

# MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 31 June 2006

## Maling's cameo role in crystal

**A chance viewing of a BBC "Flog It!" programme leads to new information about the link between the Maling and Ford families.**

We know from TMOE that CT Maling married Mary Ford, the daughter of an Edinburgh glass manufacturer. So perhaps I should have been paying more attention when "Flog It!" came from Edinburgh and featured an item on Holyrood glass.

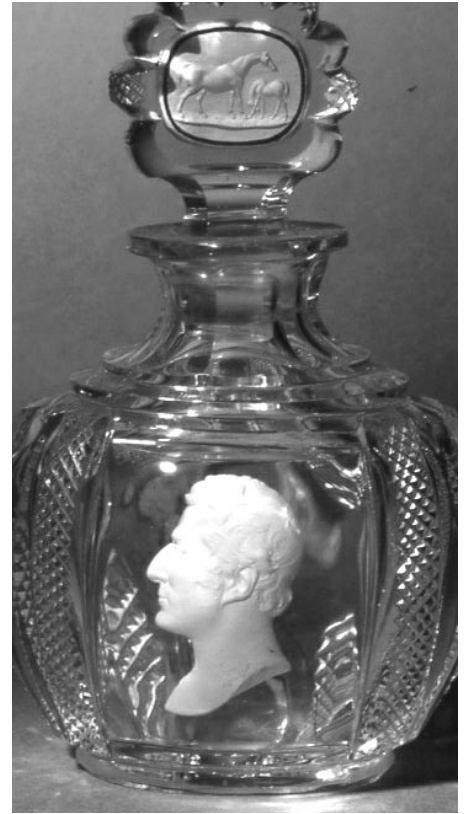
But the name didn't mean anything to me and the items being shown were of little more than passing interest. Until, that is, the interviewee produced a drinking glass with an inset ceramic cameo and mentioned that these cameos had been made by various factories including Maling.

The radar sparked into life and I watched closely for further information. The closing scene was shot in the family burial plot of the glasswork's owners, and revealed what I had missed earlier. The owners of Holyrood were the Ford family.

Steven put me in touch with his contacts at the BBC. They identified the speaker as Beverley Casebow from the Museum of Edinburgh, and gave me a 'phone number. The game was afoot, as my illustrious ancestor used to remark.

Beverley replied: I've managed to locate a letter in the Ford Ranken archive which refers to the Maling connection. The letter was written to Varty Smith

*Continued on page 4*



*Above: The Duke of Wellington. Page 4: Sir Walter Raleigh. But are either of them Maling?*



## In memory of Cecil

**We were saddened to hear of the death, in January, of Cecil Parker, Maling's copper plate engraver from 1926 to 1946. After leaving the pottery, he joined his great friend Norman Carling (Maling's former modeller) in a company which manufactured rubber toys and plaster novelty items such as the tankards which have featured in previous newsletters because of their close connection with Maling.**

At the age of ninety, Cecil was still game enough to turn up for the filming of our "Maling Memories" video. He described in detail the rigours of the engraving process - hunched for hours each day over a copper plate (which might take several weeks to complete).

Despite the muscle pains and eye strain, it was obvious that Cecil gained great

satisfaction from his work and took immense pride in it. Like all of us, he regretted the fact that so much of his work (and that of earlier engravers) had been sold off for their scrap metal value when the pottery closed.

It was a pleasure to be able to show him one copper plate (sadly, not from his hand) which had somehow escaped this fate. After poring over it intently, his enthusiasm for the engraver's craft showed through in the single comment: "Wonderful!"

I am sure that members will miss the knowledge and humorous anecdotes which he brought to our collectors' days. We apologise to his family for the fact that word reached us too late to include a tribute in the March newsletter.

*- David*

# SCHOOL SAMPLER STARTS A QUEST

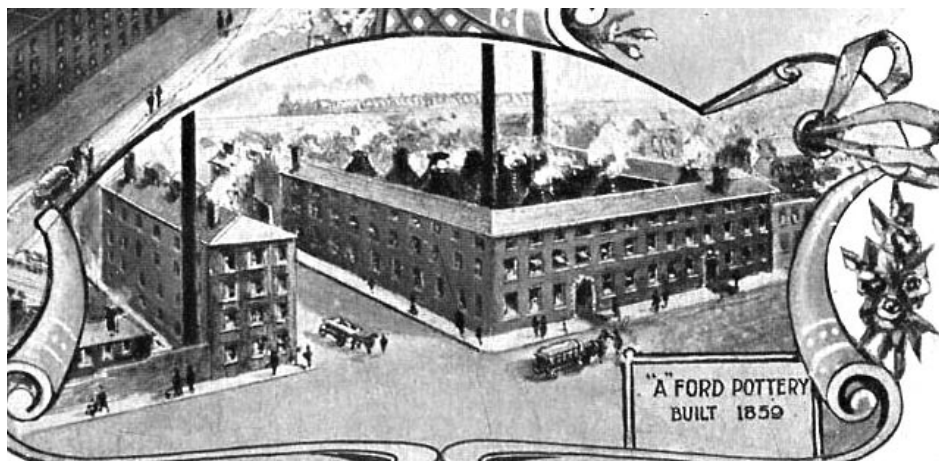
**Mike Doubleday contacted us via the website to say: “I recently bought a Victorian needlework sampler which is undated, but could be any date from mid C19th to early C20th. The girl who worked it, Frances Wright, signed herself as a pupil of the Ford Pottery School. The only Ford Pottery I can find is the one which was operated in Newcastle during the latter half of the C19th by Malings. I’d be particularly interested to know the dates that the school was operating.**

“I’ve found a Frances E Wright, aged 12, on the 1881 census and the family lived in Byker, so I’m hoping that she’s the one. The dates would seem to fit and there are no other girls of that name in the area.

“She was still in Newcastle, unmarried, in 1901 and her occupation then was shown as a dressmaker, so perhaps her needlework training at school ended up being put to good use. That said, if the school lasted into the C20th I could be on the wrong track altogether.

“Her father, James, is shown to be a corn miller in the census but she has an older brother who is shown simply as a clerk, so he might have been at the pottery. I’ve looked up and down Hume Street where they lived (the online census gives that useful facility) and a number of the Wrights’ near neighbours are indeed potters. So at least I know that I’m in the correct geographical area.

*David adds:* excellent work, Mike. The two Ford Potteries were, indeed, Maling’s and named in honour of CT Maling’s wife, Mary Ford. We have no exact dates for the school. However, TMOE states: “CT Maling was said to have been a good employer and by the time the Ford B pottery opened (1878) he had already established a chapel and school for the benefit of his employees.” A photo of a sampler dated 1896 is



included in the book. So the estimate of date is about right. But, does anyone have any further information on the school and its dates, or even on the Wright family?

We can, at least, identify the location of the school as an 1889 account of industries in and around Newcastle has this description of the Ford A Pottery:

“The Old Ford Pottery comprises a long range of buildings reaching to a height of three storeys, and consisting of warehouses and offices, the throwing or moulding shops and kilns being situated to the rear of these premises. On the opposite side of the road are an additional range of warehouses, five storeys in height, the other floors of which have been devoted to the commendable purpose of a school for the children of the workmen.”

In my view it’s quite likely that the school took in other local children to see if any of them showed sufficient artistic or other qualities to make them suitable for employment in the potteries.

The school building would have been the one to the left of the pic. Although the



above account says 5 storeys, it only appears to have 4. I don’t know if some of the things on the roof are attic windows, or a basement could account for the missing storey. The A pottery closed in 1926, but I don’t know if the school went before that.

The last word goes to Mike... “I was just thinking that when Frances Wright was working on her piece of needlework back in the 1880s she’d have been amazed to learn that a century later people would be in correspondence via laptops and the internet concerning who she was and where she lived!”

## Check your bottoms!



**If a pot says “CTM” and “Newcastle” on the bottom, you might reasonably expect it to be Maling... or would you? One recent eBay vendor jumped to this obvious, but wrong, conclusion.**

The CTM is explained as “Ceramic Tableware Marketing”, while the Newcastle is clearly identified as the one in Staffordshire. There’s a lesson for us all here. Checking and double-checking is the only way to separate fact from fiction

# A tale of cock and (old) bull

**Simon Moss, an expert on the history of Gilbert and Sullivan, has unearthed the following rarity. He writes on his website:**

This earthenware jug, hand-painted with scenes from *The Yeomen of the Guard* and finished with a pearly lustre glaze, carries no maker's name on the base. I have however been able to establish beyond reasonable doubt that it is the work of one of the most important ceramic designers of the 20th century, and is almost certainly unique.

The opera's title and subtitle appear on front and back of the jug, while on either side is a scene from *Yeomen*. Interestingly both sides feature Shadbolt, the reason for this becoming clear during my research, as I will show. Around the rim is, "A Tale of Cock & Bull / Gilbert & Sullivan / 1888" (the date of the opera's first performance). While the scenes are under the glaze, the red enamel of the lettering is on-glaze. The royal crest under the lip appears at first sight to have little relevance, but again may be explained.

The starting point of my research was the distinctive turquoise background and pearly lustre glaze, both typical of the 1930s output of the Maling factory in Newcastle. Chief designer at Maling at this period was Lucien Boullemier, and both the artist's grandson and Steven Moore have confirmed that the jug is most likely his work.

It is known that Boullemier enjoyed decorating ware outside of his working hours, as gifts for friends. Even more importantly, he was a gifted amateur performer with various Gilbert & Sullivan Societies. Indeed, Lucien played Shadbolt at least twice, and surely this explains the overemphasis on Shadbolt as a character on the jug. (A self-portrait of him as Shadbolt is still in existence, and a detail of this is shown here.)

Given his many interests, it is a wonder that Boullemier had time for Gilbert and Sullivan, but it appears that his love of performing became more important as he got older. In February 1923 he took the part of Don Alhambra in the North Staffordshire Amateur Operatic Society production of *The Gondoliers* at short notice. According to two reviews from the *Stoke Sentinel*, reproduced on the Gilbert and Sullivan Archive webpages, he was a resounding success as the Grand Inquisitor.

This production was at the Grand Theatre in Hanley (one of the Staffordshire pottery towns), but it is known that Boullemier played Shadbolt in *The Yeomen of the Guard* at the Theatre Royal in the same town some time between 1924 and 1928. (Could the name of the theatre be the reason for the inclusion of a royal crest on the lip of the jug?). He also played Squire Western in *Tom Jones* at Hanley in 1924, and while working at Maling took the role of Shadbolt again, this time at the Empire Theatre in Chester-le-Street, County Durham in 1928.

It is highly likely then, that this jug was decorated by Lucien Boullemier at home, as a gift for a friend. It is beyond belief that he made one for each of the principals in the opera, as the amount of work involved would have been immense. I suspect that it may have been a gift for the director, or for a family member, and is therefore unique.

It is impossible at this stage to say whether the piece was fired at Soho, Maling, New Hall, or another of the factories where Boullemier was employed. The shape of the piece (it is called a "Dutch" jug) is a traditional one, dating back before the C19th, and variations on this shape would have been produced by most of the major factories.

At Maling the shape is called "Clayton", but it should have a projecting spur on the handle which is absent from this example. However, it is extremely likely that Boullemier would have taken a blank from the design studio, so there is no reason why the jug would have to be a shape actually used in production at Maling. Maybe this was a trial shape, produced as an experiment to see how the Clayton shape would look after removal of the spur?

Exactly when and where this jug was produced could be the subject of further research. However, it remains a fascinating piece of G&S memorabilia which, while relating to an amateur performance, was created by one of the top ceramic designers of his day. Whereas his designs were produced by the thousand in printed versions, this is a piece created by his own hand.

*David adds:* "Tell a tale of cock and bull..." is the opening of a chorus line from one of Shadbolt's songs in *Yeomen*. By including it on the jug, LEB no doubt enjoyed a subtle reference to his nickname of "The Old Bull" within Maling.



## Correction

We apologise for an error which crept into newsletter 30 (March 2006). On page 4, the date of LE Boullemier's FA Cup goal was 1898 not 1928. (Embarrassing that this should appear in an article about corrections. But that's life!)

Continued from page 1

(a writer and collector) by one of the Ford Ranken family in November 1914. Varty Smith was doing some research about the glass works, and there are a series of letters giving details of different aspects of the glassmaking process. This particular letter states:

*“These medallions are of china clay. We had them at one time made by Messrs. Josiah Wedgwood & Sons. The body of clay made by Wedgwood is very close, and they found a great many difficulties in getting the molten glass to adhere. We also had them made in earthenware by our relatives, Messrs. Maling & Sons, Ford Potteries, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and even by a small practical potter in Prestonpans - nine miles distant from this city - and we found the Prestonpans ones as successful as any.”*

Beverley adds that the technical term for this marriage of pottery and glass is a “cameo incrustation” and says: “We have several boxes of loose cameos in the museum, some of which are signed by Wedgwood, but many others are unsigned. Unfortunately, we do not know which, if any, of these were produced by Maling.”

*If anyone can throw further light on this bit of Maling history, please let us know.*



# Rebuilding the past

**A couple more stories about buildings with Maling connections... To start, we thank local historian Keith Cockerill for this photograph of a model of the first Maling pottery. The pottery was established in 1762 at North Hylton and the model is now in the Sunderland Museum.**



Next, the Hexham Hydro... A soup bowl, manufactured by Dunn and Bennett of Burslem and made for use in the Hydro, recently tuned up on eBay. So why does it feature in a Maling newsletter? David Johnson explains.

*“In 1852, Westfield House was built for Mr Maling. However, the Maling family sold the house in 1877 to a company who decided to build a Hydropathic Hotel. The hotel opened in 1878. It provided Turkish Baths, a pool and later, in 1892, the Winter Garden with fountains and exotic plants was added. The building continued to be used as a hotel up to the 2nd World War when it became a hospital.”*



**MALING**  
*The Maling Collectors Society*  
NEWCASTLE ON TYNE  
PO Box 1762  
North Shields  
NE30 4YJ

[www.maling-pottery.org.uk](http://www.maling-pottery.org.uk)

Secretary: David Holmes  
Patrons: Roger Allan,  
Tony Boulemier, Fred Hoult, Caroline  
Kirkhope, Heather Maling  
Dr John Maling,  
Steven Moore  
Joining fee: £20 (UK); £25 (overseas)  
Includes FREE Maling catalogue  
Renewals: £10 p.a. (worldwide)