

# MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 32 September 2006

## With thanks to RC Bell

David writes: I was recently lucky enough to find a copy of the book "Tyneside Pottery by RC Bell (Studio Vista, 1971). The book contains many illustrations which have probably not been seen by present-day Maling collectors, so I feel it appropriate to bring them to your attention.

Unfortunately we haven't been able to establish contact with either author or publisher to gain permission for reproduction. However, I do salute the author of what was (in all probability) the first work to celebrate Maling wares. And UK law does allow the use of copyright material for educational purposes.

There were a few questions I would have been glad to have clarification on, and I have flagged them up in the various comments I make on the extracts from the book. Maybe one of you will have an answer.

The society has always had an academic, rather than a financial focus. In other words, we prefer to know where a piece was made, and by whom, rather than hazard a guess at what the value might be. (See page 3 for examples of this sort of guesswork.) And so we kick off with another history lesson.

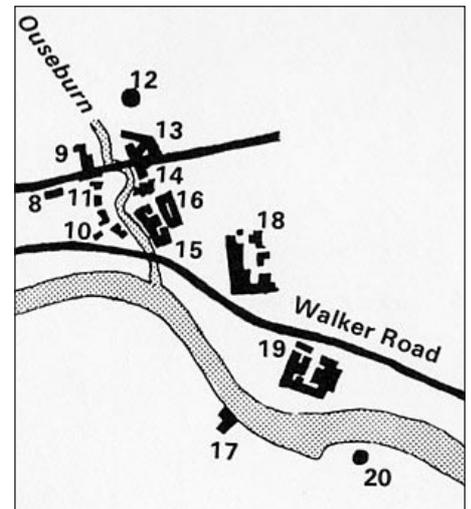
The above illustration from "Tyneside Pottery" shows a lithograph of a painting



by JW Carmichael (in the Laing Art Gallery). It depicts the Ouseburn viaduct, and a pottery chimney can just be made out beyond the large arch on the left. In a subsequent book published by the Tyne and Wear Museums Service, the author speculated that this may be Robert Maling's pottery.

"Tyneside Pottery" also includes a map showing... well what did you expect, garden centres? Number 15 is listed as the Ouseburn Bridge Pottery, 16 the Ford A Pottery, and 18 the Ford B Pottery. It seems strange that the A Pottery, which had a considerably higher output than its predecessor, doesn't appear to be physically bigger.

For other books on Maling, please check the Links page of our website.



## Meeting is unlikely this year

I regret to say that, because of ill health, I have been unable to organize a 2006 collectors' day. Although you are never supposed to see the "behind the scenes" work, Ruth and I have usually allowed ourselves around three months to get all the arrangements in place. As I am writing this in early August, you will see that time is against us.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE. PLEASE PAY NOW**

# ANOTHER DAY ON THE JOB

Raiding the RC Bell book again, we come up with a selection of photos showing the manufacturing process. They're not laid out here in any particular order. If you want to know how raw materials were turned into fine pots, then buy our "Maling Memories" DVD. Captions have been taken from the book. No dates were given for any of these photos.



*In the foreground a load is being slipped into the hardening-on kiln. In the centre background is the drawing end of a Birlec glost oven. Both were fired electrically.*



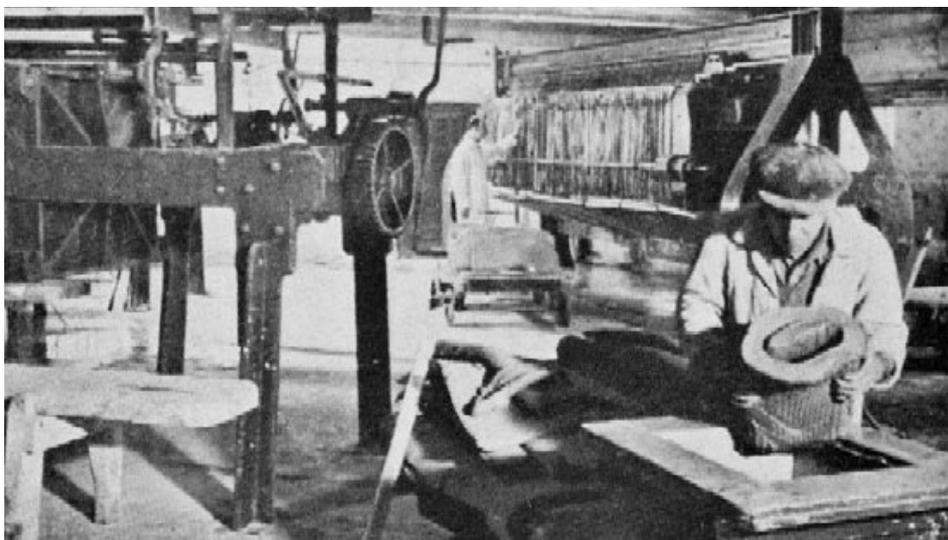
*Cutting mug handles at Ford B pottery.*



*Mugs being made for the armed forces.*



*Flinging a ball of spread clay onto a 10 inch plate mould.*



*The filter press room on the first floor of the slip house. In the background is a Manor press, and in the foreground a man drops clay down a chute to the de-airing pug below.*

# Real pots - with fake story

**Money, sex, violence? Sounds like a Hollywood movie. Actually, RC Bell's "Tyneside Pottery" is talking about something a little more mundane. I quote...**

The Willow pattern was wholly western in concept, though based on designs found on Chinese blue and white porcelain. Possibly to help sales, a romantic legend was invented, taken from the poem "Lord Ullin's Daughter", the tragic ending being changed to a happy one.

Once upon a time a Chinese mandarin of high degree lived in a pagoda behind a strong fence and under the branches of a large apple tree. Nearby a weeping willow hung over the river. This nobleman had a very beautiful daughter named Kong-Shee, whom he had promised in marriage to an old but wealthy merchant, Tan-Jin.

The girl, however, had fallen in love with her father's secretary, Chang, whom she met in secret and to whom she had sworn eternal fidelity. When her father discovered these meetings, he dismissed Chang from his service and threatened him with a lingering death, while he imprisoned his erring daughter in her room overhanging the river until she should promise to forget her lover and marry the elderly merchant.

As the arrangements for the marriage were hurried on, Kong-Shee wept in the solitude of her prison. One day half a coconut shell came floating past her



window bearing a love letter from Chang. He mourned their cruel fate and declared that life without her was worthless, and that if she married another he would commit suicide.

In her reply Kong-Shee proclaimed her devotion and told her lover that he must gather the fruit he coveted (herself) when the willow blossom was dropping on the bough. This hint gave him the approximate date of the wedding.

The wedding-day arrived, and with it Chang, an interloper among the numerous guests. Chang saw his sweetheart and persuaded her to elope with him; but the girl's absence was discovered at once, and as the pair were crossing the bridge her father almost caught them. These are the three figures on the bridge; Kong-Shee is carrying a distaff, emblem of her virginity; Chang a box containing her jewels; and the pursuing father a whip.

The lovers found a temporary hiding place in the small house at the end of the bridge, and signaled to the little boat on the water

to take them to Chang's home in the upper portion of the design; but the angry father noticed them and knocked down the door, intending to beat them to death with his whip.

At this moment of danger, the gods intervened to save the lovers, and changed them into turtle doves, which can be seen flying in company from the paternal vengeance. They lived happily ever after.

David adds: *There are many variations on "Willow" (documented in detail in the Bell books). Sometimes there are only two figures on the bridge. Sometimes there isn't a bridge at all. In the end, it was only a made-up story, as the book rightly notes.*



## Is the price right?

**It's good to see Maling cropping up on the various TV antiques programmes. Perhaps better that the experts now seem to be able to pronounce the name correctly and even give decent information and reasonable valuations.**

Sadly, the antiques trade seems to be in the doldrums at the moment and values aren't particularly high, except for the rarer pieces. (By the way, is anyone else as annoyed as I am at the ridiculous overuse of the word "rare" on eBay - and the other exaggerated claims? You and I know that 1960s Voluta is not rare, nor can it be dated as "art deco".)

Anyway, here are a couple of pieces which turned up recently on the BBC's "Cash in

the Attic" show. The Blossom vase did pretty well to come in at 38 pounds. But that's not much different from what you'd have paid ten years ago. You'd have found it cheaper on the net.

The Chelsea bowl may look a bit of a steal at 45 pounds, but it had damage. In both cases, the experts had a good stab at the valuation, but the market just wasn't in agreement.

Good Maling can still command four-figure prices. But my opinion is that you should buy something because you like it, and not as a potential nest egg for the future. Like stocks and shares, the value may go up or down. - David



## A “Storm” in a stirrup cup

This is a rare unmarked example of a Maling fox head stirrup cup. The connection between the stirrup cup, C T Maling and the Haydon Bridge Hunt has previously been documented, (see newsletters 24 and 25) but this cheeky chap is rather special. According to old factory production records he was produced in 1931, as part of a lemonade set (consisting of six stirrup cups and a matching jug) and formed part of an export order to Australia. Apparently the fox was creating quite a storm down under (appropriately, “Storm” is the pattern found on this stirrup cup) and considered to be quite a pest.

By David Johnson of Tyne & Wear.

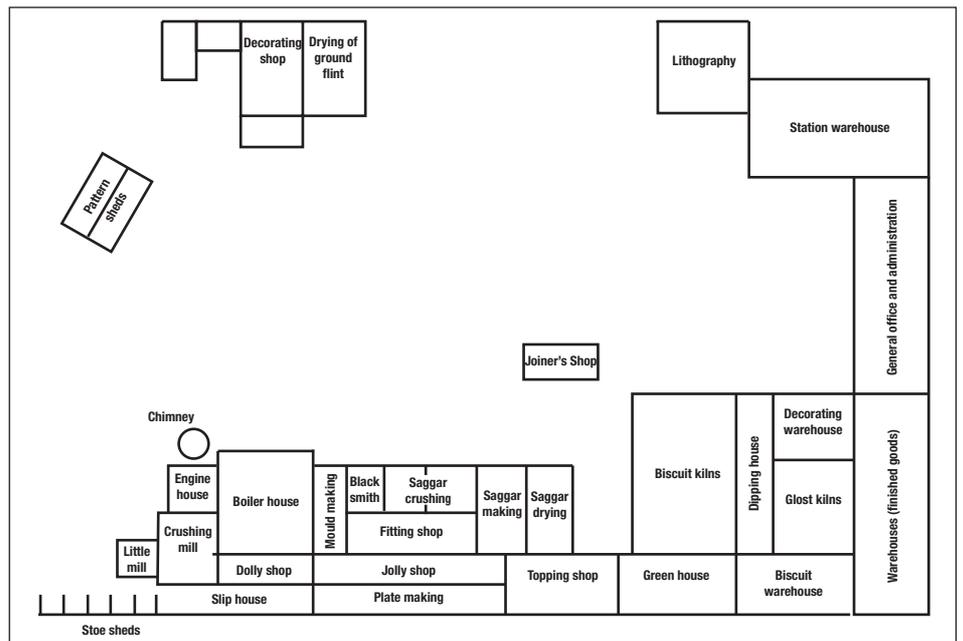
  
**The Maling Collectors Society**  
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[www.maling-pottery.org.uk](http://www.maling-pottery.org.uk)

Secretary: David Holmes  
 Patrons: Roger Allan,  
 Tony Boullemier, 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)

# A perplexing plan



**This illustration from “Tyneside Pottery” purports to show the layout of the Maling site when it was taken over by Hoult in the 1940s. Some of the buildings have been squeezed together and should be separated by outdoor passages or alleyways. The aerial view of the pottery in the advertisement should give you a better view of what was where.**

A more serious concern is the location of the joiners’ shop in the illustration. It appears to be sited slap in the middle of the

inbound railway lines which brought the coal to fire the biscuit kilns. We are inclined to think that it was at the other side of the yard next to the building labeled “Lithography”.

A strange omission is the clock tower which still sits in the middle of the yard. It also housed the manager’s office which, because of its all-round view, meant that examples of slacking or shirking by the workers could quickly be spotted and stamped on.

