

MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 March 1999

Coronet mystery is solved at last!

In our first newsletter I wrote about the Coronet mark as a great Maling mystery. When I wrote those words, I never imagined that only a few months later I would have solved it.

Looking at as many Coronet marked pieces as I could find, two points were clear. They all dated to circa 1925-1930 and they all had a different pattern number sequence. The mark also claimed to be a "registered trademark", but it was not registered in the UK.

My first breakthrough came in August 1997 at an antiques fair. I bought a "footed octo" shaped bowl with flying geese. The piece was marked with the Coronet mark and the dealer mentioned that she had bought it in Canada.

Maling's American agents were the Crownford China Co, could the Coronet mark be theirs? I eventually traced the firm, now called Crownford, and was put in touch with their British agent. Yes, he remembered Maling well, but Crownford only started in business in the 1940's. A dead-end!

My contact suggested to me that, as the numbers were in a different sequence, they might be a retailer's numbers as opposed to the factory's. It seemed more and more that the Coronet mark was a retailer's mark, but for whom?

One afternoon, I decided to type "coronet mark" into a search engine on the Internet. I was amazed to find one website offering Limoges porcelain marked "Coronet" with a

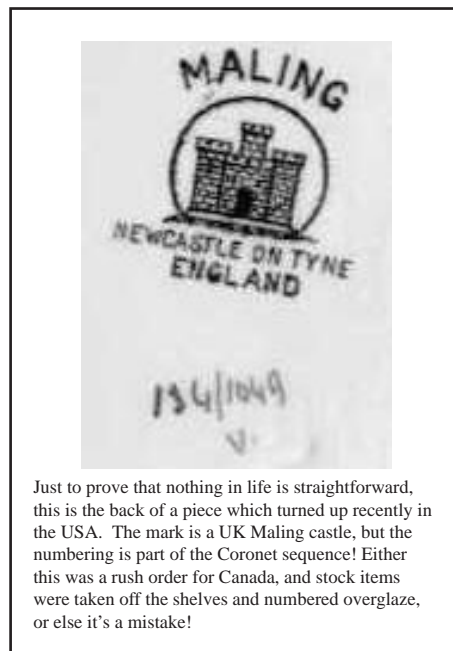
crown. The mark was not the same but the name was, and the crown was very similar. I e-mailed the dealer, but he did not know who made the china. Months of searching led to someone who told me that the Coronet marked wares were produced in France for an American firm called George Borgfeldt and Co. The name sounded familiar, but I could not think why.

Then it happened. I was searching in my filing cabinet and came across an advert from 1927. In the corner were the words: "Canadian Agents - George Borgfeldt and Co." Was it that simple? Now I knew that Borgfeldt were Maling's agents at the right time and that they used a coronet mark, but 20 years before Maling made Coronet ware. I needed proof that Borgfeldt were indeed the people behind the Coronet mark.

I wrote off more letters, including one to the USA Department of Commerce. An e-mailed reply came back to say that there was no record of Borgfeldt and Coronet, but I wasn't prepared to give up. I wrote back asking if they had checked current records or expired trademark records? They had only checked current ones, but a further check revealed five expired Coronet trademarks which they would send to me by post. Nothing happened for months until one evening at 9 p.m. the phone rang, it was a fax. There on my fax machine was the Coronet mark, registered by Borgfeldt in 1923. My theory was right after all and a little more of the Maling jigsaw was in place.

SM

We are glad to report that society membership now stands at around the 150 mark, while the website attracts approximately 1,000 "hits" a month. Encouraging news for a society formed less than a year ago. (Of course, these figures may well have been exceeded by the time you receive your copy of the newsletter.)



Just to prove that nothing in life is straightforward, this is the back of a piece which turned up recently in the USA. The mark is a UK Maling castle, but the numbering is part of the Coronet sequence! Either this was a rush order for Canada, and stock items were taken off the shelves and numbered overglaze, or else it's a mistake!

Coronet fact file.

- The Coronet mark was registered to George Borgfeldt as early as 1905, but the version we are familiar with was introduced in 1923.
- Maling stopped producing for Borgfeldt in 1929 with the Wall Street crash. Current orders were sold off on the British market.
- The pattern numbers seen on Coronet marked ware are Borgfeldt's own numbers and not Maling's.
- There are many other versions of the Coronet mark, but only those with "Maling" and "Newcastle on Tyne" were made by Maling. Other versions were used by other makers, including ones in France, Germany, Czechoslovakia and the UK.
- The American arm of George Borgfeldt no longer exists, but its Canadian sister company, who were Maling agents, is still going as a retailer of toys and crafts. Sadly they have no records!



What we need now is your feedback. We welcome comments, questions, photographs of unlisted patterns or vase numbers - plus your suggestions for what you would like to see in a new book aimed at Maling collectors. News of this book and much more is inside this issue of the newsletter.

VASE VARIATIONS POSE A PUZZLE

The following puzzle sets us off on yet another hunt - for vases which have two sets of impressed numbers.

The photo shows a vase which has 22 very clearly impressed on the base with a fainter 114 on the opposite side. It is 7 inches high, 5 inches wide. The owner also has a vase with 38 clearly impressed on the base with a fainter 9 or 6 opposite. 6.5 inches high, 2 inches wide.

The first vase is a 114 shape. Sometimes a second impressed figure refers to the size in inches, but that doesn't seem to be the case here. The second vase is a No 6 but, again, the 38 is a bit of a mystery. This mystery is made all the more curious by the pictured catalogue photograph, which shows the number 114 vase as number 22 and the no 6 vase as no 38. The numbers on the front clearly refer to the key on the back of this card, which states the correct numbers. What's going on?

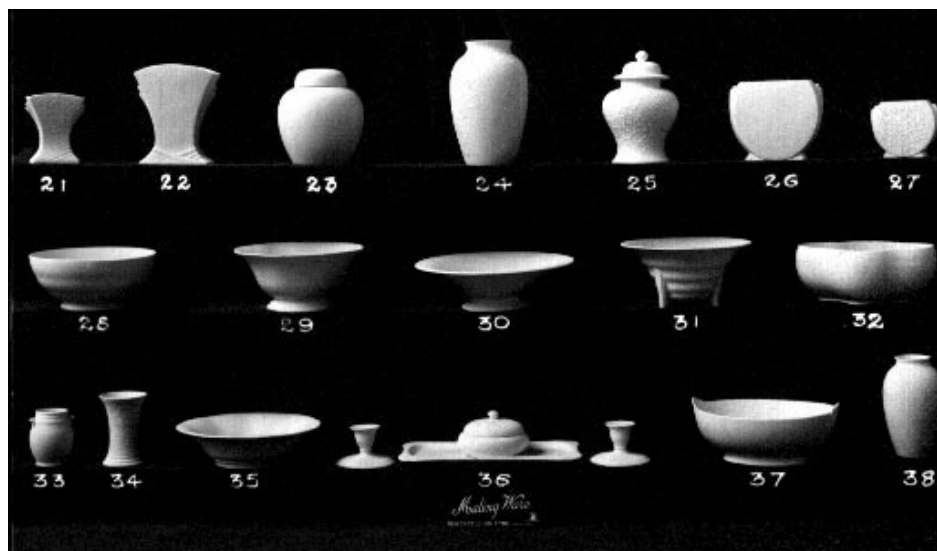
All we can assume is that, when Hoult's took over, the enormous range of shapes was cut down and re-numbered, but maintaining the old system at the same time. Once new shapes came on board in the later 50's the old scheme was resurrected (or continued) and the new scheme abandoned.

C. T. MALING & SONS LTD.
 FORD POTTERY, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, 6

Potters since 1762

DESCRIPTION OF DECORATED FANCIES
 as per Photographs

No.	
21.	Vase V.3 (Height 5")
22.	" No. 114 (Height 7")
23.	Ginger Jar No. 18 M/S (Height 6½")
24.	Vase No. 6 L/S (Height 8½")
25.	" No. 26 S/S Covered (Height 7½")
26.	" No. 113 (Height 5½")
27.	" V.4 (" 4")
28.	Wensley Bowl 8" (8½" dia.)
29.	Derby Bowl (9" dia.)
30.	Peer " (10½" ")
31.	Milan " (9" ")
32.	Regal Bowl
33.	Vase No. 100 (Height 3½")
34.	" No. 99 (" 4½")
35.	Alma Bowl (9½" dia.)
36.	Sheldon Candlesticks 2½" Covered Bon Bon 4½" Sandwich Tray
37.	Celtic Bowl
38.	Vase No. 6 S/S (Height 6½")



The life of a pottery girl

Marion (Davies) Robinson continues her recollections of working life at Maling.

A New Year had started, the festive Christmas over. It was January 2nd 1928, the day I started work. 27/6 for a 40-hour week, I thought I was a millionaire!

So Monday morning came and I was up at the crack of dawn. No way would I be late on my first morning. My sister wrapped up my four cheese sandwiches in last night's Evening Chronicle. I had 8d, in my home-made linen purse. It was 4d each way, 2d for the tram ride, and 2d for the trolley bus. I put my bag over my shoulder and closed the front door behind me.

I called for Betty my school friend - we went everywhere together. She was starting at the pottery too. We giggled and ran through the snow, it was so deep it soaked our ankle socks. It had been a bad winter, but not as bad as '47, when the snowdrifts were as high as our bedroom windows.

That year everything had come to a standstill. No trams or buses ran and very little food could get through to the shops. Men, women and children helped to clear the snow away.

We slid down our street, across the main road where we could see the tram car lurching from side to side. We jumped on and then to a trolley bus. City Road was strange to us, not having ever come this way before. We passed the Egypt

Cottage and Jeb Brother, from where I would later find out we got the rags to wipe our palette knives and clean our tiles when they were thick with paint. We made sure we got off at the right stop.

Going up the pottery yard, we looked around us, surprised at the size of it all. We went into the clocking office and found my card. My number was 49. I put the card into the machine, it was stamped 7.45, and we were 15 minutes early. We hurried up the cobbled steep slope and past the clock tower, where Mr Dixon had his office, then into the factory itself. It was huge, with coal-fired kilns that seemed to reach heaven, the heat was intense and we warmed our hands and watched the men moving quickly to and fro. It was like a circus act, men with a dozen brown saggars balanced on top of their heads, full of cups and plates.

Now we remembered, it was through the printing shop and up the old wooden staircase. Betty shoved me forward, we were so scared we went to water. A plaque on the wall read 'Decorating dept'. We gingerly pulled the door along its runners and were met by a sea of unknown faces, young and old, all



The Maling Decorating Department in 1948

smiling. The place was a hive of activity. The room was large with wooden benches on one wall and window the length of it. Stillions* full of finished vases, jugs and bowls, more than I had ever seen in my life.

The supervisor came forward to meet us and show us where everything was. We would meet Mr Boulelemier, the designer, when he came in at 9 o'clock. He was the man who kept us all in our place.

Marion Robinson 1999.
To be continued.

** Stillions (for those of you who don't know!) are the racks where pots were stored both before and after decorating.*

Derek Maling 1923 - 1998.

Derek Maling died just a few days before the first collectors' day. Heather, his daughter was due to join us at her fathers' wish, but naturally had to cancel at the last minute.

It was through Heather that I had managed to meet Derek only a few months before his untimely death and he provided me with much important information. As Frederick Maling's only surviving son, he was a vital link back to

the Maling family's last few years of owning the pottery and was able to help answer many questions.

When I met Derek I was immediately struck by his resemblance to his grandfather CT Maling. Chatting away I could have been talking to that famous man, if only that were possible! With the death of Derek Maling, the small pool of people I can contact about the pottery has diminished by a large amount. If it has told me anything, it is that I must

work even harder to record the memories of those who remain, before it is too late.

I asked Derek if he ever had any regrets about selling the pottery. Immediately he replied "No", but then added, "The last time I saw the old place it was when the whole of Byker was being redeveloped. I was driving from Gateshead and looked over the river to see the old pottery standing alone, like a rock amongst all the demolition. I thought to myself: that used to be ours once... if only". If only!

Can you really make *Net* profit?

Several society members have already stepped out onto the "Information Superhighway" and have home computers, e-mail addresses and Internet connections. For those of you who don't, here's a taste of the pleasures and pitfalls which await.

E-commerce (that's the jargon for buying over the Internet) is tipped to be the next "big thing". Already it's possible to buy almost anything from home-made herbal remedies to cars and even houses simply by sitting at your computer keyboard.

Even the antique collecting community is on board and on-line. One of the biggest Internet auction houses is eBay (<http://www.ebay.com/aw>). At any instant they claim to have over a million items for sale, and their website is visited over 600 million times a month.

In many ways, eBay functions like a conventional auction house, except that the bidding for any item is spread out



over a number of days. An on-screen clock tells you exactly how many days, hours and minutes you have left to get your bid in.

Bid increments are specified (e.g. one US dollar, two US dollars) and you can place a maximum bid and let the computerised auctioneer keep bidding on your behalf up to your limit. Should you be outbid, the computer will automatically e-mail you to let you know and give you a chance to increase your own bid.

Maling ware can usually be found both here and on other Internet auction sites, and overseas vendors (particularly from Canada, Australia and New Zealand)

often have some interesting and unusual pieces. These were, after all, the places where Maling's overseas agents were particularly active during the earlier years of this century.

So, is it possible to buy at rock-bottom prices from vendors who don't appreciate what they have? In general, the answer is "no". Most of the sellers are dealers who have a pretty good idea of what their stock is worth. An item may appear at an apparently silly opening price, but the seller has usually specified a reserve which is much closer to actual market value.

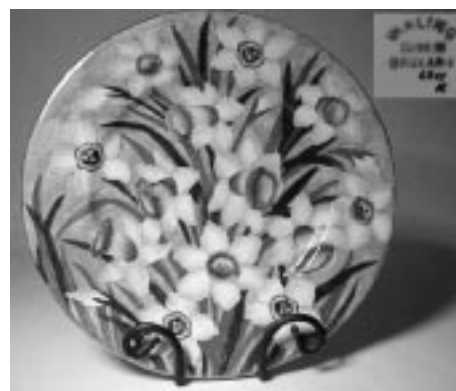
Bear in mind that, although buyers on eBay don't have to pay commission (that's the vendor's responsibility) you will have to pay shipping and insurance cost on top of the hammer price. Also, as all business is conducted in US dollars, you will have additional currency conversion charges if buying from an overseas vendor.

The following is a list of hammer prices for Maling embossed plaques sold at eBay in January 1999. Compare them with the prices you have seen in your local area and form your own opinion. (I have stuck to plaques both for ease of comparison and also because many people ask me, as the webmaster, which plaques are "rare" and therefore supposedly more valuable. I can offer no guarantees about rarity or value. This is simply a list of what the international collecting community has been prepared to pay in one particular month.)

Peona - \$230 (£144)
Tulip - \$275 (£172)
Kingfishers - \$284 (£178)
Flying Geese - \$316 (£198)
Daffodils - \$326 (£204)
Iris - \$640 (£400)

The conversions to sterling were worked out at the prevailing rate of 1.6 US dollars to the pound. Remember, once again, that shipping, insurance and any currency or credit card supplements should be added to these prices to arrive at the final cost.

Remember, also, that you are buying without having seen or handled the goods - only a photograph.. Although



most vendors try to be accurate about the condition of their items, it is very difficult to interpret phrases such as "slight crazing" or "normal wear". Your interpretation of "slight" and "normal" may be very different from mine.

I have experimented by buying three low-cost items via the Internet. In all cases, I would say that the amount of wear, crazing or age staining was more than I would have expected from the photograph I had seen. In one case, the piece had a hairline crack which had either not been disclosed or else had happened during shipping.



Certainly some of the prices quoted above look attractive. However, buying in this way is a gamble. There is still a lot to be said for dealing face-to-face with specialist Maling dealers who know their stock and will let you have a good look at the piece before you part with your cash.

The society would be interested to hear members' experiences of buying via the Internet.

DH

CETEM AFC

This newly discovered and previously unpublished photograph, shows the pottery's own football team, the aptly named "Cetem Athletic." The picture was taken in 1911 and came from the family of Jimmy Gardener, who is pictured holding the ball.

In the background is the decorating department and the chimney of the enamel kilns. The piles of 'sticks' are the spilt chestnut laths used to make the packing cases for finished wares. This picture was taken just beyond the reservoir to the back of the lithograph shop where Theo Maling had her studio in the late 1920's.



“Missing” patterns are turning up

What do 169, 4025, 5025, 5225 and 5226 have in common, or what about 2634, 3040 and 3196? Do the numbers 2074 and 5231 have any significance to you? The title of this piece is a bit of a giveaway, but they are all previously unrecorded pattern numbers and are now photographed and logged into the Society's database of Maling patterns. Each sequence contains variations on the same design, and it's surprising just how many versions of each pattern exist.

The database now contains over 200 previously unrecorded patterns. That still leaves us 15,000 odd to find. If you haven't already photographed your unlisted patterns and sent them to the society (and - hint, hint - with one or two notable exceptions most of you haven't!) please do so now.

We can't begin to stress how important this project is to the society and the result will be of great assistance to us all.

What emerges from the few numbers we already have is fascinating as it begins to show how Maling's designers worked, and just how thankful they must have been for the meticulous records the factory kept. Pattern 169 is a wonderful design of two gold carp swimming amongst seaweed and shells. Numbers

4025, 5025, 5225 and 5226 are all Boullemier versions of the same two fish chopped out of their Toft-designed sea and placed on various grounds, sometimes with ships and seaweed for company.

The numbers 2634, 3040 and 3196 are all versions of the popular "Aquatic" pattern also known as Aquatic Birds or Stork. The first is a Toft version and the rest are by Boullemier or possibly Wright. One of the problems is that we still don't know what Lucien Boullemier's first design at Maling was. Finding and photographing more patterns might reveal this mystery.

Lastly numbers 2074 and 5231 are both versions of the narcissus design. 2074 is an early version by Miguet and yes, you've guessed it, 5231 is another Boullemier reworking. 2074 is a brown print on a brown aerographed background with hand-tinted yellow and white flowers. In Boullemier's skilled hands it is transformed into a gold print on a still blue ground, with shaded cream flowers, a far cry from its original form.

Please do send in pictures of unrecorded patterns. We will be happy to return them to you if you wish.

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Photo tips

A good digital camera (unfortunately not cheap) makes photographing your collection relatively easy. At least you can check almost instantly that you have the correct exposure. If you are still using conventional photography, the following tips may be of use.

Use a manual SLR camera for maximum control over aperture, timing, etc. Using a separate flash gun allows you to take two shots of each piece, one with direct flash and one with flash bounced off the ceiling. (Open up an extra f-stop for the latter.)

It's difficult to predict where lustre pieces will "flare" as a result of the flash light. With luck, one of your two shots will be acceptable. You waste some film by taking two exposures, but at least you don't have to set up the shoot again if your single snap doesn't work.

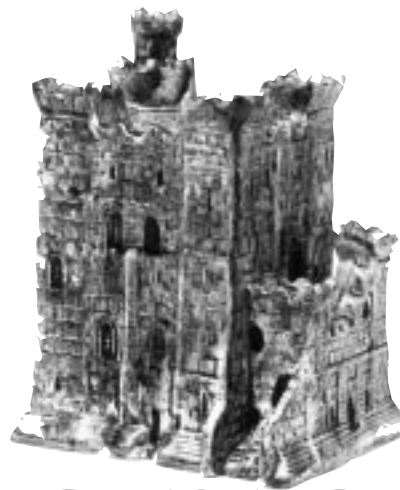
A tripod and cable release will eliminate camera shake.

Taking pictures in daylight close to a window helps preserve accurate colours.

A couple of pillow cases make handy backdrops - a light one for photographing dark pieces, and vice versa.

If all this is still a mystery to you, we are considering holding a photo shoot at the next collectors' event. Bring along your favourite (and, ideally, rare) pieces and we'll do the job for you.

Even if you have never visited Newcastle, some of the city's architecture will be familiar from your Maling collection.



Tyneside memories

The Castle or Keep of Newcastle upon Tyne is known to all Maling collectors from the factory's various 20th century marks. The following information is taken from a guidebook published by the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1952.

The present structure is the work of Henry II. In 1155 he resumed possession of castles and other royal property and ordered the destruction of the unlicensed or "adulterine" castles that had arisen during the civil wars of the previous reign.

His high-handed resumption of the Earldom of Northumberland in 1158 naturally caused him to anticipate resentment on the part of Scotland and, with this, the necessity for increasing the frontier defences of his kingdom. In these defences, Newcastle was an important feature, commanding the bridge over the River Tyne, carrying the road which was for centuries one of the main arteries of communication between England and Scotland.

It would appear from the Pipe Rolls that the present Keep was begun in 1172, and completed in 1177, at a cost of £911 10s 9d a sum equal to many times that amount at the present day. The Keep is a typical specimen of Transitional architecture, i.e. of the transition from Romanesque architecture - in England termed Norman - to the first Gothic or Early English architecture, of which the Black Gate is an example.

Almost square on plan, 62 feet north to south, by 56 feet east to west, excluding the fore building, it consists of a principal apartment on each floor surrounded by thick walls honeycombed with subsidiary apartments, stairs, passages, etc.

The walls were carried above the roof for defence, and three of the corners are covered by broad pilasters clasping the angles and ascending to the top of the Keep where they form the face of the angle

towers. The fourth corner, that at the north west angle, differs from the others in that it is a polygonal tower.

Towards the end of the 12th century great improvements were being made in military engines and military architecture. The rectangular tower was beginning to give place to a polygonal form, and this in turn was but a stage in the transition from the square plan of the 12th century to the round, or semi-round, plan frequently adopted in the 13th century.

This constant growth in military architecture, partly the result of lessons learned at the Crusades, may account for the north west angle differing from the others, for it was the most exposed. It is obvious that by the adoption of a polygonal form not only was the weak rectangular salient obviated but, at the same time, a wider field would be commanded by the defence and a better glancing surface provided against missiles.

The centre of each face of the tower is relieved by a broad pilaster - that on the west being the most massive - in such a way that seven-eighths of the west face of the tower are masked by it and by the angle pilasters.

The central pilaster on the west side is carried to the summit of the tower, and its lower portion serves to cover the garderobe shafts which are all collected behind it and discharge into a vaulted chamber having a doorway on the ground level for the purpose of clearing. ("Garderobe shafts" is a polite way of saying toilet pipes. You'll never look at your Castle Keep model in quite the same way again, will you? - Editor)

The pilaster on the south side originally stopped on the second floor. It has since been carried up, but in a much narrower form, to the parapet, and contains the flue from the second floor mural chamber.

Have you got any memories of the Castle Keep, or the Tyne Bridge. The Ringtons building or Tilleys' tea rooms? All of these places and more have connections with Maling pottery. Send in your anecdotes and memories - other collectors may well appreciate hearing them.

At the BBC Antiques Roadshow from Gateshead, January 1999, a Maling Castle Keep was valued at between £600 and £750. That's nearly as much as the real thing cost to build!

Where shall we meet?

This is the current distribution of members throughout the UK (overseas members account for the "missing" 3%). North East (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, Durham) - 29%; London & South East - 20%; North West (Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Cheshire) - 11%; North (Yorks, Derbys, Notts, Lincs) - 11%; East Anglia - 8%; Scotland - 7%; Bristol & area - 4%; Midlands - 3%; Wales - 3%; South West - 1%.

As membership grows, we will consider the feasibility of regional meetings. Again, we throw the issue open to members. Would you prefer meetings to be held in Newcastle, where there can be a visit to the factory site accompanied by former employees? Or an informal "chat and swap" meeting closer to home? If you favour a more local meeting, have you any suggestions for venues in your area?

Oddities & Rarities

In this series of articles, we'll try to bring you information about pieces which you may not have come across before.

My 60th birthday was coming up and my husband and I had just celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary, so my daughter who lives in Victoria, Vancouver Island, in Canada was looking for a special gift for me. She toured the antique shops looking for a piece of Maling and was getting quite despondent because, out there, Maling is now as expensive as it is here.



I received a phone call from her quizzing me about a G T James - something to do with the pottery. Well I had no idea at all, and eventually she said she had found a plaque with a painting of a chap and stamped with the Maling mark. The portrait was signed by L G Boullemeir 1948. On the back of the plaque was G T James, Toronto, Founder of the "James Service". She wasn't very impressed with the plaque really, saying it was rather dowdy and the chap looked like Hitler. By this time I was getting rather excited and I couldn't wait to see it.

At this time, believe it or not, although I have all the books on Maling I hadn't really read the story, I mainly referred to them for pictures of Maling. So I got my books out and was astonished to see who L G Boullemeir was. In the meantime my daughter had despatched the plaque and was doing the rounds in the Libraries and Internet to try to find out who G T James was - but to no avail.

The plaque arrived, bound in what seemed to be one mile of bubble wrap, and she was right - it was rather dowdy and he did look a bit like Hitler! Nevertheless I was more than excited. The plaque itself was handpainted and signed by Boullemeir and looked very similar to the plaque of the Queen painted in 1953. I rang the Laing Art Gallery and the Shipley Gallery, but they couldn't help me.

It was while I was again looking in one of my Maling books I saw it, G T James was the agent for Canada. It was there on one of the old advertisements shown in the book. I was delighted. I took my plaque to Steven Moore when the Maling Exhibition was on at the Shipley Art Gallery and he too was excited about it. At first even Steven wasn't sure

who G T James was until I told him, and then of course it clicked.

We wondered how it came to be in Victoria, Vancouver Island. One explanation could be that lots of people go to Victoria to retire. Maybe Mr James did too. I'm going over next year and intend to do a bit of 'digging'. Yes, this was a very Special Gift.

Steven Adds: GT. 'Jimmy' James was Maling's Canadian agent from the late forties until the factory closed down in 1963. He was not a Canadian, but was born in Liverpool where his parents ran a hotel. His company was called British Ceramics and Crystal and had extensive showrooms in Toronto. This plaque was probably made as a gift to Jimmy James when he became Maling's agent.

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NEW BOOK WILL HELP COLLECTORS

Our chairman, Steven Moore, is planning a new book - a collectors' companion for Maling lovers. This is your opportunity to say what topics you would like to see included. The provisional contents list is:

Marks - with additions to those already included in "Trademark of Excellence".

Paintresses - again with additional information which has come to light since the last edition of TMOE.

Pattern numbers - a new list of series one numbers and "missing" series two numbers (though many are still missing.) A selection of patterns would be illustrated in the margin to show the progression of styles and typical patterns of each period.

Vase numbers - as near a complete list as possible. At the moment we have two thirds of them.

Shapes - an illustrated list of popular Maling shapes, covering such things as bowls, teapots, jugs, dishes, etc.

Plaques - as near a full list as possible, showing each plaque.

Ringtons ware - a full, year by year, list of items made for Ringtons

Commemorative ware - items either adapted or specially produced to mark historic occasions.

Artists - an outline history illustrating work by each artist: Miguet; Toft; Wright; Boullemier; Theo Maling; Norman Carling; Lucien Boullemier jnr.

Family tree - illustrated with pictures of the key members of the family involved with the pottery.

If there is something you feel should be included, please get in touch as soon as possible.



Q Could you tell me more about the mark...”Asiatic Pheasants”, as I noted this mark on some other pottery? I believe John Carr & Sons as well as Maling used this mark.

A Next to “Willow”, “Asiatic Pheasant” is one of the most commonly found patterns in British pottery. Presumably the mark is flowers cut through by a scroll which says “Asiatic Pheasants” and the initials CTM to bottom left? Although this mark isn’t in “Trademark of Excellence”, you will find it recorded in a book called “Maling & Other Tyneside Pottery” by RC Bell, published by Shire Books.

Maling reintroduced ‘Asiatic Pheasant’ as ‘Pheasant’ in 1952 - Pattern nos 6549 and 6550. The original design was never out of production and can be found in red, blue and brown prints on many items particularly Magnum (a.k.a. Jumbo) teapots and cups and saucers dating from the 1940s and 50s.

Q Some of my pieces show quite bad age staining. Is there any way to get rid of it?

A Never use bleach! It is too corrosive and will destroy the body of the pot. A quick fix is to try something called “Chempro”, sold by wine and beer making shops for cleaning brewing equipment. Otherwise you could steep them in water for 24 hours, then wrap in cotton wool soaked in hydrogen peroxide (talk nicely to your local hairdresser!) and then wrap in cling film. Check daily. The stains should come out. Both methods can be repeated until they work. Oily stains are the most difficult to remove. (If you have ever seen a pair of oil & vinegar cruets, note how the oil bottle is almost always more discoloured.)

NB - both these methods should be used with great caution and we can offer no guarantee that they will a: work or b: not damage your pot!

Q At a local auction there was a small urn-type pot, about 4” high, with small gold handles. The number was 6557 and looking at my Maling book the description is “Godetia lamp, old gold”. Am I correct in thinking this was a paraffin lamp, now missing the lamp section? In addition to the Maling mark, there was the number 100 impressed into the base.

A Remember that the list was compiled from memory by an ex-Maling employee and isn’t 100 per cent accurate. From the description and the number in the base, it’s a No 100 shape vase which was never made as a lamp. Paradoxically, at least one Maling vase - No 140 - does also turn up as a lamp. The top is filled in and drilled to take a

light fitting, there’s a hole near the bottom for you to run the flex through and a larger hole in the bottom for you to get your fingers inside to manipulate the flex. Only early lamps pre 1925 have oil wells, later lamps have the solid tops

Also, pots made after 1955 can have very poorly painted pattern numbers, and it is possible to misread them. Or (and this has happened) the number may be incorrect!

Q I have a ten inch diameter bowl in the “Lucerne” pattern. I am sorry to say that it does not fall earlier than the 3817 you are looking for. However, on the inside of the bowl scribed under the mottled light blue glaze near the scroll is the number 4072, which is also the number on the bottom of the bowl. Also the letter B or number 8 is scraped into the bowl under the glaze. Is this common? Have you seen this before? Could this be a form of signature as to who worked on the bowl or designed it?

A A secret signature by a rebellious Boullemier? Well, it’s a theory, although the “B” actually appears to be a figure 8 (referring to the person who cast the bowl). We can’t think of any reason why this should have been done. If it said “Chelsea”, as in the bowl’s name, it might have been a showroom sample. Why put the pattern number in the bowl when it’s painted underneath? Once again we have to turn the question over to the membership and ask for any similar examples of pieces which appear to carry numbers, letters or even signatures in the pattern itself.

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