



UK Belleek Collectors' Group

Newsletter

Number 31/2

July 2010

*The early history of
Belleek Pottery - Part 2*

Sèvres and Pattern X teaware

Belleek's 1957 Centenary pieces

Gothic Candlesticks revisited

Contacts:

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

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.

The Group's Chairman is **Eddie Murphy**, email chairman@belleek.org.uk

Our Treasurer is **Brian Russell**, contact him by email at treasurer@belleek.org.uk

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

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

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

Credits

Photographs:	Margaret and David Montgomery, Paul and Elaine Ewing, Marck Lane, Linda and Eddie Murphy and Chris and Bev Marvell. The many contributions in Tony Fox's article are acknowledged there.
Articles by:	Tony Fox and Bev Marvell, Trevor Roycroft, Bev Marvell and Chris Marvell.
Other material:	Liz and Eddie Renshaw, Eddie Murphy, Jan Golaszewski, Linda Murphy, Marck Lane, Marion Langham, Bev Marvell, Margaret and David Montgomery.
Acknowledgements:	Belleek Pottery, The Wedgwood Museum, The Ulster Museum, The University of Ulster, Sothebys, The BBC "Put your Money where your Mouth is" programme.

Forthcoming Events

24 th and 25 th July	AGM in Coventry, hosted by Bernard and Eileen Burgham and Paul and Pat Tubb.
23 rd and 24 th October	Saturday in central London. Sunday in Woodford, Essex. Hosted by Joanna Urbanek.
Saturday 11 th Dec.	Xmas Party to be held at Chris and Bev Marvell's house, Derbyshire – this is the same day As the Bowman's Antique Fair at Bingley Halls, Stafford. Theme of the party to be: "Art Deco and the flappers".

Newsletter Deadlines

Autumn 2010: Deadline for articles and other material is **4th October**.

Cover Picture. . . A first period figure of the Prisoner of Love.

The largest figure ever made by the Pottery, this rare and magnificent item epitomises the Pottery's confidence and success of the early 1870's - she was first exhibited at the 1872 Dublin Exhibition and was once again produced in all her glory just last year, proving that the old skills at the Pottery have not been lost.

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 and the item will be removed.

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From the Editor...

We received the very sad news that one of the Group's members of long standing, Brenda Henton has died following a long battle against ovarian cancer. On behalf of the Group, I would like to send our sympathies and very best wishes to Brian and the family and friends. Bev and I attended the funeral in the small Lincolnshire village of Sibsey, not far from Brenda's birthplace. The magnificent old church was filled to overflowing and the service to celebrate Brenda's life was beautiful. Many of the UK Group members were good friends with Brenda and Brian and some of their words follow in this Newsletter.

This issue of the Newsletter concentrates on some of the early events and productions of the Pottery. The "Birth of Belleek" article continues the history of the Pottery up until when it achieved recognition as a company of the highest standing, holding its head high amongst the exalted famous names of Minton, Worcester, Copeland and Wedgwood. Another company of almost legendary fame was a French concern, established in the then outskirts of Paris at Sèvres. The porcelain works at Sèvres in the 18th century had been almost the private property of the French Kings, making fabulously decorated ware for the French royal family and aristocracy. Even when the revolution and the demise of Louis XVI ended the royal patronage, Napoleon continued to support the company. It was this company, Sèvres, that many other manufacturers attempted to emulate, the English companies in fact shamelessly copied the shapes and style and colours of the decoration. Foremost among these English companies were Minton and Worcester, but Belleek Pottery was not immune to the powerful influence of the Sèvres factory. In this Newsletter, this French connection is explored in Tony Fox's latest teaware article: this may even be the first time that this ware has been fully described and explained: it is not at all typical of most Belleek, and might not even be recognised as Belleek at all, even by experienced collectors - until turning a cup over reveals that all important first period mark!

I'm afraid I can't avoid a quick mention of the football. England's somewhat ignominious exit from the World Cup has given me a bit more time to work on the Newsletter and I can't help reflecting on the words of Bill Shankly, the famous Liverpool FC manager, who in a 1981 television interview said: "Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude. I can assure you it is much, much more important than that." Shankly was actually paraphrasing the words of Henry Russell Sanders, an American football college coach, who said in the 1950's: "Beating SC is not a matter...(etc.)" Well, I'm not the greatest football fan but I think I know what they meant. Football is more than simply a sport these days: there is nothing else, it seems, that makes people put out the flag of England - the red cross on white of Saint George - to such a huge extent. Never on Saint George's day or for any other occasion do we see such a sea of red and white - although I personally think that it's a bit unnecessary to emblazon the English flag with the actual word "ENGLAND" as some of the supporters' flags are annotated. Never mind, it is at least something that brings our nation together in a common cause, if only for a short time because of the almost inevitable anguish and disappointment caused by our team's performance.

Carrying on this line of thought, a few weeks ago, we were visited by Syd and Carolyn Darlington, Belleek collectors from the North West of the USA (Bellevue, Washington). It was Belleek, not football which was the unifying factor here. Even though we had never met Syd and Carolyn before, we were immediately at home with them and the reason was the shared interest in Belleek. We invited some other British collectors round and there ensued an evening of lively and interesting discussion - and most of this wasn't even on the subject of Belleek! I thought about this and came to the conclusion that our interest in Belleek is merely the catalyst - the necessary element that makes it all work. True, some of us sometimes happily spend hours debating the merits and demerits of Robert Armstrong's designs or counting the number of shamrocks on the left or right hand side of the first black mark - or the number of windows in the tower. I even know someone who has collected several hundred decoration numbers from the bottom of Belleek teacups (my wife). We all have our own areas of interest and specialisms to do with the ware or the history of the Pottery, some avidly pursued and some only a slight or passing interest. In the final analysis, it really doesn't matter. Neither does it matter whether we have a vast collection or just a few much loved pieces. It is the shared interest that is important... and this is then the trigger that leads to other things. Bev and I collect many other types of British and Continental ceramics and are members of other collectors groups. Without any bias or prejudice, I can say with certainty that the Belleek collectors are somehow different from the other groups (No, in a good way!). It is difficult to define what makes the difference or even what that difference is. I think it is best described by the feeling of anticipation before meeting other collectors, the immediate rapport on talking with them and the shared excitement of finding out more about each other's particular interests. Perhaps it is because of the relative lack of formal documentation to do with the history of the Pottery, or maybe Celtic mysticism plays a part, and of course the justified reputation of anyone with an Irish connection for conviviality and storytelling helps greatly in all this... but I still don't know just what it is that sets Belleek collectors apart from all the others. To some collectors, if you replace the word "football" with "Belleek", Bill Shankly's words seem apposite. I'm pretty sure that these collectors are however in a very small minority and most of us enjoy much more the sharing of our love of Belleek and everything that goes with this....

Chris Marvell

Brenda Henton (died 8 June 2010)

- Eddie and Liz Renshaw

Brenda was born in a small village named Wrangle, near Boston, Lincs in July 1950. She was the youngest of four children. At the age of four the family moved to Old Leake and she attended the local schools. During her time at Secondary School she gained the love of dressmaking and she continued to make many of her clothes, including her wedding dress.

Brenda at the Victorian themed UK Belleek Group Christmas Party

In 1966 on leaving school Brenda worked at a general store in Old Leake. In 1968 whilst alterations were being carried out at this store by Brian's father, Brenda and Brian met and soon arranged their first date. In 1972 they married at St Helena's Church, Leverton. During that year they completed the building of their first house at Old Leake.



Brenda and Brian at the Renshaws in France



During 1978 Brenda started a new job at Old Leake Medical Centre as receptionist and later as a dispenser. She remained in this job until her illness in 2008. She enjoyed the contact with people and it is clear from the condolence messages from the doctors, staff and patients, that they very much liked this lady.

In 1981 on a last minute booking to Tunisia, Brenda first met a couple called Liz and Eddie (Renshaw). That relationship over the years developed into something more than friendship and, along with her other close friends, comes the love and affection that will remain forever

In 1982 they moved into their purpose built house at Leverton where they lived until 2002. Some members may remember an earlier Belleek meeting held there.

Brenda and Liz Renshaw relaxing

From the friendship with Liz and Eddie, Brenda and Brian developed their interest for antiques and in 1984 joined the Belleek Society. There are numerous happy memories of times spent at antiques fairs, notably Newark where Maureen and Graham (Munton) often met up with them and sometimes stayed overnight with Brenda and Brian. Brenda talked fondly of the many Christmas parties, dinner parties and other social occasions resulting from the Belleek Society. Brenda's interest spread into antique furniture and glass and even towards the end of her life, she continued to watch all the antique programmes, such as Antiques Roadshow, Cash in the Attic, Bargain Hunt to name but a few.



In the lead up to and during our Belleek Convention in September 1997 Brenda worked tirelessly alongside Liz, arranging menus and table placing as well as overseeing the dining room themed decorations.

Brenda was a very warm, caring and thoughtful lady who always thought of others before herself. She had a tremendous sense of humour and was often known to have a fit of the giggles which was totally infectious!

Brenda's other interests were gardening and cooking. She was a great cook and her specialities were her chocolate biscuit cake, lemon meringue pie and treacle tart. She was often called upon to make a dessert to take to friends for dinner!

Brian, the family and close friends will greatly miss this rather quiet, but fun-loving lady whose life was taken too soon.

From Eddie Murphy:

My memories of Brenda Henton were that she and Brian just always seemed to be there. Brenda was a wonderful lady. We had a lovely meeting in their part of the world, visiting their house at Leverton. I remember Graham and Maureen Muntun always said "B&B", meaning of course Brenda and Brian. At Chris and Bev's Victorian Christmas party, I fondly remember Brenda standing with Linda, both of them in all their glory in their Victorian dresses... wonderful! Many thoughts and I will never forget.

From Jan Golaszewski:

BRENDA HENTON REMEMBERED

A devoted couple, Brenda and her husband Brian, were instrumental in our Group's early development. Our Group's inaugural meeting was held on 4th June, 1989. Brenda and Brian attended their first meeting on 4th March, 1990, which was our Group's third meeting hosted by Maureen & Graham Muntun in Prestbury, Cheshire. Brenda and Brian were very supportive Belleekers and keen collectors of our beloved parian china. When attending our Group's events, both were enthusiastic and fun loving. Brenda was an unselfish caring person who would always ask about the welfare of those Members whose wellbeing was less fortunate.

Brenda and Brian enthusiastically hosted our Group's sixth meeting on 17th March, 1991, and again in October, 1995, and yet again in March 2001. Brenda and Brian welcomed us to their home where we feasted, chatted and viewed their splendid Belleek collection. They were perfect hosts, always attentive, caring and generous.

Brenda's other significant contribution to our Group was her direct involvement in organising the 1997 Belleek Convention which our Group hosted in Stoke-on-Trent. Together with her close friend and fellow Belleeker, Liz Renshaw, they valiantly took on the mammoth task of managing and organising the Convention's four dinners for its 258 delegates who had converged on Festival Park from the four corners of the globe. They chose the menus and keenly negotiated prices with the Moat House Hotel. They arranged the lavish decoration of the Ballroom as each of the four dinners were themed. The concluding fancy dress Gala Dinner held on 14th September consisted of a sumptuous six course meal. Their tireless endeavours in the planning, preparation and meticulous attention to detail were major contributors to making the Convention such a fantastic success. The following is an extract from the late Graham Houghton's written appreciation of this unique and historic event:

"I must congratulate Liz Renshaw and Brenda Henton for the way they organised our dinners and decorated the Ballroom to transform it into a superb Dining Room fit for any member of High Society or even Royalty. There was a different theme each evening. Each table was decorated, beautifully laid out with place names and a centre piece of anchored balloons to complement the main theme of the evening. They had all sorts of problems to overcome, such as extra guests at short notice, special diets, seating arrangements, etc. Tables were laid out to seat ten delegates, each table had a UK Member as host and an Honouree or special guest. Having previously had a meal in the Restaurant and finding the food good but the service slow, I was somewhat concerned that our guests from all over the world would be disappointed. I need not have concerned myself – the food and the service was excellent."

Our Group misses Brenda's unselfish enthusiasm, genuine camaraderie and warm friendship.

Please remember Brenda in your prayers.

News from Belleek Pottery

24th March 2010

Collectors to scramble for rare Belleek piece

Belleek craftsman Brendan McCauley painstakingly examines the Prisoner of Love which will be auctioned for charity.

POTTERY collectors from across the globe are expected to open their cheque books in Fermanagh next month for an extremely rare piece of Belleek pottery.

Prisoner of Love - a limited edition piece, originally designed in 1821 by Italian sculptor Giovanni Giuseppe Fontana - will be auctioned off in a bid to raise funds for a new children's hospice building in Fermanagh.

The beautiful figurine, which has not been reproduced in almost 100 years and now retails for a cool £16,000, has had a remarkable journey to the famous pottery-makers on the banks of the River Erne.



Indeed, the sculptor himself had a colourful past, having fled his homeland after a failed revolution before setting up his studio in London, where he would later exhibit Prisoner of Love for the first time.

He offered for sale a model of the figurine for ceramic production - and the rights to produce a Parian version, which are believed to have been bought by Robert Williams Armstrong, a founder and main driving force in Belleek's creative output.

It is not known when Belleek first made Prisoner of Love, although it is shown in the Belleek old photograph album of 1881 priced at nine guineas. When the piece was shown for sale in the Belleek catalogue of 1904, it was only made to order because of its size and intricate nature. After the sale of Belleek Pottery in 1920, the piece was discontinued and the moulds were sent into storage. The moulds remained there until 2008 when it was decided to make this magnificent piece again as part of the 2009 archive collection. A maximum of 25 of these stunning pieces were made in 2009 and signed by the craftspersons - and afterwards, the moulds were retired again to the design archive.

It is hoped that the figurine will be a real money-maker for the hospice team which is currently working on a £1.2 million project in Fermanagh for a children's hospice building.

"It is wonderful to be able to support something this important in the county. This piece is an important collector's item and its story alone should inspire those with an interest to consider investing in this piece which will only increase in value in future years," said John Maguire, managing director of Belleek Pottery.

The auction of the Prisoner of Love will form the centrepiece at a gala dinner on April 9 at Belle Isle Castle, but outside bidders will have their opportunity to snap up the rejuvenated sculpture, which is also a low number of the 25 made, enhancing its credentials as a collector's piece.

"We hope to attract attention to this piece from collectors all over the world. This support from one of our largest manufacturers left in Fermanagh makes its link very special," said Emma Burton, regional fundraiser for the NI Hospice.

from Belleek website: www.belleek.ie

Richard Kennedy Degenhardt Scholarships 2010

7th May 2010

A huge congratulations goes to ceramic artist **Claire Muckian** and celtic scholar **Aodh Mac Gairbheá**; this year's winners of the Richard K. Degenhardt Belleek Collectors' Scholarships. Dr Linda Beard, founder and chair of the Richard Kennedy Degenhardt Belleek Collectors' Scholarship Endowment Fund, presented the awards of £600 each to the winning students at a special ceremony held at The University of Ulster in Belfast on Thursday 7th May 2010.



Inset photo (clockwise) Marie McGrellis, Aodh Mac Gairbheá, Claire Muckian and Dr Linda Beard (founder and chair of the Richard Kennedy Degenhardt Belleek Collectors' Scholarship Endowment Fund).

These awards were established to enhance students' opportunities for personal as well as educational development. Claire and Aodh will now have a year's international scholarship for their outstanding ceramic (Claire) and Celtic studies (Aodh) abilities.

Dr Beard is delighted with the opportunities the scholarship creates stating that, '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.'

'We have now presented these awards for the past nine years, with twenty one recipients in total. This is a wonderful living memorial to my friend and unique individual, Richard Degenhardt.'

Claire Muckian, from Dundalk in County Louth, is a second year undergraduate student on the BA Hons Fine and Applied Arts programme. She will use her award to undertake an Assistantship Programme at the International Ceramic Research Center in Guldagergaard, Denmark.

Aodh Mac Gairbheá, from Rann na Feirste in County Donegal, is a final year undergraduate student on the BA Hons Irish Language and Language Literature programme. He will use his award to present the findings of his undergraduate thesis on Nouns in Irish describing people and their characteristics, at a conference in Aberdeen.

Marie McGrellis representing Belleek Pottery at the awards ceremony presented each student with a Belleek Living Chic photo frame. These frames are new to the Belleek Living range for 2010 and were designed by Marie herself. Each of the winners were also offered an opportunity to come and visit Belleek Pottery and the chance to spend time at the Pottery working on their projects.

Congratulations once again to the winners and we wish all the candidates the best of luck in their future endeavours.

Source: Belleek website www.belleek.ie

more information is available from the University of Ulster: <http://news.ulster.ac.uk/releases/2010/5062.html>

News from the World of Ceramics

Wedgwood museum hit by pension debt black hole

Thursday, 13 May 2010 17:26 UK

By Jessica Rose Business reporter,
BBC News

Valuable artefacts from the Wedgwood museum in Stoke-on-Trent could be seized by creditors because of a pension fund black hole.

Staffordshire-based pottery firm Waterford Wedgwood went into administration last year, with parts of the business later bought by a US firm. But it was the Wedgwood Museum Trust that inherited the £134m pension debt of the whole company. Forced into administration, the trust's exhibits could be claimed by creditors.



The question is whether the assets are held in trust by the museum or whether they're available for creditors

The £10.5m Wedgwood Museum in Barlaston opened in 2008 and is home to an exhibition of more than 250 years of the company's history and last year won the prestigious Art Fund Prize. Five of the museum trust's staff were in the same pension scheme as the employees of the whole pottery company. As the last solvent entity employing members of the scheme, the museum has been forced to take on the £134m pension debt that was left when Waterford Wedgwood collapsed. Joint administrator Steve Currie, from Begbies Traynor, said the museum would stay open for the foreseeable future. "It's a really good museum and we're glad it's still there," he said. "The question is whether the assets are held in trust by the museum or whether they're available for creditors. Once we know the answer to this we can exit administration via some kind of voluntary agreement."

Fighting for survival

The museum's closure would be a big loss for the region's tourist industry, according to Staffordshire historian Steve Birks. "All that social history would be split up, even though it's taken 250 years to collect," he said. "It's a shame that the museum got a £100,000 prize last year for being so good, and has now been awarded a £134m debt".

The Trust said it is in talks about preserving its collection and that it is determined to ensure the museum's survival.



"The Trustees are extremely grateful for the continued support of the museum's staff and its many friends, and remain optimistic that the collections will continue to be available to the public in our museum," said George Stonier, chairman.

Wedgwood was founded in 1759, but Waterford Wedgwood was created in 1987 when it merged with the well-known Irish brand Waterford Crystal. It went into administration in January 2009 after being badly hit by the economic slowdown. The company also had debts of some £400m and a hole in its pension fund. A couple of months later the viable parts of the firm were bought by an American private equity firm, KPS Capital Partners, saving many jobs in the company - which was renamed WWRD Holdings.

The Wedgwood Museum is in Wedgwood Drive, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent ST12 9ER and is open 9am-5pm Mon-Fri and 10am-5pm Sat & Sun.

Museums News

McCausland hails Ulster Museum Art Fund Prize win

Thursday, 1 July 2010

Northern Ireland's Culture Minister has congratulated the Ulster Museum for winning this year's £100,000 Art Fund Prize.

It beat three other shortlisted institutions, including the UK's oldest public museum, Oxford's Ashmolean. Nelson McCausland said it was the first time a Northern Ireland museum had won "such a prestigious prize". Mr McCausland commended museum staff for "their commitment and creativity which has enabled the museum to win this superb award". Last month, Mr McCausland wrote to the trustees of National Museums Northern Ireland, asking them to give more prominence to Ulster-Scots, the Orange Order and alternative views on the origin of the universe.



The Ulster Museum reopened in October 2009 and since then has become Northern Ireland's busiest visitor attraction.

Egyptian mummy Takabuti is an enduring local favourite

More than 420,000 people have walked through its doors, set in the heart of Belfast's Botanic Gardens. Chair of the judges, Kirsty Young, said the panel were "moved and invigorated" when they visited the establishment.

"Here is a museum that shows how much can be achieved, and one that is building a lasting legacy," Young said. "We were

impressed by the interactive learning spaces on each level that are filled with objects which visitors are encouraged to touch and explore, and by how the museum's commitment to reaching all parts of its community is reflected in the number and diversity of its visitors. The transformed Ulster Museum is an emblem of the confidence and cultural rejuvenation of Northern Ireland."

The three-year renovation, which cost £17.8m, established a series of new galleries and interactive learning zones. Several renowned artefacts, including the Egyptian mummy Takabuti and a six metre-long edmontasaurus dinosaur skeleton, were given revamped displays.

Formerly described as "a cave", the museum is now full of open spaces. The re-opening coincided with the 80th anniversary of the Museum's opening in 1929, when it was called the Belfast Municipal Museum and Art Gallery. The first major exhibition in 2009 was a retrospective by Irish-born, Turner Prize-nominated abstract artist, Sean Scully.

The other shortlisted venues for the Art Fund Prize were Blists Hill Victorian Town, in Shropshire, where costumed staff give visitors a taste of Victorian England, and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry.

In addition to the cheque for £100,000, the Ulster Museum will also receive the Art Fund Prize Bowl, enamelled in silver by the craftsman Vladimir Bohm, which they can display for one year. Last year a museum dedicated to Wedgwood, the world-famous pottery company, scooped the prize.

from BBC News website: www.bbc.co.uk



Letter to the Editor - Can you help?

- a follow-up from Marion Langham at her home in Kenya

In the previous issue of the Newsletter we printed a letter from Marion. Here is an extract from it:

"It has taken a problem here that has made me get up extra early (5 a.m.) to get on and write this letter to you. There is a woman here; I only got to know her as she came to our gate looking for money to have an operation. I was not very sympathetic as it is quite common for people to come to the gate looking for help for this or that problem. The poor woman dropped her skirt and showed me the hernia she has, the poor woman is in dire need of an operation.... I wondered if the collectors would consider making a small collection to help. I hate asking and wouldn't ask if it was not such a terrible problem."

Marion has now sent this follow-up to the letter.

I am not sure where to start but I will by thanking you so much for being so very generous and helping this poor woman. The good news is she has had her operation and she is home again. I only hope she does do as she is told and gives her body time to recover. Interestingly enough she had the operation without being put to sleep - just a pain killing drug. She was out of hospital in two days and as I said I have seen her she is getting on well.

Congratulations on such a WONDERFUL magazine - it is truly a master piece, I get so much pleasure reading it each time it comes. It has so much information, it is just amazing what the UK collectors have done in search of Belleek's history. Chris also enjoys reading it from cover to cover and I am waiting for him to finish as I want to go through it again. I was interested in reading about the Belfast Museum and their new Belleek room. I hope the Curator likes Belleek!

Our rains have come - we still need lots more but at least we have had some. It became quite hot before the rains came so we were all so pleased - last year the rain didn't come until the beginning of May, I know it about that now!

My computer has crashed, so I am on a laptop, which is does not have the best of key boards and I seem to be able to type faster than it can work so it keeps missing letters and I have to go back. Still any port in a storm. We had no electricity all day today - it is not unusual for this to happen but it is a damn nuisance. This morning was worse as my phone has packed up and our car would not start so we were stuck. The car is going now - the phone I don't know... maybe it is done for - I dropped it!

I hope your were not too put out with the lava dust - there are quite a few people in Kenya who were due to fly and have had to wait until it settled and now the back log has made it difficult to get on any plane. Thank goodness I am not planning to go anywhere.

Again many thanks for being so kind, the lady can't read leave alone write so on her behalf I will reassure you that she is so much more happy now.

Lots of love,

Marion

Letter to the Editor - a request for your observations

Wanted information:

Do you have a basket with a plaited finish between the centre weave and the rod sides that has the word "Ireland" on the pad on the bottom of the basket?

Please send information to Margaret Montgomery at montadomy@xtra.co.nz or send the information to research@belleek.org.uk.

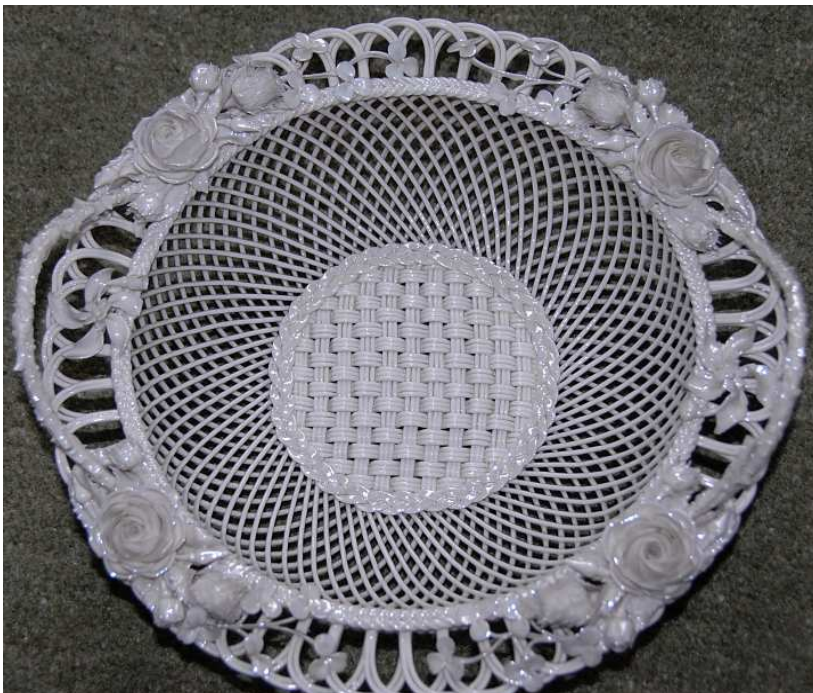
This request was accompanied with the following picture:



This clearly shows the flat rod parian plait surrounding the centre 3-strand woven bottom (viewed from the top). This basket does *not* have "Ireland" as part of the mark because it is an earlier example.

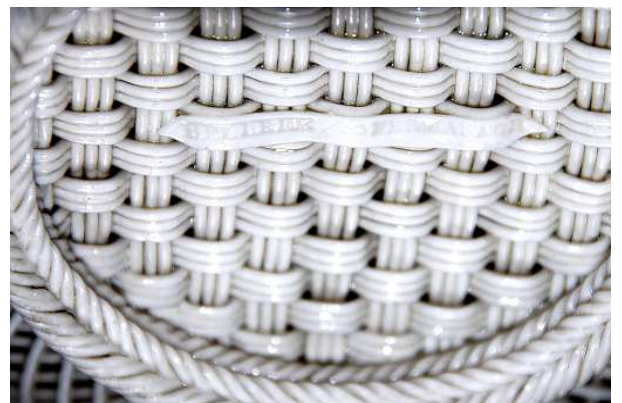
The question is: Did Belleek carry on making baskets with this attractive plaited finish in later periods? (On those made after "Ireland" was added to the mark.)

Please take a look at your baskets and if you can shed any light on this, get in touch with Margaret.



Left: an early 3-strand basket with the plaited surround to the base.

Below: the mark on this basket, just BELLEEK CO FERMANAGH, with no IRELAND.



The Spring Meeting in Stoke-on-Trent

Meeting
Sat Mar
20th in
Hanley



- by Linda Murphy

We all met in the Foyer of the Potteries Museum and soon after being greeted by aliens (!) we set off to view the few pieces of the Staffordshire Hoard, which were still on display.

The Staffordshire Hoard - is the largest archaeological Anglo-Saxon find ever unearthed, containing over 1,500 finely crafted objects, mostly gold and some inlaid with precious stones. It was unearthed in July 2009 by a metal detectorist in a field near Lichfield and was declared Treasure in September 2009.

Right: Ring (note the Celtic decoration!) and the fabulous tiny pure gold decorated seahorse

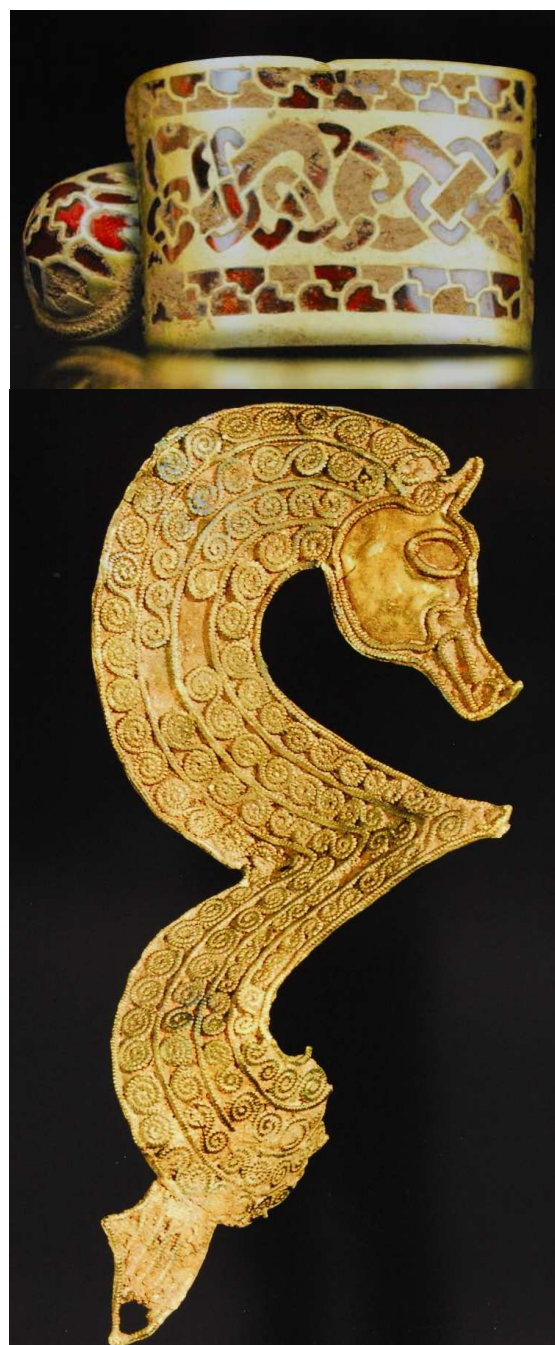
The hoard has been saved for the nation. The total of £3.3m being raised three weeks ahead of schedule, over £900,000 through public donations ranging from £1 to £100,000 from as far afield as the USA and Japan. The find has now been safely secured for Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery and the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent.

Experts believe that these pieces of Anglo-Saxon gold contain many secrets about the "Dark Ages" and there has already been much debate about the exact date at which it was buried. The public can continue to donate to the wider campaign via www.artfund.org/hoard.



Above: Lunch: another Staffordshire treasure - traditional oatcakes!

Afterwards we carried on to see other galleries before enjoying lunch in the Museum Cafe.





Left: Robin Wootton besides the Museum's Mk XVI Spitfire.

This popular exhibit was commissioned in 1945. It remains a legacy of R.J Mitchell's ingenuity and his avant garde design of the beautiful and very effective aircraft.

Bethesda Methodist Chapel

We were lucky that a museum talk was to be given by Adrian Mathuis (*Right*) (architect for Brownhill Haywood Brown of Litchfield) on the repairing and restoration of the Bethesda Chapel. One of our intrepid Belleekers Eileen Burgham asked Adrian if and when the chapel would be open to the public - and were even luckier when the answer was: "Yes but only for one hour this afternoon". The chapel is directly opposite the Museum just across the road, we all set off and were soon inside what was once called the "Cathedral of the Potteries."



Bethesda Methodist Chapel, Stoke-on-Trent, built largely in 1819, is one of England's grandest town chapels. It is impressive for its size, ambitious in its architectural design and in its heyday capable of attracting huge congregations, reputedly with seating for 2,000 people.

Left: The Bethesda a few years ago and today

The Bethesda had lain empty, abandoned and in a sorry state after closing on the 29th December 1985. The Historic Chapels Trust acquired it in 2002 with a view to repair and upgrade for community use. Their campaign to restore Bethesda Chapel was highlighted in the 2003 BBC2 *Restoration* series.

The proposal to restore Bethesda was popular with viewers and won the West Midlands round of the series and came a very respectable fourth in the national finals. Since then restoration had started and so when we went in there was a vast difference from the sad dark rotting place we saw in the BBC programme. The visit was an expected treat as us Belleekers looked around down stairs and being a friendly bunch of people obviously interested in the chapel, we were invited to look upstairs - a real privilege! We crept up stairs very carefully and when we got to the top the WOW factor was certainly there.

Right: Downstairs



The Trust Friends are as enthusiastic about the Bethesda as us Belleekers are about Belleek. They told us about the windows, one donated by the Ridgeway family, another by the Knuttall family of toffee fame and other features of the chapel. But then time ran out and we had to leave.

Phase One - Repair work. For long-term survival. To use exact materials, tools and working practices as when first built, but also for conservation using modern restoration and rebuilding.

It is a building of National importance (Grade 2 listed) being the biggest Methodist Chapel outside of London.

In 2002 the above-suspended ceiling was a pigeon nest with droppings and decay. There was wet rot, dry rot, no gutters or down pipes and damaged lead work. Cracks in the building with movement and pulling away. Vandalism and arson made it worse and the chapel was boarded up.



Above: Upstairs, rafters exposed.

Left and Right: Lovely stained glass windows

The first repairs were to make the roof water tight and sound. Old roof slates were covered in bitumen

and ash felt and so were not kept, so the roof was stripped and new slates of a smaller size were used over a breather membrane. New aluminium gutters were put up and the drains were renewed.



The following year the ceiling was put back in. It was found that the wall plate trusses had dropped and become displaced - they wanted to keep the structure as original as possible but the five dropped trusses had to be replaced with steel sections and steel plates across the top and bottom of beams to tie them in. This would not be visible when work was completed.

Some of the yellow bricks were affected by frost being made with softer clay and had to be replaced, as were some of the displaced keystones.

To restore the frontage they managed to get another grant. It bowed at the front; brickwork was done, windows repaired, joinery was done on site. The paint was stripped back through 16 layers, samples were taken, details of the decorative work came to life. It was repainted and now you cannot tell where the restoration had taken place. The building was now watertight and able to dry out.

Phase Two begins this summer, the ceiling, plasterwork, balcony, pews and organ are next to be restored.

So this ended Adrian's talk as we left the museum the Friends of the Bethesda (as enthusiastic as we are about Belleek) stayed chatting to him about his work. For more information on Bethesda Methodist Chapel and fund raising visit: www.bethesda-stoke.info

Saturday Evening at Denry's Restaurant

This is one of our regular dinner venues. We met early at the bar next door before talking our usual seats downstairs in the basement.



*Right:
From the top:*

*Linda Murphy &
Joanna Urbanek;
Bev Marvell &
Pat Tubb; Eileen
and Bernard
Burgham and
Maureen
Wootton*



*Left above:
The hungry Gang
waiting for our
first course.*



*Left:
Some of the gang
outside Denry's.*



Sunday at the award winning Wedgwood Museum



In the morning we were given plenty of time to view the Museum exhibits and browse around the shop.

This was followed by lunch *(right)* and a quick Group photo *(below)* outside in the sunshine.



Some of these photographs by courtesy of the Wedgwood Museum Trust (Staffordshire, England)

Editor's note: if you read the piece in this Newsletter about the problems presently besetting the Wedgwood company and the Museum, please note that the magnificent Museum remains open to visitors in spite of these new difficulties.





Wedgwood 'Jasper ware' cameo images produced in the Museum of some of our members....

...they have an electronic gizmo that lets you create an image of what you would look like on a Wedgwood cameo...



Can you recognise them?



They are, from the top: Amanda & Mark Hilliard, Maureen & Robin Wootton, Linda & Eddie Murphy and of course Jan Golaszewski

The afternoon started with Bev Marvell who gave us a quick update on her Belleek **number spotting project**. A Thorn pattern cup and saucer in decoration way No.1 was handed round, it had taken Bev ten years to find this example! She also handed out the current issue of her numbers list (this can be found on the Group's WEB site www.belleek.org.uk on the Research page).

She then went on to give an illustrated talk on the **engraved copper plates** used to produce Belleek's transfer designs. These were preliminary findings on the photographs she and Chris had taken last summer at the Pottery. Bev has started to catalogue these plates properly and she will report back to the Group at a later date.



Belleek Marks :- Painted Decoration Way Numbers - Listing by Pattern

Bev Marvell
 Revision 1.0 24th January 2010: Total 234 Decoration Way Numbers
 Revision 1.5 14th February 2009
 Revision 1.6 1st July 2007
 Revision 1.3 20th November 2006
 Revision 1.2 4th July 2005
 Revision 1.1 22nd March 2005
 Revision 1.0 23rd January 2005

The list below shows numbers recorded so far sorted in order of pattern type, each with description of the decoration (and if available an example image).
 Terms:
 • H: hand painted
 • S: slip
 • H-S: highlighted
 • A: artist's copy. Photo: number is shown in the "The Belleek Pottery "Old Photograph Album" - Fergus Clarry
 • 1204 Cnt: number is shown in the 1904 Belleek sales catalogue
 • 1937 Cnt: number is shown in the 1937 Belleek sales catalogue

Click on any small image to get a larger size.
 The numbers under the pattern column (B1 to G1) show how many separate occurrences have been recorded (one occurrence may consist of a whole tea set or just a plate). If all pattern columns are blank, then occurrences were seen but the pattern was either not recorded or a pattern mark was not present.
 Please, if you have seen other numbers not on the list or if this list doesn't have an image of a particular decoration way and you have an image, I would be grateful if you could add them for the benefit of all Belleekers. Also, if you can add more detail to the decoration description or have even an example that does not conform please get in touch. You can email the Research Group of research@belleek.org.uk
 I have to particularly thank those collectors who have enthusiastically sent me information and photographs and allowed me to open up their display cabinets and handle their most prized pieces. The ownership of some pictures included in this research was not identifiable and so I must also thank those unknown, but valued, contributors.
 Thank you to all who have encouraged and contributed.

*To get 50% version of this document for printing!
 Go to the UK Belleek Collectors' Group Homepage
 Go to the Research on the group of the Members
 Go to the Belleek Marks (Painted Decoration Way Numbers)*

Pattern	Painted No.	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10	B11	B12	B13	B14	B15	B16	B17	B18	B19	B20	B21	B22	B23	B24	B25	B26	B27	B28	B29	B30	B31	B32	B33	B34	B35	B36	B37	B38	B39	B40	B41	B42	B43	B44	B45	B46	B47	B48	B49	B50	B51	B52	B53	B54	B55	B56	B57	B58	B59	B60	B61	B62	B63	B64	B65	B66	B67	B68	B69	B70	B71	B72	B73	B74	B75	B76	B77	B78	B79	B80	B81	B82	B83	B84	B85	B86	B87	B88	B89	B90	B91	B92	B93	B94	B95	B96	B97	B98	B99	B100	B101	B102	B103	B104	B105	B106	B107	B108	B109	B110	B111	B112	B113	B114	B115	B116	B117	B118	B119	B120	B121	B122	B123	B124	B125	B126	B127	B128	B129	B130	B131	B132	B133	B134	B135	B136	B137	B138	B139	B140	B141	B142	B143	B144	B145	B146	B147	B148	B149	B150	B151	B152	B153	B154	B155	B156	B157	B158	B159	B160	B161	B162	B163	B164	B165	B166	B167	B168	B169	B170	B171	B172	B173	B174	B175	B176	B177	B178	B179	B180	B181	B182	B183	B184	B185	B186	B187	B188	B189	B190	B191	B192	B193	B194	B195	B196	B197	B198	B199	B200	B201	B202	B203	B204	B205	B206	B207	B208	B209	B210	B211	B212	B213	B214	B215	B216	B217	B218	B219	B220	B221	B222	B223	B224	B225	B226	B227	B228	B229	B230	B231	B232	B233	B234	B235	B236	B237	B238	B239	B240	B241	B242	B243	B244	B245	B246	B247	B248	B249	B250	B251	B252	B253	B254	B255	B256	B257	B258	B259	B260	B261	B262	B263	B264	B265	B266	B267	B268	B269	B270	B271	B272	B273	B274	B275	B276	B277	B278	B279	B280	B281	B282	B283	B284	B285	B286	B287	B288	B289	B290	B291	B292	B293	B294	B295	B296	B297	B298	B299	B300	B301	B302	B303	B304	B305	B306	B307	B308	B309	B310	B311	B312	B313	B314	B315	B316	B317	B318	B319	B320	B321	B322	B323	B324	B325	B326	B327	B328	B329	B330	B331	B332	B333	B334	B335	B336	B337	B338	B339	B340	B341	B342	B343	B344	B345	B346	B347	B348	B349	B350	B351	B352	B353	B354	B355	B356	B357	B358	B359	B360	B361	B362	B363	B364	B365	B366	B367	B368	B369	B370	B371	B372	B373	B374	B375	B376	B377	B378	B379	B380	B381	B382	B383	B384	B385	B386	B387	B388	B389	B390	B391	B392	B393	B394	B395	B396	B397	B398	B399	B400	B401	B402	B403	B404	B405	B406	B407	B408	B409	B410	B411	B412	B413	B414	B415	B416	B417	B418	B419	B420	B421	B422	B423	B424	B425	B426	B427	B428	B429	B430	B431	B432	B433	B434	B435	B436	B437	B438	B439	B440	B441	B442	B443	B444	B445	B446	B447	B448	B449	B450	B451	B452	B453	B454	B455	B456	B457	B458	B459	B460	B461	B462	B463	B464	B465	B466	B467	B468	B469	B470	B471	B472	B473	B474	B475	B476	B477	B478	B479	B480	B481	B482	B483	B484	B485	B486	B487	B488	B489	B490	B491	B492	B493	B494	B495	B496	B497	B498	B499	B500	B501	B502	B503	B504	B505	B506	B507	B508	B509	B510	B511	B512	B513	B514	B515	B516	B517	B518	B519	B520	B521	B522	B523	B524	B525	B526	B527	B528	B529	B530	B531	B532	B533	B534	B535	B536	B537	B538	B539	B540	B541	B542	B543	B544	B545	B546	B547	B548	B549	B550	B551	B552	B553	B554	B555	B556	B557	B558	B559	B560	B561	B562	B563	B564	B565	B566	B567	B568	B569	B570	B571	B572	B573	B574	B575	B576	B577	B578	B579	B580	B581	B582	B583	B584	B585	B586	B587	B588	B589	B590	B591	B592	B593	B594	B595	B596	B597	B598	B599	B600	B601	B602	B603	B604	B605	B606	B607	B608	B609	B610	B611	B612	B613	B614	B615	B616	B617	B618	B619	B620	B621	B622	B623	B624	B625	B626	B627	B628	B629	B630	B631	B632	B633	B634	B635	B636	B637	B638	B639	B640	B641	B642	B643	B644	B645	B646	B647	B648	B649	B650	B651	B652	B653	B654	B655	B656	B657	B658	B659	B660	B661	B662	B663	B664	B665	B666	B667	B668	B669	B670	B671	B672	B673	B674	B675	B676	B677	B678	B679	B680	B681	B682	B683	B684	B685	B686	B687	B688	B689	B690	B691	B692	B693	B694	B695	B696	B697	B698	B699	B700	B701	B702	B703	B704	B705	B706	B707	B708	B709	B710	B711	B712	B713	B714	B715	B716	B717	B718	B719	B720	B721	B722	B723	B724	B725	B726	B727	B728	B729	B730	B731	B732	B733	B734	B735	B736	B737	B738	B739	B740	B741	B742	B743	B744	B745	B746	B747	B748	B749	B750	B751	B752	B753	B754	B755	B756	B757	B758	B759	B760	B761	B762	B763	B764	B765	B766	B767	B768	B769	B770	B771	B772	B773	B774	B775	B776	B777	B778	B779	B780	B781	B782	B783	B784	B785	B786	B787	B788	B789	B790	B791	B792	B793	B794	B795	B796	B797	B798	B799	B800	B801	B802	B803	B804	B805	B806	B807	B808	B809	B810	B811	B812	B813	B814	B815	B816	B817	B818	B819	B820	B821	B822	B823	B824	B825	B826	B827	B828	B829	B830	B831	B832	B833	B834	B835	B836	B837	B838	B839	B840	B841	B842	B843	B844	B845	B846	B847	B848	B849	B850	B851	B852	B853	B854	B855	B856	B857	B858	B859	B860	B861	B862	B863	B864	B865	B866	B867	B868	B869	B870	B871	B872	B873	B874	B875	B876	B877	B878	B879	B880	B881	B882	B883	B884	B885	B886	B887	B888	B889	B890	B891	B892	B893	B894	B895	B896	B897	B898	B899	B900	B901	B902	B903	B904	B905	B906	B907	B908	B909	B910	B911	B912	B913	B914	B915	B916	B917	B918	B919	B920	B921	B922	B923	B924	B925	B926	B927	B928	B929	B930	B931	B932	B933	B934	B935	B936	B937	B938	B939	B940	B941	B942	B943	B944	B945	B946	B947	B948	B949	B950	B951	B952	B953	B954	B955	B956	B957	B958	B959	B960	B961	B962	B963	B964	B965	B966	B967	B968	B969	B970	B971	B972	B973	B974	B975	B976	B977	B978	B979	B980	B981	B982	B983	B984	B985	B986	B987	B988	B989	B990	B991	B992	B993	B994	B995	B996	B997	B998	B999	B1000
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Left, the elusive No.1 Thorn pattern cup.

Right: part of Bev's numbers listing (available on the Group's website).

Chris Marvell then gave a slide show on the February New Zealand meeting.

We then had a **quiz** set by Eddie Murphy on Belleek general knowledge. Chris Marvell was the clear winner!



Bring & tell 'Blue and White'

Diana Awdry – was the winner!

Along the Gilbert & Sullivan Patience lyrics performed in 1881:

*'Such a judge of blue-and-white and other kinds of pottery
From early Oriental down to modern terra-cottery'*

She brought a blue & white small bowl from the Chinese shipwreck cargo that sank 234 years ago and later auctioned in Amsterdam for millions.

Six years after Patience was first performed, in 1887, there was the Queens diamond jubilee, the mug here is the terra-cottery (except it really is earthenware!) *(right)*



Paul Tubb

- bought along his Gallimore Plate – as it has links to Belleek and Stoke (see his report in the last newsletter)

Jan

Gowaszewski

- had a Shelley bread plate (bread plates are Jan's speciality). It shows the arrival of spring and a path into the distance leads us onto adventure!! (Jan as poetic as usual)



Mark Hilliard

- showed us a small Pennington's Liverpool bowl c1770. It is special because it used to belong to (the late and popular) Graham Houghton. When he used to visit Graham, it wasn't the Belleek they used to talk about - but Liverpool. Mark still has Graham's sheet of Liverpool tips. Marks misses their regular phone calls and feels 'something is missing' without his pal to talk to.



Pat Tubb

- their New York friends had an old tile business and they gave Pat an old tile from their business... but the blue & white tile she really would like is in the Ulster Museum, the one with the Trade mark to the centre (see picture on the next page with Tony Fox) ...oh and also this lovely blue & white earthenware jug! (right)

(Editor's note: The Award winning Ulster Museum now has a new display of Belleek and other Irish pottery - see the item earlier in the Newsletter)

Joanna Urbanek

- decided a while ago to start a collection of saucers from each of the major potteries, she didn't realise what a major challenge this was and might have to admit defeat. Shown were saucers from Nautilus and Foley (c1850 mark with Staffs knot).



Eddie Murphy

- bought along a first period earthenware jug from his collection with an interesting transfer 'Limoges' to the base.

He also had a second period tureen with crude blue band, he bought this because it has an IMPRESSED second period mark, this is the only piece we have seen marked in this way.

Above, Eddie with

the Limoges pattern ewer and on the right with the plainly decorated tureen, above this on the left is the unprecedented impressed second period mark,





*Above left: Pat discussing the Belleek blue and white teapot stand - Tony is holding her picture of it.
Above right: Eddie, our Chairman, presents the winner Diana with her prize.*

Any other Business

Pat showed us her lovely crocheted Belleek mark picture: it looks lovely on the black velvet background!

Pat also gave us an update on the mission to get headstones for the graves of the Belleek potters buried in Trentham NJ.



Celebrating Saint Patrick's Day with the Evergreen Chapter - by Marck Lane

We would like to share some pictures of the Evergreen Chapter meeting held at Don and Gretchen Campbell's home in Washington State on Sunday March 14th to celebrate Saint Patrick's day. Also at the meeting were other Belleek friends from Seattle and Columbia. My wife Lorie and I try to attend these meetings, but only manage this about once every 2 years as it is quite a drive for us [Editor: yes you have to travel a wee bit further in the US than the UK!]



Dinner/Brunch was served of Corned beef and all the trimmings! Plenty of great goodies were had by all and the fellowship was wonderful. Don and Gretchen allowed us to free roam and tour, take pictures and ask lots of questions!!!!

Don was elected Chapter President of the Evergreen Chapter and takes over at the next meeting on July 11th at Tom and Katie Proteau's home

Don Campbell and with him is Kermit Rosen. Kermit and his wife (Judy) are long time members of the Evergreen Chapter and were in Belleek for the 150th anniversary meeting of the BCIS.



Dorothy Wheeler (in the shamrock T shirt) with Darlene Weatherly. Darlene is the wife of Lon who is the Evergreen Chapter Secretary. Dorothy (a BCIS collector of the year) and her husband (Maurice) moved from San Diego, California several years ago and transferred their BCIS membership to the Evergreen Chapter.

We all know Don loves his earthenware - just look at this display of spirit barrels *left* and mugs *right*. I don't believe anybody has a bigger collection than Don!





More photos of Don and Gretchen's fabulous collection for us all to enjoy!

Editor's note: many thank to Marck Lane for this report... the UK Group now has many associate members outside the UK and we would very much welcome any news and information relating to other chapters.

And by the way, does anyone know of a collection as big as or maybe even bigger than Don and Gretchen's? Sounds like a bit of a challenge here!



The Centenary Pieces 1857-1957

By Trevor Roycroft

Belleek was a picturesque village of less than 300 people in 1848. Famous for angling, the Erne drew fishermen from around Great Britain. Brown Trout, Atlantic Run Salmon, the Eel Weir Fishery, in addition to the area's great natural beauty, attracted many visitors and tourists to this part of Fermanagh. In late November 1858, the foundation stone of the Belleek Pottery was laid by the wife of John Caldwell Bloomfield of Castle Caldwell. Village life in the years that followed would be changed forever.

There are more than 38,000 acres of water in Lough Erne. For centuries severe flooding has taken place. A local saying goes, "For six months, Lough Erne is in Fermanagh, the other six months, Fermanagh is in Lough Erne." (Flanagan, 2010). Without the Lough and the Erne River, a pottery would not have been built at the part of the village known as Rose Isle.

The Erne River drove a [Fairbairn](#) water wheel that generated 100 horse power at the Pottery, as the river rushed on its way to Ballyshannon, Donegal Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. In season, Atlantic Run Salmon would overcome all odds against them, battling upstream on their journey, as they had done since time began, to reach their spawning grounds. En route they would be seen at Rose Isle's Belleek Falls making spectacular leaps that drew tourists and anglers.

John Cunningham (1992), Page 8, exhibit 2, shows a romantic painting of the Falls and the Dowager Lady Caldwell's ruined castle shaped residence on Rose Isle. On this site the Pottery would rise over a period of about five years.

During the 1880's and 1890's the original founders McBirney, Armstrong and Bloomfield died. The reorganizations of 1884, and 1919, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean War, several owners, a dozen managers all came and went, and the Belleek Pottery flourished. In 1957 Belleek was using the 2nd Green Mark, with the "R" in a circle over the ribbon, indicating that the mark was registered. For the Centenary the Pottery issued two special pieces. One piece shipped to their retail customers worldwide, was also sent to notables, heads of state, and boards of trade. An example of such a recipient was Eamon DeValera, who in 1957 was Prime Minister and President of the Republic of Ireland. Recipients were requested to sign a receipt that was returned to the Pottery warehouse to Dispatch Manager Kevin McCann. Regrettably, some of the most valuable signatures went missing with the passage of time at the Pottery.



The small mask powder bowl D1548 IV, (*left*) was chosen as the piece sent only to the Pottery's retail customers and various VIPs. The 1949 Belleek Catalogue shows the small bowl as number 567, also shown on page 96 of 2nd Degenhardt (1993), upper photo. The bowl had been in production during the First Green Mark period which commenced about 1946. Despite this, the Pottery decided to make a specially decorated D1548 IV with a run of 1000 pieces. Whether that number was ever reached is unknown. The bowls were made to extraordinary quality control standards which were rigorously enforced. The "special" masked powder bowl differed from regular production (number 567) D1548 IV in several ways. The "special" had all grapes, grape leaves, the grape finial, the grape sides of [the](#) bowl, done in a

rich, buttery cob lustre. The regular, not decorated to this degree, is done sparsely in exterior lustre. The “special” had in addition, an interior ledge, into which the lid top with finial was inserted. The ledge was 3/8 inches in width. The standard bowl had no ledge. The “special” had a superb, heavy cob lustre interior. The regular had a 1st Period Green Mark transfer on the base, with scroll. The following is on the plain bisque base of the bowl in the author’s collection (*see right*):-

- 1) The top half of a 1st Period Green Mark Transfer Mark, no scroll.
- 2) Below that 1857-1957.
- 3) Below that No. 416 of 1000.
- 4) #2 and #3 are hand printed in dark Kelly green ink.

Eddie Murphy, The U.K. Belleek Chairman, has the same “special.” His in the same ink, is No. 388, no scroll. In addition, Eddie has the bowl with the full 1st Period Green Mark with scroll. That piece has no interior ledge. All bases are plain bisque surfaces, unglazed.

The dates of introduction of the first three Black Marks, and the first three Green Marks are approximations, as are the conclusion dates of all six marks. Former employees at the Pottery have indicated in conversations that often old marks were used up on inventory despite a new mark’s introduction. Overlapping occurred, there was no exact date when one mark stopped and the new mark started. On April 1, 1980 the gold/brown 7th Mark was introduced. Despite this, 6th Period green decals were placed on inventory for economic reasons, until all green decals were used up.

The “special” mask ware powder bowl from a production standpoint would have started long before the Centenary year 1957 arrived. Conceivably, it could have taken all of 1956, remembering that each bowl had extra exterior and interior lustre in cob (*another view of the bowl is shown above*). That each bowl had to have two lines of hand-printed years and numbers, and that these were first put on in a light green ink, then gone over with a darker kelly green ink, as shown.

The 1st Green Mark with scroll started about 1946 after the war, and ended about 1955. Yet 1955 is the start of the 2nd Green Mark carrying the “R” in the circle above the right-hand side of the ribbon. The “special” bowls have only the top half of a 1st Green transfer mark; no scroll, no “R” in the circle. For space and economic reasons the Pottery used the 1st Green top half only. There certainly was not sufficient room for a scroll with the other data on the base. First Green Mark transfers were separated from scrolls, the finished product put through transfer firing and the ink lettering put on by hand later.

These numbered bowls were never sold to the public. Standard powder bowls were. So, how did the “specials” get into Belleek collections? In the author’s case, ours was bought in 2007 from the estate sale of the late Berdell Dickinson. I refer the reader to the *Belleek Collector*, Volume 8, Number 4, (1986/1987), pages 4, 5 and 6. These pages show displays of Berdell Dickinson’s rarities at the Los Angeles Chapter meeting at *Copa de Ora*, the home of Jeane and Fay Rippon. Page 6 gives Berdell’s story and philosophy. Richard Degenhardt sold many pieces from his own collection to Berdell. Berdell and I never met, but we often spoke on the phone. He



was a most kind and gracious man who loved his subject. He often spoke of Richard Degenhardt's guidance. Catherine and I bought 20 pieces from his estate, some of which had previously belonged to "Dick."

The second Centenary piece D1553-V is a true rarity. Called *Pottery Scene Celtic Commemorative Plate (right)*. It is shown in first volume Degenhardt (1978), on page 47, and page 110, second volume. The owner is Kevin McCann. Mr. McCann joined the Pottery on October 8, 1935, as a 14-year-old, during the Harry Arnold era of management. His career at the Pottery is outlined in an article he did for the *Belleek Collector Magazine, Volume 3, Number 2, 1992, page 3*. His Uncle Willie Dolan was a kiln foreman. His Grand Uncle Pat Montgomery was married to Rose Henshall, whose father William Henshall, introduced basket making at Belleek. In 1957 Mr. McCann was the Pottery warehouse and dispatch manager, a critical position. He would retire after 46 years of service in 1981, having worked through the 3rd Black, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Green, and retiring in the Gold, the 5th Mark of his employment tenure,



D 1553 – V was given by the Pottery to the following persons only. The Pottery partners or owners, such as Patrick Keown, Partner and Chairman of the Board in 1957, who died in 1976; directors of the Pottery such as Eric Arnold, who in 1940 became manager, when his father Harry Arnold died. Eric was manager for 26 years until he died in 1966. His brother Cyril Arnold, who was decoration department manager in 1957, became Pottery manager briefly in 1966, before leaving in 1968 to start his own business, Bundoran China. Owners, partners, department managers, directors, in all about 18, received this exquisite gift for service. This was the extent of the distribution according to Mr. McCann, who as warehouse manager in 1957 was a recipient of D 1553-V.

Mr. McCann has contributed much information which follows on the decorator of the Celtic Plate. Cyril Arnold was decoration manager, starting about 1945 in this position. He supervised the painting of the Celtic Plates. Eilish (Elizabeth) Dolan, paintress, was assigned this task. The Celtic border was embossed.



Areas of the mythological dragon believed to be taken from the *Book of Kells*, Trinity College Dublin Library, were filled with green and red paint pigment. When all eight sections of the dragon were painted, cloths were used to wipe off any excess paint. The contrast between the dragon's skeletal frame and its painted interior is dramatic (*see above*). The plate then went to firing.

Next, the equilateral triangles containing the different enamel painted spirals were done. These triangles (*right*) symbolize the Trinity found in many figures in Christian ornament. Red, blue, green and yellow were used. No contact was permitted between the different coloured spirals, as

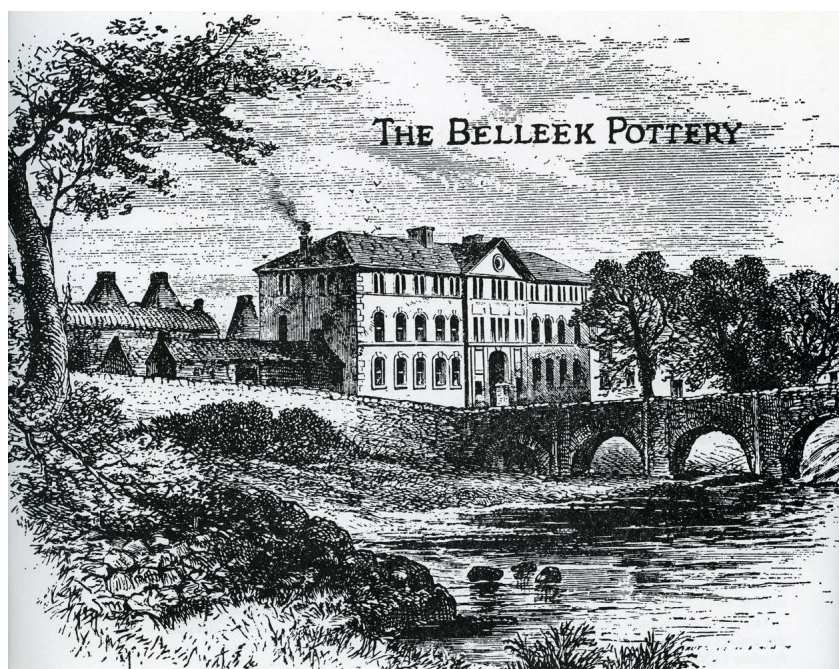
the enamel kiln had temperatures that would have caused the colours to bleed into each other. Thus there are blank spaces alternating with enamelled spirals. There were a number of trips to the enamel kiln for firing of the triangles. Finally, the two interior gold circles, 1/8 inch apart were hand-applied in 24 karat gold lustre. Then, 1/8 inch apart, two exterior circles around the rim; then firing. Then a second application of extra gold lustre was applied by hand to the exterior rim, then firing. Kevin McCann and Jim Flanagan have told me that fine, camel hair brushes using 24 karat gold lustre were wiped with cloths. These cloths were sent to Johnson Matthey in Stoke-on-Trent, where they were incinerated, recovering the 24 karat gold in the process.

Finally, the 5th Period Mark (*right*) was applied and fired. The front (obverse) side and the back (reverse) side were glazed after the Pottery scene transfer and trade mark were applied and fired. Only the reverse pedestal remains unglazed bisque. On the pedestal rim, two inches apart, are two holes drilled through for hanging. These are very lightly touched with glaze to prevent chipping when hung up. The plate diameter is 9 1/8 inches, and weighs 9 ounces.

The Pottery scene transfer on front is well known in a variety of forms. Mairead Dunlevy Reynolds shows this scene on the cover of the National Museum of Ireland's booklet and page 3 titled, *Early Belleek Wares*, (1978). This example's engraving for artistic reasons, blots out Armstrong's Rose Isle house, with trees. On page 3, a 1st period teapot stand is shown. Obviously used, the transfer has been darkened with use. In this engraving there is a man shown fishing from the bank.



1st Degenhardt, 1978, page 1 (*right*), shows on the left, a similar engraving showing Rose Isle House of Armstrong's day. This house modified over time by raising the upper windows, would be occupied by Harry Arnold in the mid 1930s. The house was demolished in later years. In this engraving there is no man shown fishing.



Page 22, of Jean Welleck's 1996 work *Anatomy of a Belleek Collection*, shows two Celtic plates, one plain and one with transfer on the right. The transfer shows Rose Isle House. Once again, no fisherman on the bank.

It is important that the Centennial piece D1553-V does show a man fishing on the bank of the Erne (*see top of the next page*), as does the example in the late Mairead Dunlevy Reynolds' booklet, at Collins Barracks, Dublin. Her engraving is a very early one, symbolic of events which actually happened as the river flowed past the Pottery, with a fisherman, line in water, standing on the bank of the Erne.



What today is the Carlton Hotel in Belleek was Ma Johnston's in 1858. As you come



west, down the main street, to the left of Ma Johnston's was a two story thatched cottage within a few feet of the River Erne. 2nd Degenhardt, page 24, figure 2-1, shows a rare photo prior to 1892 (*previous page*), clearly showing this cottage in the middle of the picture. The dwelling was occupied by the Edward Thornhill Family. Father "Eddie" and son "Willy," both worked at the Pottery and were avid fishermen. Both fished from the bank of the river that flowed by Johnston's hotel property. The Johnstons felt that the Thornhills had no right to fish "Johnston" river frontage. The Thornhill cottage was on the river and they felt otherwise. The dispute was taken to court, eventually ending up in the highest court in Ireland. The Thornhills triumphed, but in doing so, won a battle, only to lose the war.

Bankrupted by costs, and emotionally drained the elder Thornhill soon died. Willy and his mother were evicted unable to pay rent and the Johnstons took back their house. For awhile mother and son lived in the front room of Number 10 Rathmore Terrace, English Row. Then she became ill. Willy continued to work at the Pottery and do odd jobs such as wallpapering Number 4 Rathmore Terrace. There Jim Flanagan was born, later to be chief of Pottery maintenance and Belleek historian; he vividly remembers the wallpaper done by Willy. Eventually Willy's mother died and he became so insecure that he demanded his 2/6 (half-crown) be paid to him daily at the Pottery. Robert Arnold's *The Green Stamp Years*, devotes Chapter 8 to Willy, who became a famous local character living on into very old age. Today, Jim Flanagan resides in Eugene Sheerin's old home in English Row. Sheerin an invalid, painted at the Pottery scenes for which he was famous. His work fetches high prices today at auctions.

Both D 1548 IV and D 1553 – V were in Berdell Dickinson's Collection; both are in Degenhardt "perfect" condition. To have both of these Centenary Pieces of 1857-1957, in a collection is extremely rare.

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- 4) *Belleek Collector*, Vol (8), No (4), pp.4-6, 1986/1987.
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- 6) *Belleek Collector Magazine*, Vol (3), No (2), p. 3, 1992.
- 7) Mairead Dunlevy Reynolds. *Early Belleek Wares*, National Museum of Ireland Booklet, 1978.
- 8) Jean Comerford Weleck. *Anatomy of a Belleek Collection*, p. 22, 1996
- 9) Robert Arnold. Son of Cyril Arnold. *The Green Stamp Years*. Circa late 1990s.

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The Birth of Belleek

1852 – 1872 Conception, Birth and Growing Up

- Chris Marvell

Originally given as a talk at the 2009 BCIS Convention

Part 1. In the last newsletter

The story of events leading up to the foundation of Belleek Pottery.

Part 2. The early years of the Pottery and how it came to its first triumphant success.

Slow Progress 1855 – 1865

The Building of the Pottery 1858

Armstrong's Experiments Begin

Preparing for Production 1863

Belleek Pottery's Commercial Breakthrough

The Floodgates Open 1865-1872

Kerr's Renewed Involvement – Sales and Marketing

The Amazing Achievement of the Belleek Pottery by 1872

Summary

Part 2. The early years of the Pottery and how it came to its first triumphant success.

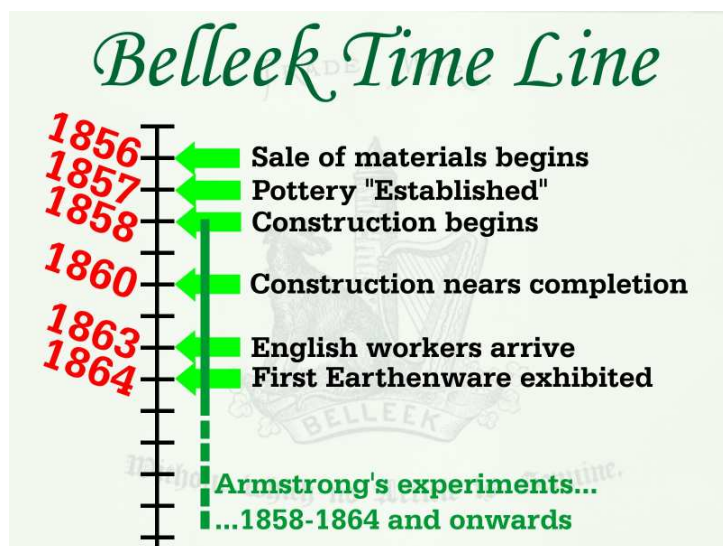
Slow Progress 1855 – 1865

After the interest engendered by the "China War" in the November of 1855, one might expect that rapid progress would be made towards establishing the new pottery at Belleek. This was not the case.

Over the next few years there were some interesting developments, but generally the subject of the Irish Pottery dropped from the public's gaze.

Mairead Reynolds [45] and Neville Maguire [35] state that Bloomfield was not free (due to his having to wait to gain legal control over the Castle Caldwell Estate) to allow the Pottery to start until 1857. This needs some further investigation to establish the exact nature of the encumbrance.

Notwithstanding Bloomfield's legal difficulties, some progress was made almost at once. In 1856, Kerr began using Bloomfield's feldspar from the small quarry at Larkhill on the Estate [5]. Kerr used this to make a large (and rapidly growing) range of parian



figures at Worcester which he sold with great success as "Irish Statuary Porcelain". Kerr had first coined the name "Irish Statuary Porcelain" for the figures that he sold at a "moderate price" in the Gallery of the 1853 Dublin Exhibition, notably a small parian figure of William Dargan, the patron of the Exhibition. This is reported in the Illustrated Magazine of Art [42], in its very full description of the 1853 Exhibition. It is most important to understand that Kerr did **NOT** use Bloomfield's Castle Caldwell raw materials to make the pieces for this exhibition: they were simply not available to him at this time. Having struck on a good descriptive name, Kerr however continued using it for the parian figures that were made at Worcester using the Belleek materials after 1856. We can therefore say with some certainty that the first items to be sold to the public made from Belleek "clay" were retailed by W.H. Kerr and Co. (Kerr and Binns) of Worcester in the year of 1856.

In April 1856, Bloomfield advertised: "*a bed of porcelain clay and feldspar*" for sale in the London Times [36], beginning successful sales to other English potteries. This trade certainly continued until well after 1865. Until "midsummer of 1862" this was largely under the control of Kerr at Worcester, who acted as the distributor of the materials. We know this because Armstrong recorded that he had taken over this supply himself following Kerr's exit from Worcester in 1862. Armstrong states that: "*Oct 28, 1865: Sent off 17 casks to Maw's Order of the same [feldspar] as supplied Kerr & Co Worcester and sold by them to Maw & Co. - Spar now much purer & better than any hitherto got.*" The trade in the raw material declined as Belleek Pottery's own requirements for the Castle Caldwell feldspar increased after 1865. The "maiden mountain" (of feldspar) - Vincent Lee's words in his letter of November 1855 [3h] - which had originally been thought both "pure" and "inexhaustible" was to prove anything but: as we shall see, Belleek's own demand for the material eventually put severe pressure on the local supply as production radically increased.

As discussed in Part 1, the Pottery itself was duly 'founded' in 1857, construction, however did not begin in earnest until 1858 [24].

The Building of the Pottery (1858 onwards)

Mairead Reynolds [45] states that "*preparation of the site began in the summer of 1858, [and] legal arrangements were completed on 29th September.*" The famous day, November 18th 1858 when Mrs Bloomfield laid the Pottery's foundation stone is extremely well reported by John Cunningham in his book "The Story of Belleek" [23] so I will not go into detail on the ceremony of that great day. Suffice it to say that by this date, it was reported in the Impartial Reporter of 25th November that "*Some portions of the building are already up to a considerable height....*"

Right: An engraving of the Pottery and associated buildings, 1869 [33]

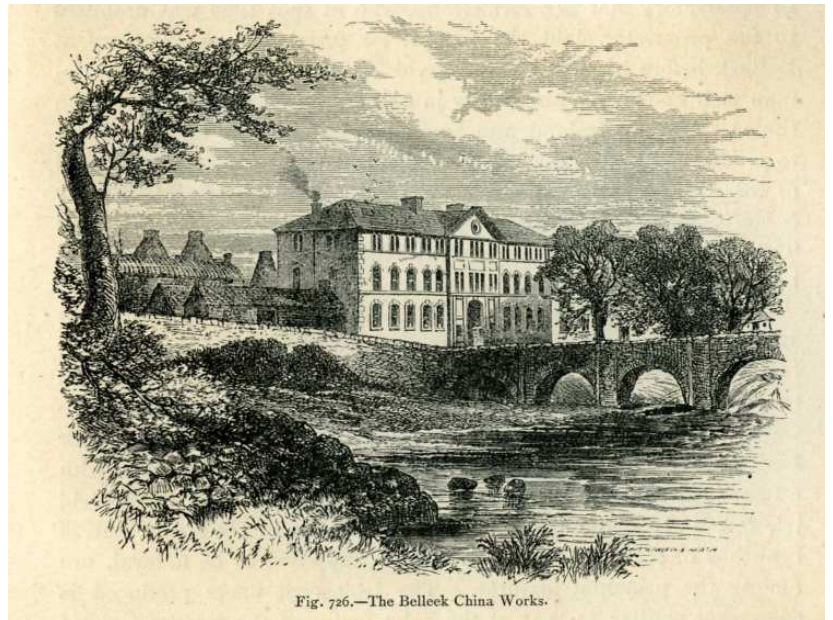


Fig. 726.—The Belleek China Works.

McBirney also took the opportunity in his speech on that day to clearly state his philosophy on the control and financing of the enterprise. He described:

"the many difficulties his partner, Mr Armstrong and himself has had to contend with in starting the undertaking, and which eventually ended in their rejecting all proposals of working the concern by a company, public or private, but to depend wholly on their own individual efforts".

Armstrong was his "partner" by the fact of his commitment to and unremitting work on the project at Belleek rather than in the legal sense of the word. McBirney appears to have rejected other offers of funding for the

McBirney's Aston Quay - 1960's photograph



project because he wanted full control of it. He was a seasoned businessman, already with extensive railway interests and proprietor of the large and successful McBirney and Collis store on Aston Quay in Dublin (*Left*). He had decided against seeking finance from a share offering or forming any type of joint stock or limited company or even a legal partnership: McBirney had come to the conclusion that he alone should bear the financial burden and he alone should have control of the company. His reasons for this were probably not that he didn't trust other participants but in his long business life (he was 52 years old in 1858), he had seen many ventures fail due to squabbling amongst the shareholders, sudden removal of financial

support or weak and incompetent management. [10t]. McBirney had his eyes open and he knew the Pottery was a risk but he thought it stood the greatest chance of success if he took full financial responsibility. This was also a pragmatic solution to the funding problem as none of the other principals then had significant available cash for the planned venture. For more details of McBirney's life and business interests please see the article by Brian Russell and Chris Marvell [39].

So following the ceremony of November 1858, when the celebrations that attended the laying of the foundation stone had subsided, the quiet of Belleek Village was broken only by the noise of contractors continuing their work on the new Pottery buildings.

During the following seven years, McBirney did not waver in his support of Armstrong and the Belleek project. Progress was slow and expensive: McBirney would have been regularly called upon to provide ongoing finance. He appears to have had the patience of a saint! One of the main reasons for the slow progress was that Armstrong was in sole control of the construction and development of the Pottery... and he was a perfectionist.

Armstrong pursued a solitary path, supervising the building work and turning his attention to the practical problems of actually making pots. Armstrong was the architect for the Pottery building and his own house 'Rose Isle House' which stood beside it. His plans for the new Pottery called for the building of the magnificent structure we still have today – it has stood the test of time over 150 years and is still an eminently practical as well as a beautiful building, part of Robert Armstrong's enduring legacy.

Armstrong had refined his knowledge of the engineering and science of building and running a pottery by observing the structures and operations at some of the most famous English potteries in Stoke on Trent [3j]. His "dry run" for the Belleek Pottery had then been the extensive work he had done for Kerr at Worcester between 1850 and 1854, where he had designed and overseen the construction of kilns, workshops and the new showroom, effectively rebuilding a good part of the old and seriously fire damaged Royal Porcelain Works on the Severn Street site.

Armstrong's Experiments Begin

Armstrong set out to learn everything that was important in the science and practice of making pottery. He read all the books he could find on the subject - his reading list, which includes basic and advanced textbooks on chemistry and many books on ceramic art, techniques and technology, was found with his diaries [22]. He thoroughly acquainted himself with the latest methods and thinking on these subjects. When satisfied with his level of theoretical knowledge, he worked with the manager, foreman and experienced potters at Kerr's Worcester factory, Mr Lane and Mr Handcock being mentioned frequently in his diaries from October 1860 onwards. Richard Binns, the artistic director of Kerr's company also supplied advice and comments becoming Armstrong's main contact at Worcester after Kerr relinquished control in 1862. Kerr himself supplied Armstrong with vital business information in the form of his company's costings and his suppliers' invoices

The "Star Fort" and Bridge at Belleek



[10f]. In 1859, as the Pottery buildings were not yet finished, Armstrong carried out some of his first practical experiments in the old "Star Fort" (*left*) across the bridge, in County Donegal. Now Armstrong worked unremittingly. He made recipes for bodies, glazes, printing colours and tints that duplicated the work of other potters. When he was not satisfied with these, he modified them and improved them. He worked on stoneware, earthenware, bone china and parian. Nothing was left out, Armstrong explored absolutely everything he could think of. These seemingly endless experiments are detailed in his diaries [22]. He continued to be assisted by the personnel at Worcester who had been told by

Kerr to hold nothing back in their co-operation with him and to supply him with whatever he needed [1, 10f, 33]. Of course, in these early days, Armstrong had to make frequent trips to Worcester especially when he needed items to be fired as he had no kiln at Belleek, probably only having his own fully operational kiln at Belleek in 1862 [diary entry October 8th 1862]. He also made trips to Dublin to show David McBirney the results of his work [diary entry June 9th 1863]. He corresponded with potters at other companies in Stoke on Trent, notably John Ridgway, Charles Meigh and William Brownfield. William Kerr himself took a very active and hands-on interest in Armstrong's experiments, visiting him at Belleek and even adding his own comments to entries in Armstrong's journals. In July 1862, at the time when Kerr was just giving up control at Worcester, he adds the comment "*This came out very fair. W.H.K.*" to Armstrong's notes on a trial of Dr. Ure's Barytes glaze and "*Found this a very transparent glaze. W.H.K.*" to another glaze trial. Armstrong worked with great dedication at Belleek, mainly on his own at this stage, but he had no hesitation in asking for advice and assistance from many prominent or experienced men at English potteries. His work at Worcester in the early 1850's and his study of many of the Stoke on Trent potteries during this period now stood him in good stead as he made use of the many contacts he had made.

Armstrong had formed an opinion by 1855 [3j] following his researches in Staffordshire, Birmingham and Worcester, that a process patented in 1840 by Richard Prosser (to produce buttons), could be utilised to make simple ceramic articles in a cost-effective and highly efficient way. Armstrong's idea involved taking dry, finely ground raw materials (mainly feldspar but with a range of other ingredients) and pressing them under high pressure into a strong metal mould. No liquid was involved, the mixed ingredients having been thoroughly dried before the pressing: only the high pressure used ensuring that this "dust pressed" article did not fall apart when taken from the mould. The theory was that this article, could then be simply fired and the resulting product would be robust and dimensionally stable (it would not change its shape or size) because no water was there to be lost in the firing process. Armstrong was highly wedded to this idea as a way of producing simple articles such as tiles, mortars and pestles and other simple thick-walled shapes. The highly successful application of a variant of Prosser's process to make tiles had already been demonstrated at Minton in Stoke on Trent which had from about 1845 been producing very high quality dust-pressed "encaustic" tiles. Armstrong seems to have invested considerable time and effort to develop this idea over the whole period 1858-1866 [22].

Other authors [23 and others], have reported that Belleek Pottery in 1860, was making earthenware or toilets and wash basins for sale. We have found no contemporary evidence for this. If this is true then it must have been very limited as the Pottery building was nowhere near complete by 1860 and it's main use then was merely as a "feldspar mill" as part of the process of finely grinding Bloomfield's material before exporting it to England via Ballyshannon. The Dublin Builder in 1862 [23] says that the Building was even then not yet fully complete with £10,000 already having been spent and that "*Raw material [was] being sent to England at great profit*".

Another factor against any significant earthenware (or any other) production in 1860 was that neither the required production equipment nor the necessary expertise appear to have existed at Belleek at this time. Toilets and wash basins are large and fairly complex items to manufacture and would require a lot of kiln space. We have found no contemporary report of such a kiln being available at Belleek in 1860. Yet another factor was that getting these large items to their market at this date would have been uneconomic because of the lack of infrastructure, both of the transport system and of sales outlets.

It is unlikely that Belleek Pottery made *any* articles for sale in 1860 other than possibly a small number of the

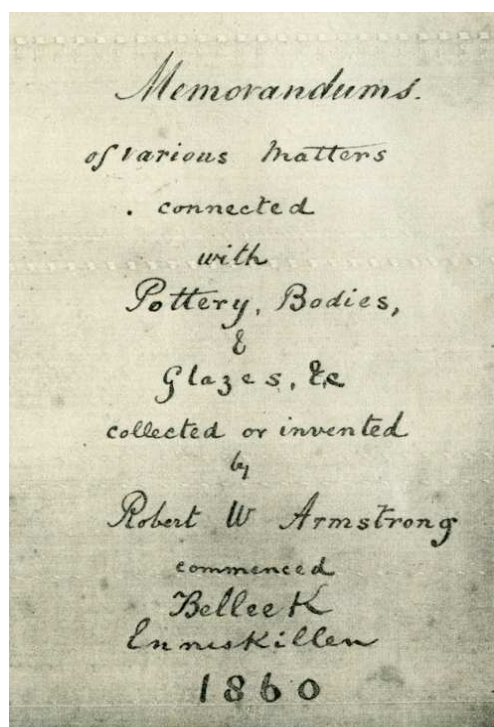


most simple tiles or trivets. A small number of earthenware transfer printed tiles and circular teapot stands, most probably made using Armstrong's dust-pressing method, with the Belleek dog, tower and harp (but not the word "Belleek") as part of the decoration on the *front* and with a circular "Belleek - Enniskillen" backstamp have been recorded. It is possible (but as yet unproven) that these might be examples of production from this time [32, 35].

Above: Circular teapot stand with the Belleek - Enniskillen mark

It is not known exactly when the Pottery adopted the dog, tower and harp as the company logo as all three of these are traditional Irish symbols. This is discussed by Neville Maguire on page 70 of his "Belleek in Context" [35].

Perhaps it is just a coincidence, but the title page that Armstrong composed for the earliest volume of his diaries



that we have found (*left*) also uses this nomenclature: i.e. Belleek Enniskillen. As Belleek village had very little claim to fame in 1860, before the existence of the Pottery put it on the map, it was natural to state its location with reference to the nearest major town, Enniskillen. Later, as we know very well, the Pottery simply described itself as "Belleek, Co. Fermanagh." Something which could well be more than a coincidence is the similarity in appearance of the mark used by Kerr at Worcester mainly on his "Irish Statuary Porcelain" in the period 1853-1862 [9] with this "Belleek - Enniskillen" mark (*Kerr's mark is shown on the right*). In 1860, Armstrong would in all probability have had to use the facilities and expertise at Worcester to get the printing plates engraved and the transfers for the tiles made. Both the backstamp and the entwined convolvulus decoration are reminiscent of the "Worcester style" of this period.



Rather than preparing for commercial production, between 1859 and 1863, Armstrong, the dedicated perfectionist, progressed slowly and methodically, continuing with his comprehensive series of experiments to perfect his cherished "dust pressing" technique as well as hundreds of trials of recipes for bodies, colours and

glazes [22]. He was able to grind materials in the large mills that were then operational at the Pottery, powered by the newly installed Fairbairn water wheel but at least initially had no kiln to complete his trials.

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Felspar Bodies trial by me
 - Oct^r 1860 -
 Note in the ^{1st} 8 trials the Spar was heated
 partly in contact with coal flame thrown
 then into cold water, and dry ground
 with Bwan Stones - and in these trials
 the materials were mixed dry instead
 of in the slip state so that they
 did not receive as fair a trial as
 they ought -
 The trials from the 8 mixtures
 were pressed in dies at Mr Whitehouse
 Borchall St Birmingham the inventor
 and patentee of the principle of
 making articles of curved surfaces
 and irregular and uneven thickness
 from a dry powder. his patent being
 an improvement on Prosser's. Mr D
 McBirney was with me and witnessed
 the process on Friday Oct^r 12th 1860
 on which evening we proceeded to
 Worcester to have them fired.
 They were pronounced by Mr Lane the
 leading manager Mr Hancock the slip
 mixer and Mr Kerr the most
 successful 1st trials they ever saw -

David McBirney continued to provide all the funding necessary to keep this going. He may have received some return to offset against his considerable investment from the sale of prepared raw materials. Although McBirney seems to have been entirely happy to fund this considerable expenditure that the developing Pottery entailed, it appears that Armstrong felt it necessary to keep him in the picture as regards the progress he was making. Armstrong's diary from October 1860 (Left) reports on an important trip he made to England with David McBirney:

"The trials from the 8 mixtures were pressed in dies at Mr. Whitehouse, Burchall St. Birmingham, the inventor and patentee of the principle of making articles of curved faces and irregular and uneven thicknesses from a dry powder. His patent being an improvement on Prosser's. Mr. D. McBirney was with me and witnessed the process on Friday Oct^r 12th 1860 on which evening we proceeded to Worcester to have them fired. They were pronounced by Mr. Lane the manager, Mr. Handcock the slip Mixer and Mr. Kerr the most successful 1st trials they ever saw."

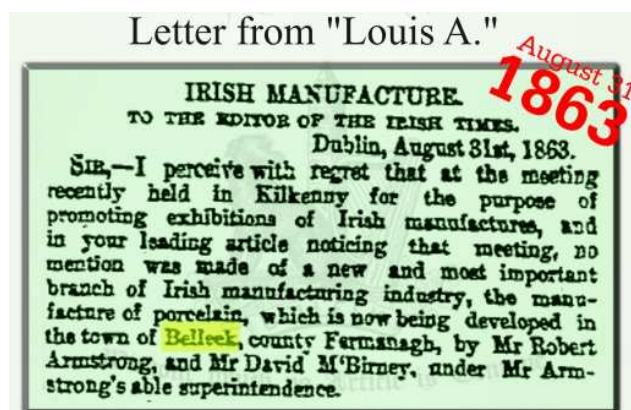
The Worcester personnel involved describe this exercise as "First trials", again this is evidence that Armstrong was only in the early stages of his experiments in October 1860. Certainly he does not mention the production or sale of any items in his journals. It seems that McBirney, apparently with nothing to show for his investment other than the results of these trials that Armstrong was carrying out, nevertheless went on ploughing more and more of his own personal money into the Belleek project. His level of trust in Armstrong's (as yet completely unproven) capabilities as a potter is truly astounding. Kerr's support was important in maintaining McBirney's confidence in Armstrong and it is significant that Kerr himself was present at these "First trials", both to give his encouragement to Armstrong and his personal seal of approval, as owner of one of the most important porcelain companies in England. It seems that Armstrong leaned heavily on his friend Kerr for moral as well as technical support, especially here when it was necessary to provide evidence to McBirney that progress was indeed being made. McBirney himself acknowledged that Kerr's support had been very important (in a report made on the 1865 Dublin Exhibition)[1].

Preparing for Production 1863

Over the course of 1863 [40] a number of experienced pottery workers arrived in Belleek from Staffordshire in England to provide the expertise needed to begin production in earnest. It is most definitely *not* the case that Armstrong depended on the "secret recipe" for making parian coming with these workers - Armstrong had no need for the Goss parian recipe which would have been well known to William Bromley, but you can't deny that Armstrong must have benefited from the additional information as well as the practical experience that came with these men. It is clear from Armstrong's diaries [22] that he had already developed his own parian recipe - based on his experiments with the original Worcester recipe (amongst others) - that he professed himself to be satisfied with. Armstrong had also recipes for earthenware and stoneware and his "insulator body". He needed the English workers for their production, kiln and modelling skills rather than for any further development of the chemistry and recipes.

It is very difficult to see exactly when Belleek actually made a first impact on the commercial scene with their products as Armstrong does not record this in his diaries and no other records of production or sales at this early date have ever been found from the Pottery itself or from any other contemporary sources. It is likely that no production kiln was available until 1863 [1]. In the absence of other information, we searched the newspapers of the day for any reports of the Pottery and its productions.

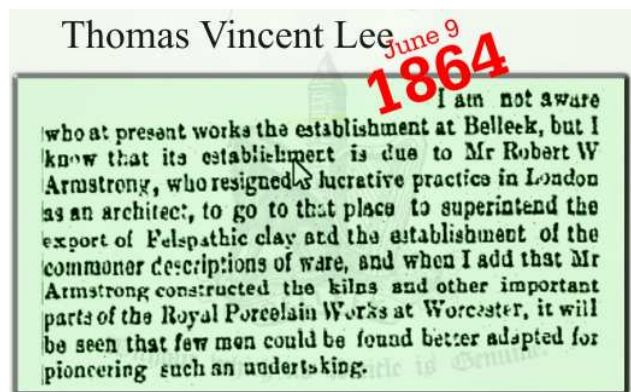
This letter to the Irish Times 31st August 1863 (*part shown below left*) from "Louis A." [10b] says that he thought porcelain manufacture was now being *developed* in Belleek, but that he regretted this was not even mentioned at a meeting in Kilkenny set up to promote Irish manufacture.



More support for 1863 being the earliest date for the start of manufacture comes from reports in the Dublin Builder [23]. In September 1863 they say that local clay was proving unsuitable for making commonware (earthenware), also in 1863 they report that the chief production was floor tiles, insulators, pestles and mortars, firing was mainly using turf (at low temperature). Later, on 15th Jan 1869, they stated that the first ware made at Belleek was in 1863. This could

explain why there are many references to the Belleek Pottery being 'established' in 1863 – was this because it was the year that product of any description was first seen? This is referred to, amongst others, most notably by The Art Journal 1865 [1], Jewitt 1878 [19] and Godden [41].

In the Irish Times of June 9th 1864 [10c], Mr Thomas Vincent Lee, turns up again! (*part shown below left*)



Remember this is the man who had courted Bloomfield between 1853 and the end of 1855 in an effort to purchase the Castle Caldwell feldspar for his "Irish China Clay, Brick, Tile and Drain Pipe Company". His letter to the editor gives his own view on how far Belleek Pottery had come. He was now employed by the "Anglo Irish Peat Company" in Macclesfield. Lee, most fortunately for the very existence of Belleek Pottery, had lost this battle to Armstrong, even though it had apparently been approved of by "Mr Dargan and many other leading Irishmen" and had been "shelved", as he put it, after "much expense and loss of time." [10c]. It

was clear that Lee was still watching the progress of the pottery at Belleek closely. Referring to Belleek Pottery, Lee goes on to say in his letter:

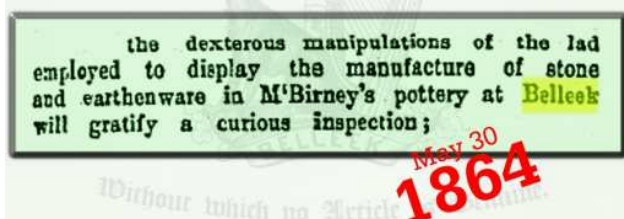
"...its establishment is due to Mr Robert W Armstrong, who resigned lucrative practice in London as an architect, to go to that place to superintend the export of felspathic clay and the establishment of the

commoner descriptions of ware, and when I add that Mr Armstrong constructed the kilns and other important parts of the Royal Porcelain Works at Worcester, it will be seen that few men could be found better adapted for pioneering such an undertaking."

So in 1864 was Belleek Pottery merely used for the "export of feldspathic clay" and production of "the commoner descriptions of ware?" In fact it was probably only from the start of 1864, after the skilled pottery workers from Stoke on Trent had been employed at the Pottery (from some time in 1863) that the production of earthenware really began in commercial quantities along with an extremely small amount of decorative parian items. These parian items probably being samples or test pieces or specially made for exhibition.

The first proper evidence of production came in 1864, when Belleek made its debut showing at the small Dublin Exhibition of that year. Children from Belleek were shown making earthenware vessels/jugs [1, 10o]...

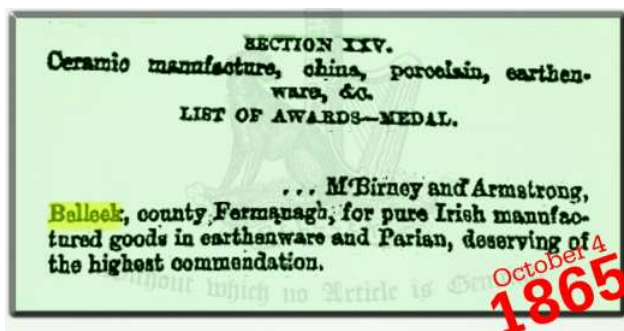
... This was entertaining maybe, but there was still no sign of any significant porcelain production!



Belleek Pottery's Commercial Breakthrough

The 1865 Dublin exhibition, the first major Irish exhibition since 1853, which took place between 9th May and 9th November now marked something of a watershed [8]. The new Belleek Pottery finally broke onto the

scene and won a medal at this Exhibition – here is the citation published in the Irish Times of 4th October (Left) 1865 [10a, 10q].



"pure Irish manufactured goods in earthenware and parian, deserving of the highest commendation".

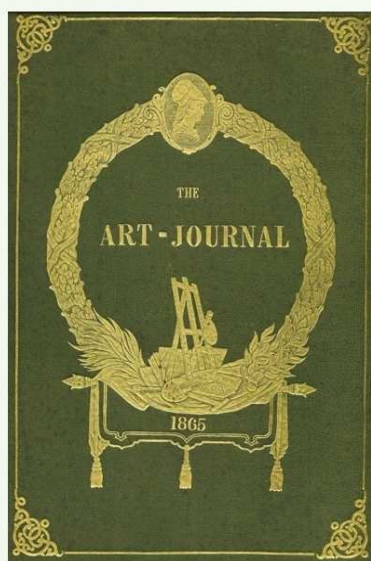


The Pottery had gained public recognition at last! And it gained wider recognition: below is part of the London Art Journal report on the Exhibition.

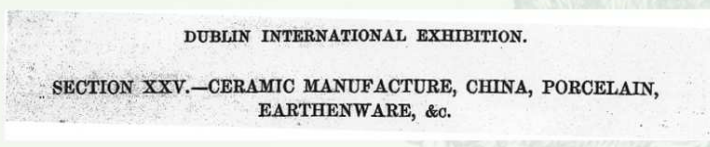
Belleek Pottery, at this time known as simply as "McBirney and Armstrong" was exhibitor number 701, classified in section 25 of the Exhibition. They exhibited "stone china" table and toilet ware, mortars etc. for chemical purposes, parian china figures, statuettes etc. and earthenware.

701 M'BIRNEY & ARMSTRONG, Belleek, co. Fermanagh.—Table and toilet ware in stone china; stone-ware; mortars, &c., for chemical purposes; Parian china figures, statuettes, &c.; and earthenware.
This branch of manufacturing industry is of quite recent introduction into Ireland, and its origin, as well as a brief account of its progress to the present time, cannot fail to be of interest to the public.

Because of the evident interest in the new Irish pottery, the Art Journal saw fit to include a complete summary of the Pottery's history and this report is the basis of most of the later published histories of the Pottery.



Art Journal Report on the 1865 Dublin International Exhibition



In the year 1852 Mr. J. C. Bloomfield of Castle Caldwell, Co. Fermanagh, found in several places on his estate, veins, or pockets of kaolin, or china clay; and by subsequent explorations found large quantities of massive felspar. Knowing these earths and minerals to have a commercial value, he resolved to have them turned to some useful purpose.

Towards the end of 1853 he put himself in communication with Mr. Robert W. Armstrong, an architect in London, who being at that time professionally engaged at the Royal Porcelain Works, Worcester, for Mr. W. H. Kerr, had the best opportunity of getting the quality of the minerals tested; and, both gentlemen being Irishmen, took more than a common interest in the result.

The materials proving to be of excellent quality, Mr. Armstrong, in March, 1854, visited the Castle Caldwell

property, and after a week's sojourn, came to the conclusion that the district had sufficient of the necessary element to warrant the establishment of pottery works even of the very highest character, and that Belleek, a village on the property, was the proper place to erect such, the advantages of that locality being—

Unlimited water power, with a never-failing supply. Water transit to Enniskillen and a number of towns, including Dublin, Newry, Belfast, Limerick, &c.

Its proximity to Ballyshannon, a seaport in the bay of Donegal, which is only three miles distance.

A sober, industrious people in and around the village. The facility for getting down the felspar clays and the marls with which the surrounding district of Lough Erne abounds.

Mr. Armstrong having consulted with some of his London friends, entertained the idea of getting a Company formed to fully carry out the contemplated works, and a few gentlemen undertook to subscribe all the necessary capital. At this time he laid his views before his friend Mr. David M'Birney, of Dublin, who entertained the matter so spiritedly that he proceeded to London, and, with Mr. Armstrong, visited the Worcester Works, where Mr. Kerr not only gave every facility for investigation, but brought his commercial and practical skill to bear upon the enterprise, which, after the most mature consideration, he considered ought to become one of the staple manufactures of his native land.

Mr. M'Birney having visited the Castle Caldwell property, and the site at Belleek, selected by Mr. Armstrong for the pottery; and with that gentleman and Mr. Kerr, having carefully inspected the tract of country containing the felspar, &c., with that enterprise so characteristic of him, volunteered to find the whole of the capital, if Mr. Armstrong would join him, to start the concern, so as practically to introduce the pottery branch of industry into Ireland, and thus give the development of the mineral resources of that part of his native country a great and powerful impetus.

A sufficient portion of the works having been erected, a water-wheel of 100-horse power put up, built by Mr. Fairbairn, of Manchester, and the necessary crushing and grinding apparatus having been erected, and a couple of ovens, with the other required kilns built, about two years ago they began to manufacture the ordinary useful class of goods for table and toilet purposes; and the visitors of the Dublin Exhibition of 1864 had an opportunity of seeing the aptitude of the children for the pottery trade by the skill and dexterity evinced by the Belleek youth, who during the Exhibition were daily engaged in making jugs, &c.

In addition to this class of goods, Messrs. M'Birney and Armstrong have directed their attention and energies to the development of the application of machinery to the potter's art, and for the last two years have been producing, amongst other things, genuine porcelain insulators for the electric telegraph purposes, made by the unskilled labour of the district from the material in the state of nearly dry dust by pressure in metal mould. These insulators contain 71 per cent. of the Castle Caldwell felspar and are in high estimation with the electrician. This means of manufacture will in time be found applicable to the production of a vast number of other articles. Mr. Armstrong has secured letters patent for an invention by which he is making the well known mortars and pestles of a most superior quality at a cost far below any process at present in use; jelly shapes, pomatum pots, and such class of goods can also be made with great ease, certainty, and economy.

The Belleek pottery at present employs about 70 hands of which number about 30 are boys and girls, learning the different branches of making ware, firing, dipping, printing, painting, lining, gilding, burnishing, &c. Even now the goods manufactured at Belleek have found their way and are in demand not only all through

Ireland, but in England and the United States of America. For the latter country the Belleek Works are eminently adapted to produce the suitable goods in such immense demand there. For their transit railway communication is established from Belleek to Londonderry, which latter boon to the district is to be attributed to the fact of the pottery works having been started in Belleek.

One of the most interesting facts connected with the Belleek pottery is, that its existence is fairly due and traceable to the Dublin Exhibition of 1853, and hence through it up to the Great Exhibition of 1851, and must undoubtedly be looked at as one of the many great and permanently practical results arising from the wisely considered project of the ever-to-be-lamented late Prince Consort.

NOTE.—From the great interest evinced by the visitors to the Exhibition in the display of ceramic goods manufactured by Messrs. M'Birney and Armstrong, we were induced, since the close of the Exhibition, to visit the Belleek Factory in the Co. Fermanagh, and found there, after a most careful investigation occupying some days, that the Pottery, now only in its infancy, from its numerous advantages will, beyond all doubt, take a prominent position amongst the manufactures of Great Britain. The practically unlimited supply of water-power, felspar, fire and other valuable clays; the great amount of skilled labour already created by the aptitude of the young people of the district, the facilities of transit by railway and water communication with the works; and the application of mechanical contrivances, clearly show that the small beginning of the present proprietors must, in time, prove a great commercial success. At the time of our visit, we found that not only were there large quantities of goods sent off daily to the different towns in England and Ireland, including London, but the orders on the books from the United States, Canada, and Australia, far exceeded what (of necessity) the limited resources of the factory could supply.

We understand a number of capitalists have expressed a desire to see this undertaking carried out by a company, on a large scale, commensurate with the local advantages it possesses, and with its national importance. We trust that the enterprise may prove not only a profitable investment to the promoters, but confer a permanent benefit on the country at large.

arguments that he used in his letter of 22nd November 1855 [3j] to make the case for the Pottery being established at Belleek. It seems that Armstrong was now vindicated and ten years after first publishing his reasoning, the successful exhibits at the 1865 Dublin Exhibition proved his arguments correct. The report states that 40 adults and 30 children were then employed at the Pottery, that there were already exports to the USA and that demand for the ware already outstripped the Pottery's ability to produce it.

One reason that demand outstripped supply was clearly because the supply, particularly of the high quality decorative parian ware, was then very small.

The Art Journal now waxed lyrical over the **potential** of the Company but concluded that they wanted: "...to see it carried out by a company, on a large scale, commensurate with the local advantages it possesses, and with its national importance."

We understand a number of capitalists have expressed a desire to see this undertaking carried out by a company, on a large scale, commensurate with the local advantages it possesses, and with its national importance. We trust that the enterprise may prove not only a profitable investment to the promoters, but confer a permanent benefit on the country at large.

It is interesting to consider exactly what was meant by this statement. It clearly implies that the Pottery was **not** then being "carried out by a company, on a large scale..." since this is what the unnamed "capitalists" apparently wanted.

This history (*left*), as published in 1865, was already telling what now appears to be a simplified and modified version of events, even though only twelve years had passed since Dargan's momentous 1853 Exhibition, to which the existence of the Belleek Pottery was now quite correctly ascribed.

In this Art Journal report, the discovery of the kaolin and felspar is credited entirely to Bloomfield. As we know, this is not quite what happened. Some statements in the report are plainly incorrect - for example there was not "railway communication... from Belleek to Londonderry." In spite of these inaccuracies, this report was an early and creditable attempt to tell the Belleek story.

The account goes on to reiterate some of Armstrong's original

The company in 1865 was D. McBirney and Co. and David McBirney had complete financial control of it. He kept this control until his death in 1883, at no time allowing any other "capitalists" to invest in the company, no matter how much this development might have been desirable in the view of the Art Journal and others.

In spite of Armstrong's valiant efforts, costs at the Pottery remained relatively high. Armstrong, in his diaries [22] (1862-1866), made many detailed costings, as he had done earlier in 1855 when attempting to justify the economic viability of the proposed pottery in the first place, but this time comparing the precise raw material and shipping costs for different types of ware made at Belleek against the same items from Stoke on Trent. Although using Castle Caldwell materials really did give Armstrong a significant cost advantage, the major factors in Belleek's overall costs still being higher than Stoke on Trent's were those of shipping in the coal and any other materials not locally available and then sending the finished ware to market. In his recipes, although Armstrong used a high proportion of the locally available materials (up to 70 percent Castle Caldwell feldspar), he also imported Cornish china clay and other materials from England. In 1865, the eagerly awaited railway was not complete and transport had to be by sea, river and road. Unfortunately, even when it opened to traffic in 1866, the Enniskillen to Bundoran Railway, which served Belleek, made only small improvements to this situation because the railway company was itself misconceived and incompetently managed, charging high prices, providing a poor and unreliable service and making losses each year it operated - both McBirney and Kerr railed against the inept directors of this and other railway companies at various shareholders meetings (as reported in the Irish Times of February 1870 [10w]).

Also the employment of the English workers had caused problems, Armstrong wrote in a letter 8th Mar 1866 that he would have to send the English workers home "*for their protection*" because of the "*existence of Fenianism*" [23].

The Belleek Pottery in 1865 was therefore seen by Armstrong and its advocates (most vociferously, Kerr) still to be at a significant disadvantage against the English potteries. In a later Irish Times report of February 1870 [10w], Kerr was quoted as saying: "*Everyone knew that the English people were trying to crush the Belleek Pottery...*" The context of this was that Kerr was frustrated by the obstacles that he perceived were put in the way of Belleek Pottery's progress - in this particular case the inefficient railways - and he blamed "*The English people.*"

As we have said, 1865 marked a significant advance by the Pottery, we have the first concrete evidence from reports of the Dublin Exhibition (*picture of the interior shown right [11]*) that it was by then making low-cost utilitarian items in reasonable quantity ('table and toilet wares in stone china, stoneware, mortars, &C, for chemical purposes,&C, and earthenware' [1], also jelly moulds [25]).

Unfortunately, there was almost a confirmation of what the detractors of the Pottery had said all along, because it was not really cost effective against similar ware made in Stoke on Trent. In this sense, Armstrong had not yet achieved his objectives stated ten years earlier [3j]. Decorative parian production (parian china figures, statuettes [1]), had begun by

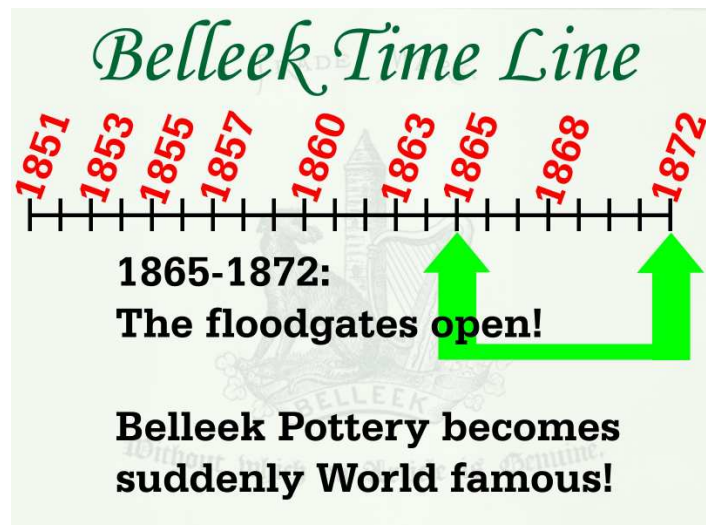
1865 but was in its infancy with the quantity manufactured very small. It was not in fact until 5th September 1868 that Belleek Pottery made the first of its design registrations (for an Echinus plate) [43].



Overall, the progress the Pottery had made, from the agreement to go ahead with the project in 1855 until the first major recognition it achieved in 1865, a period of ten years, was very slow. On the plus side, however, the major financial investment by McBirney and the investment of time and effort by Armstrong had by 1865 achieved the construction of a magnificent building and the attainment of a high level of expertise in the theory and practice of operating a Pottery. The Art Journal was correct: the potential for great success was now there.

The Floodgates Open 1865 - 1872

Now at last, in the seven years following 1865, suddenly, the Belleek Pottery achieved astounding and unprecedented fame and success.

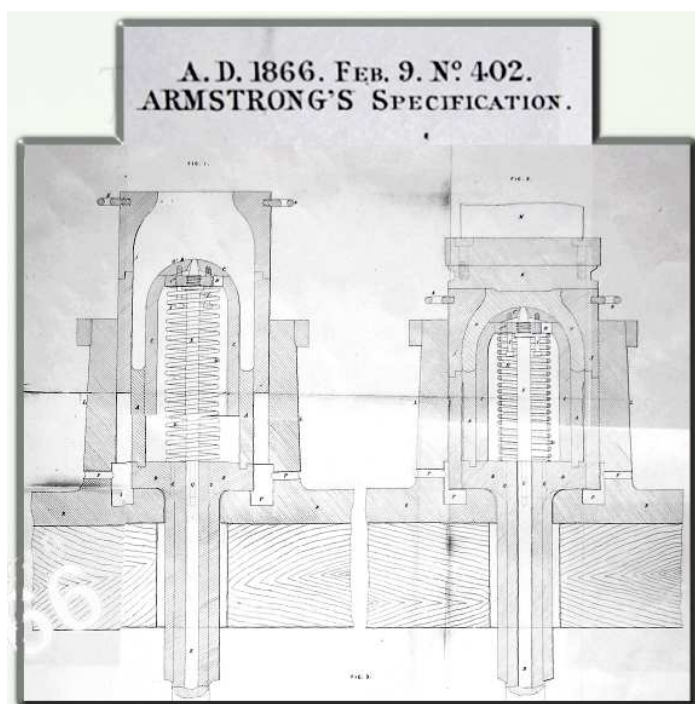


The first train to Belleek arrived on 1st June 1866, the railway had been finished with money provided by Dargan – [Cunningham p28 [23]]. This was timely as the floodgates now opened...

Perhaps the reasons for this are not what one might expect. I would like to highlight two factors which are normally not even mentioned which in my personal view go some way to accounting for this success.

Firstly, success was due to Armstrong's ingenuity...

Armstrong had continued his patient and sometimes obsessive experimentation, working with an assistant, who was truly his right hand man, called Henry Tomkinson [22]. Tomkinson faithfully carried out Armstrong's instructions and often then made suggestions and offered opinions to his demanding boss. We know nothing more about Henry Tomkinson, but he was clearly very important to Armstrong at this time. Armstrong applied for a patent for his improvements to Prosser's dust press, having now designed apparatus which could press the finely ground ingredients into precise and complex curved shapes. He submitted the patent application in 1865 [34] to the London Patent Office and when he had made further refinements to it, this was granted in 1866 [21] (*right*). This little known device, invented by Armstrong, was to turn round the fortunes of the Pottery...



...because Armstrong could use it to make articles which were then very much in demand – for once, Belleek Pottery and Armstrong in particular had got the timing exactly right:

The articles were telegraph insulators.

Right: Insulator dug off the Pottery tip (chipped!)

Now telegraph insulators are not the simple articles that many authors have supposed them to be. They have to be made to an exacting specification both mechanically and electrically. The new telegraphs of the day required perfect electrical insulation and that the insulators be made to an exact size and shape with extremely fine tolerances – the insulators were attached to the fixings on the telegraph poles with a screw thread – even today this is very difficult to make this precisely in a ceramic object.



Armstrong's patent dust press was exactly what was required to manufacture them. Combined with the undisputed purity of the Castle Caldwell feldspar, ensuring the insulators were free of defects and hence electrically perfect, the ability to make complex curved shapes repeatably was essential here. These deceptively simple, utilitarian objects may well have been far more lucrative than either earthenware or parian for Belleek Pottery because it seems that Armstrong managed to make them of such quality and in such quantity that for a time he entirely cornered the market for them in Ireland. Belleek's insulators were of such good quality that the Pottery also eventually sold very significant numbers to the English market

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

We have already directed attention to the extensions now being made by the Electric Telegraph Company, whose wires have hitherto run through a few of the most important towns in Ireland. There can be no doubt that great benefit will accrue to the public by these extensions.

It will, however, be a source of still greater satisfaction to the public to learn that the Magnetic Telegraph Company, whose wires run through the entire country, are now rapidly carrying out a more complete system, and the wires are now being extended, under the supervision of the well-known and distinguished electrician, B D WATLOCK, Esq., assisted by an efficient staff of engineers.

The following are some of the Northern towns to which new wires are already being erected, and it is expected they will shortly be in direct communication with the General Post office, Dublin. The Southern and Western sections will be commenced immediately:—

NEW STATIONS.		
Drumcondra	Whitehouse	Dunfanaghy
Glasnevin	Glenavon	Drumquin
Falsterew	Cashendall	Gortun
Clontarf	Duleek	Ballyclare
Swords	Slane	Crumlin
Malahide	Trim	Randalstown
Skerries	Athboy	Doonee Bridge
Ballybrigan	Delvin	Draperstown
Louth	Moynalty	Rubbermore
Carrickmacross	Virginia	Monra
Crossmaglen	Ballsboro'	Maghera
Cootanill	Kingscourt	Money more
Newtownhamilton	Shercock	Coagh
Tandragee	Monknugent	Gracahill
Gulford	Lisnastea	Cloagh (County Antrim)
Monra	Brookborough	Portlennone
Drumara	Five-mile town	Kilrea
Baldinnoch	Clogher	Laragh
Castlewells	Ballygawley	Bushmills
Clough	Tempo	Ballycanele
Newcastle	Derrygonnelly	Castewart
Strangford	Castlederg	Mayville
Ardglass	Ballyboofy	Carnalunagh
Alcolum	Rapshaw	Malin
Greyabbey	Latterkenny	Dungivin
Portaferry	Remelton	Clady
Ballywalter	Millford	
Whiteabbey	Rathpallan	

One highly gratifying feature in connection with these extensions of the Government telegraphs is to be found in the great encouragement given to Irish manufacture; the whole of the insulators are being manufactured at the Belleek Potteries.

The 1865 Dublin Exhibition report [1] said that insulators had been produced for the last 2 years and that they were “made by unskilled labour ..[using] material in the state of nearly dust dry by pressure in metal moulds. These insulators contain 70 percent of the Castle Caldwell feldspar”. It also said the same “application of machinery” was used to make mortar, pestles and jelly moulds at a “cost far below any process at present”.

This is clearly demonstrated in this Irish Times report on 6th November 1869 (left) [10j], which announces no less than 82 towns and villages in Ireland to which the new telegraph had been connected, says that:

“the whole of the insulators are being manufactured at the Belleek Potteries”.

This amounted to the supply of a truly prodigious number of insulators! In 1869 The Art Journal [33] says “Belleek furnishes largely the insulators used for telegraph poles and these have been pronounced by ‘authorities’ the ‘best’ ...for supremacy in these objects it is indebted to the purity of the clay and feldspar, producing a clear brilliant white and singular ‘compactness’ resulting in a remarkable hardness and durability” So, it seems, Belleek's market for these items extended to Great Britain [19].

This type of product: specialised, high quality, difficult to manufacture (especially for Armstrong's competitors!) and required in enormous quantity was exactly the sort of item that could have made the Pottery an awful lot of money. It guaranteed a period of substantial income and stability for the Pottery in the late 1860's but Armstrong, although now in danger of having a major commercial success on his hands, continued to experiment and to concentrate on the design and development of the most highly decorative and expensive ware. After all, Kerr's original plan, from back in 1852 had always been to make high quality porcelain in Ireland.

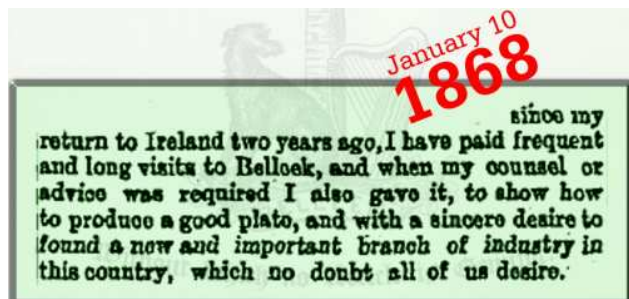
Armstrong's comprehensive and continual experiments, having already achieved this objective in a very limited way for the 1865 Exhibition were at last also about to pay dividends...

... these dividends were returned in terms of recognition and fame for the Pottery, but David McBirney did not get a return on this investment. It was said “Money was plentiful in those days” McBirney was rich and all profits were for some time spent on improvements; skilled designers and artists were employed” [34]

Kerr's Renewed Involvement – Sales and Marketing

The **second reason** for Belleek's sudden success is once again one is not usually even recognised or at all what you might suppose..... it was **getting the patronage of the Royal family**...how did they do this?

William Henry Kerr was always present in the background, providing assistance to the Pottery when it was required (*part of letter to the Irish Times in January 1868 is shown below*) [10f]. He had sold his interests in the Worcester Royal Porcelain Works in 1862 but continued living in Worcester, making trips to Ireland to his family's flourishing porcelain retailing business in Dublin and to visit Armstrong in Belleek. It then appears to have taken more than three years to sort out his affairs in England, after which he returned to live in Dublin. He now had money - he received £11,000 from the sale of his interests in Worcester [45] - and time to invest in Belleek. Kerr now paid frequent and long visits to Belleek. He also repositioned his business in Dublin, styling it as "*The Sole Depot in Dublin for Belleek works.*" (*see Kerr's advertisement bottom right*).



If we remember back to the Dublin Exhibition of 1853, Kerr had talked at length to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert and sold them Worcester parian items. Since then he had sold the Queen several custom made Worcester services, so Kerr was entirely accustomed to dealing with royalty, the aristocracy and the leaders of British society. He was obviously persuasive and convincing and today we would say he was expert in "networking". Kerr was in effect expert in a field which was then both unknown and unnamed, its name was first used in 1905 by the University of Pennsylvania [46] – we of course fully recognise its vital importance as it is a predominant force in the world of today – the field is "marketing". More than the skill of a salesman, Kerr's marketing ability meant he had a very good idea of what he could sell to whom and how to go about achieving this. More than this, Kerr's experience at Worcester showed him exactly what had to be done to gain the maximum publicity and recognition for Belleek Pottery.

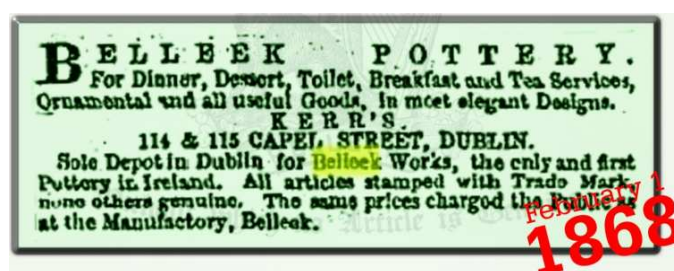
Kerr became Belleek's marketing man.

Kerr was unable to invest directly in Belleek Pottery because David McBirney still insisted, as he had from the start, on retaining full control of the business, so he directed his efforts at the promotion of Belleek Pottery through the marketplace. He discussed with Armstrong the type of product that would make an impact on his intended "target market", he advertised accordingly and positioned himself and Belleek Pottery so that he could achieve his objective of beating the dominant and then world-beating English potteries at their own game... and his target market? It was nothing less than the British Royal Family and Queen Victoria herself!

Armstrong and the Pottery responded after 1865 by designing and producing exquisite parian ware. In spite of many of the English pottery workers, including the talented modeller, William Gallimore, returning to England in 1866, the skills and methods of production they had brought with them from William Henry Goss's factory in Stoke on Trent were now established with local men at Belleek. Here we must emphatically state what a fine and innovative designer Armstrong was, but so too was his wife Annie Langley Nairn! Armstrong was indeed fortunate to have such a talented wife. The early years of delay and Armstrong's perfectionism now paid off: due to his recipes, the designs could be cast fine and thin. Armstrong had also developed his own delicate nacreous lustre glaze which was much admired. This is usually attributed to a Frenchman, J.J.H. Briancon of Paris but Armstrong eventually perfected a much more delicate and subtle version [22].

As soon as it was available, Kerr purchased large quantities both of decorative parian ware and fine quality earthenware for sale in his Capel Street, Dublin shop. Kerr also advertised copiously in the press: this was from the Irish Times of February 1st 1868

Right: Kerr's advertisement as the BELLEEK POTTERY DEPOT in February 1868

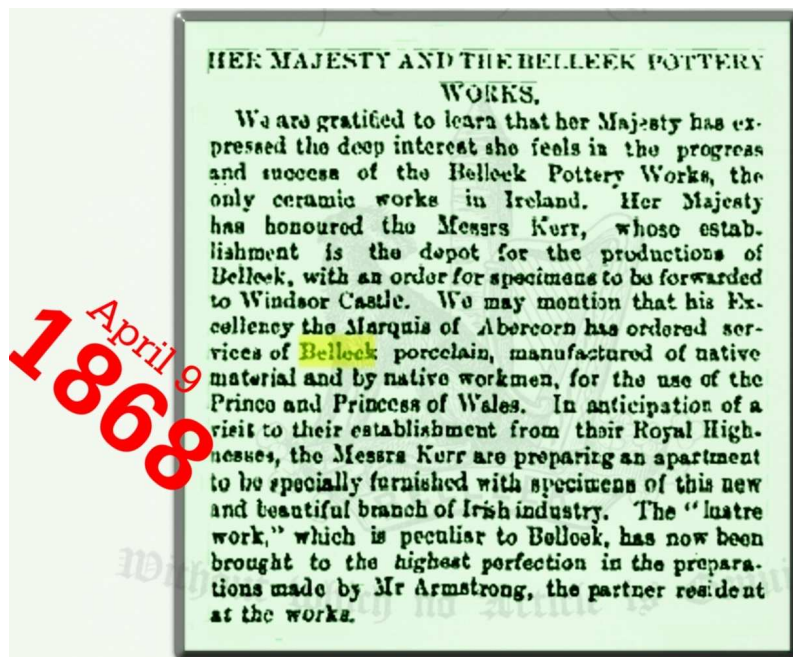


Bartels [46] writing about the development of marketing (in 1976) stated that: "By 1900, it was being found that demand consisted of more than simple purchasing power. It reflected desire as well as ability to purchase, and new experiences with advertising and salesmanship were proving that desire could be increased and molded by factors other than the mere existence of supply." He also stated: "...in 1900, there was no clear concept of the justification of marketing as a productive activity or as a contribution to economic production. On the contrary, the popular impression was that the middleman added cost instead of value." Perhaps this is the reason Kerr's major contribution to Belleek Pottery's success has been largely overlooked - he was, in effect, at least thirty years ahead of his time! It was Kerr's efforts that brought public recognition of Belleek's wonderful designs and artistry. What was if anything even more amazing than the magnitude of the success was the speed with which it all happened.

By early in 1868 Belleek Pottery had received effusive acclaim with several articles being published in the Irish Times and influential London based Art Journal. Belleek Pottery had also made the national news in England as well as Ireland. And why all this fuss over Belleek?

Well, Kerr, amazingly, had in less than three years from the Pottery first having parian available for sale in 1865, achieved his main objective - to sell to royalty.

The news in the 9th April 1868 Irish Times (*Below*) was that Queen Victoria had requested Kerr to forward Belleek to Windsor Castle for her inspection [10h].



You just can't emphasise enough how important royal patronage was for the Pottery.

The consequences were then exactly what Kerr had anticipated and hoped for because the floodgates now opened!

In 1868, Belleek was suddenly fashionable, the Irish Times reported that: "*The Lord Mayor of Dublin had ordered a banquet service to entertain Queen Victoria on her next visit.*"

Below: A covered dish from a banquet service made for the Marquess of Donegall

Services were also sold to: [10d, 10h, 33]

- Prince Teck (father of Queen Mary)
- Marquess of Drogheda
- Marquess of Donegall
- Lord Cloncurry
- Earl of Charlesmont
- Sir B L Guinness, Bart MP
- Earl of Arran
- Lord Hastings
- Marquess of Abercorn
- Earl Spencer
- Earl of Enniskillen
- Earl Erne

...and a long list of other notable people...



*Echinus Pattern Tea Service as done for
Her Majesty The Queen*

The Queen made several further purchases:- as gifts for her relatives and other sovereigns and for Balmoral and Osborne House.



Left is a contemporary photograph from The Old Photograph Album [20] with *below* an illustration from the Art Journal [1869, 33] 'Grounds basin. Part of a service made for H.M. The Queen'

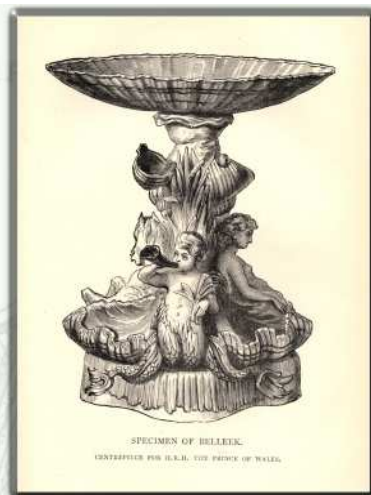
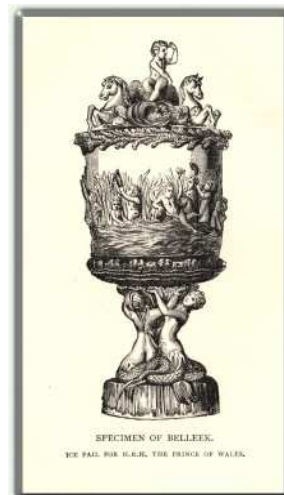
The set illustrated here (*Below left*) is not the one made for the Queen but a



similar one made for the Alexander family of Enniskillen.



Illustrated below *below* is the well-known dessert service made for Edward, the Prince of Wales, from the Art Journal [1869, 33] 'Ice Pail [Centrepiece] for H.R.H The Prince of Wales'



Below is a contemporary photograph of the Prince of Wales dessert service from The Old Photograph Album [20]

Prince of Wales's, Ivory china & Parian, Dessert Service



In May 1870 the Viceroy of Ireland made an official visit to Belleek Pottery [10k] and by October 1870, the important London retailer, John Mortlock was displaying the Echinus eggshell Dejeuner Set ('as purchased by the Queen'), the Crouching Venus and much more besides [10k, 10l]. Then in February 1871 the Art Journal [37] reviewed The Prisoner of Love.



All this attention led the The Irish Times in February 1871 to report that: "Belleek already competes with the better works of Staffordshire and the chief trade is in England!" [10m]

In 1871 the Lord Mayor of Dublin got another Belleek dinner service via Kerr [10m], this time painted with heraldic arms & flower studies done by the ladies of the Dublin Queen's Institute from the conservatory of the Mayoress.

Kerr also took a stand to exhibit Belleek at the 1871 London Exhibition from which the V&A Museum bought examples [38].

In 1871 The Irish Times [10m] reported that: "*They have now produced from Belleek a porcelain in every respect superior to anything produced at Worcester*" ...and that: "*Belleek can be found in USA, Canada, India, Australia, Europe.*"

The Irish Evening Mail [7] reported that the Queen: "*considered a set for dinner & dessert so valuable that she deemed it worthy of presentation to the Queen of Spain... then visited Mr Kerr last August to order a substitute set.*"

A further visit to Kerr's shop to view Belleek porcelain by the Prince of Wales in August 1871 was planned but abandoned – two days after this abortive visit, an "affray" in Phoenix Park led to Kerr's shop windows in Capel Street being broken – this is as follows:

"[the rioters] turning into Capel Street, they smashed the windows of Mr. Kerr and Messrs. Edmundson, both large and liberal employers of labour, the former being a gentleman who had expended his capital in developing the Belleek Potteries, on the banks of Lough Erne, and whose Dublin works had been visited a day or two before by the Prince of Wales." [as Hansard later reported in the British parliamentary proceedings, 14]

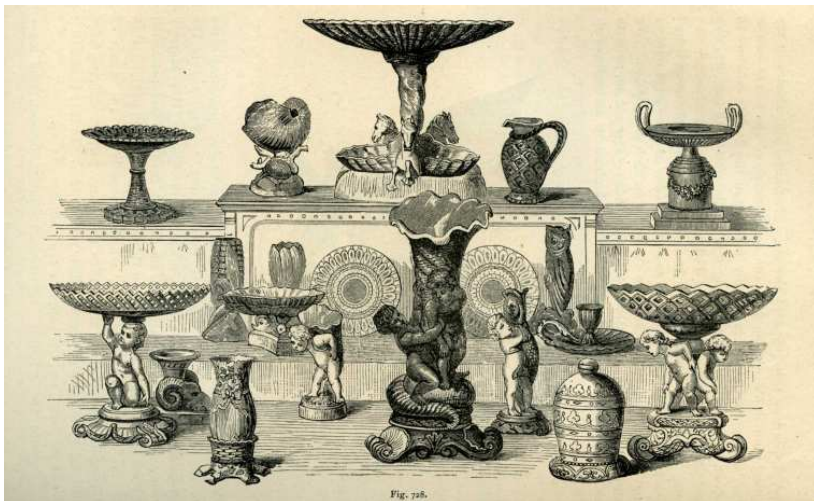
This is interesting in that the Hansard report states that **Kerr** had "expended his capital in developing the Belleek Potteries". He had indeed expended much time and effort over the period from 1852 to 1872 in the cause of the "Irish Pottery." When the pottery became a reality at Belleek, he invested much more time and a large amount of his money buying ware from the company, as soon as suitable products became available. Kerr was also the most vociferous and persistent person in getting Belleek Pottery to the forefront of the fashionable world by his incredibly successful efforts at advertising and marketing. Without his efforts, Belleek would not have become famous so quickly or the Pottery may never have become well known at all.

Belleek Pottery truly burst onto the fashionable scene [7]. The artistic world was compelled to sit up and take notice of this Irish upstart [33]. The famous English potteries, who would previously have just smiled quietly, or even laughed out loud, at the thought of serious competition from Ireland, of all places, now had to take a new threat seriously. When the Pottery managed to sell items to the Queen and the Prince of Wales, it was both announcing that "Belleek has arrived" and also laying down the gauntlet to the English potteries.

Despite riots and aborted visits, the Queen continued her personal support for Belleek. At the 1872 Dublin exhibition there was a case labelled:

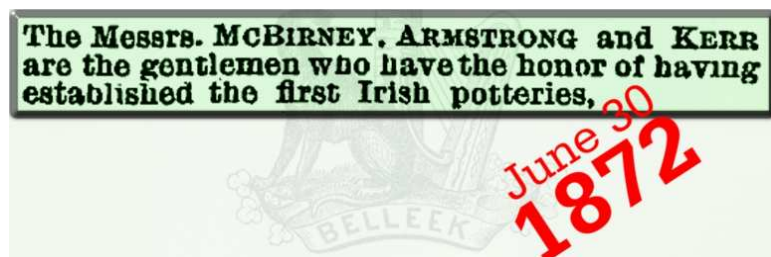
"The Queen's Institute Collection' - Kerr exhibits specimens of the exquisite breakfast sets made for her Majesty, by special command, in 'beautiful Belleek China'" [7].

Right: Engraving of some Belleek on display at the 1872 Dublin Exhibition [19]



The Amazing Achievement of Belleek Pottery by 1872

What Belleek Pottery achieved was remarkable. The senior academics of the Royal Dublin Society had said in 1855 that what Belleek accomplished would be "impossible". Businessmen had said that there was no hope for the commercial success of a company in Ireland selling high quality porcelain. Well, Armstrong, McBirney, Bloomfield and Kerr had proved them all wrong, part of a report in the New York Times on 30th June 1872 is shown



Left [8].

So, who should get the Credit?

McBirney steadfastly supported Armstrong and the Pottery over a long lean period, pouring in a huge amount of his own money. Now it was successful, he was able to enjoy the celebrity *his* Pottery had achieved in the eyes of the Press and the public and he was willing to allow any profit to be ploughed back into the Pottery.

Armstrong has always been rightfully recognised as the guiding light of the Pottery and the genius behind its beautiful ware.

Kerr spent a lot of his own time and money supporting Armstrong at Belleek. McBirney's refusal of other investment meant Kerr's "capital expenditure" had been on Belleek Ware for his shop and for show at the Exhibitions, which he largely funded himself.

Bloomfield, by 1868, was remembered only as the man on whose estate McBirney and Armstrong's Pottery was built [7]. He would much later in March 1883 [18] try to get the recognition he thought he was due.

Poor Bloomfield! Because Kerr was now "the public face of Belleek Pottery" who organised the Exhibitions and talked personally with the important customers, it was McBirney, Armstrong and Kerr who, by 1872, got the credit for the Pottery and its success.

Bloomfield was, to put it mildly, just a little bit annoyed at this. At the start of 1868, the Pottery was receiving a huge amount of press publicity.

On 2nd January 1868 an anonymous article (*part shown below left*) on the foundation of the Pottery was published in the Irish Times [10d] which gave Bloomfield very little credit indeed: he just "took part in the work..."

THE BELLEEK POTTERY WORKS.

When Mr Dargan's Great Exhibition was being organized, Mr Kerr, then holding the most important pottery works in Worcester, determined to try whether he could not introduce the manufacture of pottery into Ireland with success. His first object was to ascertain whether materials in sufficient quantity and of fine quality could be found. With Mr Kerr was associated Mr Armstrong, and together they sought and found ample materials, and of these they were enabled to manufacture various articles for the Exhibition of 1853.

In 1857, Mr Armstrong, now the resident partner in charge of Belleek Works, Mr M'Birney, and Mr Kerr commenced operations on the property of J. C. Bloomfield, Esq, lord of the manor of Belleek, where abundance of the finest felspar was found. Mr Bloomfield took part in the work with the three above-named gentlemen, and, after a ten years' incessant struggle against innumerable difficulties, they are now in the proud position of being able to supply articles, not only of a common or ordinary character, but works of the greatest taste and beauty.

THE BELLEEK POTTERIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES.

Dublin, January 7, 1868.

SIR,—Our friend Mr Bloomfield in a letter appearing in your columns of yesterday, states he wishes to correct some erroneous statement respecting the origin and progress of "The Belleek Works," in a former impression. There are two points he refers to, and when my name is brought in, so prominently, I am reluctantly compelled to reply thereto. In the first place, the idea of introducing pottery into Ireland was from the Dargan Exhibition, for as far back as 1852, the idea came into my own head, and to test it practically I decided on a tour through Ireland, and asked my friend Mr Armstrong, now the resident partner at Belleek, who was architect to my works in England (the Royal Porcelain Works, Worcester) to accompany me, to first find materials, and having succeeded, then for the first time on record I had porcelain made and exhibited, and it was from that our friend Mr B. took his idea, which the document I send you proves it to be the case. Then, in the second place it was not mere sympathy only, but to further so patriotic an object, I had every department in my works in England thrown open to those interested in the Belleek Works, not only for trials but supplied all receipts for bodies and glasses, together with my counsel and advice whenever required, and which, I venture to say, no other manufacturer in England or Scotland would grant such privileges, and in addition to which, since my return to Ireland two years ago, I have paid frequent and long visits to Belleek, and when my counsel or advice was required I also gave it, to show how to produce a good plate, and with a sincere desire to found a new and important branch of industry in this country, which no doubt all of us desire. I write this not wishing to dispraise in the least the merits of others—on the contrary such and all deserve great praise, especially Mr Armstrong, who had so much to contend with.—I remain, dear sir, yours truly,
W. H. KERR.

The next day, Bloomfield responded with a letter of his own [10e] (*Right*) criticising Kerr and claiming credit for the idea of the Pottery.

A few days later Kerr responded with two letters [10f, 10g]. In the first one, dated the 7th January (*Left*) he stated the case that his idea for an Irish pottery originated in 1852 and caused him to make the trip to Ireland with Armstrong to search for materials. Kerr, in his first letter, is disparaging about Bloomfield, saying that his idea for the Pottery only came from when he saw Kerr's Shakespeare Service at the 1853 Exhibition.

In Kerr's second letter (10th January) (*Right*), he is much more conciliatory and gives Bloomfield due credit for having the idea to build a pottery on his Castle Caldwell estate at Belleek and rightly gives fullsome praise to Armstrong.

The real point of all this was that Belleek Pottery was now so important that it really mattered to be involved with it. Both Bloomfield and Kerr are unfair in these letters but it is clear that by 1868, Bloomfield felt that he had been effectively written out of the story and was moved to set the record straight.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES.

SIR,—Your account of the rise and progress of the Porcelain Factory being very erroneous, permit me to set you right. Given a life interest, heavily incumbered, in a property most bountifully treated by nature, I commenced an examination of the raw materials; with Glenannon, late of Suffolk-street, I found the felspar. Then by chance came across our Irish "Palliser," R W Armstrong, who with me induced Mr M'Birney to risk a large capital on the venture of a first Irish pottery. On reference to the files of *Stamford's News-Letter* of 1855 you will see the struggle Mr Armstrong, Professor Cameron, and myself sustained against the Irish savans, and observe therein illustrated the firmness of Mr M'Birney against overwhelming theoretical negatives. Mr Kerr gave all his sympathy, and rendered us much assistance in the way of trials at the Worcester factory—nothing beyond. The idea was mine, the enterprise Messrs M'Birney and Armstrong's, the success and present position solely the result of the woodruss genius, who, adding to his natural gifts, the training of a architect, scientific knowledge, and educated taste against unparalleled difficulties, raised this monument to his own and his country's fame, which, whether taken as an exhibition of Celtic capabilities, or an illustration of the powers of energy and enterprise, is deserving of the sympathy of those who think with me that in this path alone is to be found the solution of the Irish difficulty.—Your obedient servant,
J T BLOOMFIELD.

Belleek, January 3rd, 1868.

BELLEEK POTTERY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE IRISH TIMES.

Dublin, Jan. 10th, 1868.

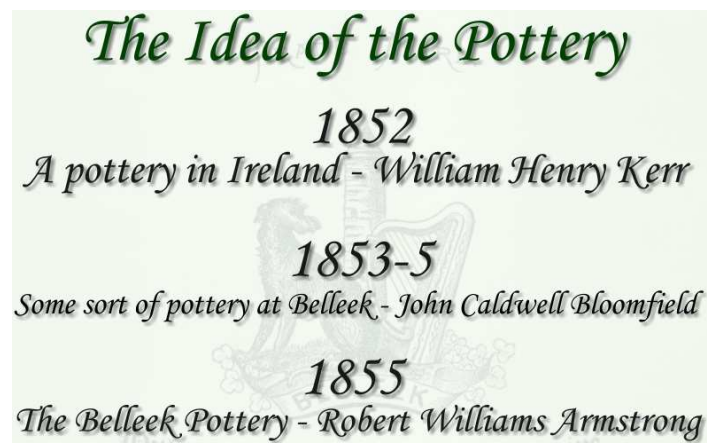
SIR,—I should have added to mine of the 8th that being desirous of giving Mr. Bloomfield credit for whatever ideas he is justly entitled to, I may mention it was certainly an original idea of his wishing to have the china works on his own estate, as I did not select any place where such should be, when the idea of pottery came into my head as a branch of industry for my native country, in 1852, and he was most fortunate in inducing Mr. Armstrong to be the pioneer at Belleek; and I must say that one man in ten thousand would have undertaken such a task or gone through what he has done in many ways, as I can speak from experience, such as the outside world are not aware of, for a master potter's life is no sinecure; it is one continual drag on the brain. It is a business which is a science from beginning to end.

I much regret you have been so much troubled with a correspondence between friends, when your sole object was to assist all in your power, I may say a national undertaking of no mean importance, by alluding to it in your columns of the 2nd inst.—I am, sir, yours truly,
W. H. KERR.

Summary

To try to clear up this issue of who should be given credit for what and in the interests of fairness, now looking back with hindsight., we can summarise the situation as follows:

The original idea of establishing a pottery in Ireland came from William Henry Kerr in 1852.



The idea of some sort of establishment at Belleek to exploit the raw materials came from John Caldwell Bloomfield between 1853 and 1855.

It wasn't until 1855 that the idea of the Belleek Pottery as we know it was developed by Robert Williams Armstrong.

Belleek's early history is almost a tale of the first three Dublin International Exhibitions:



1853

Where Kerr's Shakespeare Service showed what could be done and Bloomfield was inspired to do something.

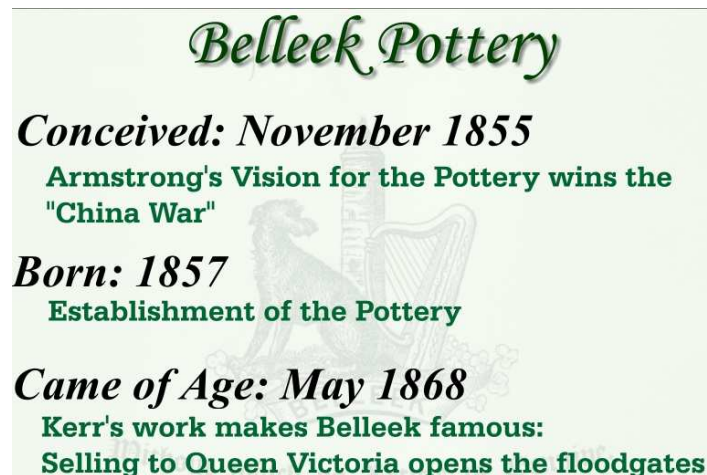
1865

Here, Belleek were promising newcomers with their first simple parian pieces.

And 1872

Belleek was internationally recognised for its parian and earthenware of magnificent design and quality. The company had Royal patronage and was said to have surpassed Worcester.

This article is entitled "The Birth of Belleek" and I've been looking at why and how the Pottery came to be... and then what it became.



We can accept the **date of the establishment of the Pottery as 1857** and even though little else happened that year, let's say this marked the **birth**.

A more important event was the **"China War" in November 1855** when Robert Williams Armstrong established the case for the Belleek Pottery – this was its **conception**...

...and in **May 1868**, William Henry Kerr guaranteed the Pottery's fame and success by making **his first sale of Belleek to Queen Victoria**: this is when the Pottery

came of age.

Belleek Pottery's achievement was amazing and unprecedented...

...and after a slow start it was all the more amazing for the incredibly short time it took to achieve Worldwide recognition!

And so, at last we end up where this article started, the **1872 Dublin Exhibition**. This marked the culmination of all the effort. It is not the end of the Belleek Story by any means, but (to quote Winston Churchill) "The end of the beginning." Belleek Pottery was rightly seen as one of the very few true Irish success stories.

The 1872 Exhibition really showed the World what Belleek Pottery could do. This was a fantastic high point in the Story of Belleek and it is where this article almost ends, leaving our heroes celebrating their success, their faith in the "Irish Pottery" now fully vindicated.

I feel it is appropriate to conclude this article with this report from the Irish Times of 15th June 1872 [10r] (*Below*). It is news of yet more royal patronage with an order for three of the new works from the Exhibition, special attention was given to the "*allegorical figure of the Belleek Pottery... which Mr Armstrong styles, 'Hibernia awaking from her slumbers.'*" Belleek Pottery had truly come of age.

Yesterday Messrs D M Birney and Co., proprietors of the Belleek Pottery, Fermanagh, received through William Chaffers, Esq, of the Loan Museum of the Exhibition, an order from his Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh for three of the new works now exhibited by that company. Every article exhibited by Messrs M Birney will be found worthy of the visitor's attention, and none more so than that of the allegorical figure of the Belleek Pottery establishment which Mr Armstrong styles, "Hibernia awaking from her slumbers."

Right: "Hibernia awaking from her slumbers" - Erin unveiling the Belleek Pottery



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 - q) 4th Oct 1865 'List of Awards – Medal'
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Belleek Black Mark Tea Ware - Part 12

Geometric/Abstract (additional) in Bone China

By Tony Fox

Part Twelve of this series of articles covers two early patterns manufactured in bone china i.e. **Pattern X** and **Sèvres Style** tea ware which are two additional patterns included in the Geometric/Abstract design motif group. Both patterns are exceedingly rare, perhaps not many were produced, or maybe collectors just do not recognise these atypical patterns as Belleek production and therefore many examples have not been discovered.

All of the previous tea ware articles have dealt with patterns produced in a parian body and all have pattern names which were given to them by the Belleek Pottery. All the tea ware pieces seen to date in Pattern X and Sèvres Style are made of bone china and both have pattern names that have been assigned to them by collectors.

This article also marks a new journey into tea ware patterns rarely investigated by other authors on Belleek and so it must be stressed that more research is required and examples sought to support or refute propositions made. So much of the existing information appears quite contradictory regarding these two patterns possibly due to some degree of crossover of tea ware items between these patterns which does not occur in the patterns already covered in the previous articles.

Body Types

I feel I need to briefly, at this point, outline the differences between a **parian** and **bone china** body [1]. The 'body', which is sometimes also referred to as the 'paste', is the mix of ingredients (recipe) that the item is made from. Different bodies have different properties, advantages and disadvantages.

Usually when **parian** is mentioned in the context of ceramics it refers to figures/statuary items which in the Victorian era were nearly all made of a parian body - but Victorian manufacturers also rarely made other items such as tea ware in a parian body and for these uses the item was usually finished with a glaze. Belleek is an exception because the majority of its tea ware is parian and this is one of the main reasons why Belleek tea ware has a different look and feel to its competitors, using moulded shapes as the main decoration with less emphasis on painted or transfer decoration. Parian is in the group of true hard paste porcelains, it is very hard, can be cast very thinly and is good for intricate moulding and has a creamy or ivory colour. Good quality ingredients are required as imperfections (such as sooting) would be obvious especially as they would not be covered over with a painted/transfer finish. It does not suffer from stress fracturing, crazing or staining, however due to substantial shrinkage in the kiln it can be prone to firing cracks.

A **bone china** body is not so amenable to fine moulding and so tends to be used for simple shapes but provides a smooth even surface which lends itself well to being decorated with painting, gilding or transfers. It is not a pure porcelain and is classified in the smaller group of soft paste porcelains, it is not as hard and in Victorian Great Britain was the most favoured body used by ceramic manufacturers due to its smooth white translucent appearance. It can be prone to stress cracking and crazing due to ambient temperature changes and staining, but not firing cracks or faults. It was very unusual for Belleek to use this body type for any of its wares, and when it did the results tended to look much more like other manufacturers wares and probably therefore had to compete head on with these on price and artistic merit.

As mentioned in another article in this newsletter by Chris Marvell on the Birth of Belleek, Armstrong undertook extensive experiments with body type and glazes. From looking at Armstrong's diary entries [p] relating to Bone China (as far as we have been able to decipher them as this is still a work in progress) it seems that he acquainted himself with the practices in the use of bone ash in recipes used at many English potteries. As early as October 1860, Armstrong describes a "Bone Porcelain" body as made by Mr James Hancock at

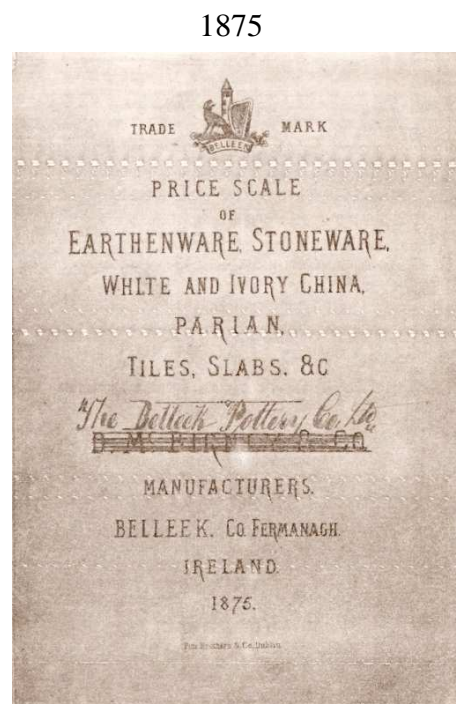
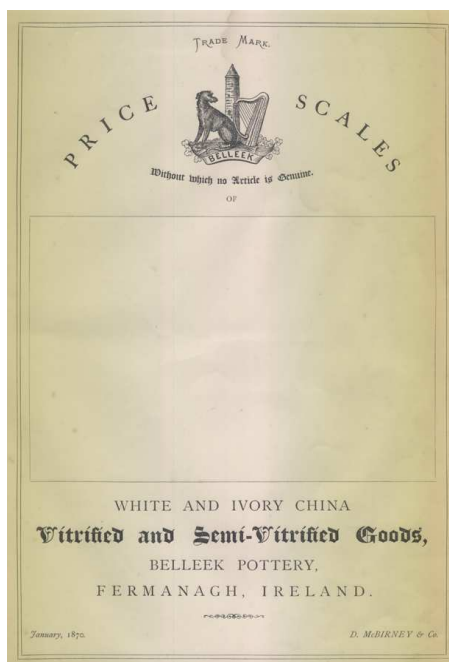
Worcester. Armstrong himself in November 1860 had experiments done for him by Lane at Worcester on the "Worcester Bone Body". By October 1862, Armstrong was carrying out his own experiments into various porcelain bodies that had bone added, working at Belleek but using recipes essentially obtained from Worcester, adjusting the recipes to allow for the use of Castle Caldwell feldspar and china clay. It is not yet clear when Armstrong felt he had perfected his own bone china body. The entries in the diaries show that he concentrated far more on experiments with parian, earthenware and bodies for his insulators.

Early Production

I think here, it is also important to establish **what is meant by the term 'early'** in the context of Belleek Black Mark tea ware. Belleek Pottery attended its first ever exhibition in 1864, the following year 1865 Belleek Pottery won its first ever medal at an exhibition in a restricted section of the Dublin International Exhibition and the Pottery again exhibited at the Dublin International Exhibition in 1872 and was awarded a medal of special merit. More on these exhibitions is covered in this newsletter by Chris Marvell. According to the local newspaper the Pottery building seems to be finished by 1866 and has operated two kilns since 1866. It would therefore appear reasonable to conclude that production facilities for the manufacture of various wares had been established by this time in the history of the Pottery.

The two earliest known 'Price Scales' i.e. price lists printed by the Pottery, to date, list the following:-

- 1870
- a) 'Price Scales' dated January 1870
'White and Ivory China Vitrified and Semi-Vitrified Goods' (*Right*)
- b) 'Price Scale' dated 1875
'Earthenware, Stoneware, White and Ivory China, Parian, Tiles, Slabs. &C' (*Far Right*)



'Ivory China' refers to glazed Parian, this terminology is very similar to that first used by Kerr and Binns when they introduced 'Ivory Porcelain' [j] in 1856. There is general consensus that **'White China' applies to Bone China**. So wares in both of these body types were available in 1870 and 1875. However, Bone or White China is no longer included in the first known illustrated sales catalogue in 1904. Thus there exists irrefutable evidence that Belleek Pottery produced bone china in the 1870's, if not before, therefore **the term 'early' can realistically apply to tea ware manufactured during the first decade of production proper i.e. 1865/6 to 1875/6.**

So the only detailed sales literature known, to date, covering this early production period are the few pages contained in the 1870 and 1875 Price Scales and the list of exhibits for the Dublin 1872 Exhibition [q]. None of this information explicitly describes or names the patterns that we know of as Pattern X and Sèvres Style. However, there are two particular cases worthy of consideration in this regard. The 1875 Price Scale contains two pages listed under the heading of 'China Tea Scale' which identify thirty two individual tea ware pieces including a dejeuner ('dejeûné') tray but there is no mention of a pattern name. The inclusion of the word 'China' in the heading may possibly refer to either or both of these bone china patterns, further detailed research is required. There is more discussion on this later in 'Crossovers between Pattern X and Sèvres Style'.

Pattern X

As we have already noted, there is very little literature covering Pattern X tea ware. Pattern X is in a bone china body. It was first referred to as 'Pattern X' by Marion Langham [b].

Left: Part of a Pattern X tea set, No.196, BI (NB: the earthenware tureen is not part of this set!)

Pattern X, like the Ring Handle Ivory pattern, is a plain simple shape without a design motif and compares with very similar patterns of tea ware abundantly produced by almost all other porcelain manufacturers of the period.

The teacups taper outwards from the base to the outer rim and have a 'standard' smooth handle, i.e. very similar to that found on some modern tea ware teacups. The saucer is a simple, fairly deep, dished shape with a cup well.



Decoration

Decoration ranges from simple coloured lining on the outer rims/edges with and without gilding, to more elaborate hand-painted/transfer designs including floral, armorial, religious and crests with monograms some with sumptuous coloured grounds with very ornate and detailed gilding of intricate designs.

Many decoration way numbers have been noted on Pattern X:-

- No.101 Pink ground, fancy gilt border with garlands
- No.127 Peacock blue wide and thin band, gilt rim
- No.128 Red wide and thin band, gilt rim
- No.175 Pink ground
- No.191 Sprigs of roses, forget-me-nots, pansies, gilt border of shamrocks
- No.192 Maroon rim with gilt line
- No.196 Gold and black thin band, black rim
- No.199 Pink ground, gilt vermicelli border
- No.215 Pinky red wide and thin band, gilt rim
- No.231 Hand painted flora and insects gilt border with lines & dots
- No.253 Green ground, peach and gilt border

Belleek Pattern X Teacups and Saucers:



Top:

Left: Pinky red wide and thin band, gilt rim, No.215, cup BII, saucer BI

Right: Gold and black thin band, black rim, No.196, BI



Upper Middle:

Left: Pink ground, No.175, BI

Right: Peacock blue wide and thin band, gilt rim, No.127, BI



Lower Middle:

Left: Red wide and thin band, gilt rim, No.128, BI

Right: Maroon rim with gilt line, No.192, with crest and monogram, BI



Bottom: Left & Right: Green ground, peach and fancy gilt border, No.253, Coat of Arms, BI. Note the unusual shape of the matching bread plate (also bone china).

Pattern X Tea Ware – Comparison with other Manufacturers

Belleek (Left)

Other Manufacturers (Right)



Top:

Left: Sprigs of roses, forget-me-nots, pansies, gilt shamrocks border, Cup No.191, BI; saucer, possibly from a different manufacturer, marked '2688' in orange

Right: Minton. Sprigs of roses, forget-me-nots, pansies, turquoise border, probably 1860s

Upper Middle:

Left: Hand painted flora and insects, fancy gilt border, No.231, BI

Right: Kerr & Binns (Worcester). Hand painted flora and insects, fancy gilt border, 1850s

Lower Middle:

Left: Pink ground, fancy gilt border with garlands, No.101, BI

Right: Unknown manufacturer marked '2785' in orange. Pink ground, oval with landscape, gilt border of leaves c1880

Bottom:

Left: Pink ground, gilt vermicelli border, No.199, BI.

Right: Minton. Pink ground, white jewel work, gilt rim, probably 1870s



Left: Unknown manufacturer in Pattern X style. Decoration utilizes devices from the Belleek Trade Mark. Do these pieces have any connection with the Belleek Pottery?

Neville Maguire discusses a trio similar to this cup and saucer in his book 'Belleek in Context' [h page 70]

Periods

First period, often with an orange mark. A single second period cup has been seen paired with a first period saucer of the same decoration way No.215 (*Below Right*).

Evidence from lantern slide pictures indicates that Pattern X items were still made early in the second period. The '150 years of The Belleek Pottery' [g] published by the UK Collectors Group contains a section entitled "Sepia Lantern Slides c1892: Belleek Pottery 115 years ago". Amongst these slides [page 21, slide 3] includes details which show several Pattern X teacups with floral and/or ribbon decoration sitting on a table with other pieces waiting to be burnished.



Below: Part of the '1892' lantern slide titled 'Burnishing China'. Note how white the Pattern X cups look compared to the other parian items, from this we assume that these cups are indeed bone china.



Forms

At this stage of the research programme it appears that Pattern X did not have sufficient pieces to constitute a dejeuner set. However, if we can establish that the China Tea Scale previously mentioned in connection with the 1875 Price Scale refers to Pattern X then there may be an adequate number of pieces for the provision of a dejeuner set. To-date, we do not know of a tray, teapot or kettle to match the Pattern X tea ware.

Pieces we have identified so far as Pattern X are:-
Teacup and Saucer (breakfast and normal),
Sugar (or maybe a Slop bowl), Milk jug (various sizes). Additional examples would be helpful to establish what forms and sizes there are.



Above right: Two Cups

and Saucers, BI. Normal size (cup: height 2.75", diameter 3.125"; saucer: diameter 5.5"). Breakfast (large) size (cup: height 3.25", diameter 3.75"; saucer: diameter 6.375")



Four Cream/Milk Jugs all Belleek, BI. These are thought to form part of Pattern X tea sets as they have been seen in association with Pattern X cups and saucers.

Left Top: Transfer Bind Weed with wide gilt rim with dots

Right Top: Wide burgundy band edged with gilt, also with religious logos



Left Below: Peacock blue bands, gilt rim No.127

Right Below: Thin black line with gilt rim, also with crest and monogram

Sèvres Style

There is nothing to suggest that Belleek gave this pattern a name and/or number. All the tea ware pieces seen, to date, in this pattern are made of bone china.

Right: The Swann Dejeuner set, BI.
(picture courtesy of Sothebys)

Jean Comerford Weleck in her book *Anatomy of a Belleek Collection* [n]

referred to this pattern as London Tea. However, the Price Scale dated 1875 lists 'London Teas', 'Irish Teas' and 'Breakfasts', whilst the 1904 Catalogue lists 'Evening or London Teas' and 'Breakfast or Irish size' under the general headings of Tea Scale and Earthenware Tea Ware respectively. Recent research indicates that all of these descriptions/terms relate to different sizes of teacup in the same pattern. In the interim, in an effort to avoid any confusion this pattern has been given the name of Sèvres Style since it is similar to tea ware produced by the famous French porcelain factory. This particular aspect is outlined in the Jenks Manuscript [a] under the sub-heading of Painted Dejeune Sets: "this set reminiscent of Sèvres, was made to special order". Jenks also goes on to describe the decoration on a particular dejeuner set as "superb individual paintings of birds in their country surroundings with their natural colourings, and the green background embellished with gold" this is an accurate description of the 'Swann' dejeuner set now in the National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks, Dublin. (*shown above*)



The two pages in the Price Scale dated 1875 listed under the general heading of China Tea Scale (already mentioned in of this article) which identify thirty two individual tea ware pieces including a dejeuner tray could also apply to the Sèvres Style pattern. Again the emphasis for further research is important in respect of the manufacture of bone china tea ware by Belleek.

It is worth recalling the article by Gwen Wood in the UK Belleek Collectors' Group Newsletter number 27/2 July 2006 [i] in which she describes, in detail, the purchase of a Sèvres Style trio by Josephine Bowes, whose collection of items acquired by herself and her husband is held in the Bowes Museum. The original bill of sale states that these items were purchased at the London International Exhibition of 1871 from the stand of Kerr & Sons. This date provides further verification of the 'early' production of bone china tea ware by Belleek, particularly Sèvres Style.



Left: Sèvres Style dejeuner set BI

The Sèvres Style dejeuner set shown in The Old Photograph Album [d] has exactly the same decoration (No.237) as that purchased by the Bowes (*shown at the bottom of the previous page*). The text accompanying this album photograph says 'Dejeuner set white china Pale green ground white roses &c. Jewelled high relief red. Shamrock Gold all richly gilt. Price £'. No price is given. Two collectors also have Sèvres Style cups and/or saucers with this same rich decoration (*Below*)



London Exhibition, bought from Worcester stand by Josphine Bowes

D. MBERNEY

A cup and saucer of red pearls,

£1-7-00

Purchased at London International Exhibition of 1871

Plate with green ground red pearls of KERR & SONS, £1-15-0

Left: Part of the Bowes bill of sale (with spelling mistakes!).

Note, the cup and saucer were incredibly expensive (twenty seven shillings) when compared with the maximum price for a bone china teacup and saucer from the 1875 Price Scale which was £0-10-0 (ten shillings)!

Again the Sèvres Style pattern like the Ring Handle Ivory pattern is a plain simple shape without design motif, except for the handles, and as such compares with similar tea ware patterns produced by contemporary pottery and porcelain manufacturers which also emulate Sèvres.



The crossed handle with acanthus leaves on the teapot, cup and cream/milk with a fork at the top is an important feature of the Sèvres Style.

Left & Below Left: Belleek Sèvres Style crossed and forked handles (all BI)



Immediately left: Real Sèvres cup with crossed and forked handles

The teacups are bowl shaped on a relatively small foot. The teapot has a generally globular shape with a pronounced spout terminating in a vee cutaway. The milk or cream jug appears to be very similar to the pattern X jug shape except for the handle, also it is much smaller in size. The covered sugar is globe shaped and tapers from the base to the inverted rim. The dejeuner tray is lozenge shaped and resembles the Grass pattern tray, the rim is raised and has moulded rope twists at four points on the periphery with moulded ribbon bows at both ends. The handles on the teapot and covered sugar lids are of a twig like asymmetrical format without the forked arrangement but again terminating in leaves.

Right: Sèvres Style dejeuner set painted with lily-of-the-valley and elaborately gilt (lacking sugar lid), B1

Decoration

Decoration is very varied and can be comprehensive. From simple gilding on the rims/edges and acanthus leaves, to more elaborate jewelled/hand-painted/transfer designs some with sumptuous coloured grounds with very ornate and detailed gilding of intricate designs not seen, to-date, on any other patterns of Belleek black mark tea ware, viz:-

- White ground hand painted and/or transfer printed Lily-of-the-valley decoration with ornate gilding on the rims of all the pieces. This has no decoration way number.
- Green ground with exquisite panels of hand painted birds with sumptuous background colours and ornate gilding on the rims of all the pieces. This has no decoration way number.
- No.237. Green ground with 'Jewelling' around the rim made from hand applied alternate large red and small gold raised balls. Decorated overall with a band of white roses and foliage together with ornate gilding on the rims, the saucers having an inner circle of gilded shamrocks..
- No.135. Completely plain with gilt rims and detailing to the handles.
- No.175. Pink ground with gilt rim and detailing. This is the same decoration way as seen on a Pattern X cup!
- Burgundy handles, spout and detailing.



Left: Part of a Belleek Sèvres Style breakfast set with plain gilt decoration No.135.

Note: the acanthus leaf handles on the matching bread plate - a discussion on this is given at

the end of this article.

Periods

First period, often with a puce or orange, or occasionally with a blue, mark. *Examples shown right.*



Forms

The majority of items seen in the Sèvres Style pattern have been in the form of dejeuner sets (three examples known), with one exception of a breakfast set.

Teapot (various sizes), Cup and saucer, Covered Sugar, Cream (small). Even though it appears that the Sèvres Style pattern has a limited range of tea ware items, it does have sufficient pieces to constitute a dejeuner set. There is no evidence, to date, to indicate that this pattern had a kettle or slop bowl.



*Right: Covered sugar, lily-of-the-valley BI.
Note. previously assumed to be a trinket bowl!*



It is interesting to note that the only two Belleek Sèvres Style trays seen to-date have had a large stress crack

across the well of the tray in exactly the same place. Perhaps this fault deterred Belleek from making many trays in bone china.

Teapots all Belleek BI

Top: Pink ground, gilt rim & detailing, large size?

No.175, BI

Middle: Gilt rim and detail. 5.25" tall x 9.5" wide (medium size?), BI

Bottom Left: Burgundy trim, 4.25" tall (small size?), BI

Bottom Right: Lily-of-the-valley, 4.25" tall (small size?), BI



Sèvres Influence on Victorian Manufacturers

Sèvres had a major international influence on style and design, so it is not surprising that many premier British porcelain manufacturers admired their ware and emulated it.

Consequently it is very difficult to spot which is 'authentic Sèvres' and which is a 'copy'. So, discovering a piece of Belleek Sèvres Style is like looking for a needle in a haystack.



Part tea-service, bone china, showing a strong French influence in both the shape and decoration.

Top: Minton Sèvres style tea set [m] c1860. Teapot, cream and cup and saucer are very similar in form to the Belleek Sèvres Style.

Right: Coalport Sèvres style dejeuner set [n] c1860s. Again note the cross handles. This also has a very similar lily-of-the-valley decoration to the Belleek Sèvres Style dejeuner set.



PLATE 235. A delightful Coalport cabaret set of the 1860s, using shapes often associated with the factory's French-style wares of the period. The essentially "English" decoration on these pieces comprises lilies-of-the-valley painted in green and white with supplementary flowers in purple and green.

Below: Sèvres Style trays showing the lozenge shape with bows to both sides...

Belleek (Left)



Worcester (Right)



Both of the trays above have hand painted birds: the Belleek example is painted by Swann and the Royal Worcester example by Hopewell c. 1875.

Belleek (Left)



Worcester (Right)



The Belleek tray is decorated with lily-of-the-valley, the Kerr and Binns Worcester tray (1852-1862) is decorated with grasses and insects.



Finally, three cups and saucers all with lily-of-the-valley decoration all in the Sèvres style.

Top Left: Belleek

Top Right: Worcester

Left: English unknown manufacturer (possibly Minton)

'Crossovers' between Pattern X and Sèvres Style

Thirty two individual pieces of tea ware listed are under the general heading of China Tea Scale included in the Price Scale dated 1875 (*see below*). As no pattern names are mentioned it is not clear what shape/pattern the pieces referred to are. Interestingly, a tray is on the list but not a kettle.

Price Scale 1875

CHINA TEA SCALE.	
D. McBIRNEY & Co.,	
Tea Cup and Saucer	...
12 Tea Cups and Saucers...	...
8 Coffee Cans	...
1 Tea Pot and Cover	} Silver Pieces
1 Stand to ditto	
1 Sugar Box & Cover	
1 Cream Ewer	
1 Slop Basin	...
2 B. and B. Plates	...
Breakfast Bowl & Saucer...	...
Plate, 8 inches	...
Ditto, 7 "	...
Ditto, 6 "	...
Ditto, 5 "	...
Dish, 12 "	...
Ditto, 10 "	...
Muffin Plate & Cover	}
Butter Tub and Stand	
Toast Rack	
Broth Bowl & Stand, 30's	}
Marmalade Pot & Stand, 3in.	
Broth Bowl & Stand, 30's	
Honey Pot and Stand,	}
Milk Jug, 24's	
Egg Cup	}
Plate 4 in.	
Egg Stand, with 6 Cups	...
Sugar Basin	...
Coffee Pot, 4's	...
Ditto, 6's	...
Roll Tray	...
Large Bread Plate	...
Dejeûné Tray	...
Half Covered Sick Feeder...	...

This suggests the possibility of a crossover or commonality of some tea ware pieces (e.g. saucers, cream/milk jugs, side and bread plates) manufactured in bone china which is not found in other tea ware patterns produced by Belleek. Indeed, the pieces from sets we have seen so far support this proposal.

These bread plate handles match the Sèvres Style because of the acanthus leaf decoration, but this shape of bread plate has been more commonly seen in association with Pattern X tea sets, although the only example of Sèvres Style tea set we have seen also incorporated a bread plate of this form.

Other evidence (in addition to the saucers and bread plates) such as the same form of bone china side plates being present in sets of both pattern types, also indicates that there was a mix and match

approach to providing bone china tea sets.



Right: Bread Plates, all Belleek, bone china, BI



Left: Belleek Saucers, BI. Pattern X (left) and Sèvres Style (right)

Both saucers are 5.5" diameter. Even though these saucers are from different patterns they are the same shape and size and so probably from the same mould. Note that the apparently smaller centre well of the pink pattern X saucer is only because of the way it is decorated.



Left: Underside of 5.5" Saucers:

Unknown English manufacturer Sèvres style (left), Belleek Pattern X (middle), Belleek Sèvres Style (right)

Note all saucers look very similar, in diameter, height, well size and foot moulding.

We have a suspicion, which certainly requires much more research, that Belleek 'bought in' at least some of its bone china pieces from other manufacturers and either decorated them in house or via Kerrs/Queens Institute in Dublin. Neville Maguire discusses this in his book 'Belleek in Context' [h page 32]

Continuing with the theme of 'mix and match', some Pattern X tea/breakfast sets have been seen with an accompanying earthenware dinner service! Although all pieces have been decorated in the same way, the Pattern X bone china tea ware exhibits a different decoration way number to that on the matching earthenware dinner pieces [h page 34].

Photos Courtesy of:

This article has been illustrated with photographs that originate from many sources and collections. The authors would like to thank and acknowledge the following (in alphabetical order):

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Questions last article Part 11

- Mask
 - What tea ware have you got that is BI or BII?
- Chinese
 - Do you have a tray that is not 15" diameter?
 - Do you have a kettle? If so what size is it?
 - Do you know of a different sized teapot to those illustrated?
 - Do you know of a large size sugar or slop bowl?
 - Do you know of any pieces that are BIII?

Questions raised from this article Part 12

- Pattern X
 - Have you got any Pattern X tea ware? **IF SO PLEASE** could you send us images and dimensions
- Sèvres
 - Have you got any Sèvres Style tea ware? **IF SO PLEASE** could you send us images and dimensions

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

Patterns to be covered in Tea ware Part 13

- Miscellaneous parian and bone china tea ware in different patterns not covered in the previous articles
PLEASE if you have different black mark tea ware get in touch

This article describes what we know TO DATE, please if you have further information get in touch with Tony at 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)

The final word on the Gothic Candlestick

- Bev Marvell

As you might recall, last year (Vol 30/1, March 2009) we had a lively discussion regarding the application of the symbols on Belleek's Gothic candlestick.

The main issue was 'Are the symbols applied by transfer (decal) or handpainted or stamped?' Also there was a suspicion that the symbols on the candle get smaller towards the top!

Left: Gothic candlestick and matching candle from Armstrong's photograph Album (produced by Fergus Cleary)

Well what a difference a year makes. Since then Chris & I have embarked on a project to record the engraved copper plates held at the Pottery which were used to create transfer designs. I will be reporting on this project in depth at a later date, but one particular copper plate is of importance to our debate as it solves our Gothic symbol dilemma.

This large plate (*shown below*) has a line of graduating size fleur de lys outlines along the top edge (6 in all, one obscured by the brown 'blob'), these match those shown on the candle, also there is an IHS mid-left (faint). Therefore we must conclude that these transfer designs were applied to the candlestick and candle and then their outline carefully hand painted in with gold.

Left: IHS from candlestick and copper plate

Right: A Fleur de Lys from candlestick and three of



them from the copper plate



Incidentally it seems that Belleek sometimes used the larger plates for several unrelated designs, as seen here on the large copper plate with the Fleur de Lys. (*left*)

Here there are also designs on this plate for a marbling effect (middle of the plate) and curtain/swags (bottom).

Auction Report

- some exceptional Items of Belleek

FIRST PERIOD IRISH BELLEEK PORCELAIN SWEETMEAT DISH

...DRAGON BROKEN OFF & RESTUCK, WING TIPS & NOSE LOSSES, DAMAGES & LOSSES TO EDGES OF THE SHELL. TIP OF ONE SHELL RESTUCK ...UNUSUAL BLUE FIRST PERIOD MARK, ALSO IMPRESSED

Sold for: £826.82

EBay seller: londonantiquesetc

Period: First Black



1ST PERIOD IRISH BELLEEK PORCELAIN DOG SHEPHERD CANDLE

...HAIRLINE CRACK ...BASE RIM CHIP, FILLED CHIPS TO CANDLE OPENING, HAIRLINE TO SHEPHERDS ARM,... ALSO IMPRESSED MARK.

Sold for: £1021

EBay seller: londonantiquesetc

Period: First Black

BELLEEK 1ST. BLK. MK. JOHN MORTLOCK - SHELL CREAMER

... Nautilus on Abalone shell creamer... detailing is quite crisp and the turquoise color on the coral handle is a deep rich blue... excellent condition

Sold for: US\$510

EBay seller: paleofpink

Period: First Black



EXCELLENT ANTIQUE BELLEEK FIRST PERIOD MILK JUG

...finely modelled as a sea urchin with detailed coral foot... 9cm tall.... also an impressed date lozenge. Excellent condition

Sold for: £397.95

EBay seller: jayoemms

Period: First Black

2nd Period Belleek Honey Pot Bees Antique MINT (right)

... three legged honey pot in mint condition. The lustre remains intact ... No flaws

Sold for: \$285

EBay seller: cindytom1986

Period: Second Black



c1892 ANTIQUE BELLEEK BEEHIVE HONEY PRESERVE POT (left)

...CONDITION VERY VERY GOOD VERY SLIGHT WEAR TO THE GILDING ON THE RIM...

Sold for: £361.55

EBay seller: antiquesdm

Period: First Black [not c1892!]





Belleek BLACK MARK D1209 FINNER VASE in MINT CONDITION

....third black mark (1926-1946). Measures 9 1/4" high

Sold for: US\$535

EBay seller: gjahneke

Period: Third Black

Belleek Papillion Vase - BCS Mark

...has the red Belleek Collectors Society mark. ... limited edition piece; this is marked #65, ...approx. 8" H X 4" D ... in its original box in like new condition.

Sold for: US\$204.50

EBay seller: danpankey

Period: modern



STUNNING RARE Art Nouveau Vase

BELLEEK Black Mark IRIS

...6 1/4" TALL... NO CHIPS, CRACKS OR REPAIRS.....

Sold for: US\$910

EBay seller: abclovell

Period: Third Black

BELLEEK SPILL VASES FIRST PERIOD

PAIR OF 9" ...SPILL VASES IN THE FORM OF A SHELL WITH AN ENTWINED LIZARDS... I CAN FIND NO CHIPS OR CRACKS .BOTH LIZARDS APPEAR TO HAVE SLIGHT FIRING FLAWS AROUND MOUTH ... SOME SMALL BLACK MARKS ON VASE BODIES.. INSIDE APPEAR TO BE FINISHED IN A YELLOW TYPE GLAZE.

Sold for: £1655

EBay seller: cjk8888

Period: First Black



Irish Belleek Affection and Meditation Statues

Meditation and Affection statues, matched pair. Second black mark. Affection does not appear to have any damage, or repairs. Meditation is in excellent condition with the exception of a small chip on the front bottom of the base..

Sold for: US\$2175

EBay seller: belleekboy

Period: Second Black

Rare Antique Belleek Dolphin & Shell Spoon Warmer1890s

... excellent condition

Sold for: US\$1001

EBay seller: rogerf17

Period: Second Black





Belleek Teapot 2nd Black Mark

...4 5/8" tall and 7" wide ... in good condition ...but does have a tiny nick on the spout

Sold for: US\$810.10

EBay seller: saphiremtn

Period: Second Black



Belleek 2nd Black Mark Low Lily Cup/Saucer

... Dusty but no damage

Sold for: US\$535

EBay seller: parkercreektrading

Period: Second Black



RARE BELLEEK 2ND P'RD BLACK STAMP HEXAGONAL SHAPE BOWL

..THE INTERIOR IS SHINY , MOTHER OF PEARLESQUE & TRIMMED WITH BUTTERSCOTCH HIGHLIGHT

Sold for: sugar £49, matching cream £49

EBay seller: ovidamores

Period: Second Black



BELLEEK Ring Handle Decorated Cup and Saucer v.rare pat..

Coffee size, hand painted ivy with blushed gold background...A very dainty piece in perfect condition. ... number 364...

Sold for: £164

EBay seller: texmex58

Period: Second Black

RARE BELLEEK Tea Set THORN Turquoise 1st BLACK MARK

... TEA POT MEASURES 4 3/4" TALL .. A TINY CHIP ON THE SPOUT OF THE TEAPOT

Sold for: US\$1475

EBay seller: abclovell

Period: First Black



UNUSUAL IRISH BELLEEK SECOND

PERIOD MOUSTACHE CUP ...FAINT HAIRLINE TO ONE SIDE & ...MOUSTACHE LIP



Sold for: £125, EBay seller:

londonantiquesetc

Period: Second Black

Rare Belleek 1st Period Black Mark Grass Teapot Stand

...almost near mint condition!.. a small firing crack in one of the legs

Sold for: US\$325

EBay seller: whosno1, Period: First Black





Belleek solitary tea set (2 blk mark)

...tray and tea set are in perfect condition showing no crazing, chips or cracks

Sold for: US\$3250

EBay seller: armaghco

Period: Second Black



Belleek Tridacna Batchelor Tray Set Black Mark RARE

... with 'green wash' measuring 27long x 20cm wide. Consists of small sized tea pot, cream, sugar and cup/saucer. Really good moulding and detail. ...

Sold for: £595

EBay seller: texmex58

Period: Second Black



Irish Belleek Bread Plate, Art Deco Style

...about 7 inches wide, hand painted using Cobb Luster (close inspection I believe this is probably just yellow paint, it does not have the sheen Cobb Luster normally has),...condition ...excellent

Sold for: US\$133.50

EBay seller: belleekboy

Period: Third Black

1ST PERIOD BELLEEK POTTERY MASONIC LARGE PLATE

..IMPRESSED MARK. RIM CHIP & MINOR SHORT HAIRLINE

Sold for: £278

EBay seller: londonantiquesetc

Period: First Black



Irish Belleek Plate, 3rd mark

...hand painted waterscape including two mallards in mid flight. ..., 5" wide ... condition is mint

Sold for: US\$210.28

EBay seller: belleekboy

Period: Third Black



Fine Victorian Belleek Painted Plate, Second Period

..9.5" width... Centre is a Superbly Painted Landscape, Titled on The Back of The Plate, Gap Of Dunloe, Killarney..

Sold for: £1030

EBay seller: lazuliall

Period: Second Black





Rare Early Irish Belleek 1st Hound Mark Whiskey Keg

...oval form body, approx 11 3/4" tall x 11" across...excellent condition with exception of some crazing to glaze and some slight wear to gold.

Sold for: US\$2125

EBay seller: coasttocoast_antiques_nh

Period: First Black

Rare Large Belleek Chamber Pot First Period c1863

..in good condition with no chips, crazing or restoration. .. slight hairline..

Sold for: euro190.95

EBay seller: ehc1959

Period: First Black



ANTIQUE 1ST PERIOD BELLEEK POLITICAL CHAMBER POT

... CONTAINING A PORTRAIT OF GLADSTONE .. AT THAT TIME THE PRIME MINISTER AND WAS NOT WELL RESPECTED BY THE IRISH. .. CONDITION IS VERY GOOD.. DIAMETER 5", HEIGHT 3.7/8"

APPROX

Sold for: £410

EBay seller: dayespast

Period: First Black



Rare Belleek Tureen

.. in good condition

..slight hairline ...

approximately 10"...I have been advised by the Belleek Collectors Group in the UK that this piece is a Toothbrush Holder

Sold for: euro236.50

EBay seller: ehc1959

Period: First Black



FIRST 1st BLACK PERIOD BELLEEK MUFFIN DISH C.1862

... armorial crest....MOVEO ET

PROFICIO above an eagle ... initials JHK. ... 9" diameter... Original condition dome. .. base has an 1" long hairline. Provenance; sold during a clearance auction of Shankill Castle, Paulstown, County Kilkenny, Ireland during the 1980's. I believe these plates originated from a Henry Knox (1788-1872) who resided at the Castle.

Sold for: muffin euro239.50, cup & saucer euro109.50

EBay seller: 61w61, Period: First Black



PAIR BELLEEK LIGHTHOUSES - c1863 TO 1891 ..would presumably have had lighthouse tops in their original state,...nearly 8" tall... Although not in perfect condition the damage is minimal

Sold for: US\$151, EBay seller: lahope, Period: First Black



Unusual Belleek Souvenir Dublin Diary Cream Pitcher

Souvenir Dublin Diary Cream pitcher (Whyte & Sons). First Mark (1863-1890). Excellent condition save one small chip

Sold for: US\$182.50

EBay seller: jackson12hole

Period: First Black



Celtic Belleek Becker. Blue Mark - Old !?

Celtic motifs around the neck and the base. On the base is a blue mark which according to www.belleek.ie/Date is the mark used from 1993 to 1996, ..does not have the R above the tower and it looks much older. Condition: Very good... approx 16.5 cm high

Sold for: euro135.50

EBay seller: greenisle_collectables

Period: Probably Second Black

3rd Mark Belleek Celtic Ringed Spill (Left)

...pristine condition...4 rings of gilding with no apparent wear. Beautiful painted celtic design ring in reds, browns and oranges...6 inches tall

Sold for: US\$415

EBay seller: specc2

Period: Third Black



BELLEEK FLUTED DISH (FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION, 1908

6.5" X 5" DISH. TRANSFER "ST. PATRICK'S CROSS, BALLYMACLINTON. FRANCO-BRITISH EXHIBITION, LONDON, 1908, **Sold for: £237, EBay seller: beesliam, Period: Second Black**



BELLEEK 2ND BLACKMARK BOWL BELFAST SCHOOL OF ART SIGNED

...earthenware bowl ...by the artist, E.K. McDermott of the Belfast School of Art and signed on the base. Lustre finish on the inside, colourful pattern on the outside ... 4" wide x 2 1/4" ...Some paint rubs and a hairline crack

Sold for: US\$130.50

EBay seller: cxgirl Period: Second Black

LARGE BLACK MARK IRISH BELLEEK LATTICE COMPOTE - 11.5"

.... pearlized" ivory. This fabulous piece has a couple of small, hard to notice, imperfections...

Sold for: US\$811.99

EBay seller: oldbostonian

Period: Third Black



And Finally...

...Here's yet another one of those little mysteries! Here we have our Chairman and his wife sitting outside at a table on a lovely summer's day - there is a blonde stranger sitting opposite them, holding what might well be at item of interest....



The camera moves to show another view... we can recognise the mystery person now: it is Kate Bliss, the BBC TV antiques expert. These pictures are indeed taken from the BBC programme *"Put your Money where your Mouth is"*... but what is Kate holding?



It seems to be an ashtray... decorated in a sort of Celtic pattern with a cob lustre interior... and it's definitely Belleek - here's the second green mark (dating it to 1955 to 1965).



Kate then goes to great pains to describe the finer points of the item that she has previously purchased. Then she hands it over to Eddie! (right)



A few moments later the deal is done, they shake hands on it (left) - everyone is happy!

And why do we see this taking place so publicly? It is of course for the benefit of the television cameras!

So, Eddie and Linda part with £50 of their hard-earned cash and become the proud owners of a Belleek fifth mark Celtic ashtray...



And the mystery? Well I'm still not sure if it's Eddie or Kate who's putting their money where their mouth is...