

MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 14 March 2002

We mourn the loss of two good friends

All of you will be saddened to learn that Marion Robinson (nee Davies) died on the morning of Christmas Eve 2001, losing her long battle with bowel cancer. I had only known Marion for five years, yet it seemed much longer. She had got in touch after an appeal I made on Tyne-Tees television. An appeal that generated so much response that it prompted Tyne-Tees to make the programme "Potty about Maling" in which Marion was one of the undoubted stars.



After my first meeting with her at home it was clear she was going to be used in the film as she had 'star quality.' What's more she had a wonderful memory full of stories and recalled a friend called Joyce Kirk whom she said she would love to see again. What Marion did not know is that Joyce had also got in touch - so we planned a reunion with cameras invited.

I think that you all know the rest of the story, but needless to say we all became very close

over those few days filming and Marion will leave something of a hole in my life.

As Marion said tearfully when she and Joyce met again for the first time since 1963 "Div'vant cry." So let's not cry for Marion, she would not want that anyway. Let us just remember her as she was, full of life, fun and laughter. - *Steven*

John Hughes, Maling engraver prior to WW2, died in February. I first met John at a collectors' day a few years ago. (He's on the right of the picture, engrossed in his work, as ever.)



Although he'd only been "booked" to give an afternoon talk about his career, he arrived as the doors opened and asked if he could come with us on the factory tour. "Of course", I said, and wondered where I

might find an umbrella to shield this gentleman from the rain which was drizzling outside.

First impressions always deceive. The moment the bus pulled up at the factory, John was out of the door - drawing members after him like a human magnet. Within seconds he was pointing out who worked where and filling in the bare facts with stories which seemed so fresh that they could have happened the day before, rather than half a century ago.

This was a teenager masquerading in an older man's body. As he talked, we were there with

him, skating on the frozen factory reservoir and throwing snowballs at the other workers in a pre-war winter. My proposed umbrella was as irrelevant to him now as it would have been back in his youth!

We shared a love not only of Maling, but also of skiing. We talked about it at the last collectors' day. John was planning to

be in Austria in January of this year. As it turned out, he never made that last holiday. I'll take a run in your memory, my friend - no doubt with a small stop for a Gluhwein and a "Prosit" to your life and achievements. - *David*

Renewals

Those of you whose membership is due for renewal will receive a separate reminder with this newsletter. Remember, we're bringing all renewals round to a common date of October. So you'll be asked for £10 to cover the next six months. What happens after October is a matter of debate. (See article on page 2.)

How do we go forward ?

David writes: Sadly, I cannot afford to keep up with the workload of being unpaid society secretary for much longer. I am now spending about one day a week on my various duties.

I will certainly keep going until October. After that, we can all vote on how we may keep running in some form, or we can gradually wrap the society up as and when the money runs out.

The fact is that time is robbing us of our guest speakers at the collectors' days. Most of my own meagre knowledge of Maling will have been imparted to you when I finish my series on royal commemorative wares (though I'm sure you may well be glad to see the back of it!).

If we haven't got newsletter articles or feedback from members, and we can no longer run a top-notch collectors' day, Steven, Ruth and I have to ask ourselves why we're putting the time in.

Our plan at the moment is to use some of the society's funds to do a "proper" video of the ex-factory workers. This may well take the place of the Spring collectors' day.

Of course, someone might be foolhardy enough to take over some of the secretary's duties. These include:

1 Newsletter Editor

Write (or organise someone to write) approximately 5,000 words each quarter. Sort photographs, design, print and distribution. Many a pleasant hour can be passed in sticking address labels and stamps on a few hundred envelopes - allegedly!

2 Membership Secretary

Maintain the database of members. Send welcome letter to new members and notify regional reps of any new member in their area. Chase late payers and delete them from the database if necessary (in accordance with Data Protection laws).

3 Webmaster

Maintain the society website, refreshing content each month (ideally). Answer e-mails, or do so in conjunction with Chairman.

4 Correspondence Secretary

Answer all correspondence received by e-mail or post (after consultation with Chairman.)

As of now, I'm doing all of this, and I've also ended up being cameraman, director, editor and very probably "key

grip", "best boy" and "gaffer" (whatever they may be) on the society videos. It may be possible to split the various jobs as outlined above. But each job holder will need to be in touch with the others (e.g. Membership Secretary will need to supply Newsletter Editor with mailing labels, etc).

A further fallback position is that we keep the society going on a more informal Internet basis. About half the membership have Internet access, and we'd expect that figure to improve as time goes by. We also have a couple of regional representatives in place, and we'd like to see that side of the society take off.

We've kept the society going for four years. In that time, we've produced four newsletters a year, held six collectors' days and produced two videos. If we can produce a definitive video record before we wrap up, that won't have been a bad achievement.

If you have any suggestions as to how we might carry on, please let us know. Members in the North East have already put their heads together at a regional meeting and come up with a few ideas, as you'll see elsewhere in this newsletter.

Member sets a Chinese puzzle

At first glance the two "ORIENTAL" bowls are the same, except one is 8.5" and one is 9.5". The patterns are the same, as are the main colours, but the decoration of the pagoda buildings is significantly different. The black-and-white chequerboard roofs on the smaller bowl have been replaced by grey and orange on the larger version, which also lacks the black detailing of windows, arches, fascias and columns. In stamp collecting circles these would be called 'Variations.' Now is this just a case of quality control or artistic licence? *Eric Hawkins*

Steven says: *I think it's neither, more a case of cutting costs! The bowl with black enamelling will be an early version and the version with more white showing (the 9.5" bowl) is a later example where costs have been cut by using less paint and therefore less valuable time.*



"Up the yard ..."

By **Peggie Boustead** (Nee Stewart) who started working at Maling's pottery in 1927

I think that you will all have seen "Malings yard" as it is now, but in the twenties and thirties it was so very different. Let me tell you a little about those times.

Maling's pottery was a very imposing building. The makers section (down the yard) housed offices, showroom, warehouse and stables. The kilns were there too with their huge chimneys seen for miles around. Up the yard was the enamel section where I worked as a lithographer and paintress.

To get to where I worked you went past the time office and walked right up the yard past the clock tower over the railway lines to two smaller buildings with the enamel kilns on one side and the decorating shops on the other. They were joined by a wooden bridge.

The painting shop was upstairs, a very big room with windows down one side. The room was arranged with one bench per window, and we sat on square wooden stools with no backs. You were taught from the beginning to grind your own paint from powder to either

glost or water paint, each having to be ground to different

consistencies for use on the ware, as some was very dry and some very wet. You were taught to paint (it came naturally to some) and how to handle the ware whilst painting. In those days, none of Maling's employees ever dreamt that the ware they made and decorated would ever become a collector's item, so prized and loved. I still wonder about it!

From the painting shop you came to the gold printing shop. They had their own printer making the prints which were then put over the top of the painted pattern and that print was then dusted with 22 carat gold.

Going downstairs, you came to the enamel warehouse where all the decorated ware was housed. After firing it would be examined. The girls then would chip off the stilt marks and would burnish the gold markings. The "blowing shop" (aerographing) was also downstairs and always had a smell of peardrops. Next came the gilders' shop. The gliders each had their own wheel to gild tea sets, dinner services etc and also to lustre certain wares.



L to R: Mary Haining, Peggie and Mary Ball decorating teapots for the Silver Jubilee of 1935.

Next came the engravers, who were always very busy and, just next to them, the Studio - Mr Boullemiers domain! It was a most wonderful sight to see. A piece of everything he had ever designed was there in all its glory. The low walls and parts of the floor absolutely covered in decorated ware all glowing. He would be sitting at a huge desk covered in paper drafts of designs he was busy with. Always bringing out new designs, new shapes and specials.

I remember best of all the specials (one offs for the North East Coast Exhibition and the like) such as the Geisha girls plaque, the model of the Prince of Wales on horseback in full regalia, red coat etc. I also recall seeing the model of the castle keep - absolutely marvellous - as well as the exhibition plaque with scenes of Newcastle and the Lord mayor's picture. (I think the mayor was called Lambert). More of that later. - Peggie

Looking for 4000s

Allan Smith writes: I find it intriguing to see that there appear to be very few pattern numbers in the 4000 series. Do you have any details of why this should be the case? (Was it due to War years, or perhaps just that the numbers were skipped from 3000 to 5000 ?) I attach one image that I have been able to obtain which was identified as 4039.

Steven says: I don't know the reason why there are so few 4000, pattern numbers either, but it was not because of world war two. 4000 numbers fit in the date of circa 1926 - 1927, the very earliest years of LEB's reign at the pottery. Your pattern has been recorded on bowls before as well as vases, the

only link being that in each case the design consists of the windmill motif and a border.

Les Dixon once told me that the reason for the scarcity of 4000s was that it was the depression and most numbers were allotted to printed wares which often don't have a pattern number painted onto them. That means that there must be almost a thousand missing printed designs of circa 1926. Even though the designs would presumably be used later, when business picked up, 4000 series numbers are still quite rare. So, as ever, check out those pots and check those numbers and send any missing ones to the usual address. Only by pooling knowledge can we discover more about Maling.



maling commemoratives

5 WE THREE KINGS

Let's start by clearing up a commonly-repeated myth, which doesn't just apply to Maling. The story goes that, as Edward VIII was never crowned, pieces for his proposed coronation are rare. Nonsense!

The minute the old King was in his grave, factories started churning out pieces for the next coronation. What could be more of a racing certainty and an opportunity to do good business?

George V died in January 1936. (Actually, he was helped on the way by an injection from the Royal physician, Lord Dawson, to ensure that the story made it into the national morning papers, rather than the provincial evening ones.)

Edward, as eldest son, was automatically King. His coronation was planned for May, 1937 and he actually reigned for some 11 months until the abdication in December 1936. Plenty of time for pieces to be produced.

To prove the diversity, here are a few different transfers of King Edward - all Maling. Note the shapes, which are typical of Maling's commemorative output in the 1930s. Like the majority of George V Silver Jubilee pieces from a year or so earlier, these are "bargain basement" pieces, and you shouldn't be paying a lot for them.

Maling's real contribution to Edward's coronation were to be a plaque and jug designed by Mr Boullemier Snr. Like the Silver Jubilee pieces mentioned in the last newsletter, they were to have a rich cobalt blue body and would be embellished by a hand-painted cameo portrait of the King.

It would be a time-consuming process to produce them, what with all the enamelling, gilding and hand decoration. But what better way to show off the quality of which Maling were capable?

The story goes that Mr Boullemier had just got examples of these pieces to his satisfaction and was proudly displaying

them in his studio, when in walked Harold Sharpley. Mr Sharpley was Maling's American agent at the time and, while the UK press had covered up all news of the affair with Mrs Simpson, it was common gossip in the US media. Mr Sharpley was just back from a trip to America.

Mr B asked Mr S what he thought of the pieces. The response was to the effect that: "it was all very well, but the coronation wouldn't happen". And how right he was!

The plaques and jugs were in various stages of production throughout the factory. Some had only got as far as biscuit firing, most were partially completed but lacking the finishing touches, and only a few were complete. All were now redundant.

A hasty effort was made to salvage something from the disaster. Several pieces exist which have been finished off to show the dates of the accession and the abdication. These must have been touted around the stores in the hope that they would find a market. They didn't.

Most of the proposed coronation pieces ended up being smashed. If you should be fortunate to find one of these plaques or jugs, examine it very carefully before you buy. Most were missing gilding, enamelling, etc, and it's not unknown for unscrupulous people to have taken out their "painting by numbers" kits and tried to put them into a more complete state. Smashed pieces, which have been restored later, are also known to exist.



A coronation was, of course, held in 1937. But this was for George VI rather than Edward VIII. Some cobalt blue pieces were produced, again probably in very limited editions. For example, a beaker exists which commemorates the visit of the officers of HMS Newcastle to the Maling factory.



The rest of the output is, I'm afraid, rather run-of-the mill. However, even this "bargain basement" Maling can occasionally surprise. For several years I was convinced that Maling must have used up their final stock of "Norfolk" shape mugs on Edward VIII. You never saw one for George VI. That was until last year, when one turned up on eBay. I've not seen another since, so have to conclude that the "Norfolk" shape did end its production run round about 1937.

One other thing has always slightly surprised me about this coronation. Given that it must have been an almighty rush to re-do the entire output in only five months, how did Maling find the time to produce a

completely new commemorative piece for George VI?

I'm referring to the well-known tea caddy produced for Ringtons and showing a portrait of the King on the front and the Queen on the back. Was it some form of oblique propaganda to promote the sanctity of the home and marriage? Or was it simply that, because Edward wasn't married, no one had thought of the idea before? Other theories are welcome. Incidentally, I was amused to see one of these, without its lid, being advertised at auction as a "vase". You wouldn't fall for a story like that, would you, dear reader?

Next time, we'll look at the 1953 coronation of our present Queen.



Commem conundrum

Never assume anything. Eric Hawkins recounts his "expensive experience" at a recent fair.

Having asked the stall-holder the usual question: "Have you any Maling?", I received the half-expected answer of "No". Then there was a delayed "but..." and he handed me a Queen Victoria Jubilee mug. "Do you think this is Maling?" he asked.

Now, despite our secretary's best efforts, I know as much about Maling commemorative ware as I do about the stars in the sky. However, since the mug was stamped: "Made for Cullen & Son, Newcastle upon Tyne", I was able to say with confidence that the city was right! It also had a registration number - 294252 - which I knew could aid identification. Finally, although the mug had an elaborate handle, it did seem to be Norfolk shaped. With that limited evidence, and the excited anticipation that it might be Maling, I bought it.

I started with the enquiry section of the Patent Office, where a member of staff suggested I contact the British Library (0207

412 7919) which is opposite St Pancras Station. I telephoned and spoke to John. He asked for the registered number and an approximate date because, although the library holds volumes of The Illustrated Official Journal (Patents), which was published weekly, entries are not always systematic and can take some time to find.

He added that he was able to undertake a 5-10 minute search for no charge. Otherwise, there was an £80 per hour search fee, or anyone could apply for a reader's ticket and search for themselves.

To my relief I was offered the free search and within ten minutes John rang back with the news that the entry for my number was 10th March, 1897, and read: "S Bridgwood & Sons, Anchor Pottery, Longton".

So the mug was not Maling. It is, however, very unusual. First, Queen Victoria, if not exactly amused, does look in celebratory mood. Second, there are eight or so small prints of various sporting activities - including driving a motor car, which may be

the first time on a piece of pottery. Here's hoping!

PS - The Public Record Office at Kew (0208 876 3444) holds more detailed records of registrations.

David adds: Cullen & Son also bought Diamond Jubilee pieces from Maling. There's no factory mark, but the mugs are undoubtedly the "barrel" shape shown in a previous newsletter. These carry the Newcastle city arms and an inscription indicating that they were a gift from the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. I don't recollect seeing a "Norfolk" mug earlier than the 1911 coronation of George V or later than the 1937 coronation of George VI. However, it's always possible that the life of this shape extended beyond those dates. As a reminder, the Norfolk shape is pictured again in this newsletter. It's the middle one of the three Edward VIII mugs. Note the distinctive handle and the foot with its two incised lines.

"Great"
meeting
for NE
members

Saturday, 16th February was the day that the NE part of the Maling Collectors' Society held its first meeting. Just 11 members turned up, but those who did attend were full of enthusiasm and many positive things came out of it.

We discussed the future of the Maling Collectors' Society at the moment and agreed that the format and way it has been run inevitably has to change if it is to survive. Unlike other societies - connected to potteries still in production - Maling has very little news to bring. Also, the recent sad deaths of John Hughes and Marion Robinson reminds us that none of us is getting any younger

and in years to come there will be no Maling workers left to remind us of their days there.

I think that there was a general consensus that perhaps the newsletter should be less frequent and we should all try to write some sort of contribution to any future newsletters. Also mentioned was the fact that we could perhaps just have a meeting of all members once a year instead of two, and on other occasions different areas could meet up. A modest 'honorarium' perhaps should be offered to David and Ruth to show our appreciation of their hard work was

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Put Pen to Paper

Thanks to all members who have jotted down their Maling anecdotes. Here's a selection.

Margaret Hare writes:

When my husband was evacuated to Bude during the War, he bought a small vase for his mother's birthday at a local gift shop. He thinks it cost 6d. It was the 3 1/2 inch version with two gilded lugs, in the primrose pattern (6403) on a dark blue waved background. Some years after this piece had come to us following his mother's death, we spotted a large footed fruit bowl in the same pattern and colours at an auction, and successfully bid £18 for it.

For the first time we compared the maker's name and pattern number, and soon became dedicated Maling hunters. Right from the beginning we only bought what really appealed to us, and many of our pieces have the favourite dark blue background.

Among our favourites are a tall cylindrical vase in the Plum and Orchard pattern (3449) and a pretty scalloped bowl in the peony pattern (6234). However, we are not totally stuck in the Boulemier lustre period, and have a Norman Carling "Flight" vase to prove it. I love the soft colours and the tactile smoothness of this piece.

Most cherished piece - a fruit bowl in the rather rare, I think, Michaelmas daisy pattern (6441)

Most striking piece - a 'Louis' bowl with a flowing design of pink and white trumpet flowers and blue/green leaves (phlox?) on a brilliant dark blue ground (3763).

Most mysterious piece - a small Cetem bowl in a pattern called Old Hylton (2738). Outside it has a Japanese style branching peony design on a finely dotted greenish background. The inside rim has a border of stylised chrysanthemums in pink, blue and yellow. The rest of the inside is finished with a deep petrol-coloured lustre. Anyone seen this design before?

Most fun piece - one of those blue and white jumbo cup and saucer sets!
Best bargain - a large ginger jar sans lid in the daisy pattern (6156) on a striking

orange background, snapped up for £25 at an Antique Fair.

Well, that's the kind of Maling I like personally. Perhaps this article will sting other members of the Society into defence of 'Coleus', 'Harlequin' and the ubiquitous 'Voluta' shapes which I find so unattractive. Come on, then, let's be hearing from you! Meanwhile... good hunting!

David adds: Well that's a start for the rest of you - "cherished", "striking", "fun", "bargain". You all collect Maling, so what are your tales? As for the mystery piece, "Old Hylton" is believed to be a ground, rather than a pattern in its own right.

Jim Turnbull writes:

My first piece of Maling belonged to my Grandmother and on her demise some years ago I "saved" a plate that I wanted to remember her by. I recollect as a small boy that the plate was always in the centre of the mantle shelf above the fireplace in the colliery house in which she and my Grandfather lived. As he was a leek grower, I suspect that it was a prize that my Grandfather had won at the local Blucher leek show.

The plate for many years now has taken pride of place in my own home, on the mantle shelf. It is marked Cetem and I believe its known as Colliers' Derby, the pattern is of a Chinese design. Whatever it is, I like it very much and along with my other pieces is much admired by friends. Although as I have previously said, my collection is small I have purchased pieces via the internet from New Zealand and Canada, I like the idea that I'm bringing pieces of Maling back to where they belong in the North East of England.

David adds: Officially, the pattern was known as "Ming & Chang" but was generally referred to in the factory as Pitman's Derby. I'd assumed this was simply a pun on high-quality Derby china which the colliers couldn't afford. However, Dave Neville reminds me that "Pitman's Derby" is also the local name for the Northumberland Plate horse race run annually at Gosforth Park. And David Masson adds a few details about the different pattern numbers for this design: "7609 is similar to, but more elaborate than 7507, and I have a set of Pitman's Derby

plates (pattern no. 4050 - year 1930) which are more elaborate again, having added one extra building and a more decorative border."



The less elaborate Pitman's Derby - pn 7507



And a more elaborate version - pn 7609

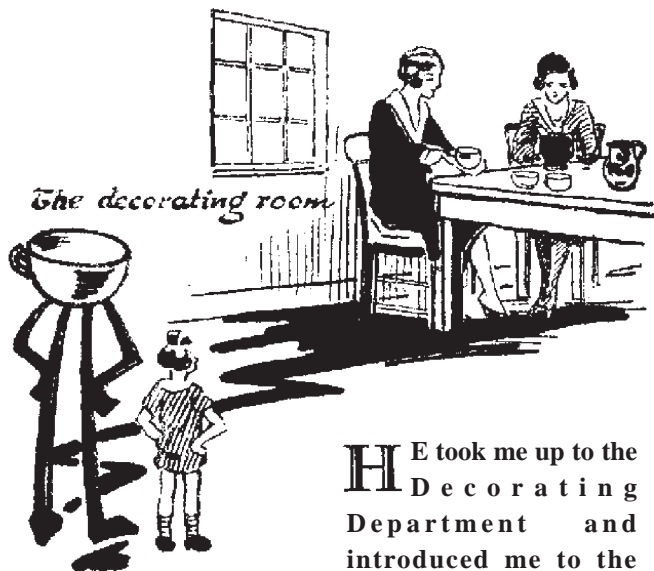
Allan Smith writes:

My interest in Maling only started three years ago and came about whilst browsing in an Antique Centre on the Suffolk coast close to where I live.


Looking back it now seems rather bizarre, as I was born in County Durham and moved to Suffolk when I was 21. I spent quite a lot of my time in the Newcastle area in my teenage years attending Gateshead Technical College and supporting the football club, known then as The Magpies (now referred to as The TOON). I am pleased to report, this is still the team I follow today.

The irony is that in 47 years I had not realised about the existence of the Maling factory! Back to the plot... whilst in that

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HE took me up to the Decorating Department and introduced me to the

manager. There we were surrounded by all sorts of Vases, Bowls, Teapots and all manner of things, in all the colours imaginable, and most of them with such beautiful decorations that I was simply enraptured. It was a real feast of colour. Then he showed me the Engraver, a very busy man, engraving beautiful designs on copper, very similar to those being transferred in the printing shop. I just peeped over his shoulder. He was finishing a "Maling Brand"  on every piece of Maling pottery.

"These girls are all busy Painting, Gilding, and putting the Lustre on to the different pieces," my friend informed me as we walked through another Department...

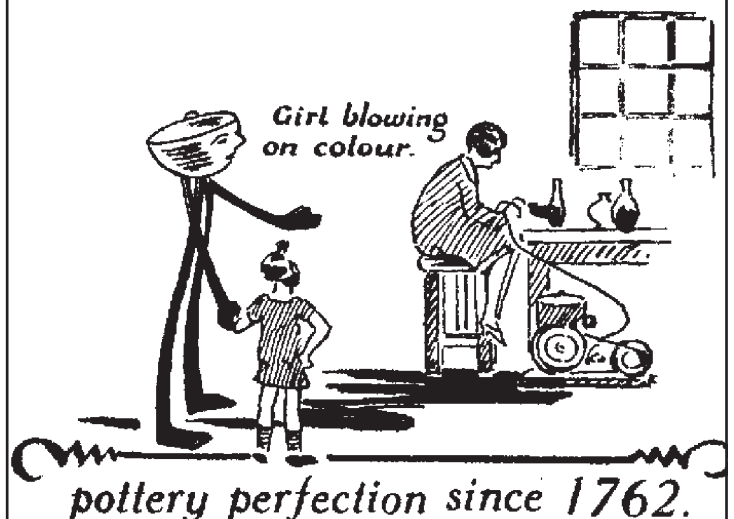
Made by Maling—stands for

"**N**OTICE how dull and lifeless the colours look, and that dark brown mark they are putting round the edges is Gold, though it does not look like it. But when they are fired, all the colours are true and permanent."

"You see these girls blowing colour on to the various pieces - that is called aerographing - isn't it all very interesting?"

"I should like to show you the enamel kiln if you are not too tired," said the Genii. "Please do," I said, and off we went. This time I was shown a much smaller oven... to accommodate very valuable pieces.

I couldn't believe the colours which came out of this oven were the drab looking ones I had previously seen - they looked almost alive with brilliance.



pottery perfection since 1762.

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Antique Centre I spotted a dark blue embossed peony (shape 113 pattern 6504) vase and this looked similar to some items I had retained from my parents' home when they had died. It was only then the penny dropped and when I returned with my purchase I checked the pieces at my home to discover they had the Maling mark on the base.

This was the start of my quest to find more out about this pottery. With a pending birthday my wife tracked down with the help of The Laing Art Gallery a copy of the 'Trademark of Excellence', which has been used endlessly as a reference guide ever since.

Needless to say the Newsletters are keenly awaited, as living in this region of the UK there is little interest and hardly any fellow collectors to discuss Maling with. I fully support the idea of regional groups. However, it is with regret that I am unable to participate in one within a reasonable distance due to a lack of members in the area.

In closing could I ask our more knowledgeable members to submit articles to our secretary as without them how am I and other novices going to get the information and history we search for, which we can then in turn share with those collectors of the future?



It may look like kids' stuff, but the Genii is actually telling you quite a lot about the manufacturing process. Sorry if there's any loss of image quality, but I'm wrestling with a new scanner which has ten times the features of my old one (and I really don't need about nine of them!). - David

Society matters

We're grateful to Barbara Mills for this copy of a Maling receipt from 1899. The purchaser looks to have got 21 plates in different sizes, plus five dishes, all for less than seven shillings. Those were the days!

We have two videos available of Collectors' Days 5 and 6. Day 5 features Doug and Vi Spearman casting and fettling pots, reminiscences from factory engraver Cecil Parker and from a panel of paintresses. Day 6 features a painting demonstration, a description of the manufacturing process (using 1940s photographs of the factory) and a "virtual" tour of the factory. The videos cost £9 each. Please send sterling payment to the usual address.

With the recent deaths of Anne Rowbotham, Marion and John, the pool of people we can ask about problem pots has diminished greatly. It's now more important than ever that members get out cameras and photograph ANYTHING that might be interesting to the Society. If you're sending digitally, please send .jpg's and SMALL ones!



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suggested by a member and this too met with a positive response.

It was decided that the next meeting of the North East group would be a trip to the Harrogate Fair in May. If that went well we discussed possibly meeting up with other areas in Newark in August for a grand 'Maling Hunt'. So, come on all you North East members, put the 18th of May in your diaries for an all day outing.

In true Collector's style we finished the afternoon with a show of pots and chat. Some collectors had brought interesting pieces and as always it was enlightening to listen to people talking about them. I'm always amazed at how much I learn

just listening to others. The 'You've been Framed' incident of the afternoon goes to member who shall remain nameless who thought she had broken a very rare Norman Carling elephant, brought by Steven Moore, when the tusk came off in her hands. 'It just pushes back in' said Steven. I've never seen anyone look so relieved in all my life!

The end of the afternoon came all too soon and I hope people went away a little wiser and looking forward to the next outing.

(Steven adds: "Thanks to Barbara for hosting this great afternoon and for making the delicious cakes and scones... we will definitely come back for more!")



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 Secretary: David Holmes
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Membership:
 £20 p.a. (UK),
 £25 p.a. (overseas)