

MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 17 December 2002

Charlie Allen was our host for the video filming and sends us this article:

People who have visited my pottery at Hoult's Yard, have often asked me if I was an apprentice at the Maling Pottery. I must look older than I feel! I have been at Hoult's Yard since 1993. The site was once the Maling Ford B Pottery. The majority of the buildings date back to 1879. The clock tower and clock-faces, roofs and stone work have been restored over the past few years. It is a fascinating complex, housing an abundance of small businesses occupying about eight acres of land.



I have been trying to remember where I first came across Maling ware. I guess must have been in the early 1980s, researching Tyneside potteries. A few years after this initial interest, I moved to the Heaton area of the city, with Byker just across the rail track. I realised that the site of the Maling pottery was somewhere local, but at the time I didn't know where.

By 1991 I had set up my own pottery, New Castle Delft, in Albion Row Byker - a place which during the 19th century had its fair share of small potteries. I needed some timber and was looking for a local wood yard when I was directed to a company in Hoult's Estate. It was not until I walked under the old railway bridge in to the site that I

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The video is ready!

Months of planning, two days' filming, weeks of editing... and the result? The answer, of course, is our professional video: "Maling Memories". It's undoubtedly the biggest (and most expensive) project the society has ever undertaken and we owe all members a hearty vote of thanks for paying their subs and giving us the funds to do it.

The total cost is several thousand pounds, and other projects have had to take a back seat until we were finished. However, the sad news of the deaths of Marion Robinson and John Hughes at the turn of the year focused our minds and made us determined to get a "proper" job done. The shaky amateur videos we've done in the past are OK as far as they go, but not really something which do justice to Maling ware and its makers.



So, having commandeered Charlie Allen's studio on the pottery site, we brought in seven ex-workers to talk and demonstrate. Our thanks also go out to Charlie and the cast for giving up their time and putting up with all the fiddling about with lights, microphones, cameras and other alien equipment.

Out of all that, we got around five hours' of material down on tape. Then it was a long job to go through it and put together a workable script. (Yes, I know the Hollywood way is to have a script before you start shooting, but we couldn't expect our cast to learn lines and do rehearsals. It was much better to shoot

whatever happened and then pick out the best bits afterwards.)



Within that five hours there were the inevitable re-takes and things that went wrong. It's extremely hard to ask a massive industrial estate to keep quiet because we're trying to film. Again, thanks go to the several bemused workers on Hoult's Estate who found strange people bursting into their workshops and asking: "Excuse me, but I wonder if you could turn that machine off for five minutes?" Then lorries would inevitably drive past just as we started to shoot an exterior, and park up and begin unloading outside the next building we were planning to film.

What we ended up with is a video which runs for about 75 minutes. It starts with a factory tour, with memories from painteress Peggie Stewart and caster Doug Spearman. Peggie's unique recollections of working at Malings both before and after the war pour out as she views a selection of archive photographs.

Then we go into the business of making pots. Doug and Vi Spearman cast pots in genuine Maling moulds and take us through the fettling and on to the biscuit firing. Engraver Cecil Parker then talks about how he created transfer prints from the designs of Mr Boullemier.

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Next comes the decorating - in the capable hands of Margaret Dixon, Joyce Hayley and Jean Hawkins. If you've ever seen them perform at a collectors' day, you'll know how they can bring the factory back to life with their fund of anecdotes.

Finally, Peggie does her own version of the "Antiques Roadshow" as she reminisces while surrounded by some of the best Maling wares we could lay our hands on. (Did you know that the embossed plaques which are so sought after today used to sell for 17/6 in Townsends' store in Newcastle?)

The video was premiered at the collectors' day in October. Members were encouraged to fill in a questionnaire as they watched, and we have made about a dozen "tweaks" based on what they said. How's that for democracy?

**Here's another
Ringtons advertisement.
OK, it's not actually
about Maling ware, but
at least there's a
connection.**



There is one final piece of news on the video front. The families of Marion and John had kindly given permission for us to use any footage we had of them from previous collectors' days. Unfortunately, while I had usable footage of John, I drew a blank with Marion. And yet her former colleagues had also suggested that it would be fitting to include her as part of the cast.

Some of you will know that Marion featured prominently in a Tyne-Tees TV documentary called "Potty About Maling" a few years ago. For copyright reasons, Tyne-Tees had never been able to make that programme available to the public. However, it was probable that, like us, they shot a great deal more than ever appeared on screen. Maybe there would be something of Marion?

I managed to track down the producer, who was kind enough to go into the archives and

search for anything which might be suitable. No luck. Only the programme itself still existed. The camera tapes had been wiped and re-used. When faced with a problem like this, I draw inspiration from my ancestor - a certain Mr Holmes whose reputation for problem-solving may not be unknown to you.



So, I decided to tackle the legal and contracts department. Would they make "Potty About Maling" available to the society for private use? There was much umm-ing. There was much err-ing. There was no doubt much scratching of bewigged legal heads. Finally there was an e-mail. The answer was "yes".

In short, anyone who buys our video of "Maling Memories" will receive free of charge a copy of "Potty About Maling". Consider it a "bonus track" by courtesy of Tyne-Tees. An order form for "Maling Memories" will be in the next newsletter (or mail us if you want to know sooner). - David



RINGTONS CATHEDRAL TEA CADDY (DECORATED TIN)

**HEXAGONAL IN SHAPE,
DECORATED IN BLUE.
Height 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. Width 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ ins.
Containing 1lb. Fine Tea.**

PRICE
3/8
EACH

Oddities & Rarities

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

This column has itself become a bit of a rarity over the past few issues, so we thought we'd revive it with a few pieces which are so rare that there's hardly anything we can say about them!

The embossed plaque isn't factory stamped, but it carries the mark of a known paintress. The trees are similar to those on the "Flying Geese" plaque, and the flowers look typical Maling. Unfortunately, we don't know what this pattern was called or whether it went into production.

The dressing table tray is signed on the back with the initials TM - Theo Maling. The design, with its mounted knights accompanied by squires and trumpeting heralds is reminiscent of the pieces produced for the 1931 Historical Pageant. But the latter pieces are credited to Mr Boulemier Senior. So, which items were produced first and who pinched whose idea?

The covered vase was, we are informed, painted by Anne McBeth, the Scottish Glasgow school artist, on a Cetem blank. Unfortunately, a trawl of the Internet has failed to find any information about this artist. Can anyone supply more information?

The mermaid figurine is by Norman Carling. Although one of the reasons for his recruitment by Malings was to break into this market (already being successfully exploited by companies such as Royal Doulton), few of the Carling prototypes seem to have gone into production. We don't know whether this one did or didn't.

Finally, another "missing" vase - shape number 29 - has turned up. (If you're wondering why this wasn't included in the list of "missing" shapes in the last issue, it's because we had the story but not the pic. Apologies for quality now we can see it.) Julia Irwin reports: "I went to a car boot sale at the local rugby club and walked past the table bearing the vase initially! I must have spotted it out of the corner of my eye, because something made me go back and have a second look. Amongst the egg slicer and various pots and pans there was this little black vase. I gingerly picked it up, thinking

'Foreign' would be stamped on the bottom. I could not believe it was marked 'Cetem' with pattern number 9991 (Aquatic Birds). The young girl said it was £1.00 - so I paid my money and came home very happy."

David adds: It only goes to show that the "missing" patterns and shapes are out there somewhere - and that I must have been at the back of the queue when the luck was handed out. I'm equally envious of the member who brought along to the

collectors' day a plate which had been bought at a car boot sale for £8. It was a superb CT Maling piece from the 1850s and our member was a little surprised to find that it was valued at £150-£200!



Thanks to those of you who entered the quiz in the last newsletter. The answers are:

- 1 What is the name of the Lord Mayor of Newcastle whose portrait appears on the 1929 NE Coast Exhibition plaques? Arthur Lambert (His surname was also mentioned by Peggie in her first article on life “up the yard” in newsletter 14.)
- 2 Whose address in Sefton Avenue, Heaton, was probably the inspiration for the name of the Sefton floating bowl? Harry Toft (Apologies to members who have earlier editions of TMOE, as I belatedly realise that this information only appears in the revised version. - David)
- 3 With which pottery did LG Boullemier serve his apprenticeship? Wood & Sons (Where he had worked with Frederick and Charlotte Rhead.)
- 4 Who was housekeeper to CT Maling (not “the grand old man”, but his son who was born in 1863?) Mrs Graham (Whose pet dog was the model for Norman Carling’s figurine known as “Snip”).

THE WINNERS ARE:

Competition A - Ann Walker
Competition B - Ken Wardle



This photograph (by courtesy of the South Hylton Local History Society) shows the “Rapid” moored alongside Grimshaw’s Cement Works at North Hylton, Sunderland, in 1905. Of course, this was previously the site of the first Maling pottery. Our thanks to Keith Cockerill for discovering another bit of Maling memorabilia.

Society Matters

We apologise for bringing you a shorter newsletter. To hit the Christmas posting deadlines, this one often has to be put together before there’s quite enough copy to fill the usual eight pages. Normal service will be resumed when I have recharged my batteries after the skiing season.

On the upside, collectors’ day 7 drew around three dozen members from as far afield as Glasgow and Bristol to our venue in Yorkshire. Without a few last-minute cancellations we would have numbered well over forty. Obviously, the idea of having the occasional day away from the North East seems to be popular. If you want to be a regional representative and do the local things that the three of us can’t, please let us know.

Now the video is done, there will be a major upgrade to the website (indeed, it may be in place by the time you receive this newsletter). I’m hoping to put all past newsletters on there in downloadable .pdf format so that our achievements to date can be seen.

DMG Fairs have again given us 2-for-1 access to their major fairs, and we hope many of you will take advantage of their generosity. - David

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realised that I had found the former Ford B Pottery. I was so excited and could not wait to go through the gate and have a good look around.

My first visit was a bit of a shock. I found the place full of the meanest looking gangsters and large black shiny limos. It turned out later that they were actors filming an episode of “Spender”. *(For the benefit of overseas readers, I should point out that, despite the title and the involvement of “gangsters”, this is not a programme about antique dealers but a cops & robbers show which was quite popular back then. - David)* The site with its granite-set roads and collection of Victorian buildings has been used a few times for film locations over the years.

I eventually outgrew my workshop at Albion Row and was looking for suitable premises. I thought: “here’s an opportunity to move to the Maling site at Hoults Yard”. I ‘phoned their office to make a few enquires, “What sort of business are you in Mr Allen?”. “Pottery” I replied. “That’s interesting, this place used to be a pottery”. “Yes I know, that’s why I would love to work there”. That’s how I ended up making pottery at the former Maling Ford B Pottery, exactly 30 years after its closure. I was thrilled to be working on this site, and over the years it has been my pleasure to meet the Maling workers and members of the Maling Collectors’ Society.



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Chairman: Steven Moore
Secretary: David Holmes
Patrons: Roger Allan,
Tony Boullemier, Fred Hoults,
Caroline Kirkhope,
Dr John Maling

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