including a spa bath which Caragh and Elinor loved. It was hard to leave as we had a great time there. On our last day we chatted to the owners about their Belleek and Melvin Ware which we could not believe was being displayed in a holiday home. To them it was day to day earthenware. We were told the Thorn bowls were used to mix soda bread in, all those years ago by her mother.



All too soon, it was time to come home. Although the weather was a bit patchy, we had such a great time over in Ireland. The girls had a great time too. We can thoroughly recommend a trip over to Ireland at the moment. Superb scenery, great food, excellent accommodation and amazing retail therapy if you love Belleek earthenware!! If any UK Collectors would like details of where we stayed or the shop with Belleek earthenware, please email us <[webmaster@belleek.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@belleek.org.uk)>.



*Even more earthenware from the "hoard" – the rare spongeware platter is more than 20 inches across*



# *The Knockninny Meeting*

## *The first Joint Meeting of the UK & NI Groups!*

**Firstly this from Eileen and Bernard Burgham...**

On our recent visit to Northern Ireland for the combined meeting we spent a few days in County Down, staying in Newcastle where the 'Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea'. While in the area we went to Delamont Country Park on the edge of Strangford Lough and to our surprise the Vikings had landed. Moored in the lough were two Viking long boats. We later found out it was not an invasion but a Viking festival held annually at the end of September. With Viking boat races and battle scenes to commemorate the invasion and eventual defeat of Magnus barelegs in 1103. As for the meeting at Fermanagh we had a great time and a relaxing weekend based at Belleek!



**Meanwhile, Bev and Chris Marvell were engaged on a totally different mission...**



Is this some sort of decontamination? ...Or a new fashion trend?

...No, the plaster moulds in the background give it away: this is at the Pottery, in the old mould room where Bev and Chris, with the kind permission of Fergus Cleary, have set out to record images of all the old copper printing plates that the Pottery had accumulated over its 150 year history. The size of this task was a bit of a surprise and we now have more than 3000 photos of the plates from large ones like the one Chris is holding to very tiny ones used for crests and monograms: the protective clothing is necessary because of all the plaster dust which gets everywhere! When we have sorted out the pictures we will report further...

After all this activity, we made our way to the meeting at Knockninny on the Saturday...



## Day 1 of the Meeting – Sat. 12<sup>th</sup> September at Knockninny



*Some of the UK and NI members at the meeting ... and the vital Knockninny plate, very kindly brought along by Olga Clarke – Chris gave a talk on the history of the plate (see later)... Bev gave us a quiz on Belleek items... and a Belleek Easter egg!*







*The present owner of the hotel (left) gave us some more information on its history and the notorious Mr Porter who had it built.*

*Paddy and Tracy had arranged a cake – complete with a Knockninny Hotel plate in icing sugar!*



*Roy in action... Tracy with Celtic Mug – a present for organising the meeting - (not Belleek!) ...and doing her important cake-cutting duty... ...Eddie giving the prize to Olga for winning the quiz... ...and Chris and Bev getting well deserved Irish whisky!*







The Saturday morning had started with everything shrouded in gentle mist but as the day progressed, brilliant sun took over. We had a most enjoyable and good natured get-together at the historic hotel.

*Here we have the Hotel, photographed from the quayside, the Saint Ninnian's Well, about which more later and finally a group photo.*

Paddy, who had done so much work to arrange the meeting along with Tracy, was suffering that morning with a chest infection so he ended up missing most of the meeting – fortunately he had recovered sufficiently to take part in the events at the Pottery and the Carlton Hotel in Belleek the next day.

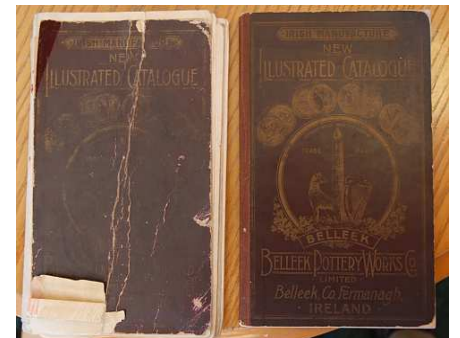
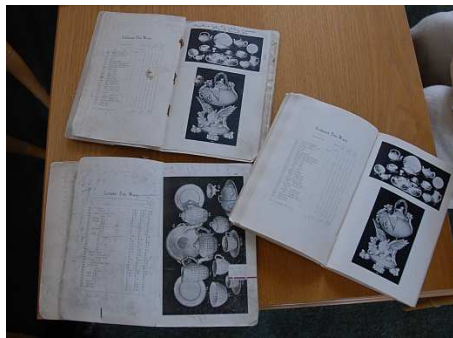




## Day 2 – Sun. 13th September at Belleek Pottery



*For Bob and Myra (above left), this was their first ever trip to the Pottery – they certainly chose a nice day to do it! It was lovely to see June Sweeny (above middle) at the meeting and for a lot of us it was an opportunity to have a good chat with Fergus (above right).*



*Above left, with Patricia in the Collectors' Room.. Above: not one, but two original copies of the rare 1904 Catalogue! And on the left some highly unusual shamrock pieces in the Collectors' Room.*





*An absolutely superb carvery lunch at the Carlton Hotel...*



*...and afterwards, a stroll up the main street of Belleek to the wonderful little Church of Ireland church to see memorials to Armstrong, Henshall and others... and of course to see the new Belleek Pottery stained glass windows... (see the back page of the Newsletter)*



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

*by Chris Marvell*

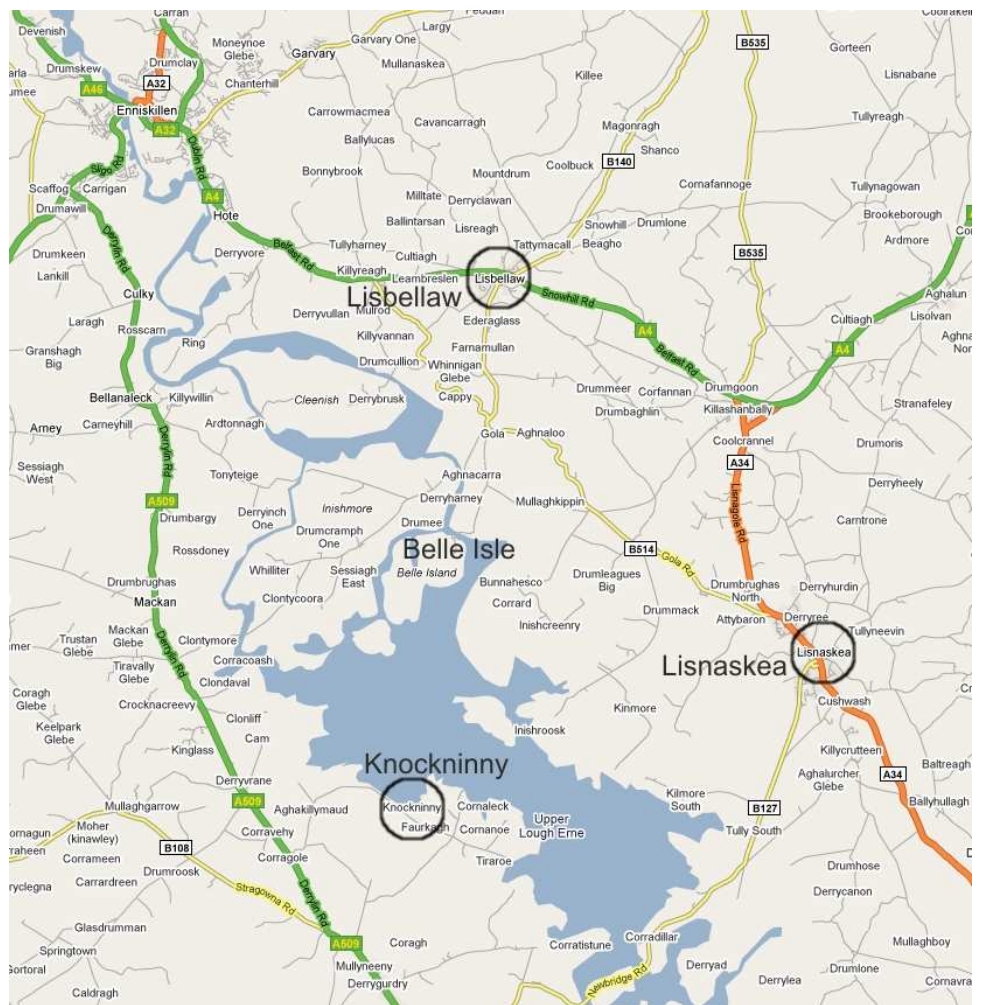
This Story starts, in a fairly mundane way with the purchase of a first period Belleek earthenware plate on Ebay. It was an interesting plate - I had never seen anything quite like it. Several examples of the plate have now turned up, so it is by no means unique but still unusual and rare. The plate has enigmatic sayings (four of them) printed round the plate which seemed to mark it out as a somewhat eccentric item! The story behind the plate is however even more eccentric than the plate itself, being related to the life of a very interesting and colourful character – a Mr. John Grey Vesey Porter.

## *The Porter Family*

The Porters were a clerical family originally from England. John Porter was Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University before the family left England for Ireland in 1795. He was made Bishop of Clogher in 1797. His son was John Grey Porter who also followed a career in the Church.

The Belle Isle estate had been owned by Sir Ralph Gore, created Earl of Ross in 1772. The Estate was left to his only surviving child, Mary Gore on his death in 1801. She married Richard Hardinge and their son, Charles Hardinge inherited the Estate in 1828 – he lived in England and apparently had no interest in the Estate so put it up for sale.

So in 1830, Reverend John Grey Porter bought the huge (11,000 acre) Belle Isle estate for £68,000 from this Charles Hardinge.



Later in the 1830s, the Rev. John Grey Porter, when the Church amalgamated the dioceses of Clogher and Armagh, bought the vacant Bishop's palace (Clogher Park) and made further extensive purchases of land, in both Counties Fermanagh and Longford, this time from the 2nd Earl of Belmore.

The additional Fermanagh lands alone had a rental income of £1,869 a year and cost him £75,000. The combined rental of all his estates (Belleisle included) was around £6,750 a year in the mid 1830's - a staggering scale of acquisition. The lands in Fermanagh stretched from Lisbellaw to Lisnaskea to the north east of the Upper Lough and also included a large part of Knockninny and its surrounding area to the west.

So the Porter family were of considerable means and among the largest landowners in County Fermanagh.



### ***Portion of the Porter Family Tree:***

Professor John Porter, Bishop of Clogher (d. 1819)

|

Reverend John Grey Porter (d. 1881)

|

John Grey Vesey Porter (1816-1903)

In 1816, the Reverend John Grey Porter had a son. By his will, made in 1869, he left Belleisle, Clogher Park and effectively all his landed property to this son and heir: John Grey Vesey Porter.



***And the hero of this story, the man responsible for the construction of the Knockninny Hotel and the pioneer of tourism on Lough Erne is this Mr. John Grey Vesey Porter.***

**JOHN GREY VESEY PORTER** was by all accounts not a well liked man, but in working for his own gain, he also ultimately brought numerous benefits to the local community. His marriage was childless and would seem, unhappy, partly due to the age gap between him and his wife, but also we can assume to do with JGVP's "contankerousness".

The 4th Earl of Belmore, in what was quite an understatement, wrote of Porter: "He is a very peculiar man indeed, and not easy to work with ..."

***A Bust of John Grey Vesey Porter***

John Grey Vesey Porter endeavoured to benefit the estate indirectly by becoming in 1854, one of the original shareholders of the Dundalk and Enniskillen Railway Company which obtained by Act of Parliament the authority not only to make the main line from Dundalk to Enniskillen, but also to make branch lines, among other places, to Lisbellaw (the nearest town to Belle Isle). The 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Erne who owned most of the town of Lisnaskea and who was Chairman of the Company, decided to change the branch line to go to Lisnaskea instead of Lisbellaw.

Porter opposed the change by a petition to Parliament and when this didn't work published a "malignant production" accusing Lord Erne of using his position in the Company to promote the prosperity of his own estate. Not surprisingly, Lord Erne didn't take this lying down and responded by bringing a libel action against Porter. This was heard in Dublin and after the hearing which took two days (12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 1859) the plaintiff, the Earl of Erne won the case but was only awarded damages of £300 as opposed to the £2000 he had claimed.

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



## *A Painting of John Grey Vesey Porter*

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

Among Porter's interests were local Newspapers. In 1879, Porter founded both the Lisbellaw Gazette and the Co. Fermanagh Advertiser. He used these as a vehicle for expressing his own opinions. In the Lisbellaw Gazette, he expressed sympathy for the improvement of conditions for tenant farmers and advocated the reestablishment of an Irish parliament but with loyalty to the British Crown. He was also caustically critical of the Orange Order, some landlords and prominent local people.



**REPRESENTATION OF THE BOROUGH OF ENNISKILLEN.**  
(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)  
Enniskillen, Saturday Evening.  
As already mentioned in the *Irish Times* the meeting which was adjourned from Monday week was announced to be held in the Court House to-day, and accordingly a good many voters assembled at one o'clock to give **J. G. V. Porter, Esq.**, of Bellisle, a hearing.  
Amongst those present I noticed, Captain A. Elliott, William Carson, James Hamilton, *Enniskillen Advertiser*, Jeremiah Jordan, William Cockey, William Armstrong, R. A. Wilson, A. Cassidy, John Bannon, John Maguire, S. Johnston, J. Martin, Solicitor, R. Christian, William Anderson, P. Hall, T. McMullen, M. Fox, &c. &c.  
At a quarter past one a little impatience was displayed, and a messenger was despatched to request **Mr. Porter** to come and address the meeting he had convened.  
Mr. Trimble came into court and said he had just been speaking with **Mr. Porter**, and on account of the resignation of **Mr. Collum** **Mr. Porter** would not attend the meeting.  
This statement was met with hisses, and groans, and cries of "that's a lie" "Mr. Collum has not resigned," "**Porter** is afraid to come forward"  
Mr **Porter's** object in calling that meeting was to belch forth the hatred which he has so often displayed against the Archdalls and John Collum, Esq."

Porter was active in politics, although again only in an effort to further his own interests. He was involved in many disputes and amongst others had a long running feud with the powerful local family the Archdalls. This report in the *Irish Times* of an abortive meeting in the Enniskillen Court House illustrates the general feeling against Porter engendered by his provocative behaviour.

In this report of 19<sup>th</sup> October 1868 (*left*), he fails to turn up at a meeting that he has himself convened. The actual issue that was at stake had apparently been lost in the confusion and general dissatisfaction expressed by those at the meeting.

The Enniskillen correspondent of the *Irish Times* says outright that:

*"Mr Porter's object in calling that meeting was to belch forth the hatred which he has so often displayed against the Archdalls and John Collum Esq."*

Porter may have been active but he was spectacularly unsuccessful in politics: he stood as an Independent candidate in the 1874 General Election and was defeated. In 1880 he tried again only to be beaten into third place by his rival William Archdall and Viscount Crichton, son of his old adversary the Earl of Erne.



Porter's enterprises which most interest us here are those involving the steamboats on Lough Erne and his other efforts to encourage tourism. If it were not for the steamboats, there would not have been a hotel at Knockninny!

As early as 1860, discussions had started on the possibility of steam navigation on Lough Erne, to connect Belleek, and Belturbet to Enniskillen and hence the existing railways. Porter was present at these discussions from these early stages. Here (*right*) is a report from the Irish Times of 6<sup>th</sup> December 1860.

In 1862, the "Lough Erne Steamboat Company (Limited)" was formed with Lord Erne as chairman and JGV Porter along with his father Rev. John Porter and William Archdall as the major shareholders. It is perhaps a surprise that Porter and Lord Erne were again together in the same Company given the acrimonious libel case of 1859 but in spite of this, the steamer "**Devenish**" eventually provided a daily service between Enniskillen and Belleek on the Lower Lough.

Described as the biggest and the best of the Lough Erne boats, the **Devenish** was launched on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July 1862. She had been built in sections, by Henderson Colbourne of Renfrew, Scotland at a cost of £3,700. The sections were brought to the Market yard, Enniskillen where the Scottish riveters assembled them. She was 131 feet long with a beam of 16 feet; powerful twin steam engines drove her two big paddle wheels. She could carry almost 1,000 passengers and for a large vessel she had a very shallow draft of two feet, two inches. She could do the trip from Enniskillen to Belleek in two and a half hours including two stops on the way.

She plied successfully on the Lough Erne for six years, but the development of the railways effectively heralded the end of commercial shipping on the lake. The **Devenish** was sold in 1869 to John Brown & Company of Bangor, Co. Down and ended up in West Africa as a riverboat.

When the Enniskillen and Bundoran Railway opened for traffic in 1867 the original Lough Erne Steamboat Company was faced with a severe problem. The service as then constituted was no longer a commercial proposition, as shown by this Irish Times report of 8<sup>th</sup> February 1867 (*below right*), saying the company was: "in a very unfavourable position". It seems that sailings had actually been halted due to the dire condition of the company and were only restarted on the basis that they would be reviewed after another two months.

John Grey Vesey Porter took sole control of the business of operating steamboats on the Lough in 1868. His new business replaced the old Lough Erne Steamboat Company and he operated it on a "tourist" rather than a commercial basis. Rather than continuing with the very large **Devenish**, he operated two smaller passenger and freight steam vessels from Knockninny which he called the "**Royal Erne Navy**". The steamboats were named the "**Knockninny**" and "**Belturbet**". He also had his own private steam vessel appropriately called the "**Belleisle**". These vessels were not of the side paddlewheel design but of the much more modern screw propeller type.

Apparently it was 6 pence to have your pig transported from Knockninny to Enniskillen and it was said that the local shopkeeper used to drop the takings from the bridge onto the deck of the boat as it sailed underneath him: someone on the boat would then lodge the money for him at the bank in Enniskillen.

**STEAMBOAT MEETING IN FERMANAGH.**—On Tuesday an influential meeting was held at the Town-hall, Enniskillen, on the subject of the steam navigation of Lough Erne, from Belturbet to Enniskillen and Belleek. Among the noblemen and gentlemen present were—The Earl of Erne, chairman of the Dundalk and Derry Railways; Captain Archdall, M.P.; R. Hall, Esq., D.L.; J. G. V. Porter, Esq., D.L.; Nicholas Archdall, Esq.; George Woods, Esq.; Roderick Gray, Esq., County Surveyor; Rev. S. G. Porter, D. Wilkin, Esq., chairman, with many of the Town Commissioners, and others of standing in the county and town. Several resolutions were passed for forming a company to place steamers of a light draught of water, of the American river models, on the lake, to connect Belleek with the tramway about to be made to Ballyshannon and Bundoran; thus, between the two companies, the watering-place of Bundoran and seaport, of Ballyshannon will have daily communication with Enniskillen and Belturbet, and the railways. Thanks were voted to Mr. Wilkin, the chairman, and Mr. Kernahan. We will give a more enlarged report from the *Fermanagh Reporter*.

**LOUGH ERNE STEAMBOAT COMPANY (LIMITED).**  
(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)  
The fourth annual meeting of this company was held in the Town Hall, Enniskillen, on Wednesday. The Earl of Erne, Chairman of the Company, presided, and the following shareholders were present: Rev J G Porter, William Archdall, Esq, J P; J G V Porter, Esq, J P; Thomas Davlin, Esq; William Carson, T C; David Wilkin, Esq; George Black, T C; Robert Armstrong, T C; Edward Gamble, Samuel Little.  
The Secretary, Mr Hall, read the report, which showed the company to be in a very unfavourable position, but after some discussion it was adopted on the motion of the chairman, seconded by Rev J G Porter.  
It was resolved to call a meeting in two months hence, to consider the condition of the company. It was also resolved that the steamboat **Devenish** commence her sailings on Monday, the 11th inst, between Enniskillen and Belleek, returning on Tuesday.



When the Viceroy of Ireland (Lord Spencer) and his wife made a visit "to the north" in May 1870, they "left [Enniskillen] on board the *Knockninny* accompanied by John G.V. Porter Esq., the owner... the Rev. John G Porter was also on board."

The Irish Times report of 16<sup>th</sup> May 1870 (*part shown on the right*) continues:

*"Notwithstanding the unfavourable state of the weather, rain falling throughout the trip down, their Excellencies remained on deck in order to enjoy the magnificent scenery of the Lower Lough Erne. A stiff gale blew as may be judged from the fact that Lord Spencer lost his hat on the passage."*

*"Shortly after five o'clock Castle Caldwell was reached and their Excellencies and attendants proceeded to Belleek in ferry boats as owing to the shallowness of the river the steamer could not run any further. They were landed beside the Belleek Pottery and their Excellencies were viewed and shown through the splendid building by Mr M'Birney, one of the firm and John C. Bloomfield Esq. D.L. on whose estate the quartz and other material for the manufacture of this beautiful ware abundantly exists. Their Excellencies were highly pleased with all they saw."*

A MEETING convened by J. G. V. PORTER, Esq., will be held on Friday, March 3rd, at the Bilton Hotel, to consider the advisability of forming a company, with head offices in Dublin, to run first-class passenger steamboats once a month each way between Galway and New York. The capital proposed to be raised is £500,000, in 5,000 shares of £100 each. There is to be no stock-jobbing or interference of brokers. Mr PORTER believes that very fine vessels can be now purchased in Liverpool for less than half their original cost. There are at first to be four boats, with three crews, one of the vessels being kept in reserve. Passengers from London to Galway will land from Holyhead at the quay terminus of the Midland Great Western Railway, and step from boat to rail. The board of the Midland Company have agreed to give an abatement of 30 per cent, off the charge for cross-Channel passenger to and from the American and Galway steamboats for five years. Mr PORTER hopes that English capitalists who throw away such enormous sums of money in foreign loans and bubble speculations will take shares in the proposed company. We wish they would; but a Galway packet line could not offer the seductive allurements of 18 per cent. interest on the money subscribed, paid monthly, bonuses of 15 or 20 per cent every year, and the return of the whole capital invested at the end of ten years. The modern speculator prefers any amount of risk, provided there be a promise of large profit, to a safe investment which will only return a modest 10 per cent. Mr. PORTER, in a circular issued by himself, explains the natural advantages which Galway possesses; but we must say he is too discursive, and turns out of his path to attack old enemies. His circular would be more widely read and better understood if reduced to one-fifth of its present length. We wish him, however, perfect success in his undertaking.

This was probably the most memorable day in the long working life of the Steamboat Knockninny. She continued in service until 1920, making daily trips between Enniskillen and Castle Caldwell and was finally broken up for scrap in 1940.

The Steamboats on Lough Erne were not the only maritime venture that Porter promoted. This report in the Irish Times of 8<sup>th</sup> February 1876 has Porter setting up a meeting to float his idea of a company to operate what he calls "first class passenger steamboats" in a monthly service between Galway and New York. The previous venture, to operate a steam mail packet (The Galway Line) had failed in 1864 when the British Government removed the subsidy they had been giving to the venture to carry the Royal Mail to and from the USA. The Irish Times correspondent is sceptical, obviously knowing Porter of old. In the article (*shown on the left*) he says:

*"Mr Porter hopes that English capitalists will throw away such enormous sums of money in foreign loans and bubble speculations will take shares in the proposed company. We wish they would... the modern speculator prefers any amount of risk, provided there be a promise of large profit, to a safe investment..." "Mr Porter, in a circular issued by himself... is too discursive and turns out of his path to attack old enemies... we wish him, however, perfect success in his undertaking."*

The Irish Times clearly thought that Porter was unlikely to succeed in the venture, especially as he seemed to be taking the opportunity to attack the many enemies he had made in the past!

**THE VICEROYAL VISIT TO THE NORTH.**  
(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS.)  
Omagh, Saturday Evening.  
As the *Irish Times* has already stated, the Lord Lieutenant and the Countess Spencer took their departure from Enniskillen on Thursday evening, and proceeded to Belleek. Their Excellencies left on board the *Knockninny*, accompanied by John G. V. Porter, Esq., the owner, who had placed the steamer at their disposal. Mrs. Campbell, Captain Campbell, A.D.C., Mr. Courtenay Boyle, Mr. Thompson, and the Rev. John G. Porter were also on board. As the steamer moved off loud cheers were given by the crowd on the quay. Notwithstanding the unfavourable state of the weather, rain falling throughout the trip down, their Excellencies remained on deck in order to enjoy the magnificent scenery of the Lower Lough Erne. A stiff gale blew, as may be judged from the fact that Lord Spencer lost his hat on the passage.  
Shortly after five o'clock Castle Caldwell was reached, and their Excellencies and attendants proceeded to Belleek in ferry-boats, as owing to the shallowness of the river the steamer could not run any further. They were landed beside the Belleek pottery, and their Excellencies were viewed and shown through the splendid building by Mr. M'Birney, one of the firm, and John C. Bloomfield, Esq., D.L., on whose estate the quartz and other material for the manufacture of this beautiful ware abundantly exists. Their Excellencies were highly pleased with all they saw. They then proceeded to the pretty seaside town of Bundoran, by road, and remained at the Hamilton Hotel for the night. In the morning they visited as much of the neighbourhood as the weather would permit, and at five o'clock left by train on the Bundoran and Sligo Railway for the Bundoran, or Irvinestown Junction, where they were entertained by the Rev. John G. Porter, who resides quite close to the railway, Kilskeery. The Viceroyal party left by



And now we come to a very important event. In the 1870's, John Grey Vesey Porter founded Lough Erne's first hotel the "Knockninny Hotel". I have not been able to establish the date of the founding of the Hotel any more exactly than "the 1870's", so we need to do a bit more research on this!

Just to conclude Porter's story, he died in 1903, of old age but had also become blind. As he was childless, he was succeeded at Belle Isle by John Porter Porter, second son of his sister Adelaide Mary.

To sum up his life, a kinder view of John Grey Vesey Porter is given by W.F. Wakeman, writing in his guide to Lough Erne and the surrounding area. He says:

*"J. G. V. Porter, Esq., a gentleman who, more than any other now living, has devoted his time, money, and energies in the endeavour to develop the resources of Lough Erne and those of the adjoining districts... We may say that his chief aim is to make Enniskillen, Belleek, and Belturbet principal points in the great network of inland navigation which spreads over all Ireland."*

*"This is to be accomplished by excavating and dredging the shoals of the Lough, and by the establishment at Belleek of a series of well-considered regulating weirs, sluices, &c., by which the water may be kept throughout the year at a uniform level. By this plan many thousands of acres of low-lying land, now rendered comparatively valueless by spring and autumnal floodings, would become permanently reclaimed. He would further, by utilising Lough Erne in connexion with existing canals (which, though they cost the country millions in their construction, are now, through long-continued neglect, all but impassable), render the carriage of heavy matters — such as minerals, bricks, stone, all building materials, lime, coal, agricultural manures, pottery earths, &c. — cheap, and at the same time remunerative to the carriers. "Canals," he says, in reference to the supposed antagonism between lines of railway and canals running somewhat in the same direction, "are carts and waggons, railways are carriages to the nineteenth century — each helps the other". The more the natural resources of this country are developed, and the more civilised becomes the life of our people in good houses, the more business will there be for our railways and canals."*

*"One project considered by Mr. Porter to be of the highest importance, not only in connexion with the lake district, but also with a considerable portion of the North-West of Ireland, was the establishment of steam communication to and fro between Belturbet and Belleek — a project which, because it might be carried out at his particular cost and sole risk, is now, we need not inform our fellow voyagers by the Knockninny, a fait accompli, Bellisle, described in 1834 as "one of those graceful, incipient ruins in which Decay's effacing fingers have swept the lines where beauty lingers" is now restored to more than its pristine elegance."*



***The House at Belleisle — "Belle Isle Castle" as it is now known.*** The tower, the gallery, additional bedrooms and a porch were added in the 1830's by Rev. John Grey Porter, John Grey Vesey Porter's father. In 1991 the house and 470 acres of the estate were sold to the Duke of Abercorn. It is now operated as a hotel with holiday cottages converted from the coach house and farm associated farm buildings.



## *The Knockninny Hotel Plate*

With the Story of John Grey Vesey Porter in mind, the rather strange sayings on it start to make sense...



Clearly John Grey Vesey Porter, although “contankerous” and eccentric, was a local entrepreneur and businessman of great importance and it seems that when tableware was required for his new venture, the pottery at Belleek was a natural choice to supply it. Hence the quirky and eccentric plates that Belleek produced for his hotel at Knockninny. The plate acts as an advertisement and as tourist information on Porter’s venture...

I wonder how many of these plates still survive as mementos to his endeavours? We now know of the existence of four of them.



Printed on the plate (*right*), we have firstly the crest of Knockninny, with an Earl's coronet, probably taken from the Arms of the Gore family, Sir Ralph Gore being created Earl of Ross in 1772. John Grey Vesey Porter, as owner of the Belle Isle Estate, although it was not his own family's crest, probably thought this was appropriate!



Secondly, here is a mention of the hotel itself (*below*).

***“Eat, hungry traveller, eat and pay:  
Knockninny Hotel.”***

The hospitality offered to the “Hungry traveller” is somewhat tempered by the statement that he must certainly pay for whatever he consumed at the Hotel – John Porter was definitely not in the business of giving charity!

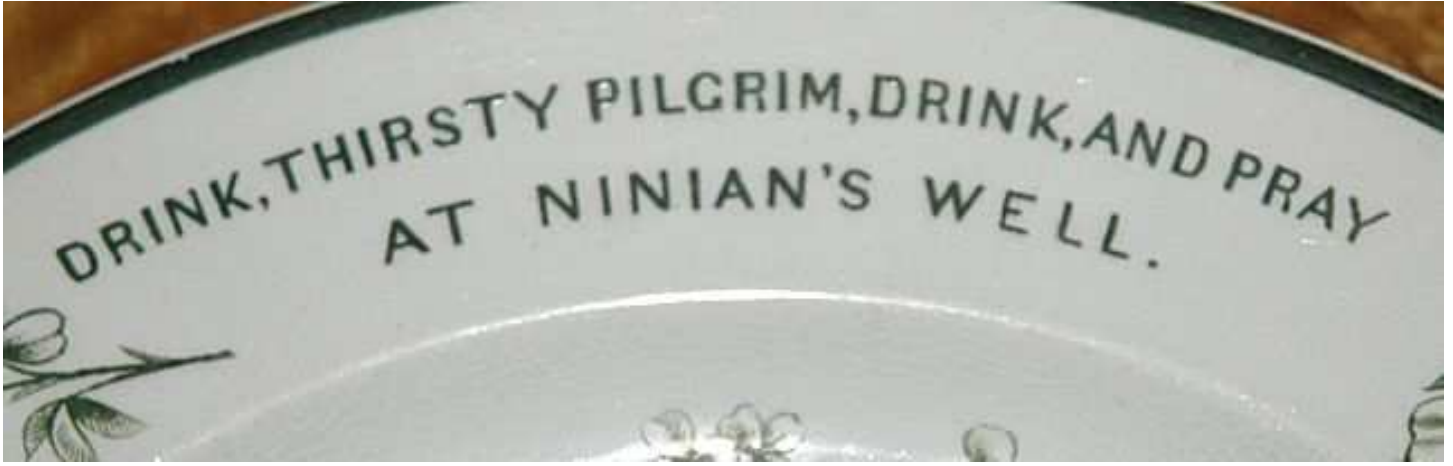


Having got the commercial side out of the way, the next saying enthuses on the pleasures of the area! We have an advertisement for the beauty of Lough Erne (*below*) which is appropriate given the Hotel's favourable location looking out over the islands of the Upper Lough.

***“Gaze, happy tourist, gaze on Lough Erne, kind nature's scene.”***







...and the Hotel did not want to miss out on any trade that might be provided by pilgrims. So here is a reference to “Ninian’s Well”.

***“Drink, thirsty pilgrim, drink and pray at Ninian’s Well.”***

Did pilgrims go to this Ninian’s Well? This well is named after Saint Ninian, a sixth century Irish saint who carried on the work of Saint Patrick in spreading the Christian religion in Ireland. In fact, the origin of the well is pre-Christian, relating to the pagan Celtic Druids of the area.

The name Knockninny, is an anglicised version of Irish Gaelic “Cnoc”, meaning small hill and “Ninnidh”, in English Ninian, hence “Ninian’s Hill”.

Saint Ninnian arrived at Inishmacsaint in 532 A.D., almost 100 years after Saint Patrick had arrived in Ireland to spread the Christian religion in 432 A.D. At this time Lough Erne was a vast highway stretching from where Belturbet is today to Belleek. The surrounding countryside was a mass of bogs and woods and almost impossible to pass through, so the lake was the most obvious and easiest way to travel. It was still the main highway of Fermanagh until roads were made in the 17th Century.

Ninnidh was a grandson of the High King Laoire and was born in Donegal. He became interested in religious matters at an early age and is said to have journeyed up and down the southern portion of Lower Lough Erne in a hollowed-out boat, coming ashore at intervals and making his way inland, in order to meet the people and spread the Gospel, no doubt having the odd heated discussion with the local druid.



***The Saint Ninian’s Well at Knockninny, approx. 100 yards from the Hotel***

He probably established a little church or residence at Glenwinney (Ninnidh's Glen), visited Ninnidh's Hill above Roscor to meditate and pray and quenching his thirst at nearby Ninnidh's Well. He is said to have fasted during Lent at Knockninny, no doubt making his way there by boat from Inishmacsaint.

So the reference to “Ninian’s Well” on the plate is accurate and appropriate for the Hotel, named as it is after St. Ninian. The well is one of many in the area to the south and west of Lough Erne, established or frequented by St. Ninian, or named in his honour, on his frequent missionary travels in the area.





Finally on the plate, we have a resounding exhortation:

*“Pilgrims, Tourists and travellers, often return. God save the Queen.”*

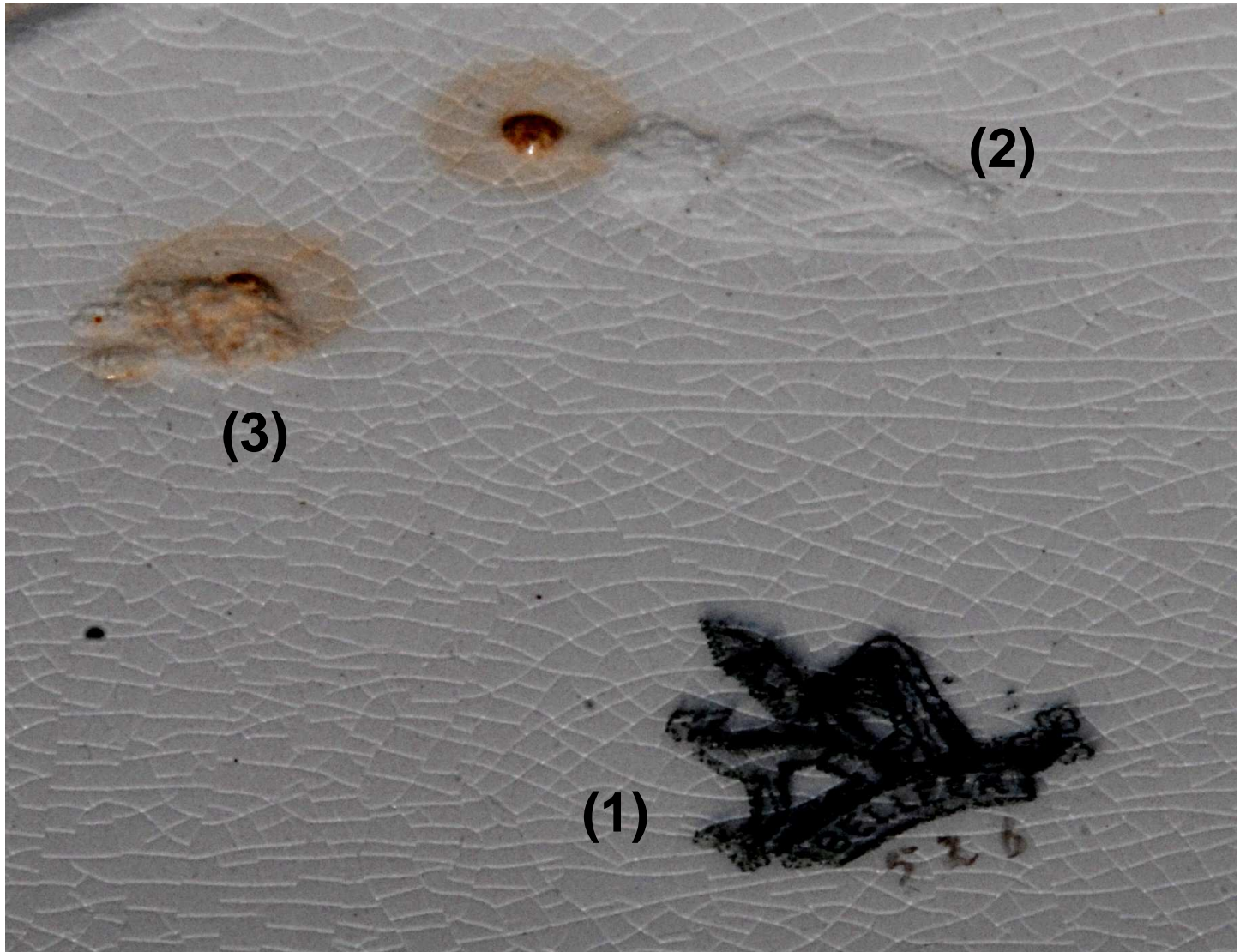
John Grey Vesey Porter, his Steamboats and his Knockninny Hotel, would have been well known at the time. His fame spread far beyond Belle Isle. His exploits were regularly reported in the Irish Times, especially the two memorable court cases in Dublin. In the 1870's, the surrounding towns of Enniskillen, Lisbellaw and Belturbet would have resounded with the scandal that John Porter seemed almost continually to be embroiled in. The fact that he controlled two local newspapers would have made him and his very strong views extremely well known throughout the community. His efforts to establish the tourist trade around Lough Erne ultimately made him a popular figure with most people in the area and he was seen as a benefactor and visionary rather than the difficult, self-serving and ambitious man that he at first appeared to be. The hotel at Knockninny is a worthy monument to this man.



*Knockninny Hotel as it is today, having been rebuilt and considerably extended.*



Let's look at the plates themselves in more detail. We don't know how significant the order for the plates was to the Belleek Pottery but the total quantity ordered must have been in the hundreds. No records exist at the Pottery of the production of the plates, but this is not at all surprising as virtually no records at all exist from the Pottery during this period. We don't know if the plates were used solely as tableware at the hotel, also used on the Lough Erne Steamers or even sold or given to visitors to the Hotel as a form of advertising. It is most probable that the plates were mainly or solely used at the Knockninny Hotel itself – the example here shows signs of use with crazing and some discolouration as well as rubbing to the pattern in the well of the plate – it was clearly not intended only as a decorative piece but for everyday use.



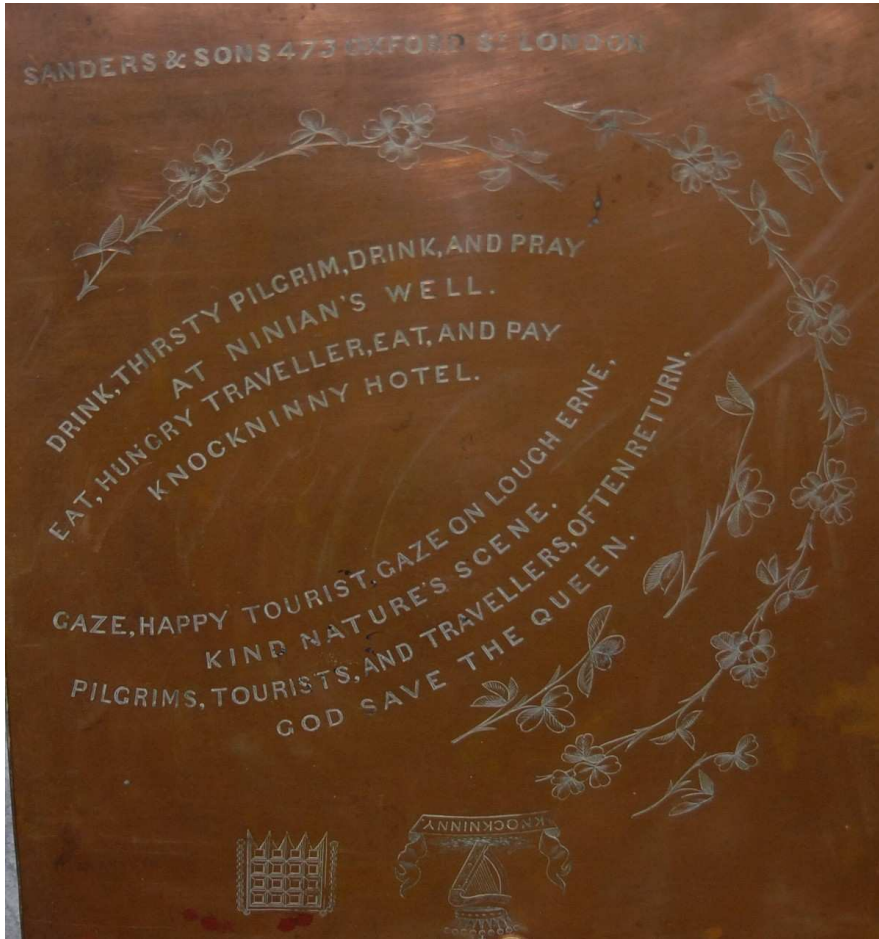
### *The marks on the plate*

The plate has three identifiable factory marks. Firstly the standard transferred black first period mark (1) with the number 526 written freehand beneath it. The “526” identifies the colour used and the design of the decoration, in this case a dark green narrow band around the rim of the plate, the shamrocks in the bowl of the plate and the crest and sayings on the plate all in the same dark green. The plate is a standard ten and a half inch earthenware dinner plate

This shape and size of the plate was standard Belleek earthenware production and plates of this type were produced from the late 1860's until at least the 1890's. Along with this type of standard plate, the Pottery also produced bowls, tureens, serving dishes and many other items for general sale as separate items or as large dinner services.







At this period of production, the Pottery would allocate new numbers as new types or colours of decoration were introduced. This system of numbering was used to allow the Pottery to keep a record and therefore to produce subsequent orders, when required, with exactly the same decoration.

The decoration itself is done by a transfer, printed in coloured ink onto tissue paper, then applied to the plate before its final firing. This required the making of an engraving of the decoration onto a copper plate from which the prints were taken.

Because of the setup costs involved in engraving the copper plate, this is a good indication that a reasonable number of the plates were made – it would not have been worth the cost if only a very small number were required.

The actual engraved copper plate is shown here (*left*). It can be seen on the wall at the Pottery's museum.

On this copper plate is also printed "SANDERS & SONS 473 OXFORD ST. LONDON" we do not at present know the significance of this or if it has anything to do with the Knockninny plates, although it is possible that this may have been a retailer associated with an order for the plate. No example of the plate which I have seen has had this text printed on it, front or back.

It is possible that other ware, like tureens and serving dishes or bowls and plates of different sizes were also made for the hotel with this decoration although, as far as we know, none have turned up and we have not found any of the copper plates which would have been required to make transfers for them.

The next mark present (2) is the impressed "harp and crown" (*right*), which means it is not from the earliest of Belleek's earthenware production, but dates from after the time when Armstrong perfected his earthenware process and saw fit to add the crown to the standard impressed Harp mark originally put onto earthenware. This fits well with the date of the opening of the hotel.

In fact, we can be certain about the date of this example of the plate. It possesses another mark (3): the figures 38 over 77. This is a date mark which indicates that this plate was produced (that is moulded) in the 38<sup>th</sup> week of 1877. This might **not** correspond to the opening date of the hotel as this plate may have been part of a later batch made to augment the hotel's supply or to replace breakages. Or, if the hotel opened earlier than this date in 1877, it may not have had the plates for opening day, obtaining them later. A second example of the plate that I have seen, sold in 2007 at an auction at the Manor House Hotel, north of Lower Lough Erne, has the date mark 41 over 77 which means it was produced three weeks after the first example. This would almost certainly place it in the same batch as the first. A third example of the plate has the date mark 16 over 81 – week 16 of 1881, indicating that this came from a separate, later batch. So we know that the Pottery made at least two batches of the plates, four years apart.





The opening of the hotel must have been a very special occasion. In this contemporary advertising article in "Ireland Gazette" published in 1881, the hotel is shown, standing alone in its prominent position at the base of the hill on the Lough shore. It is called the "Tourists' Hotel", again emphasising that the tourist trade was the main reason for building it.

The "sayings" on the plate are given again, but this time, in a way that makes much more sense as a poem that just about rhymes.

It would be very interesting to find out exactly who wrote the rhyme: it's tempting to attribute it to Porter himself, but we have no evidence for this!

Finally the hotel's location and the delights that this location offers are described:

*"This Hotel, halfway between Belturbet and Enniskillen, on the west side of Upper Lough Erne. Fishing allowed to all Sportsmen, who stay three nights, among the picturesque Islands of Deocharn, Deal, Bilberry, Inisfausy, Inisleague, Iniscreegh, Creaghmarourk, Creaghmaquallen, Staff, Killygoan, and Carrick. Magnificent views from top of rock. The Postmaster-General has lately opened an Office in Hotel four days a week."*


The William Latimer who puts his name to this advert was a farmer and grocer from Knockninny who died 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1883 (at Knockninny). We don't know if he had any other association with the Hotel.

At some stage in its existence, the hotel was known as the "St. Ninian's Temperance Hotel" so the drink referred to in the rhyme was clearly not then alcoholic. The hotel was apparently a "popular resort in its day" and the dates of the name changes between "Tourists' Hotel, Knockninny" and "St. Ninian's Temperance Hotel" have not yet been discovered but the hotel was certainly known as the "Tourists' Hotel" in references from 1881 and 1905: Knockninny Hotel was clearly re-invented several times over its lifetime up to the present day.

IRELAND'S GAZETTE, LOYAL AND NATIONAL 19

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## TOURISTS' HOTEL, KNOCKNINNY.



Drink, thirsty pilgrim, drink, and pray  
At Ninian's Well;  
Eat, hungry traveller, eat, and pay  
Knockninny Hotel;

Gaze, happy tourist, gaze on Lough Erne,  
Kind Nature's scene.  
Pilgrims, tourists, and travellers often return—  
God save the Queen.

---

This Hotel, halfway between Belturbet and Enniskillen, on west side of Upper Lough Erne. Fishing allowed to all Sportsmen, who stay three nights, among the picturesque Islands of Deocharn, Deal, Bilberry, Inisfausy, Inisleague, Iniscreegh, Creaghmarourk, Creaghmaquallen, Staff, Killygoan, and Carrick. Magnificent views from top of rock. The Postmaster-General has lately opened an Office in Hotel four days a week.

WILLIAM LATIMER, Knockninny.



## *Were there any other connections between Knockninny and Belleek?*

John Grey Vesey Porter was a Deputy Lieutenant of County Fermanagh, as was John Caldwell Bloomfield, both were also magistrates and so both occupied positions of some authority and respect in the County. Both Porter and Bloomfield were significant landowners in the County. All this does not however guarantee that they knew each other or had any other dealings or indeed that they ever actually met. The only recorded episode where they almost certainly encountered each other was on the Viceregal visit to Belleek Pottery in May 1870 when Porter accompanied the Lord Lieutenant and his wife on his steamer on their trip down Lower Lough Erne to Belleek where McBirney and Bloomfield conducted the Viceregal party round the Pottery.

Porter was active in Dublin and may possibly have encountered McBirney there. McBirney's railway interests would have made this likely, especially when Porter was trying to get the Dundalk and Enniskillen Railway routed via Lisbellaw. Porter and McBirney certainly had the common interest of using the railways to open up the potential of the area around Lough Erne: in McBirney's case this of course involved Belleek Pottery, with the line finally being opened from Enniskillen to Belleek in 1867 and in Porter's case it naturally involved the development of the tourist potential of the area. Porter may well not have supported McBirney and Bloomfield's efforts to get the railway built to Belleek as this was direct competition with Porter's original steamboats on Lower Lough Erne.

Robert Williams Armstrong was resident in Belleek at the time Porter established the Hotel and as a prominent architect and freemason, he may well have encountered the flamboyant Mr Porter. We have however found no evidence for their having met or had any dealings.

The plates for the hotel were probably ordered from Belleek Pottery for no other reason than the Pottery being an excellent and well known supplier of such items, at the peak of its fame in the early 1870's having received orders from Queen Victoria and many prominent people in Ireland by then. The simple fact that the Pottery was located at the end of the journey of one of Porter's Lough Erne Steamers just made the choice of Belleek as supplier for the hotel even more appropriate.

*Drink, thirsty pilgrims, drink and pray  
At Ninian's Well;  
Eat hungry traveller, eat and pay  
Knockninny Hotel;  
Gaze, happy tourist, gaze on Lough Erne,  
Kind Nature's scene;  
Pilgrims, tourists and travellers often return –  
God save the Queen.*

## *References*

Old Images of Belleek and The Voice of the Erne, Joe O'Loughlin.

Lough Erne, Enniskillen, Belleek, Ballyshannon, Bundoran. Routes from Dublin to Enniskillen and Bundoran.  
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Thanks to Olga Clarke, for bringing her example of the plate to the Knockninny meeting.



# Belleek Black Mark Tea Ware - Part 10: Celtic

By Tony Fox

The three patterns comprising this particular group are clearly identifiable by means of the Celtic design motif embossed on the pieces. The patterns are attributed to Madam Boroniuxz, a Hungarian designer, who adapted designs from the book of Kells. Included in this article is Ring Handle Ivory pattern decorated with Celtic painted/transfer designs from the Book of Kells which was introduced in parallel with the three Celtic patterns.

The Belleek Pottery changed hands in 1920 and it seems that many old Armstrong patterns were revived and several new designs were produced. In 1922 K. E'Leod, from Hungary, became the new manager and he introduced Madame Boroniuxz to the design team. Celtic tea ware was probably created by her between 1922 to 1926 (with the aid of with Fred Slater), she modelled all the embossed and painted Celtic patterns, deriving her inspiration from the Book of Kells. She was considered a gifted designer; Jenks says in her manuscript [a] “..her patterns are clear, well-placed and uncluttered. Her strong colourings, edged with gold, come as near to the colours in the old manuscript of the Book of Kells... Her motifs show to advantage against the ivory background of Belleek porcelain..”.



The Book of Kells is an exquisite ‘illuminated’ manuscript containing the Four Gospels and is generally considered the finest surviving manuscript to have been produced in medieval Europe. Today it resides in Trinity College, Dublin [h].



It is tempting to think that because generic Celtic motifs are part of Irish culture, the Irish would be the first to commercialise them and that Belleek had been innovative with its novel exciting ‘modern’ interpretation in the design of its new Celtic range. However, Belleek was susceptible to external fashions and followed other manufacturers.

*Right: Belleek's Celtic interpretation, BII*

*Below: Wedgwood 'Celtic Ornaments' decoration c1920*



Wedgwood obtained an expensive reproduction of the Book of Kells in 1916 [e]. From this date to 1920, Daisy Makeig-Jones (who was responsible for Wedgwood's famous Fairyland Lustre decoration) designed a whole range of Celtic based patterns for tea and coffee ware, this range was called ‘Celtic Ornaments’. It was applied mainly to bone china, the Celtic border patterns being transferred and then hand enamelled, sometimes with mother of pearl lustre glazes.





So Belleek's Celtic patterns date from late in the Second period into the Third period. The Belleek '1924' sales catalogue included a new page titled 'Novelties' of which half the items illustrated were of Celtic design, this was the first time Celtic decoration appeared in Belleek sales literature - but there was still no Celtic tea ware. By the 1928 catalogue Celtic tea wares are extensively shown and were introduced in this catalogue with the preamble:-

*'The introduction of Celtic designs into the decoration of "Belleek" ware is a recent innovation. The designs themselves are reproductions taken from the tracery ornamentation of letters in the Book of Kells, one of the oldest ancient Irish Manuscripts'*

*These beautiful designs, painted in brilliant colours of red, blue, green, yellow and shining black, produce charming and artistic effects on a background of such rich creamy softness as "Belleek" possesses'*

These same pages on Celtic tea ware with preamble appear again unaltered in the '1931' catalogue. But by the 1937 catalogue the emphasis had shifted, Belleek's new wares were illustrated in colour (for the first time) and now concentrated on their Art Deco influenced decorations and the New Shell pattern. Celtic tea ware was still available, but its preamble has been relegated to the separate price list, perhaps by now Celtic was no longer viewed as 'new'.

## *Celtic Low Shape*

This pattern was initially featured in the 1928 catalogue in which the heading for this pattern reads:-

*'Celtic Design on Low Shape, Hand-Painted in any Colour. Richly Gilt with Lustre Lining'*

*Right:  
Dejeuner set,  
Tray BII,  
other items  
BIII*





The design motif from the Book of Kells consists of embossed cone shaped swirling panels which radiate from the centre of the saucers with this effect reflected on the teapot, cream, sugar, teacups and slop bowl in the manner of a spoked wheel or Catherine wheel effect. These panels alternate between a stylized Celtic motif panel and a ribbed panel. When the design motif reaches the shoulder section of the teapot, cream and sugar it is reversed in the top section of these pieces.



The tray is of oval form and the design motif is arranged on a similar basis to that found on the saucers. There are 2 forms of teapot, cream and sugar: oval and globular. The oval form is rare and probably earlier, the globular form is more common and is probably later. The swirls radiate in different directions on these 2 forms and the teapot lid is completely different, the oval lid repeats the swirl design and the globular lid has 'jewelled' roundels instead of swirls. The globular sugar also has a similar lid.

*Left: Tray, BII*

The handles on the teapot, cream and teacups, together with the teapot finial and covered sugar finial have binding rings at intervals along the full length and are similar to those on the Aberdeen pattern tea ware pieces.



*Left:  
Close-up  
of teacup  
handle*



*Right and Above Right: Dejeuner set in pink tint and lustre showing the oval form teapot, cream and sugar.*



Left: Oval form, teapot, sugar and cream, all BII



Right: Globular form, teapot, sugar and cream, all BIII





## Decoration

Celtic Low Shape tea ware was produced with the ribbed panels tinted in:-

- Cob with cob interior. See teacup and saucer, BII - *Top Left*
- Pink tint. See oval cream. BII - *Top Middle*
- Green tint. See teacup and saucer – *Top Right*
- Pink tint with lustre Celtic panels and interior. See teacup and saucer – *Middle Left*

Also there are colourful versions which have heavily painted Celtic panels and a lustre interior:-

- Reddish brown with blue, brown, green and yellow 'jewels', gilt detailing and rims. See teacup and saucer, BII – *Bottom Right*
- Mid green with gilt detailing and rims. See teacup and saucer, BIII – *Bottom Right*
- Mid blue with gilt detailing and rims. See teacup and saucer, BIII – *Middle Right*
- Subtle light blue and brown with gilt detailing and rims (very rare) – see bread plate - *Centre*
- Tan with black detailing and gilt rims (very rare) – see teacup and saucer, BIII – *Bottom Middle*
- Dark blue with gilt rims (very rare). See oval teapot, BII – *Previous page*





## Periods

Second (rarer and on all oval forms) and Third periods. Occasionally it can be found with the 'First/Third' black mark as shown *(Right)*.

## Forms

Tray, Teapot (oval and globular), Teacup and saucer, Sugar (oval uncovered, globular covered), Cream (oval and globular) and Slop bowl. The Celtic Low Shape pattern has sufficient tea ware items to constitute a dejeuner set. There is no evidence, to date, to indicate that this pattern had a kettle.

It was thought that this pattern did not have a tray as one does not appear in any sales catalogue. But only relatively recently a dejeuner tray was seen in this pattern. Since that time two others have come to light but they remain a rarity.

*Right: Slop bowl (surprisingly large at 14cm diameter!) mid blue and gilt, BII*

*Below: Teapot, oval form, pink and lustre, BII*



*Above: Cream, oval form, cob, BII*

*Left: Sugar, globular covered, reddish brown with multi coloured 'jewels', BIII*



## Celtic Tall Shape

This pattern was initially featured in the 1928 catalogue in which the heading for this pattern reads:-

*'Celtic Design on Tall Shape, Hand-Painted and Gilt'*



*Above: Extensive tea set, band of mint green with matt black triangles and gilt rim, BIII*

The design motif adapted from the Book of Kells consists of an embossed band which appears on the periphery of the saucers and top section of the teacups, sugar and slop bowl. However, in the case of the teapot and cream the band is located just below the waisted section on these two particular pieces.

The handles on the teapot, cream and teacups project horizontally, on top of the waisted section of the teapot and close to the rim of the cream and teacups. The handle is then turned at right angles and sweeps downwards in an elegant curve where it rejoins the piece at two points. It is of square section throughout and gives a distinctive Art Deco feel to this pattern. The finial on the teapot lid also contributes to this design concept.

## Decoration

Celtic Tall Shape tea ware was produced in a variety of colour ways to the embossed band (all with lustre interior):-

- **Right Top:** Reddish brown panels and triangles, with gilt detailing to handle and gilt rim
- **Right Middle:** Reddish brown panels with gilt, multi coloured and gilt triangles, without gilt detailing to handle and gilt rim
- **Right Bottom:** Mint green to band, matt black and gilt triangles and gilt rim
- Alternating panels of chocolate and reddish brown, multi coloured triangles and gilt detailing to handle and gilt rim (see teacup and saucer on *top of next page*)







*Top Left: Chocolate, alternating with reddish brown panels, multi coloured triangles, mega gilt detailing, BII and BIII*

*Top Right: Reddish brown panels with gilt, multi coloured triangles, without gilt detailing to handle and gilt rim, BIII*

*Bottom Right: Mint green to band matt black triangles and gilt rim, BIII*

*Bottom Left: Reddish brown panels and triangles with gilt detailing to handle and rim, BII*

## Periods

Second and Third periods.

## Forms

Teapot, Teacup and saucer, Sugar (open), Cream, Slop Bowl. The Celtic Tall Shape pattern has a limited range of pieces and as such there are insufficient items to realise a dejeuner set. There is no evidence, to date, to indicate that this pattern had a tray or kettle.

*Right: Teapot from the extensive tea set, BIII*





## Celtic Pot

This pattern together with the Five O'Clock pattern; as denoted in part 8 of this series of articles [g], shares the dubious distinction whereby none of the pieces have been illustrated in any of the sales literature/catalogues seen to-date. However in the 1928 catalogue under the section headed 'Celtic Vases & Gift Ornaments' item number 412 is a Celtic 'Pot and Cream' (sold as a pair). Recent research has established that these two pieces differ in size from the corresponding tea ware pieces.



This situation is reminiscent of the 'Sugars and Creams' section illustrated in the 1904 catalogue i.e. they differ in shape and/or size from the similar tea ware pieces.

*Above: Tea set, Reddish brown band, blue and red 'jewels', BII*

*Left: Tea set, Green, BII*



All the pieces, except the saucers, are based on a cauldron form and have three angled legs. The design motif consists of an embossed band containing a multi lattice open work type structure interposed with small jewel like vertical segregated panels. The band is located on the periphery of the saucers and the top section of the teapot, cream, sugar and teacups.

*Right: Close-up of cream handle*

The handles on the teapot, cream and teacups are of an ornate double support form with curled ends, inwards where it joins the piece at the top and outwards at the bottom. The finial on the teapot lid is less ornate taking the form of a semicircle with two small scrolls on the top.





## Decoration

Celtic Pot tea ware was produced with bright colours to the Celtic embossed band:-

- Green detail to embossed band. See cream *below*.
- Reddish brown band, blue and red 'jewels', with gilt detailing, with and without cob interior. See the different sizes creams on the *bottom right*.
- Matt black band with gilt pattern outlining. See the cream and sugar on the *below right*.
- Green and reddish brown band with blue and red 'jewels' with gilt detailing. See the sugar on the *right*.



*Above: Sugar with Green and reddish brown panels with blue & red 'jewels' with gilt detailing. Note that the handles are like the 'Irish Pot' and not like those usually found on 'Celtic Pot' tea ware, BII*

*Left: Cream small size, green, BII with Feeney & Co. Buenos Aires, Argentina retailers mark*

*Right: Sugar 'Pot and Cream', matt black and gilt, larger size, BII and BIII*

## Periods

Second Period (usually for tea sets) and Third Period (usually for the larger separate cream and sugar 'pot'). Also may have a retailers mark.

## Forms

Teapot, Teacup and saucer, Sugar, Cream. The Celtic Pot pattern has a very limited range of pieces and as such there are insufficient items to constitute a dejeuner set. Also a larger version of the Sugar ('Pot') and Cream. There is no evidence, to date, to indicate that this pattern had a tray, kettle or slop bowl.

*Right: Two sizes of cream in reddish/brown and gilt rim, small 7.8cm high, larger 8.5cm high, both BII*





## *Celtic Decoration – Ring Handle Ivory*

The Ring Handle Ivory pattern was covered in part 8 of this series of articles except for this particular style of decoration. This Celtic design of decoration was included in the 1928 catalogue on what Belleek termed “Belleek Shape” ware which are in essence Ring Handle Ivory blanks. The catalogue heading for this pattern reads:-

*‘Hand Painted Celtic Design on Belleek Shape’*



*Left: Part of an extensive tea and coffee set, in black, red and green, BIII*

The decoration is not entirely hand painted, in fact it consists of a transferred band which has then been hand-painted in enamels, one around the periphery of the saucers and the top of the coffee pot, teacups and slop bowl. In the case of the cream the band is positioned centrally which is a similar location for the teapot and covered sugar, however the last two pieces and coffee pot can also have an additional band on the lid.



*Far left: Part enamelled saucer using the transfer as a guide.*



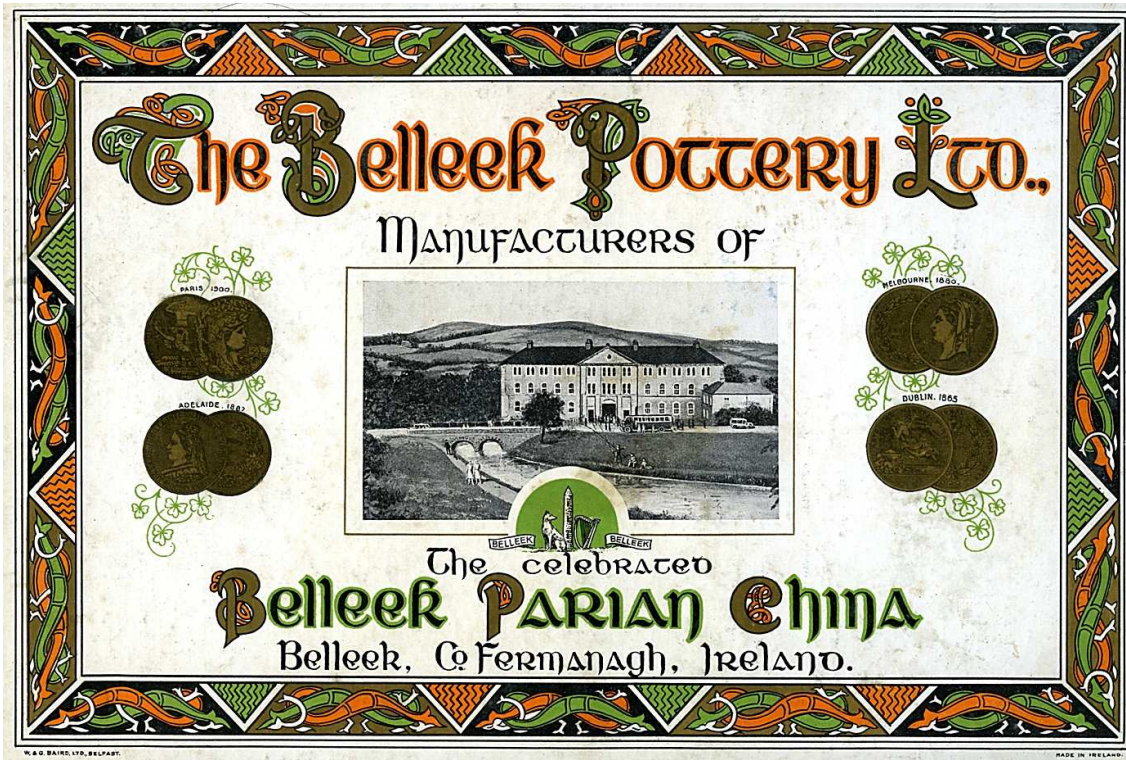
*Left: Engraved transfer plate for this Celtic decoration*

Consistent with other Ring Handle Ivory cups from the late second period onwards, all Celtic decorated cup handles have an oval shaped ring and no supporting vertical bar between it and the cup body [g].

*Right: Oval cup handle with no vertical bar*







*Left: Shop advert (A4) c1931. It utilizes the same Celtic decoration as used on the Ring Handle Ivory pattern.*



*Above Left and Right: Part of an extensive tea and coffee set in black, blue, red and yellow with gilt lines and rim. Note, the band of Celtic decoration also to the lids*



*Left: Part (bowl, saucer and plate) of an earthenware Melvin Ware tea set utilizing exactly the same Celtic decoration*



*Left: Ring Handle Ivory sugar with identical decoration and colourway*



## Decoration

Celtic decorated Ring Handle Ivory tea ware was produced in three enamelled colour variations (all with cob interior):-

- Black background, green and red 'serpents', yellow and tiny bit of blue with gilt lines and rim (most common) - **Right Top**:
- Black background, blue and red 'serpents', yellow with gilt lines and rim - **Right Middle**
- Blue background, green and red 'serpents', yellow with gilt lines and rim and handle support - **Right Bottom**

Sometimes the lids also have a matching Celtic decorated border.



*Above: Covered sugars, with and without Celtic border to lid*

## Periods

Second (rarer) and Third periods.

*Right: Cup and saucer, blue, green, red and yellow with gilt, BII (mark printed in blue and black, see picture below right)*

## Forms



Kettle, Teapot (large, medium and small), Coffee pot, Cup and saucer (breakfast, tea, coffee – termed 'AD' for 'after dinner'), Sugar (large covered, large open and small), Cream (large and small 'low shape', large and small 'tall shape'), Slop bowl. The Celtic decorated Ring Handle Ivory pattern has a comprehensive range of tea ware items. There is no evidence, to date, to suggest that a tray was produced with this Celtic style of decoration.



*Above left: Cream, 'First/Third' mark  
Left: Cream (large size? 'low shape'), BIII  
Above right: Kettle, BII  
Right: Sugar and Cream (both small?)*





## References

- a. Belleek Manuscript c1959 – M A Jenks. Edited by Steinberg, published by the Los Angeles Chapter
- b. Langham – Belleek Irish Porcelain
- c. Degenhardt – The Complete Collectors Guide and Illustrated Reference, 1st and 2nd editions
- d. Various old Belleek sales catalogues (1904, 1923, 1924, 1928, 1931, 1937).
- e. Robin Reilly – Wedgwood The new Illustrated Dictionary
- f. Bev Marvell – UK Belleek Collectors' Group Newsletter 24/2, article on Celtic Designs
- g. Tony Fox – UK Belleek Collectors' Group Newsletter 30/1, Tea ware Part 8
- h. About.com

## Questions last article Part 9

- Aberdeen
  - Do you have, or know of anyone who has, a tray?
  - Do you know any BI or BIII examples?
- Blarney
  - Have you seen a black mark coffee cup and saucer?
  - Do you know any BI or BIII examples?
- Scroll
  - Have you seen a coffee cup and saucer?
  - Do you know of a BI example?
- Sydney
  - We would love someone to send us a picture of a tray!
  - Do you know any BI or BIII examples?

## Questions raised from this article Part 10

- Celtic Low Shape
  - Can we find an oval form teapot, cream or sugar in BIII?
- Celtic Tall Shape
  - We only know of one complete tea set – do you have one?
- Celtic Pot
  - Can we find any tea ware items (teapot, teacup and saucer, small size cream or sugar) in BIII?
  - Have you seen a Celtic pot item which has an angular handle (not the proper ornate handle)?
- Celtic Decoration Ring Handle Ivory
  - Have you got a different size teapot?

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

## Patterns to be covered in Tea ware Part 11

Mythical/Oriental design groups:

- Mask
- Chinese

**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

(produced in collaboration with Bev Marvell)



# Michael Collins

by Trevor Roycroft

*"The world hath conquered, the wind hath scattered like dust Alexander, Caesar, and all that shared their sway: Tara is grass, and behold how Troy lieth low- and even the English, perchance their hour will come."*

Translated by Padraic Pearse from the 18<sup>th</sup> century Irish Gaelic, titled: "*Tara is Grass*".

On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, on the steps of the General Post Office (GPO) Dublin, the Republic of Ireland was declared. The declaration was written and was read aloud by Padraig Pearse. There were seven signatories to the document. By May 15, 1916 all seven, including the Commandant of all Volunteers in Ireland and President of the newly declared Provisional Government, Padraic Pearse, were shot in Kilmainham Jail by order of the British commander-in-chief, General Sir John Maxwell.

In the years that followed, Michael Collins held many positions in the new Provisional Government, including Finance, Intelligence and finally Chief of Staff of the Irish army.

In August 1922, six years later, he was killed in an ambush set up by anti-treaty units of the IRA operating in west Cork.

As Collins is a figure of great importance in 20<sup>th</sup> century Irish history, The Belleek Pottery produced Collins commemorative mugs and vases carrying second period marks.

## *The Belleek Michael Collins Commemorative Mugs*

At least two forms of this mug are known to exist.

The first was shown in "The Belleek Collector" volume 10, number 1, 1999, p. 7, under the heading: Results of Auction sales, Belleek earthenware as: "Michael Collins mug 2<sup>nd</sup> Period - \$240".

### **Belleek Earthenware**

Water Jug with Classical Figures (1st)	975.00
Michael Collins Mug (2nd)	240.00
10" Dinner plate cobalt & gold (2nd)	200.00
Gladstone Chamber Pot (1st)	1550.00



This mug has no pedestal base. It has an ear-shaped round handle. The sepia photo transfer of Collins is extensively worn and frayed. A crack of at least one inch starts upward under the name Collins. The mark is 2<sup>nd</sup> Period, but no colour is indicated. The mug has a band (gold?) around the upper perimeter edge. The mug is highly glazed; see bounce flash off handle reflected on mug. McCrum, plate 1, p36; Old Jack the Donkey and his Master comes closest to the mug sold in 1998, but the handle in McCrum has twig spurs.

McCrum explains these mugs on page 50, earthenware, in detail. Degenhardt, volume 1, page 187, 1904 catalogue shows D858 left and right bottom row. The handle far right bears the closest handle to the mug in the Belleek Collector, volume 10, number 1, page 7, 1999. This is the first example of a Collins' mug described in this article.



The second Collins' mug described in this article was bought by me in April, 2009. This mug has a fine sepia photo transfer of Collins on one side. It has a recessed pedestal base. It has a rectangular handle and is almost identical to three of the mugs of plate 1, page 36, McCrum but without pedestal bases. In addition, the 1928 Catalogue of Belleek, published by Jeanne Breslin, 2003, Vintage Catalogs, shows on page 35, row 2, item 3, number 298. This mug does have a pedestal base but not the angular handle.



*My mug with Collins, also the back with hand painted shamrocks and strawberries and enlargements of the picture of Collins and the decoration on the back.*



My mug dimensions follow: width at top 3  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", at base 3  $\frac{5}{16}$ ", height 3  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", circumference at top 11  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", at bottom 10  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". From the sharp edge of the mug at the bottom to the pedestal base is  $\frac{7}{16}$ ", recessed pedestal is  $\frac{3}{16}$ ", interior depth of the mug is 3  $\frac{7}{16}$ ", handle of the mug diagonally is 3", width of handle at top is 1  $\frac{1}{8}$ ", width of the handle at base is 1", interior width of the handle is  $\frac{15}{16}$ ".





This mug is completely glazed earthenware. On the handle of the mug there is a hand-painted perpendicular gold stripe under the glaze. There are gold flecks residual on the perimeter of the mug's rim combined with printing that is difficult to read. The mark on the base of the mug is a 2<sup>nd</sup> Period, **avocado green mark under glaze**. Hand painted on the side of the mug opposite Collins **on top of the glaze**, are what looks like very large dark green/light green shamrocks, with two hanging strawberries in pinkish red. Collins and Boland used to pick the strawberry beds together in Dublin. A three-inch hairline crack runs from the mug rim to Collins' belt buckle both exteriorly and interiorly.

*The green second period mark on the Collins mug*

Why are there so few examples of a Collins' sepia photo mug? No Collins mug of any type is described in any standard reference source on Belleek yet many could have been produced, even if few survive today. We now know of two examples, they are certainly not unique, a much used and abused word when it comes to Belleek. Eddie Murphy has a blank mug with this pedestal shape and other pieces in his collection with an avocado green 2<sup>nd</sup> Period mark. Inquiries made of Belleek dealers in Ireland confirm at least two Collins' mugs have been sold in the past, they are considered rare.

There is also a Collins/Griffith vase in *Langham Belleek Irish Porcelain* page 34. Richard Degenhardt, *Belleek the Complete Collectors Guide*, volume 2, 1993, page 161, shows a pair of Collins vases. In *Early Belleek Wares*. Reynolds, National Museum Ireland, page 4, shows a mug without pedestal base, but with similar handle, but not of Collins. The description states that "Earthenware was made in two principal grades, the more expensive being given a white opaque glaze to imitate stone china." These last seven words describe exactly the mug in my collection. In fact, I first thought it was stoneware. Additionally, Tony Fox tells me that *Belleek in Context*, by Neville Maguire shows a similar mug to mine but without Collins on it, these examples are on pages 52, 58 and 60 of Maguire's book. In addition Marion Langham's addendum page 22, upper left photo shows left to right two sponge ware and one transfer printed mugs. The left-hand sponge ware example is identical in shape to the Michael Collins mug in my possession.

Are the readers of this article aware of other examples of a Belleek mug carrying a sepia photo transfer of Michael Collins? Have they seen an example anywhere at anytime in the past almost 90 years of such a Belleek earthenware mug or have they heard of one? It would be helpful for posterity and researchers if this knowledge were shared now with other Belleek collectors.

One reason these Collins mugs are of special interest to me is that my Father in the 1920's in County Cork was caught up, as many others were, in the movement leading to the creation of the Irish Free State. Although he was only a boy at the time, he also encountered Collins on the day that he was killed. I would now like to relate this episode of our family history to give some background to my personal interest in Michael Collins. Let me continue with some information on Collins himself.



## *Michael Collins – Historical Background*

In the late 12<sup>th</sup> century the clan of ÓCOILEÁIN was expelled from an area southwest of Limerick. Eventually they settled in an area of West Cork, considered by many to be one of the most scenically beautiful in Ireland. The clan would live south of Clonakilty, a market town. During the famine years of 1845 to 1849 starvation would wreak havoc among the inhabitants. Merchants opening their doors in the morning would do so carefully, for fear of finding the dead piled up on the other side. Travelers reported the cries of the dying and the wail “Clonakilty – God help us,” went up all around.

Sam’s Cross is a small hamlet to the south on the way to Roscarbery and its thousand Isles. Here in 1875, Michael Collins aged 60, a prosperous Catholic farmer of 120 acres, took Mary Anne O’Brien, aged 20, as his bride. They had eight children. Their last, a boy born in 1890, would live to age 31. At the time of his birth October 16, 1890 his father was nearing 76 years of age. The boy was baptized Michael Collins.

Both Michaels were taught by a “hedge-school master” named ÓSUILLIOBHÁIN. When very young Michael learned of the Irish patriots of times gone by.



*Michael Collins in general's uniform*

Collins, as he grew up, had as heroes: Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet and Charles Stewart Parnell. Parnell died in 1891, when Michael was a baby but Michael would have known the lines in Parnell’s 1885 address:

*“No man has a right to fix the boundary of the march of a nation; no man has a right to say to his country – thus far shalt thou go and no further.”*

And these words written by Wolfe Tone, widely recognized as the “Father of Irish Republicanism”, hanged in 1798 after the Irish rebellion of that year:

*“We took a solemn obligation never to rest in our efforts until we had subverted the authority of England over our country and asserted our independence!”*

Arthur Griffith, born in 1871, was a generation older than Collins. In 1905 Griffith founded “Sinn Féin,” literally “we ourselves.” In 1905, Collins came to idolize Griffith and his efforts to oppose John Redmond’s Irish Parliamentary Party. Griffith wanted Irish independence not Home Rule.

Collins’ father died in 1896 leaving his mother and brother to manage the farm. Collins was educated in Clonakilty. He undertook civil service exams in 1906 moving to London where he worked in the Kensington Post Office Savings Bank as a boy clerk. In 1909 he joined in London the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), founded in 1858 by James Stephens of Dublin. The IRB would inspire and organize the 1916 uprising in Ireland. Collins left the Post Office for the Board of Trade, then the stockbrokerage firm of Horner and Company, then the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, Lombard Street, London office. He was restless. Conscription faced him. Rumours circulating in London among the IRB members caused him to make a trip to



Dublin in late 1915. There he met Tom Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada and others. Convinced that history was in the making, he left London for Dublin in January 1916.

The Dublin he returned to was less than 100 days from being changed forever. Great Britain had been at war since the Guns of August 1914. The city was filled with Irishmen on their way to France to fight the Kaiser. The IRB and the Irish volunteers were drilling and planning. The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), attempted to maintain order. The "G" division detectives were hauling citizens in to Dublin Castle for questioning. There were spies everywhere, German, English, and Irish, both north and south. There was the citizenry attempting to carry on their daily lives, school, shopping, mass, jobs, pleasures, in what was considered to be the fairest city in the empire. All this would suddenly change.

## *The 1916 Easter Rising*

In 1914 Padraic Pearse published a book of his own poetry. It contained a poem, *Ideal*, translated from the Gaelic by another Irish poet Thomas MacDonagh.

*"I set my face  
To the road before me,  
To the work that I shall see,  
To the death that I shall get."*

Pearse was a master of the Irish tongue and founder of St. Enda's Bilingual School. On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, he would stand on the steps of the General Post Office (GPO), Sackville Street, now O'Connell Street, about noon and declare: "The Republic of Ireland." The statement was signed in the name of the Provisional Government by seven men: Thomas J. Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, P.H. Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, James Connolly and Joseph Plunkett. A more incredible group of revolutionaries would be difficult to imagine than these seven: poets, dreamers, idealists and academics as they were:

- Pearse: Teacher, Gaelic poet, Barrister, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Republic.
- Connolly: Socialist, advocate for the inarticulate poor, Commander of all Volunteer forces in Dublin.
- Clarke: Newsagent, tobacconist, 16 of his 59 years spent in English prisons.
- MacDiarmada: Sinn Fein, IRB organizer, tubercular, limping with a stick.
- MacDonagh: Tutor University College Dublin, poet, loving the poetry of Frances Thompson.
- Ceannt: Intellectual, teacher, Irish war pipe player before Pope Pius X in Rome.
- Plunkett: Editor, author, planner, strategist, dying from tuberculosis.

The GPO was seized. Posters of the Declaration were all over Dublin's buildings and walls. The fighting started. Michael Collins, then a staff captain and adjutant to Joseph Plunkett was described as cool and efficient, helping Pearse and Connolly at GPO H.Q. Daly at 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Four Courts. MacDonagh, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Jacob's Biscuit Factory. DeValera, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion at Boland's Mills. Ceannt, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion South Dublin Union, Marrow Bone Distillery. Mallin and Countess Markievicz, combined their Volunteers, at Stephen's Green. The fighting was desperate, at times hand to hand, lasting for five days. Outnumbered by the British forces ten to one, they fought on.

The British brought in reinforcements from England, Belfast, and the Curragh. Heavy guns were brought up, including the naval gunboat Helga on the river Liffey pulverizing Sackville Street. The streets around the GPO were littered with dead horses, civilians and soldiers on both sides. By Friday the GPO was totally in flames. It was chaos. The military situation was untenable with mounting casualties. At 3:45 p.m. Saturday April 29, 1916, Padriac Pearse as Commandant General surrendered all forces unconditionally. The leaders of the uprising were rounded up. By May 15, 1916, 15 were shot by firing squad in Kilmainham Jail. All seven of the men who had signed the Republic Declaration were shot first. James Connolly, whose right femur was shattered and who could not stand, was placed on a chair then shot.



British retribution then accomplished what the volunteers could not. The majority of the Irish people, who had viewed the uprising with disbelief and scorn, suddenly had modern day martyrs and heroes. What began as rebellion, became a revolution, leading to another six years of bloody strife.

Meanwhile large numbers of prisoners were sentenced to life imprisonment, among them deValera and Collins. The former was not shot as he was American and England needed America to enter the war in Europe. Collins was barely known. Both were shipped to England and Collins was later moved to Frongoch in Wales. On December 22, 1916 under pressure from America, Ireland and England, all prisoners were released and they returned home in time for Christmas. The Ireland to which Collins returned had changed, the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster no longer spoke for the people. Sinn Féin saw its opportunity, electing deValera with a large majority in East Clare, starting his climb to power.

## *Collins' rise to power*

During the years 1917-1920, Michael Collins held many positions but most importantly, intelligence chief. He was at one time an object of a £10,000 reward, an incredible sum in those days, yet Collins was never captured or betrayed. Collins wore no disguise, and moved around Dublin on foot or bicycle, unrecognized. He would at times have access to information of raids being made on Sinn Féin or IRA suspects, before the raiding parties got their orders from Dublin Castle, such was his penetration of British intelligence. British mail was tapped and secretaries slipped contents of communiqués to Collins' runners. He had spies in the regular British army, RIC, Auxiliaries and even the hated and dreaded Black and Tans. There was a constant stream of raids, killings, counter raids and killings; literally no one in Dublin was safe, many innocent civilians were killed.

Then came *Bloody Sunday*. IRA forces under Collins killed 17 British spies in their hotel rooms. The group killed had been recruited from a British officer group in Cairo. Retribution came the same afternoon of November 21, 1920. Auxiliaries drove up to Croke Park during a Gaelic football game and machine gunned the crowd of men, women and children. Fourteen were killed and many wounded.

Eventually the Lloyd George's Government put out feelers to deValera who mainly ignored them. Finally in return for a truce, Lloyd George released all prisoners and on July 11, 1921 fighting stopped. By October 11, 1921 the situation had resolved to where a conference in London was to start. Five members representing the Irish people were chosen: Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, Robert Barton, Eamonn Duggan, and George Gavan Duffy. DeValera did not go, he was already sure that he would not get the Republic he wanted. Cathal Brugha refused to go too. DeValera and Brugha remained in Dublin, Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith went to London. Collins was trapped, a soldier, not a politician, he did not want to go. He was exhausted from five years of war and he went reluctantly.

The British delegation consisted of seven members: The Prime Minister David Lloyd George, a lawyer who eventually served 55 years in Parliament. Sir Austen Chamberlain, half-brother of Neville, son of Joseph, he would share the Nobel Peace Prize in 1925 with Charles G. Dawes, in 1921 Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Birkenhead, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain. Sir Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary for Ireland. Winston S. Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies. Sir L. Worthington Evans, and Sir Gordon Hewart.

Erskine Childers was the Chief Secretary for the Irish delegation. Neither Griffith, nor Collins trusted Childers. During the months of discussion that followed, Childers would secretly feed reports to deValera and Brugha in Dublin. Thomas Jones was the Chief Secretary for the British. Early on the British delegation spotted the rift in the Irish panel, not only in London, but also between Griffith, Collins, deValera and Brugha in Dublin. The British exploited every angle of the Irish rifts. During the next two months, the discussions dragged on. The Irish knew they would not achieve a Republic. The English knew that the empire depended on the outcome. Two main problems faced the negotiators of both sides: 1) the six counties of Ulster (Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, Fermanagh and Londonderry) controlled by the 1920 Partition Act, and 2) The oath of allegiance to be sworn by the Irish.

When the treaty was signed December 6, 1921, Ireland would be the Irish Free State, not a Republic. The six counties could join the Free State or remain as an integral part of Great Britain, with a Boundary Commission

to be set up, and had a month to decide. A watered-down oath, acknowledging the King as head of the association of the member countries of the British Empire, was agreed to. Ireland now had a form of dominion status, but no Republic. The return of the Irish delegation was ordered by deValera for a cabinet meeting and vote. The result was four to three for the treaty, the Dial ratified by 64 to 57: deValera walked out and Griffith was elected to the presidency of the Dial unanimously.

There was a major division in the country, anti-treaty groups vs. pro-treaty groups. The anti group supported deValera and Brugha: these were ultra-patriots, who wanted no oath and the six counties. Collins and Griffith, were patriots, who delivered the treaty as a first step toward independence as a Republic. Collins recognized that they would not get the six counties. Ireland was drifting toward civil war.

The withdrawals began; British troops, Auxiliaries, Black and Tans leaving. Into this vacuum stepped four Irish groups: 1) The Provisional Government, 2) The Dial or Irish Parliament, 3) The Republican Party of deValera, and 4) a splinter group of the Volunteers under O'Connor, called the Irish Republican Army. With civil war approaching, on May 20, 1922, Collins and deValera came to an agreement granting virtually all of the latter's demands, in an attempt to prevent civil war. There was throughout the country a sigh of relief.

On June 16, 1922, a general election was held. The overall voting results were pro-treaty 93, anti-treaty 35. The people, almost three to one, had spoken. On June 22, 1922, Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson was assassinated in London. Churchill and Lloyd George threatened war. IRA troops under O'Connor seized the four courts in Dublin, and then kidnapped General O'Connell, Deputy Chief of the National Army. Collins as Commander-In Chief of the army acted. In fighting in the Hamman Building, now in flames from heavy guns directed by Major General Emmet Dalton, Cathal Brugha died. Wounded at the GPO in 1916, he had parts of seventeen bullet and shrapnel fragments in his body.

By July, 1922 the fighting was over. Harry Boland was killed on July 31, 1922; before he died he asked to be buried next to Cathal Brugha. Collins suppressed Kerry, Limerick and Cork. August 12, 1922, Arthur Griffith died of a massive cerebral stroke. Collins had lost three of his colleagues within less than six weeks, two of whom, Brugha and Boland, had opposed him. Boland and Collins had been the closest of friends, picking the strawberry beds together in Dublin, in happier times.

Collins commenced an inspection tour arriving Sunday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1922 at Mallow Co. Cork, where Collins inspected the garrison under Commandant Flood. They returned to Cork City about 8 p.m. Monday, the 21<sup>st</sup> was spent in Cork City inspecting military posts during the morning. In the afternoon they visited Macroom meeting with Commandant Conlon. They had trouble with the armoured car and at 8 p.m. returned to Cork City for repairs.

On Tuesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1922, Michael Collins' last day alive, they left Cork City at about 6:30 a.m. The party was in a convoy of four or five vehicles, certainly four: a motorcycle scout, Lt. Smith, a Crossley Tender containing two officers, two machine gunners and eight riflemen. According to one of the party, Corry, there were two Crossley tenders with ten men in each following the scout. These were followed by a Leyland Thomas, straight eight-cylinder touring car, with a folding top, in which rode in the back seat on the left, behind the co-driver, the Commander-In-Chief of the Irish National Army, General Michael Collins. On the right in the back seat behind the driver of the right-hand drive vehicle, sat Major General Emmet Dalton. The co-drivers were Quinn and Corry. Behind these four vehicles was a heavy Rolls-Royce Whippet, fully armoured car called *Slievenamon*, whose Gaelic name translates to "The mountain of women". The driver of the armoured car was a Scot, MacPeake, who was the only person who knew how to operate and repair it.

They traveled from Skibbereen to Bandon, where Collins spoke briefly with Garrison Commander Sean Hales and went in the direction of Clonakilty, where within one mile they found downed trees blocking the road. The party attempted to clear the obstruction, but left and found another route to Clonakilty. There they breakfasted, Collins ordering the tree removal, and went four miles to Sam's Cross, where he showed his old home, destroyed by Black and Tans, and discussed family matters. At six-o'clock in the evening, the convoy reentered Skibbereen. The local garrison reviewed, Collins departed from the Eldon Hotel heading for Clonakilty.



*At this point of the article  
the author digresses...*

Richard Roycroft, my great-grandfather, built the house at 49 Townshend Street, Skibbereen, Co. Cork, Ireland.

He owned the steam mill on Ilen Street opposite the West Cork Hotel. It was originally a Marmion mill, owned by the Wolfes of Ilen House. His son Thomas Ross Roycroft, born at 49 Townshend Street, first married Frances Eleanor Wolfe, who died in 1899.

In 1902, Thomas Ross Roycroft, at age 46, married Mary Jane (Jennie) Johnson, age 18. In 1908, one hundred and one years ago, my father George Trevor Ross Roycroft was born. In 1922 my father was 14-years-old. In that year, Irish Free State Regulars were billeted at 49 Townshend Street, by order of the new Provisional Government. Many years later, the Irish Free State Government would reimburse Thomas Ross Roycroft, my grandfather and his wife Jennie for all the expenses of room and board at 49 Townshend Street during 1922.

*Above right* is a picture of the house as it was in 1922, and again, in snow, in a photograph taken on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1994, virtually unchanged.

In this photo (*right*) taken in August 1922 in the large back garden of number 49 (having full grass tennis courts), my father aged 14 is shown with Irish Free State (IFS) rifle and ammunition bandoliers; an IFS badge in his left lapel.







In this photo (*left*) he has been asked by the commanding IFS officer to kneel fully armed in the front row, extreme left. He is home in Skibbereen from Rydal School, Colwyn Bay, North Wales, for the summer having just passed his fourteenth birthday on March 29, 1922.

All of the men in the photo were local IFS. They would have known both my grandfather and father. Neither they nor their relatives in the very large house were harmed, although all sorts of killings, settling of old scores and outright murder, were happening daily all over Ireland. No one trusted anyone. County Cork was almost united in its opposition to the treaty and a strong supporter of the IRA units of Rory O'Connor. My father and grandmother often told me tales of the times and area. It was truly a very frightening era for all.

Of the photograph (*bottom left*) and its enlargement (*next page*) of a crowd outside the Eldon Hotel Skibbereen, much can be said. They were taken about 6 p.m. on Tuesday, August 22, 1922, from the upstairs window of the chemist shop owned by Mr. Lester. They show a Leyland Thomas touring car with soft top down and the windscreen up. The driver is Corry, behind him General Emmet Dalton is settling into his seat on the right side. Michael Collins with his great coat on and his general insignia showing is just about to enter and sit in the back seat. Quinn and Corry both drove the Leyland Thomas, which was a very fast car. Collins and Dalton sat side-by-side.



*Photograph taken from the upper floor of Lester's chemist shop. Scene: Eldon Hotel, Skibbereen, Co. Cork, Emmet Dalton, Brig. General about to sit down behind the driver Corry. My father Trevor Ross is in Rydal College school cap white collar and jacket (marked with X), he is 12 feet from Collins. The car is a straight 8 cylinder Leyland Thomas*

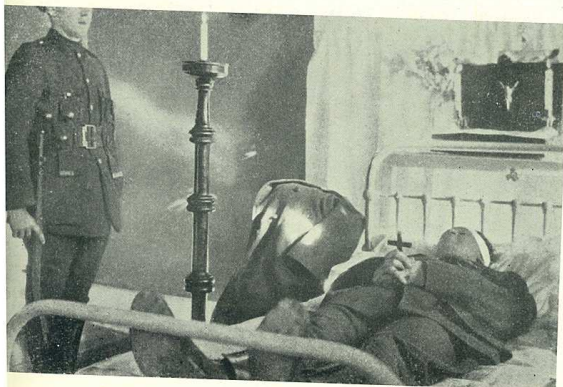




*In this enlargement (above), my father, Trevor (circled), is shown next to the large front headlamp on the right side of the vehicle.* He is readily distinguishable, at the outskirts of the crowd with his school jacket, white shirt collar and blue Rydall School cap. He told me he was about 12 feet from Collins and that soon afterwards the convoy left Skibbereen for the Bandon area, in the Clonakilty direction. Within two hours of his departure from the Eldon Hotel, Collins would be killed by IRA Irregular Forces in an ambush. It is an historic photograph being the last one taken of Collins alive.



The body of Michael Collins at Cork, shortly after the ambush



The body of Michael Collins at Cork  
(Note hob-nailed boots)

They entered an area known as *Beal na mBlath*, which in translation is "The mouth of flowers". Rounding a blind corner they came under heavy rifle and machine gun fire. Dalton ordered "Drive!!" Collins ordered, "Stop and fight them!" This was typical of Collins but fateful, in that he would die in this ambush a few minutes later. There was heavy firing ahead as the Crossley Tender(s) engaged the enemy. The armoured car backed up to deliver machine gun fire, at firing coming from the left. The gun jammed and the operator notified Dalton, "Gun jammed". Soon the firing died down and Collins stood up from his prone position to reload. A single shot was heard and Collins fell. Heavy firing restarted at the group and it would be ten minutes before his party, taking murderous fire, could reach him. Collins was dead. He had a horrible wound near his left ear, whether this was an exit or entry wound will never be

*Above: Body of Michael Collins (with head bandage)*

known as no autopsy was ever performed. The ambush anti-treaty forces were lead by Tom Hales, whose brother Séan Hales was the commander of the I.F.S. garrison at Bandon. Both brothers were old friends of Collins, now on opposite sides of the civil war.

The touring car was disabled. The armoured car was stuck in deep mud. The group carried Collins across fields to the Crossley Tender, returning to Cork City early in the morning of August 23, 1922. There was a nationwide outpouring of grief, even from those who opposed him. His body lay in state at Dublin City Hall, where thousands paid homage. On the trip to Glasnevin Cemetery, street flower vendors stopped the cortège, placing a wreath on his coffin as it passed Nelson's Column.

The last three lines of the poem Envoy by Francis Thompson, could be the epitaph for all who died for Irish independence:

*“And if men ask you why ye smile and sorrow,  
Tell them ye grieve, for your hearts know Today,  
Tell them ye smile, for your eyes know Tomorrow.”*

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Note: Rex Taylor sent this proof copy to my aunt Mrs. F.E. Bennett at her home in Shannonvale, Clonakilty prior to publication as Shannonvale is mentioned on numerous occasions in the book. Mrs. Bennett was a student at Trinity College Dublin during the Easter week uprising, graduating B.A. 1917. She was expert on the Skibbereen/Clonakilty/Shannonvale/West Cork area and times, living there from 1890 until her death in 1978.
20. The poem: "Envoy", Francis Thompson 1859-1907.
21. My daughter Nancy D. Roycroft, typed and proofread the article.



## *Potters' Last Resting Places*

*- by Paul Tubb*

On our way to the excellent North New Jersey Convention back in April Pat, Patrick and I stopped off for a day in Trenton NJ where we met up with Scott Anderson and Judie Wells who had been helping us with our research into the Belleek men who went over to the Trenton potteries in the 1880s and 90s. We were particularly interested in visiting the graves of William Bromley, William W Gallimore and Ebenezer W Swann and, with help from Scott, Judie and the authorities, we found all three.

Regrettably, we discovered that although the plots are identifiable from the cemetery plans there is no grave marker at any of them. The Gallimore and Swann graves in Riverview cemetery are surrounded by monuments to the Moses family and the Lenox family but only William's grandson, Donald Gallimore, has a stone marker and he is buried in his mother's family plot. Similarly at Greenwood cemetery there is no marker for the Bromley family grave.

We feel that these men had such a major influence on our pottery at Belleek that we should, as collectors and therefore to some extent heirs, seek to rectify this state of affairs for the benefit of succeeding collectors. Consequently we wrote to the authorities at both cemeteries to seek their guidance on how best to proceed and what tasks we would have to fulfil in order to provide a suitable memorial at these grave sites.

We have heard back from the Riverside cemetery and it seems that there would be a requirement to pay a care charge for each of Gallimore and Swann's grave sites which has not been paid for many years. This could be subsumed into a perpetual care charge of \$575 for each site. These charges would have to be met before any monument or tablet was erected at the sites.

We still await a response from Greenwood regarding the Bromley family grave but now anticipate that there is likely to be a similar response from them also.

Readers of our articles on the lives of these men will be aware that there is unlikely to be any Bromley heirs still living in the USA, but there may be a few Gallimores around and we have made contact with some descendants of Swann's third wife. However in so far as the charges for upkeep of the graves have not been met since the early part of the last century any monument or tablet we would wish to erect is unlikely to be financed except by our collectors society.

Our question to you is therefore; Do you wish that the BCIS membership should seek to mark the graves of these pioneers of Belleek pottery and will we be able to raise the funds necessary to do so ?

Finally, in case it comes about, is there any member of the society who is or was a monumental mason ? [We are really only anticipating a small plaque].

We may be contacted through the UK group website at [trenton@belleek.org.uk](mailto:trenton@belleek.org.uk)

*Pat and Paul have been tireless in their research into the potters and decorators who worked at Belleek, those who stayed in Belleek, who returned to Stoke-on-Trent or who emigrated to Trenton, New Jersey or elsewhere in the USA. Recently (in 2007 for the Pottery's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary), a memorial to William Henshall has been placed in the churchyard in Belleek where Robert Armstrong is also commemorated. This is an issue of some importance to all of us who have an interest in the Pottery's history and it would be gratifying to think that those who ended their lives in the USA could also receive some care and recognition. Please get in touch with Paul if you are interested or can offer assistance.*

*- Editor.*

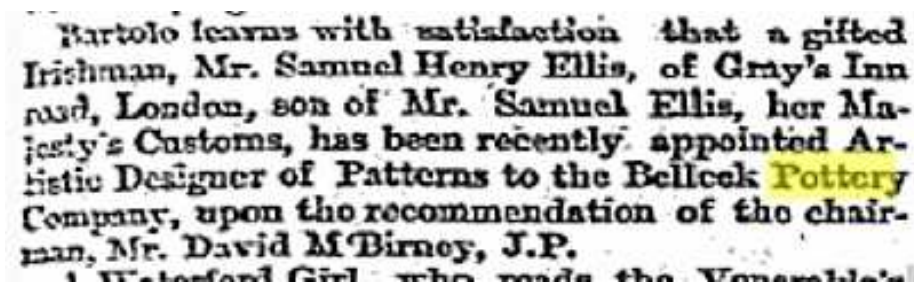
## Samuel Henry Ellis – Painter

by Pat & Paul Tubb

In our previous article for the Newsletter in March of 2009 we listed names of the Staffordshire Pottery workers that had been recorded as being at Belleek in the early years of the pottery. One such name is that of J Ellis who is recorded in both the Jenks manuscript and by Marion Langham as having been a painter who came over with Bromley in 1863, painted “The Shoeing of the Bay Mare” and was said to be the tutor of Eugene Sheerin.

We have been unable to find any certain reference to a painter by the name of J Ellis in our English census or BMD (Births, Marriages and Deaths) records, but we have come across one called Samuel Henry Ellis and we have also found that two of his and his wife’s children were born in Belleek whilst their father was employed in the pottery as an artist. There is no indication in the Jenks manuscript nor in Marion Langham’s book as to the provenance of the information they record about J Ellis so that we wonder if J Ellis and our Samuel Henry Ellis are, perchance, one and the same? When written in mid-victorian handwriting the capital letters for J and S can look remarkably similar, which could indicate that there might be a mis-representation which has been repeated in the sources.

The other facts recorded about Ellis are his representation of Landseer’s Shoeing of the Bay Mare on a 10 ¼ inch round wall plaque made of Belleek earthenware pottery and that he is reputed to have been the tutor of the young Eugene Sheerin. Now, Eugene was born in 1855 and would, therefore, have only been 8 when J Ellis is said to have come to the pottery in 1863. Beverly and Chris Marvell have alerted us to a report in the Irish Times of May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1877, reproduced *below*, which records the appointment of Samuel Henry Ellis to the pottery, as Artistic Designer of Patterns.



This date fits rather better with the career of Eugene Sheerin who is said by Degenhardt to have come to the pottery in 1878. In the light of this, we think that the Ellis who tutored Sheerin is almost certainly Samuel Henry Ellis.

To confirm our supposition, or otherwise, we asked Audrey Whitty, the Curator of the Ceramic and Glass division of the National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks in Dublin, to look at the two plaques in their possession representing “The Shoeing of the Bay Mare” and to let us know if there was any signature on the plaques and, if so, could it be deciphered. Her answer is that “They are both signed ‘S.Ellis’ in the bottom left hand corner of the painting itself.” Audrey adds in explanation “i.e. on the front rather than on the underside of the piece.” In response to a further e-mail from us she also confirmed that both plaques carry first period marks.

We think that this information confirms our supposition that the Ellis referred to as painting “The Shoeing” [which, incidentally, is Landseer’s title for his original painting in 1844] and as being the tutor of Eugene Sheerin is Samuel Henry Ellis whose appointment to the staff of the pottery is, possibly uniquely, recorded in the Irish Times for May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1877. That there may, indeed, have been a J Ellis who came over with Bromley in 1863 is unaffected by these findings except in so far as what is attributed to him by Jenks and Marion Langham is, we think, incorrect attribution.

For the sake of completion, in so far as we can ‘complete’ these things, we should mention that in her ‘Dictionary of Ceramic Artists’ Vega Wilkinson does give details of a painter named J Ellis who was at work in the Staffordshire Potteries and winning medals during the 1870s and 80s. She does not say anything about his having worked at Belleek but the possibility of him being there in the mid 1860s cannot be discounted.



However, in the light of other information as recorded here, we are quite confident that it was Samuel Henry Ellis who did the particular work at Belleek that is noted by Jenks and Langham.

To return, then, to the details of Samuel's life we would wish to take issue also with the reporter of the Irish Times in so far as we think that Samuel was actually born in England, in Dimsdale near Cheadle to be precise, on March 12<sup>th</sup> 1851. Dimsdale is now called Dimmingsdale and is a most beautiful spot in North Staffordshire and is just along the Red Road from Oakamoor to Alton where we spent part of our early married life. His birth certificate calls his birthplace Dimsdale, but we feel sure that the change of name is simply due to the passage of time.



*Dimmingsdale Pool which would have fed the mill house*

The record in the census of that same year, taken on March 30<sup>th</sup> 1851, also gives the address as 'Dims Dale' and records young Samuel Henry as being just 2 weeks old. The head of the household is his grandfather, John Adams, a 59 year old Miller. John's wife, Elizabeth, aged 60, their daughter, Eliza, aged 24 and the Ellis family consisting of Caroline Ellis, John and Elizabeth's daughter, aged 22 and her children, Adeline Louisa aged 2 and noted as having been born in Ireland, but as a British Subject, with our Samuel Henry completing the household listing. No occupation is noted for the grandmother nor either of her daughters.

The absence of Samuel Henry's father is accounted for by his occupation which, as recorded on his son's birth certificate and in the Newspaper article above, is a Customs House Officer. The fact of Adeline having been born in Ireland and the complete absence from the English records of any reference to the father, Samuel, leads us to think that his service may well have been with the Irish customs whose records reside in Dublin and to which we have not yet had recourse and this may also be the origin of the Irish Times writer's assertion that Samuel Henry was an Irishman.

We have been unable to find the Ellis family for certain in the 1861 UK census index, which may be evidence that they lived in Ireland in accordance with the needs of their father's job. Nor have we been able to find the record of Samuel and Caroline Adams marriage and this, too, may have indicated that it occurred in Ireland. However, how they met, when Caroline's father was a miller in a remote Staffordshire village, remained a mystery to us.

Until, that is, we unearthed a marriage certificate for a marriage of Samuel Ellis to Caroline Adams at St Peter's church in Stoke on Trent on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1853. Why four years after the birth of Adeline in Ireland? Why, too, in Stoke with which there is no apparent family connection? Another question is raised by Caroline's father being given the occupation of 'Baker and Grocer' on the certificate. In the 1841 census, when the family was living in Lower Street, Newcastle under Lyme, he was a Miller just as he was in Dimsdale in 1851. Also in the 1871 census return his occupation is given as Corn Miller and he is resident, as a widower, with his daughter Eliza, now married, in Hill Street, Tinkersclough, Hanley. To confuse matters further there is, in the 1861 census, a John Adams living in Tinkersclough with his wife, Elizabeth, and he is listed as a grocer.

We cannot be certain that we have found the right answers to these questions and so can only surmise as to the circumstances which surrounded the early life of Samuel Henry. It seems likely that, given his father's occupation, the family may well have been living in Ireland at the time of the 1861 UK census which would, at least, account for their non appearance in that document.

The next thing about which we can be sure is that Samuel Henry Ellis appears in the list of apprentices at Mintons in Stoke from 1866 to 1871 as recorded in the Dictionary of Minton by Atterbury and Batkin. There is no further information about him so that he almost certainly did not proceed into Minton's employ when his apprenticeship was over but we can be reasonably sure that his time there would have provided him with an excellent grounding in pottery production and, in particular, decoration.

In the 1871 census Samuel Henry is living with the Hastings family in Hanley and styles himself 'Artist'. The house is 41 Charles Street and the householder is John Hastings a 24 year old China Warehouseman. Samuel Henry gives his birthplace as Alton, Staffs which is the closest village to Dimmingsdale. This John Hastings had a younger sister, Mary, who was at the time of the census living with their widowed mother, a china dealer, at Fountain Square, Hanley.

This connection with the Hastings family must have led on to other things because on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1876 Mary Hastings and Samuel Henry Ellis were married at the Wesleyan Chapel in Hanley. Samuel Henry's occupation is given as 'Potters Painter' and he was at the time resident at 108 Grays Inn Road, Holborn, London whilst his father, Samuel, is said to be a Customs House Officer.

None of the family are listed at this address in the 1871 or 1881 censuses, nor can we be sure at which pottery Samuel Henry is employed. The London address may have been that of his parents at the time and not necessarily where he was living himself, although the newspaper clip referred to above would seem to indicate that Samuel Henry was indeed at that address. It is in the following year that he and Mary head off for Belleek and he takes up the post of 'Artistic Designer of Patterns' on the recommendation of David McBirney.



*The Hastings China Shop in Fountains square*

It seems to us quite probable that Samuel Ellis, the Customs House Officer, and David McBirney, the Dublin businessman, would have met and possibly become friends in the course of their business. That McBirney is prepared to introduce his friend's son into the business in which he has such a large monetary interest and at such a seemingly prestigious level indicates that Samuel Henry had, almost certainly, been producing decorative work of a very high standard. We would think, too, that the pottery had indicated a need for a person of such skills to be recruited because, in the ordinary course of things, we think it is unlikely that David McBirney would have been involved in matters of personnel recruitment.

Thus Samuel and his new bride arrived in Belleek at some time in 1877 and their first child, Samuel John Hastings Ellis, was born there on December 3<sup>rd</sup> that year (*see the birth certificate below*). Their first and, as it turned out, their only daughter, Florence Emmeline, was also born in Belleek on August 12<sup>th</sup> 1879 although at her registration her names had not been agreed upon and were added to the certificate two and a half weeks later (*see the birth certificate at the top of the next page*). Samuel Henry is recorded on both certificates as

Superintendent Registrar's District <u>Ballyshannon</u>				Registrar's District <u>Belleek</u>						
BIRTHS Registered in the District of <u>Belleek</u> in the Union of <u>Ballyshannon</u> in the County of <u>Fermanagh</u>										
No. (1)	Date and Time of Birth (2)	Name of boy (3)	Sex (4)	Name and Residence and Distinguishing of Father (5)	Name and Residence and Distinguishing of Mother (6)	Rank or Profession of Father (7)	Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Registrar (8)	When Registered (9)	Signature of Registrar (10)	Signature of Registrar or other person in charge of the District (11)
382	<u>Third</u> <u>December</u> <u>13. 77</u> <u>Belleek</u>	<u>Samuel</u> <u>John</u> <u>Hastings</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>Samuel</u> <u>Henry</u> <u>Ellis</u> <u>Belleek</u>	<u>Mary</u> <u>Ellis</u> <u>formerly</u> <u>Hastings</u>	<u>Artist</u>	<u>Samuel Henry</u> <u>Ellis</u> <u>Father</u> <u>Belleek</u>	<u>E. Devault</u> <u>Deputy Registrar</u> <u>18-77</u>	<u>William</u> <u>Inman</u>  <u>Registrar</u>	



simply 'Artist' without reference to his position in the factory which is the first indication we get that there may have been some journalistic license involved in the piece from the Irish Times.

Superintendent Registrar's District <u>Ballyshannon</u>				Registrar's District <u>Belleek</u>						
BIRTHS Registered in the District of <u>Belleek</u> in the Union of <u>Ballyshannon</u> in the County of <u>Fermanagh</u>										
No. (1)	Date and Time of Birth (2)	Name (if any) (3)	Sex (4)	Name and Residence and Domicile place of Father (5)	Name and Residence and Domicile place of Mother (6)	Rank or Profession of Father (7)	Signature, Qualification, and Residence of Registrar (8)	When Registered (9)	Signature of Registrar (10)	Register, Volume, and Page (11)
62	18 <sup>th</sup> August Belleek	—	M	Samuel Henry Mary Ellis Belleek	Mary Mary Ellis Belleek	Artist	Saml Henry Ellis Father Belleek	Twenty Second William August 1879	James William 1879	Volume 1879

From the Hastings family gravestone in Hanley cemetery, as shown *below right*, we know that Samuel Henry and Mary had another son, Arthur. We cannot find reference to his birth in the English registers which leads us to believe that he too was born in Ireland towards the end of 1881. On the gravestone his death is recorded as occurring on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1882 and his age is given as 14 months.

It must be, then, that Samuel Henry and Mary left Belleek, probably at some time in 1882 as Arthur died of pneumonia at 88 Charles Street, Hanley. Why did they leave? There are a number of possible answers that are indicated by our researches so far. Perhaps having a sickly child, Arthur, encouraged them to return to the family base in England. Or perhaps the death of David McBirney, who had introduced Samuel Henry into the pottery and was therefore seen as his patron, made his life there less comfortable. It may be that many things in their lives were conducive to their making this decision.

During Samuel Henry's five years at Belleek he painted at least two copies of the Shoeing of the Bay Mare plaque, both of which are at the Collins Barracks site of the National Museum of Ireland and he would also have been involved with Eugene Sheerin's early introduction to pottery painting. The training he had received at Minton's in Stoke would probably have been the basis for whatever tutoring he did for Eugene. As mentioned earlier, Eugene joined the pottery in 1878 so would have had four years working with Samuel Henry before the latter left to return to England. In the light of his subsequent career in England we wonder if Samuel recognised the limitations of his own skills when compared to Sheerin's accomplishments and this also may have been a factor in his decision to return to Stoke on Trent when he did.



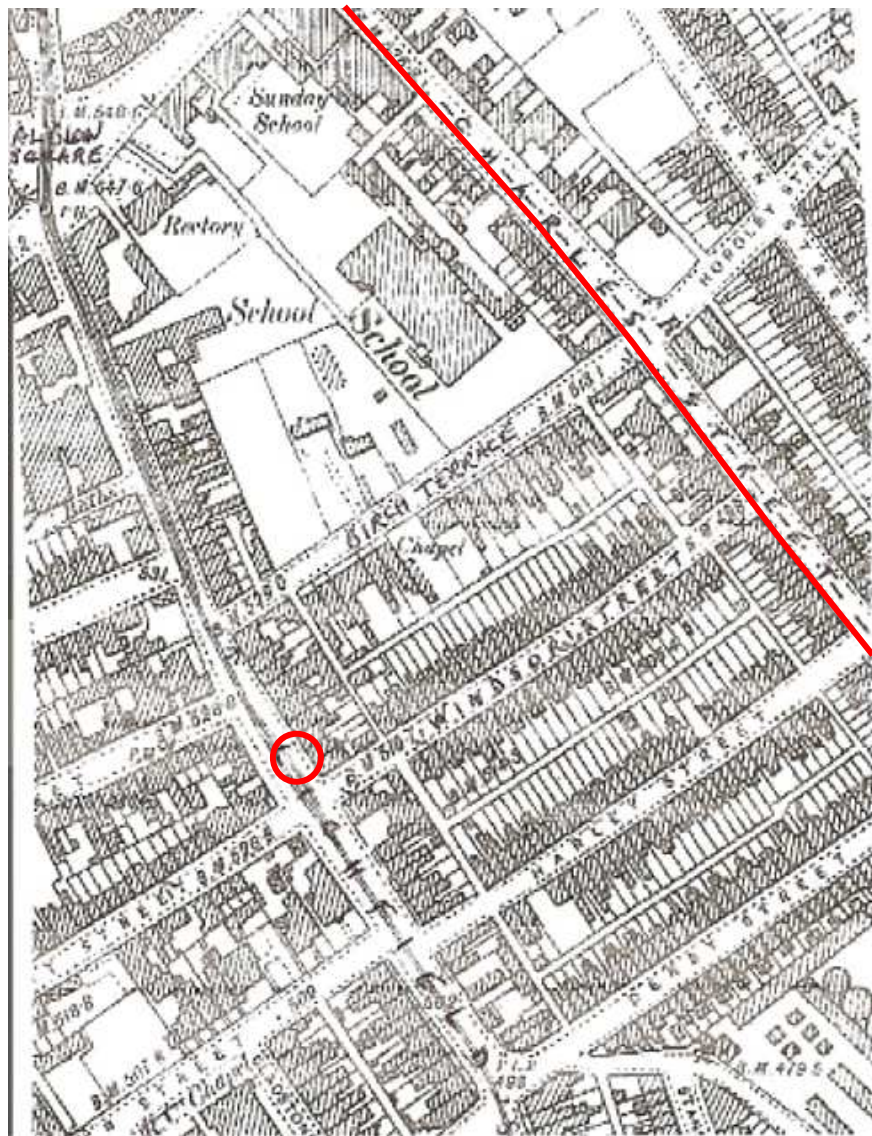
We also have to remember that the 1880s in Ireland were a time of increasing tension between the indigenous population and their rulers in Dublin Castle and Westminster. The rise of Fenianism and other movements may have led Samuel and Mary to have concerns for their young family and this, too, may well have been a factor in



their decision to return to England in 1882. Given all of these things and maybe more besides about which we know little or nothing, the decision was made and the family returned to Stoke on Trent in 1882.

Another son, Harry, was born at 88 Charles Street, Hanley on October 7<sup>th</sup> 1883 but, as evidenced by the Hastings gravestone, he only survived for two months and died on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1883 of convulsions. His death was certified by the deputy coroner for the borough of Hanley so must have been entirely unexpected. Samuel's occupation is given as Potter's Designer on the two earliest of these certificates but as Artist at the time of Harry's death. On January 29<sup>th</sup> 1886 another son, Frank, was born at 88 Charles Street, Hanley and Samuel's occupation is now shown as Potter's Painter. The final child in the family, Alfred Robert, was born at 88 Charles Street on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1888 and on this certificate Samuel Henry's occupation has reverted to 'Potters Designer'. *Charles Street is shown by the red line on the map below left.*

By the time of the 1891 census the family had moved just a short distance, as shown on the accompanying map



*left* of 1898, to 13 Lichfield Street (*red circle on map*) where Samuel Henry had taken over the running of a studio and is designated an 'Artist and Photographer'. With the parents are the remaining children, Samuel John, Florence, Frank and Alfred. There was also a general servant in the house, Mary Cooper aged 36 and from Shropshire, presumably assisting Mary in the running of the household whilst the children were still so young. Samuel John and Florence are recorded as having been born in Ireland, but nothing more specific than that. John Hockey, a photographer, is recorded at the address in the 1880 Kelly's Directory, but in the 1881 census return the premises at 13 Lichfield Street had been occupied by a house painter named John Lockett.

We have to ask what persuaded Samuel Henry to take up with the relatively new art of Photography? In the nine years since returning to Stoke from Belleek the birth and death certificates of his children record him as a Potters Designer or as a Potter's Painter. Had he found it difficult to find and keep work in his profession in the pottery industry at that time? Or, perhaps in the light of his experiences at Belleek had he, as suggested earlier, come to realise that his capabilities in this work were limited and that he would not become a first class decorator? Or, again, had he come into contact with photography and been enchanted by this new art form to the extent that he made himself into a competent practitioner sufficiently well to take on his own business of which photography was to become a major part?

Tragedy again struck the family when on February seventeenth 1900 their 20 year old daughter, Florence Emmeline, who had been born in Belleek, died. Her death certificate states that she died from Hodgkins disease from which she had suffered for 18 months. She is described as 'Daughter of Samuel Henry Ellis, Photographer' and her father is the informant of the death which had occurred at 13 Lichfield Street. Hodgkins



disease had been so named in 1832 and is a form of cancer of the lymphnodes. It is currently one form of cancer which can usually be effectively treated but in 1900 this would have been far from the case. A year later in the 1901 census return the family are recorded at 13 Lichfield Street still and Samuel Henry gives his occupation as simply "Photographer". For the first time in an official document he has ceased to call himself an artist or painter. He records that he is an employer working from home and his eldest son Samuel John is also recorded as a photographer working at home. Once again the entry simply records Samuel John's place of birth as being Ireland and his father's as Alton, Staffordshire.

In the autumn of 1902 Samuel John married Beatrice Rathbone Powis from Burslem and it looks as if they moved to live in the Cobridge/Burslem part of the city where they are recorded in the 1911 census living at 10 Grange Street with their son, John, and Beatrice's widowed father and her sister, Florence. Samuel John still gives his occupation as "Photographic Artist General Assistant" but we cannot be clear whether he is still assisting his father back in Lichfield Street, Hanley, or has joined a more local photographer in Burslem. Grange Street is off Waterloo Road in Cobridge. He is noted as having been born in Belleek, Co Fermanagh, Ireland. Young John is recorded as being three years old and was born in Cobridge. The father and sister in law are working in the pottery trade as a cup maker and a gilder respectively.

Samuel Henry and his wife, Mary, are still living at 13 Lichfield Street with their youngest son Alfred Robert. Samuel Henry now styles himself a "Photographic Artist" and his son simply states he is "Assisting in the Business". Samuel gives his birthplace as being Dinnsdale Staffs and, as we know, the marriage is noted as having lasted 34 years. Their other son, Frank, had married Ada Adderley in the autumn of 1909.

### *Top of Lichfield Street in 2009*

The premises at 13 Lichfield Street, which the family occupied for upwards of 25 years, no longer exist and were swept away by redevelopment of the area to provide Hanley with its new bus station. The map shows that the shop and house would have been some yards south of the Albion Inn, which still stands on the corner of Lichfield Street and Albion Square, and from the census returns we know that the area was a busy road fronted by a number of retail premises. Opposite were the public baths and the passage of trams down Lichfield Street towards Victoria Road and Fenton would have helped to make it an area full of people during the working day and the Albion would have kept it so during the evening hours as well. The tram tracks can be clearly seen on the map.



*Houses in Birch Terrace (see next page)*

During these years his photography business is recorded in the Trade Directories on the shelves of the library in Hanley. Keates directory of 1892/93 records Samuel Henry under their heading of Artists" and the sub-division "Photographers". There is no mention of the business in the 1887 Postal Directory of the Potteries which gives us, probably, the earliest date at which the family moved into Lichfield Street and the photography business began as being 1889 or 1900. Kelly's 1896 directory mentions Samuel Henry of 13 Lichfield Street both under "Hanley" and under "Photographers". Kelly's 1907 and 1912 directories list him at that same address under "Photographers". There is, however, no entry for him in the 1921 directory which probably indicates that he had ceased to trade by then and had 'retired' to Windsor Street.

Windsor Street used to run parallel to and south of Birch Terrace and lay roughly where that section of Potteries Way now runs. The houses there would have looked similar to those shown (*bottom of previous page*) in Birch Terrace in 2009. It was in number 62 Windsor Street that both Mary and Samuel Henry died in late 1927. Samuel Henry's death certificate shows that he had died on December 16th that year and records him as a 76 year old Photographer and the cause of death is threefold, firstly Pyels-Nephritis, secondly Gangrene of the foot and thirdly Diabetes Mellitus. The informant was his daughter in law, Mary Ellis who, as Mary Weiss, had married Alfred in the spring of 1911.

Samuel Henry's wife, Mary, had pre-deceased him by a couple of weeks only and both were interred in Hanley cemetery, Mary on December 1<sup>st</sup> and Samuel Henry on December 21<sup>st</sup>. They were laid to rest in the grave where their daughter, Florence Emmeline had been buried in February 1900. When we visited the cemetery we could find no gravestone or other marker for their grave, but the Bereavement Care Service had given us the details recorded above and the location of the grave. It would have been under the tree in the top right of the picture *right* and the Hastings gravestone can be seen at bottom left. It was whilst searching for Samuel Henry, Mary and Florence Emmeline's grave site that we came across the Hastings gravestone mentioned earlier and located in the same part of the cemetery.



We are pleased to record our thanks here for the help given us by the Bereavement Service in the city.

Samuel Henry Ellis lived only five of his 76 years in Belleek but has left us a legacy with the "Shoeing of the Bay Mare" plaques and, probably more importantly, his tutoring of the young Eugene Sheerin that will remain whilst the pottery's products are admired and collected. It is difficult to say why he gave up his artistic work on pottery and turned in mid life to the art of photography nor can we say at this time how successful he was at this new trade. Sufficiently for him to be able to support his family for certain but we have not been able, on a first trawl through the records, to discover any lasting piece of his photographic work to set beside his Belleek plaques. We hope that, as time goes on, some, at least, of his photographic work may come to light as we continue to look into the details of his life.

### References:-

- [1] Marion Langham; "Belleek Irish Porcelain" Quiller Press Ltd; London UK 1993
- [2] Robert Arnold; "Belleek, The Green Stamp Years"
- [3] Irwin & Maxine Steinberg editors; "Belleek" the Jenks Manuscript; Los Angeles Chapter of the Belleek Collectors Society 1992
- [4] Richard K Degenhardt "Complete Collector's Guide and Reference" 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Wallace-Homestead; Rednor PA 1993
- [5] Vega Wilkinson 'A Dictionary of Ceramic Artists' Landmark Publishing
- [6] Paul Atterbury & Maureen Batkin "The Dictionary of Minton" Antique Collectors Club 1990
- [7] UK Group of Belleek Collectors Newsletter articles [Sept 2004 to March 2009, Vols 25/2 to 29/2]
- [8] "The Story of Belleek" by John B. Cunningham, published by St Davog's Press, Belleek 1992

### Resources available for public searching:-

England & Wales Census returns [1841-1901] per [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk)  
The 1911 census on line.

Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes for England & Wales made available by Office for National Statistics.  
Birth, Marriage & Death Indexes for Ireland available at the Research Centre, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin.



# *Hand Painted Decoration on AMERICAN BELLEEK*

*by David Reynolds*

Look on ebay any day of the week where you'll find a nice selection of hand painted items from the "American Belleek" factories in Trenton, New Jersey, and stop and wonder, (you may already have), did the likes of C.A.C./Lenox and Willets employ great armies of painters and decorators to produce an output which still feeds the secondary market with high volume, high quality and varied porcelain.

Well, wonder no more, the secret lies in the very buoyant market in the US during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in white goods from the "Belleek" factories and others for home and leisure decoration, furthermore the retailers of a vast array of white goods could supply all the items needed to paint, glaze, gild and fire the finished article.

It was quite by chance that I came across a white goods catalogue issued by Thayer and Chandler of Chicago and containing no fewer than 31 pages of white china being offered, much of it imported from the Limoges factories in France, and with 4 of the pages devoted to "Belleek". The chance find was my interest in the front cover illustration of the catalogue which is not credited but appears to have been plagiarized from an 1898 painting by Alphonse Mucha for F Champenois (a French printing company) and used in their advert.



***Left: Catalogue cover***

Please note that Mucha's signature on the lower right corner of the original painting has disappeared under the Thayer and Chandler banner.

***Right: Mucha's original  
Below: Mucha's signature***



I am aware of other American companies who used Mucha paintings in their advertising and on merchandise packaging.

Importation and retailing of white china was not the core business of Thayer and Chandler, they were manufacturers and suppliers of artist's materials and patented the air brush (in 1893), however sale of different media for painting on (including porcelain) and finishing resulted in a selection of mail order catalogues apart from the china one, and including: Picture frames; matts and glass; Fountain air-brushes; Pyrography goods; Artist's materials; Miniature frames.

It is interesting to note that in the back of the china catalogue (*below right*) is an advert for kerosene oil fired kilns, a far cry from the modern electric kilns in use.

The next part page from the catalogue (*below*) shows, in the upper right corner, a footed teacup and saucer (the only cup illustrated) which is not attributed, but is clearly Willets. The presence of this shape in this catalogue confirms to me that the four cups and saucers I have in this shape, all with different decoration, were not painted in the Willets factory but were from a talented amateur artist who had hand written the date 'Xmas 1903' on them (see below).



Thayer and Chandler's business flourished into the mid 20th Century when they stopped trading in all artist materials and supplies, concentrating solely on manufacture and sale of air brush

products which they continuously refined. According to the Airbrush Museum in Chicago, Thayer and Chandler continued trading until 1999 when they sold their business to Badger Airbrush, also based in Chicago.

Of my four cups and saucers pictured (*below*) only one saucer carries the Willets back-stamp (*bottom right*).



The changing pastel hues all over the cups and saucers blend very subtly and could only have been applied with an air brush before the painted floral groups were added, and it is most likely that the blank china, air brush, artist brushes, paint, liquid gold and firing kiln were all purchased from Thayer and Chandler.





## Auction Report- some exceptional Items of Belleek

### RARE BELLEEK CELTIC PATTERN HONEY POT

Covered honey pot and cover in the sought after Celtic pattern ... interior is glazed in the Cobb lustre. Excellent condition.

*Sold for: US\$2083.99*

*EBay seller: apollo\_antiques*

*Period: Third Black*



### Rare Belleek CELTIC Sugar Bowl

... in excellent condition

*Sold for: US\$285*

*EBay seller: maddogantiques1*

*Period: Third Black*

### BELLEEK (BLACK TRANSFER MARK) BOWL ON 3 FEET

...very good condition.

*Sold for: US\$415*

*EBay seller: pooltechespiche*

*Period: Third Black*



**Belleek Low Celtic Lunch/Dessert Set, 15 pc** ...original owner verifies that the set was in his family since the 1920s. No damage.

*Sold for: US\$1580.55*

*EBay seller: ozmadoll*

*Period: Third Black*



### EX RARE 1st BLK MARK BELLEEK INSTITUTE SEAHORSE CREAMER

.... in excellent condition

*Sold for: US\$464.88*

*EBay seller: paleopink*

*Period: First Black*

**1863-1890 BELLEEK FLORENCE PITCHER 1ST BLACK MARK**  
7.7" TALL ...EXCELLENT CONDITION ...JUST A LITTLE OF THE GOLD HAS RUBBED OFF

*Sold for: US\$545, EBay seller: assistancelc*

*Period: First Black*







### **Belleek Violet Holder - Shell Form - 1st Black Mark**

5 1/2" long ...excellent condition ...stamped with the 1st black mark and registry mark

*Sold for: US\$478.99, eBay seller: mak783, Period: First Black*

**BELLEEK FIRST PERIOD DRAGON TEASET WITH TRAY**  
NO CHIPS, CRACKS OR STAINING.  
TEAPOT HAS

INSTRUCTIONS ON LID ON HOW TO MAKE A GOOD CUP OF TEA. TRAY HAS IMPRESSED BELLEEK MARK ON BACK PLUS BELLEEK MARK AND REGISTRATION

*Sold for: £1150, eBay seller: audtom, Period: First Black*



### **Irish Belleek (2nd Black Mark) Tea Set**

Set is in perfect order. Includes Tea Pot, Creamer, Sugar Bowl and 4 cups & saucers

*Sold for: AU\$800*

*EBay seller: neilh2802*

*Period: Second Black*



### **RARE Irish Belleek 2nd Period Low Lily Tea Set**

...rare Low Lily set that is pastel green and white in color. The heart shaped dish is not a part of this set, but from the fourth period ..there is a platter tray, 2 cups, 4 small plates, a small pitcher and a small sugar. .. no apparent ..defects.

*Sold for: US\$2000*

*EBay seller: kiotsu*

*Period: Second Black*



### **BELLEEK NEPTUNE 2nd Black Mark Tray & Tea Set 4X Green**

Neptune - Complete Tea Set & Tray All pieces apart from the tray are in excellent condition. ..TRAY has a hairline crack .. edge inwards about 15cm, .. more visible on the back

*Sold for: £300*

*EBay seller: hollinmd*

*Period: Second Black*





### Belleek 2nd Black Mark Teapot Perfect

I don't know the pattern name ...Excellent condition  
**Sold for: Teapot US\$710, Cream US\$315.90, Sugar US\$291.90**

**EBay seller: downsizer88**

**Period: Second Black**



### Irish Belleek Blackmark Shell Dish

...excellent condition... pink tinted border with gold trim 6" x 6".

**Sold for: US\$62.77**

**EBay seller: talloak**

**Period: First Black**

### IRISH BELLEEK SECOND PERIOD CRESTED CHINA JUG DROGHEDA

ARMS OF  
 DROGHEDA. NO  
 CHIPS, CRACKS OR  
 RESTORATION

**Sold for: £92.11**

**EBay seller: from-  
 froome**

**Period: Second Black**



### 2nd BLACK PERIOD BELLEEK CRESTED TRIPOD POT, LARNE

...crested cauldron/jug for Larne, County Antrim ...perfect condition.

**Sold for: euro114.76, EBay seller: 61w61, Period: Second Black**

### BELLEEK. ERNE BASKET. RARE. 2BM

superb Belleek Erne flower basket, no chips cracks or restoration..This extremely rare piece has green tinted rope trim to handles and lower edge, overall length is 8"

**Sold for: £310.50**

**EBay seller: mr.firswood**

**Period: Second Black**





### **Belleek Rare Tulip Vase**

... edges are tinged with green ... in very good condition there are two small flaws ... Height 5.5"

**Sold for: £114.99**

**EBay seller: abcann1**

**Period: Second Black**

### **Irish Belleek large size Shell & Coral Vase 1891-1926**

..coral and shell vase, dating from the second period ..a large size 8.5" high in absolute prestige condition

**Sold for: £236.55**

**EBay seller: ickle\_betty**

**Period: Second Black**



### **BELLEEK PORCELAIN VASE IMPRESSED MARK**

Nautilus Shell with impressed mark "BELLEEK Co FERNANAGH" ... thickly potted and in good condition apart from two tiny fleabites

**Sold for: AU\$104.17**

**EBay seller: whitfer**

**Period: First Black**

### **FINE QUALITY BELLEEK TRUNK AND BIRDS NEST CENTREPIECE**

..beautifully modelled ...A superb piece of work. ..wing of the bird on top and one of the tree branches has been repaired and there are some nicks to the applied flower leafs ... 13" high

**Sold for: £67**

**EBay seller: decoy1690**

**Period: Third Black**



### **1st PERIOD BELLEEK CANDLESTICK DECORATED IN EGYPTIAN FIGURES AND SYMBOLS. PERFECT CONDITION.**

19.5 CMS IN HEIGHT

**Sold for: £550**

**EBay seller: robertchristieantiques**

**Period: First Black**



### **Belleek, Co.Fermanagh 1st period plate, vg cond, 10ins.**

In good condition...Had originally a gold line around rim but with age most .. has disappeared.

**Sold for: euro71, EBay seller: winifredhotmailcom, Period: First Black**





**Belleek 2nd period jug Fermanagh, Good condition.**

.. no chips but signs of wear and a small hair line crack...

*Sold for: euro73*

*EBay seller: winifredhotmailcom*

*Period: Second Black*

**Belleek First BM Dinner Plate with family crest/motto**

26cm diameter earthenware dinner plate ...crest and motto (roughly translated as He Seeks for Higher Deeds) ...related to many families e.g. Scott/Campbell/Burns ..with print of Pottery ..Overall good condition

*Sold for: £127, EBay seller: audtom*

*Period: First Black*



**Coffee Cup...**

..good condition but has one small hair line crack ... "Oglaig na hEireann" imprinted on outside

*Sold for: euro102.50*

*EBay seller:*

*winifredhotmailcom*

*Period: Second Black*



**Fermanagh, Belleek Platter, 1st Period**

Lovely platter, just some aging ...good condition with one hair line crack

*Sold for: euro68.50*

*EBay seller: winifredhotmailcom*

*Period: First Black*



**Mug-Sir Edw Carson MP-Belleek-Mug-Very Scarce...**

Commemorative mug of "Sir. Edward Carson. M.P (Born Dublin). In good condition except some hair line cracks ..also some small chips around rim of mug. Unmarked ..but believed to be Belleek

*Sold for: euro189.50*

*EBay seller: winifredhotmailcom*

*Period: NOT MARKED*



[Editor: not sure if this mug is Belleek, but it is certainly VERY interesting. Compare with the Collins mug in Trevor Roycroft's article. Carson was leader of the Ulster Unionist Party between 1910 and 1921]



*And Finally. . . , the new window in Belleek Church is magnificent. I need say no more!*

*Details from the new window  
in Belleek Church...*

*... and Robert Armstrong's  
grave in the churchyard there*

