

MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 12 September 2001

It's been three years



From the vault - 1

Newsletter 1 brought our first discovery - a fine example of members working together to pin down an elusive fact. At the first collectors' day, Steven had given an illustrated talk on Maling's designers. One of the pieces shown was the ashtray produced for the 1931 Historical Pageant.

You can see the Newcastle Castle Keep on the left, and on the right is the spire of a church rising from behind a clump of trees. In passing, Steven commented that the church had never been identified.

An hour later, we were at the factory site. Standing in the yard, one of the members - who had never been there before - looked up over the roofline and spotted a strangely familiar landmark... yes, that spire!

The church turns out to be St Michael and All Angels in Byker and would have been clearly visible from Mr Boullemiers' studio window.



Those of you with an eye for statistics may have noted that the society is about to celebrate three years of activity. Our achievements in that time haven't been bad. Twelve quarterly newsletters, six collectors' days (including day 6 on September 29th), a large number of "lost" Maling moulds recovered and returned to Newcastle, and even our own video. (See below.)

It couldn't be done without your support and we thank the 40 or so members who have been with us all that time. We are now some 200 strong.

If you haven't been a member for so long you may well have missed some interesting articles and discoveries along the way. So we've been into the vault to dust off a few past highlights and spread them around this newsletter.

Now to business. The society's constitution says that the self-appointed offers would run the society for a period to be determined, then put themselves up for re-election.

Yes, we know none of you have ever shown any interest in the constitution. But we have it to keep the taxman happy and assure him that we are prudent managers of your subscriptions. However, now is probably a reasonable time to sound out members' opinions.

If any member would like to run for office, we'll hold an election. Write or e-mail to express an interest. If you are happy with the

way things are going, we'll save the expense of a postal ballot by unilaterally extending our period of office, as allowed under that sentence above.

If you want to see the full wording, it's:

"The officers shall have the following initial areas of responsibility:

Chairman: maintenance of PO Box and receipt of all correspondence, liaison with former employees of the pottery with especial reference to organisation of Society events, advice on historical matters pertaining to the pottery, contribution to material for newsletters, liaison with patrons.

Secretary: response to all correspondence, editorial responsibility for newsletters, maintenance of a database of current members, maintenance of website.

Treasurer: receipt of all incoming monies, payment of all invoices and expenses, maintenance of accounts and necessary returns, liaison with accountant as necessary."

Steven is chairman for obvious reasons. David is secretary because he's been involved in design and print for a quarter of a century or so. And Ruth is treasurer because of her administrative skills. It was a happy coincidence that the three of us came together.

End of business. Hereafter you'll find the articles you really want - the ones about Maling!

V I D E O A V A I L A B L E

It may not be a Hollywood blockbuster, but there is now a video of collectors' day 5 available to members. It runs for approximately 45 minutes and features Doug and Vi Spearman demonstrating fettling, Cecil Parker and John Hughes talking about their days as the factory engravers, plus four ex-paintresses reminiscing. If you can't make it to a collectors' day, it's the next best thing and a unique historical record.

The cost to UK members is £9.00 inclusive of postage and packing. This covers the costs of professional editing and duplicating. Cheques payable to The Maling Collectors' Society and sent to the PO Box address on the back page please.

Once we've sorted out the UK orders, we'll get a price for overseas members. The video should play on most systems, except for the USA and Canada. We can make copies for those countries, but they will cost extra.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



I have always said, and it's certainly true where Maling is concerned, that the more you learn the less you know. Here are a few problem pieces from Maling's pattern archive. If you have any ideas let me know. - Steven.

1a & 1b Brill or what?

This small object is clearly inscribed "ogee Brill Tray" and was introduced in 1936. Should it say "Brillo Tray" though? It is the size of a Brillo pad and does have a cut away part to pour off liquid.



1a



1b

2a & 2b The bottom of Dorset.

Here is a typical Maling puzzle. "7/9/38 Dorset Honey Jar Bambola". The cover of a "DORSET" honey pot in "BAMBOLA" but the bottom is missing. Does anyone have a complete one so we can finally marry up the shape with a name?



2a



2b

3 Earl or Sefton?

This is the familiar plate most often seen in use for the 1911 coronation. How do we decide what to call it though as it is marked as both an "EARL" Dessert plate and a "SEFTON" Bread and Butter plate?



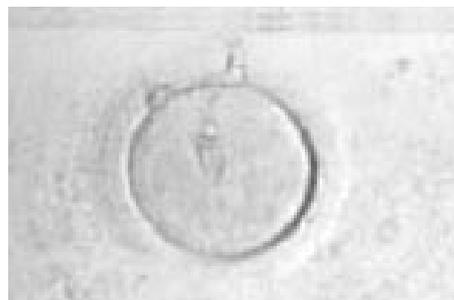
3



4a

4a & 4b Pipe up

Here are two identical bowls, but one is inscribed "16/7/25 Oval bulb bowl", the other "3/12/30 OVAL BULB BOWL WITH PIPE". What is a "Pipe"? The only clue is that the "PIPE" bowl is later and has this curious circular mark inside. Was it made using a "pipe" which has left this mark? If so, the question is: what is a pipe?



4b



4a

DAY 6

Collectors' day 6 will be from 10.30am on Saturday 29th September in our new venue - the King's School, Tynemouth. It's fifteen quid a head, to cover costs of room hire, catering, etc.

Oddities & Rarities

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

To be honest, this little medicine or kitchen measure probably isn't that rare - but how many of you would give it a second glance? Marked with a CTM triangle transfer, it stands just over 5cm high and is graded on the inside to measure 1-4 tablespoons of liquid.

It's interesting because it demonstrates that, if Maling could make containers to hold a standard weight - e.g. 1lb of marmalade - they didn't have to be rocket scientists to adapt that technology to make containers which held a standard volume of liquid.

In fact this was pretty big business because then, as now, drinking vessels had to be stamped by the Weights and Measures authority to certify that they held one pint, half a pint, etc. Check your glass the next time you go to the pub. You'll find a royal monogram, the capacity and a number which

identifies the regional office which passed the glass as OK.

Maling's production was so big that a Weights & Measures officer was permanently stationed at the factory to certify the output. The number which identifies the Newcastle office is 71, and it's a fair bet that an unmarked piece which looks like Maling and has a 71 mark is the real thing.

For example, I have a pint mug in a known Maling shape and pattern ("Eslington"), but it doesn't have a factory mark. However, it does have the monogram GR and the number 71. Obviously, that's not a date because there wasn't a King George in 1871, and it's not going to be 1771 when the factory was in Sunderland, or 1971 when the factory quite simply wasn't. But it does tie the piece to Newcastle and make a Maling attribution even more likely.



(Parts of this article appeared in newsletter 1 - so that's another "vault" article we've generously donated to you. - David)

Castle keeps appearing!

This isn't the first time we've brought you a non-Maling Castle Keep. As you can see, it's made by Goss and features on the cover of the July 1976 collectors' magazine (kindly loaned to us by Ron Laverick).

Inside the magazine it says: "The front cover illustration is Newcastle Castle, one of the rarest glazed buildings (they mean by Goss, of course - David). The following information appears on the model: 'Robert Curthose, eldest son of the Conqueror, built a fortress here in 1080, which in contradistinction to the old Roman Castrum of Pons Aelii, was called the New Castle, whence the present name of the town.' "

The model was up for auction in the magazine, with a reserve of £135 - quite a tidy sum twenty-five years ago when many other pieces in the auction were starting at only £2-£4.

Goss went out of business in 1929. So, did they pinch Maling's idea, or vice versa? Did both companies base their designs on the pre-WW1 Bavarian model of the Castle Keep which has been shown before? Or is it just coincidence?

Corrections & clarifications

We apologise to the Genii of the Teacup, who was inadvertently referred to as the Genii of the Teapot in the last newsletter. Also to Charles Allen, who seems fated to appear in these pages as Charles Allan. Your editor grovels in an appropriate fashion. Mr G.O'Tcup resumes his adventures elsewhere in this newsletter.



maling commemoratives

4 War, Peace and a Jubilee

Three for the price of one this time, as we take a brisk trot through the years from 1914 to 1935. Let's start with the Great War.

It's ironic that, while WW2 was one of the nails in the Maling corporate coffin, WW1 seems to have been quite good for business.

At the start of the war, Maling produced a number of items - notably those bearing a portrait of Lord Kitchener. The pictured plate carries this wording on the back: "Lord Kitchener, drawn and printed by C. T. Maling and Sons, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, November 1914." What the inscription doesn't tell you is that the engraving was by Mr Miguet - so he was still in some sort of business relationship with the factory, even though Mr Toft had been chiefly responsible for design since 1908.

Apart from the plate, vases and beakers have also been recorded with this Kitchener portrait.

As we mention beakers, we may as well note the introduction of a "slimmed down" version of the Maling drinking horn. Compare this one with the one produced for the 1911 Coronation (newsletter 11) and you'll see what I mean. Although marked examples of this particular mug are unlikely to turn up, the impressed number 2085 in the base is a sure sign that it's Maling. (The other beaker, remember, will be impressed with 2355.)

This piece carries the flags of Britain, Russia, Belgium and France on the front - a fairly certain indication that it was produced in the early days of the war. Later pieces, produced by factories other than Maling, show the flags of several more allied nations who joined the fray later on. (How ironic that one of these was Japan - the country whose

competition would be one of the factors which killed off the factory some fifty years on!)

Peace, when it eventually came, was marked by another flurry of production. Maling peace mugs are either the slimmed down drinking horn mentioned above, or the Norfolk shape mug. Many of them are found with inscriptions indicating that they were produced for local north-eastern communities - Felling, Blaydon, Cleadon, etc.

These peace mugs may or may not be marked. Your first clue is the shape and/or impressed number, as mentioned above. A further clue is the distinctive lettering, which factory engraver Cecil Parker describes as "fishtail". (The ends of the letters are split like a forked stick, or a fishtail.)

For a long time, I believed that Maling used only one transfer on peace mugs - Britannia, enthroned and ruling the waves. But this is Maling, so be prepared for the unexpected. Another transfer has turned up - a dove of peace flying over the globe (as used by other factories and pictured here).

For the moment, I'll pass over Maling wares produced to celebrate the NE Coast Industries Exhibition of 1929 and the Historical Pageant of 1931, as these were local rather than national events.

This brings us towards the "bargain basement" end of Maling commemoratives, with the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935. You'll find at least three different transfers of the King and Queen Mary and several different shapes. It will save you some time searching if you know that Maling were one of the few factories to use silver gilt, rather than gold, on these pieces.

Apart from drinking horns and Norfolk





mugs, the factory also produced other items such as a rectangular teapot for Ringtons. You're probably familiar with that teapot in white. However, there's a variant which is much more interesting and definitely not in the "bargain basement".

Mr Boullemier appears to have taken a number of "stock" items and decorated them by hand to produce a range of limited edition Silver Jubilee pieces. Each has a stunning cobalt blue body, portraits of the King and Queen with hand enamelling - even down to the beads in the Queen's necklace - and is signed by Mr Boullemier himself.

These were presumably made in very small quantities and given as special gifts to local dignitaries, important visitors to

the factory, etc. Known examples include a desk ornament, a tobacco jar, a biscuit barrel and the teapot mentioned above.

It was the success of these items which probably led Maling to consider a range of similarly ambitious pieces for the coronation of Edward VIII a couple of years later. But, this time, they would be sold to the public and openly demonstrate the quality of which the factory was capable. Or would they...?

Next time we'll consider three wed Kings and a funeral (though not necessarily in that order). OK, I know Edward VIII wasn't married when he was on the throne, but why let accuracy get in the way of a pun which I've been waiting a whole year to get into the newsletter? - David

Life, the universe & royalty

The late Douglas Adams once wrote something to the effect that the universe is so complicated that, should anyone discover anything significant about it, it will instantly recreate itself to become even more complex. This is, of course, a law which applies to Maling collecting.

Two newsletters ago I gave you chapter and verse on Edward VII and mentioned the Marlborough House barrel shaped mugs or beakers. Here's another example. Ponder closely on the pictures before you proceed.

Seen the point yet? You can see the front of this piece... and the back. So where's the handle? Answer: there isn't one. It's a Maling barrel shape mug but without a handle. It hasn't been damaged, and is fully glazed and factory marked with an additional Harrods mark. This is just how it was made. Why on Earth did the London "toffs" want to buy a beaker without a handle?



From the vault - 2

Newsletter 2 saw us crack the mystery of "Coronet" pieces. These items were made by several different factories and imported into the USA and Canada by George Borgfeldt & Co. 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



From the vault - 3

Newsletter 6 brought the exciting news that the society had recovered original Maling moulds from the now defunct Weatherby factory in Staffordshire. These moulds - mainly "Voluta" and "Cherry Blossom" - had been sold off when Malings closed in 1963.

Steven and David faced the dangers of acres of dog poo and a recalcitrant hired van to bring these little (and not so little) beauties back home. We now use them to cast pots at collectors' days, thanks to the expert assistance of Doug and Vi Spearman.

You think that's a Maling milk jug in "Voluta"? Think again. It was made by Weatherbys only a couple of years ago and, as Weatherbys used to have big contracts with the catering trade, you might still find one in a restaurant near you

The **A T O Z** of Maling

“**A**” is for... Alma, Armstrong and Alex.

Many Maling shapes are named after people or places. Our first is “**ALMA**”, she is a bowl introduced in the late 1930’s and seen here on a 1950’s pattern card.. “**ALMA**” seems to have been used as a trifle bowl or for fruit or just as a decorative ‘fancy.’ (do people really just have things in their house for the hell of it?)

“**ARMSTRONG**” is jug and basin dating to the 1890’s and seen here from Maling’s 1898 catalogue. One wonders if it was named after Lord Armstrong, the famous inventor and armaments manufacturer who lived at Cragside and Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland? I know that the Malings and Armstrong’ were friends, so it’s quite possible.

“**ALEX**” is a name given to an imported china plate used for dessert services. The fact that Maling gave names to the imported

shapes suggests that they must have had contracts with suppliers and that this trade must have been an important one. “**ALEX**” has low relief moulding, similar to Maling’s “**COLAR**” or “**EDEN**” shapes. I have seen a large “**F**” impressed into the back of one example, but have but yet been able to trace a maker.

*(Next time: “**F**” is for fingers. Please get them out and write something for the newsletter. - David.)*



970 Ivory Body,
Armstrong Shape, Handled Basin

China
Dessert Services.
“Alex Shape.”



Yates & Sons

Help us to find ‘lost’ patterns

A few newsletters ago I said that I didn’t know whether the Maling “Osborne” border had been created for the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, or whether it was already on the shelves and was brought back into service to embellish the plate which was produced to mark this occasion.

To be honest, I still don’t know. However, here is an example of non-royal Osborne. Unfortunately, the impressed date reads 1887, so we could still be looking at something created for a royal occasion - i.e, the Golden Jubilee of that year.

Steven adds: “The more I think about this matter the more I believe that ‘Osborne’ is the border. In the 1898 pattern book the exact plate is listed as ‘Osborne’, but the very same pattern, without the border, is described as ‘Eglantine’. Similarly, the ‘Maple’ pattern shown in the last newsletter is listed as “Ascot”, but without the blue border. It’s all very confusing! “The same thing occurs later with ‘Old

Hylton’, which we now know is a ground and not a specific pattern. I think the reason it’s on the 1897 commem plate is because of the association with HRH and is therefore a coincidence.

“I can’t overstress the importance of looking at your pots and sending in the pattern numbers of anything pre 1933, i.e. under 6200. Also anything pre 1908. If you send them in I will reply and tell you if they are unrecorded and then ask you for a photograph. Why is it so important?”

“Well quite simply it’s the only way we will ever find missing numbers. Of the 600 plus ‘missing numbers’ I have recorded, the majority have been discovered through my own efforts. With one or two notable exceptions, many members have not yet helped in this important task.”



LEAFLET

For those of you who don’t know, the society has a full colour membership leaflet. If anyone would like a small supply to hand out to friends or fellow collectors, please get in touch.

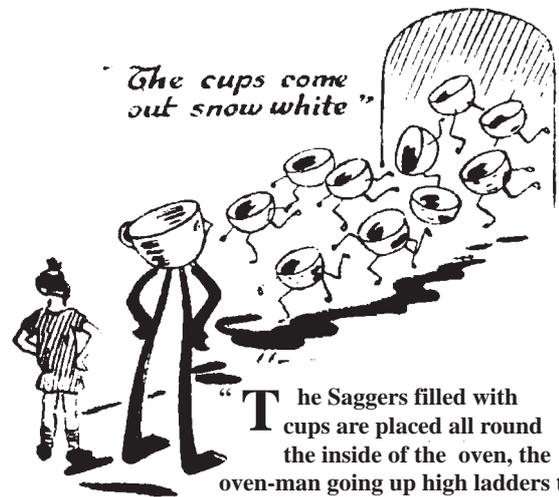
“THIS work of sticking on handles is very tricky, but the girls have been doing it for years and are quite clever at it - see how skilfully and daintily they work.”

“It is fascinating to watch them, but how monotonous it must be, doing the same thing over and over again,” I said. “Yes,” said the Genii, “Some of them do about a thousand a day.”

Then I was taken to see them putting the finished cups into the “Biscuit” over. “This is where the cups have their first fire,” the Genii informed me. “They are carefully packed into those Fireclay boxes called ‘Saggers’, which are built up solid inside that huge chimney looking place. ‘I’d love to go inside and take a peep,’” said I.

“Come along then, step inside. Isn’t it a dizzy height?”

“Yes! It reminds me of a huge beehive.”



“The Saggers filled with cups are placed all round the inside of the oven, the oven-men going up high ladders to fill it to the top,” I was told.

After the oven-men had filled the oven, they bricked up the door and lighted fires at eight or a dozen different places around about it. It was very hot when it reached 1,300° centigrade, and it takes about three days before that operation is complete. “When the cups come out of this oven, they are snow-white and very brittle,” said the Genii. “Come through to the Biscuit Warehouse and you will see what I mean, they have a rough surface, are very porous and not yet able to hold water.” We left the vicinity of the oven and journeyed on to the printing shop where busy workers were putting the prints or transfer patterns (taken off engraved copper-plates) on to the Biscuit ware.

“Don’t the cups look funny, all done up with bits of paper,” I said. “Yes,” said the Genii “after the prints are well rubbed on so as to leave a good impression of the White Cup, they are put through yet another fire sufficiently hot to fix the prints so that the Glaze will not wash them off..” “Now we will take a look at the Dipping House.”

pottery perfection since 1762.

From the vault - 4

Newspaper 2 turned up this fine rarity, a plaque decorated and signed by LG Boulemier and dated 1948. It depicts GT “Jimmy” James who was Maling’s Canadian agent at the time.

It was bought as a present for a member by a relative who commented that it “was rather dowdy and the chap looked like Hitler”.

Steven adds: Jimmy James 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 him when he became Maling’s agent.



Once again the Genii of the Teacup takes us on a tour of the Maling factory to see how the wares were made. This booklet was written by Fred Maling for distribution at the 1929 NE Coast Exhibition.

Good enough to eat off?

Strange as it may seem, the embossed Deco plaques which are now sought after as ornamental items, were once seen as items of table ware (albeit rather high class). A Canadian advertisement dating from the late 40s describes them in these terms.

“Thrillingly new are these gracious service plates... creations of a famous English pottery... and thrillingly colorful too, in their hand painted embossed designs. It’s the latest thing to set each place at the table with a different design in Maling Art Ware.”

You may just be able to make out that the advertisement was produced by British Ceramics & Crystal, who were Jimmy James’ distribution company (see “From the Vault” on page 7).

A THOUGHT: Do members actually use their food-related Maling items? Have you ever made a pudding or a jelly in Maling kitchenware? Do you pour your gravy from a Maling boat as you eat your Sunday lunch off Maling plates? If so, we’d like to hear your stories and see your photos for a newsletter article.



Maling sighted

John Bailey writes: “I came in from gardening for a rest on Sunday and put on the TV. There was Delia Smith, with a Maling Chintz Jug on her kitchen shelf!”

David adds: Thanks John. (And thanks also to Iris McElvanney who made the same observation.) We didn’t have room to put this pic in the last newsletter but, for those of you who think the story about the sighting of Maling on Thunderbirds was an out-and-out hoax, here is the back of a genuine Maling Cherry Blossom salt. Now do you believe that Lady Penelope used one as a flower vase?

Your sightings (real or imagined) of Maling in unusual locations are always welcome as newsletter articles.





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