

MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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There's a hole in my ashtray

A reader asks why his 1930s block ashtray has a hole in the side. (You can see it just above the centre of the parrot's back.) The answer is to stop it exploding. No, not in your home - in the kiln.

Those of you who have seen our "Maling Memories" programme* will be familiar with the casting process. Liquid clay (or "slip") is poured into a plaster of paris mould until the mould is as full as your favourite pint glass.

The clay begins to thicken from the outside where the plaster of paris is absorbing the moisture. The central mass of slip remains liquid. After a while, the mould can be emptied, leaving a layer of clay of the desired thickness adhering to the inside.

That's fine for jugs or vases, where there's a big hole in the top to pour the clay in and out. But pieces like the ashtray have a solid outer skin of clay with air trapped inside it. If the piece were to go to the kiln in this state, the laws of physics would kick in.

As the temperature rises, the air inside the piece tries to expand. Meanwhile the clay is losing moisture and trying to contract.

Result: "pop!". So a little hole is necessary to let the air escape.

You can see this air vent on other pieces - notably the model of the Castle Keep made for the 1929 NE Coast Exhibition. Look closely at the turrets on the top. One of them has an identical tiny hole in its centre.

These holes have nothing to do with the pouring away of excess slip. They are far too small. Pieces like these were made in two or more sections which were joined together during the fettling process before the piece went to the kiln.

There is some confirmation in the account of the manufacturing process, written by former General Manager Les Dixon. He notes: "For intricate shapes, a set of moulds may have been made in as many as ten sections". Whether this means that the moulds themselves were in up to ten sections, or the pots were put together from ten separate castings, isn't quite clear.

However, Steven is able to offer some clarification. He writes: "A mould for a hollow item, say a vase or a jug, will normally have three sections - i.e. a bottom and two 'sides'.



However if the shape is more complex, e.g. with handles, it may require separate sections within the mould. The more complex the shape the more complex the making.

"Something such as a figure may have possibly 8 to 10 sections. Teapots can have separate moulds for handles and spouts, as well as covers, knobs and strainers. The skill of a designer and modeller is to make a product that uses as few mould pieces as possible and to hide the mould lines to save time during fettling."

* *Maling Memories* is now available exclusively on DVD. See page 4 for details.

Maling: in memoriam

David Johnson writes: This is not a place for the faint hearted, nor is it the place for anyone of a nervous disposition, and the thought of meandering through an overgrown Victorian Jesmond Old Cemetery in Newcastle upon Tyne, made me err on the side of caution, even in the name of research.

Was this the reason why I eventually decided to stay back with the living in the comfort of my own home and send a friend instead, on what should have been my mission? Most certainly not! The simple fact of the matter is that he is a much better photographer than I am - well, this is the reason that I'm giving and I'm sticking with it!

The cemetery comprises three sections - the North West, the South West and the East. It is to the North West section that my friend has braved the brambles, bushes and anything else that he may have encountered along the way. Here lies 'The Governor', as he was known - Christopher Thompson Maling (1824 - 1901) - with his family. The inscribed memorial stone to the family resting place reads as follows:

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IN MEMORY OF ROBERT MALING WHO DIED 16TH JANUARY 1863 AGED 83 YEARS. ELEANOR WIFE OF THE ABOVE DIED 19TH SEPTEMBER 1868 AGED 86 YEARS.

MARY WIFE OF CHRISTOPHER THOMPSON MALING DIED MAY 16TH 1882.

BLANCHE ADELAIDE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE DIED MARCH 5TH 1887. CHRISTOPHER THOMPSON MALING SON OF ROBERT & ELEANOR MALING DIED JULY 20TH 1901 AGED 77 YEARS.

ELEANOR MALING DAUGHTER OF ROBERT & ELEANOR MALING DIED MAY 1ST 1898 AGED 89 YEARS. ALSO ELIZABETH MALING THIRD DAUGHTER OF ROBERT & ELEANOR MALING WHO DIED APRIL 5TH 1913 AGED 99 YEARS.

ANNE, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF ROBERT & ELEANOR MALING DIED OCTOBER 1875. JOHN, ELDEST SON DIED APRIL 1877. MARY, YOUNGEST DAUGHTER DIED MARCH 1883.

For those interested in where Robert and his son Christopher figure within the history of Maling read on. The family firm was founded in 1762 on the banks of the river Wear at North Hylton and was then called The 'Hylton Pot' Works.

It would appear to have been Robert Maling (1781 - 1863) who initiated the pottery's move, after over 50 years on Wearside to Tyneside's Ouseburn valley. Robert Maling's son Christopher Thompson Maling, 'The Governor', would be the one responsible for taking the business from a small pottery into the largest pottery in Britain and possibly the world.

In 1857 he was to marry Mary Ford, the daughter of an Edinburgh glassmaker John Ford, and with her generous dowry was able to build a new Ouseburn factory known as the Ford Pottery of Ford Street after Mrs. Maling's maiden name. Much success came through the pottery being fully equipped with the latest mechanisation.

By 1878 Christopher Thompson Maling invested a large proportion of the Maling fortune in a new pottery, the Ford 'B' pottery, which was built about half a mile away along Walker Road. This huge pottery dwarfed the nearby Ford Pottery (now renamed the Ford 'A' pottery) and was completely self-contained, employing some 1000 people. Ford 'A' closed in 1926 and the larger Ford 'B' survived until 1963.

By David Johnson of Tyne & Wear with sincere thanks to his friend David Hardy for his bravery and photography.

Here's a price to ponder

C. T. MALING & SONS, FORD POTTERIES, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

DINNER SERVICES				Without Gold	Gold Edge	Gold Edge and 3 Gilt Lines.
54 pieces	-	-	-	16/1	23/2	25/3
70 "	-	-	-	25/1	34/8	37/6
26 "	-	-	-	8/6	12/-	13/-
61 " Scotch	-	-	-	19/3	26/5	28/9
77 " "	-	-	-	25/4	34/10	37/9
26 " "	-	-	-	8/4	11/7	12/9

This extract from a Maling price list doesn't look much, but it actually tells us quite a lot. Unfortunately, it isn't dated, but the owner hazards a guess at between 1910 and 1920.

The first thing it tells us, of course, is the price of Maling in those far-off days. Wouldn't you like to find a dinner service for less than a pound today?

The list also explains why we have to answer: "Don't know" to members who ask: "How many pieces should my dinner service/toilet set have?". Here you have dinner services ranging from 26 to 77 pieces. You bought as much, or as little, as you wanted.

(As an aside, it's interesting to speculate on the fact that one of those numbers is odd and the other even. You might have expected the larger services to be simple multiples of the number of pieces in the smallest service. Obviously, that's not the case.)

The same catalogue has a list of toilet sets available with 5 or 6 pieces. At a guess, the 5 pieces would have been water jug, basin, soap dish, toothbrush holder and chamber pot. Possibly the 6th item was a second chamber pot for the ultimate in "his" and "hers" convenience. Or maybe it was a child's chamber pot. We don't know.

Consider, too, the range of prices. Maling were astute enough to realize that different people have different disposable incomes. So they offered the same basic pattern in "plain", with gilt and with gilt plus extra embellishment. If you've gone to the trouble of creating a new pattern, it makes sense to sell it to the widest possible market.

As you can see, even a piece of paper as simple as this one teaches us quite a lot and leads us into new avenues of exploration.

Pixie is pinned down

Imperpol have engaged in a pan-global search to find the origin of the "pixie" pattern which appeared in Newsletter 33.

From New Zealand, Agent Jean Brideson reports: "I think it is somehow connected with the Australian children's classics featuring 'The Gum Nut Babies', written and illustrated by May Gibbs." Meanwhile, Agent Eric Hawkins in the UK writes: "One candidate is Arthur Rackham. He is the right sort of time, drew caps, feathers, big ears and lots of imp-like figures."

I, too, had my theories. But we are all put right by Steven who writes: "It is part of a series of lithographs designed by Harry Clifford Toft circa 1910, based on drawings by Richard Dadd the Victorian illustrator and artist."



I have to confess that I hadn't associated such a "frivolous" design with Toft - the man who masterminded the rather sombre range of black ground Cetem wares. The palette of greens used on the leaves had led me to a much later date of circa 1930. But nobody's perfect!

The Army & Navy salute the Queen

You spot a piece which looks like Maling and feels like Maling - but it isn't factory marked. Do you risk buying it in the hope that you can establish the provenance later? That was a problem I faced some ten years ago with this Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee mug.

According to the base, it was manufactured for the Army and Navy Co-operative Society. Research could turn up a fair amount of information about the store, but no firm evidence that they bought from Maling.

The Army and Navy Co-operative Society Ltd was formed in 1871 by a group of army and navy officers. It was their intention to supply "articles of domestic consumption and general use to its members at the lowest numerative rates". The first store opened on 15 February 1872 at Victoria Street, London.

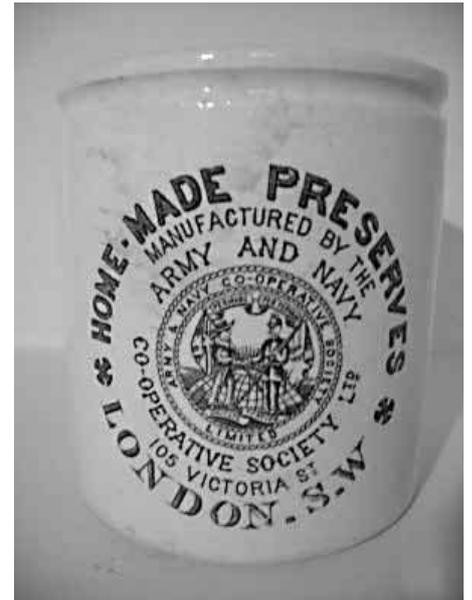
By the end of the century the Society was issuing an enormous annual illustrated price list, had introduced telephone

ordering and had reduced mail order prices. In 1934 the company's official name became the Army and Navy Store Ltd and in 1973 Army and Navy Stores was taken over by House of Fraser. (Taken from Michael Moss and Alison Turton, "A Legend of Retailing, House of Fraser", Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1989.)

So I lived on in the hope of finding a marked piece which would tie the two threads of this story together. Finally, at the end of last year, a preserve pot turned up on eBay. It had the Co-op logo on the front and a typical impressed Maling mark on the base.

I reckoned that, if I could pick it up for a fiver, it would be all the proof I needed. When the price rose above 30 GBP, I decided to bail out and make do with the photograph. I like my Maling but not at that sort of price!

So that's another case which can be laid to rest.



Which C.T.M. do you mean?



We keep making reference to CT Maling, and some readers wonder why the dates of this man's achievements seem spread implausively over almost two centuries. Well, we're not quite that sloppy. The answer is that there were four CT Malings involved with the pottery over the generations. They were ...

CT Maling (1741-1810). The son of William Maling, who is credited as having founded the pottery in 1762. Christopher I (if we may adopt the convention of royal nomenclature) took over the running of the business, together with his brother John (1746-1823), when their father died in 1765.

CT Maling (1824-1901). The son of Robert Maling (1781-1863) who was, in turn, the son of the aforementioned John. It was Robert who moved the pottery from Sunderland to Newcastle and was eventually succeeded by CTM II (known affectionately as "The Grand Old Man" or "The Governor"). CTM II built the two Ford Potteries, and is the one whose name is most likely to crop up in anecdotes about the business. He is pictured here.

CT Maling (1863-1934). The son of "The Grand Old Man". He and his brothers, John Ford (1858-1924) and Frederick Theodore (1866-1937), joined their father in the business in the 1880s to form CT Maling and Sons. The "Cetem" brand name was introduced by CTM III and his brothers in 1908 as a phonetic spelling of the company name and, in all probability, as a tribute to their late father.

CT Maling (dates not established). RC Bell's "Tyneside Pottery" records: "Mr. Frederick Theodore Maling's son, Christopher Thompson Maling (the fourth of this name) entered the business in 1929, and apart from the years of World War II, remained with the company until it was sold to Hoult's Estates Ltd. in 1947."

Search for knowledge

It may be helpful to update you on what information is available on Maling - and, sadly, it's not a lot.

"Tyneside Pottery" by RC Bell is long out of print and will only be found in second-hand bookshops or on the Net.

Bell's "Maling and other Tyneside Pottery" (Shire Albums Vol 170) is also out of print and not scheduled to come back into the catalogue, according to the publishers. However, Shire tell us that they do have a very small stock remaining. They can be contacted on 01844 344301.

"Maling - the Trademark of Excellence" by our patron Steven Moore is still available from the Tyne & Wear Museums Service. Try the Laing Art Gallery on 0191 232 7734.

Of course, the internet will speed up your search. If you don't have a computer, your local library or internet cafe should be able to help you take your first steps into cyberspace.

"Maling Memories" is our record of the former factory workers talking about their time in the pottery. It comes with a free bonus programme "Potty About Maling" and is available on DVD for 15 GBP. Cheques payable to the society and sent to the address below, please. We've taken the opportunity to clear up one factual inaccuracy which slipped through the editing process and has been annoying me for the last 5 years. But this isn't a "director's cut" and has only one small (ten-second) change from the previous video version.



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)

Numbers: so what?

In the early days of the society we made strenuous efforts to discover "missing" Maling patterns (i.e. those not listed on the website or in later editions of TMOE). It turned out to be a labour which even Hercules would have balked at.

This leads me to raise a controversial question. Are pattern numbers really that important?

Did anyone ever go into a china shop and say: "I want a Maling bowl in pattern xxxx please"? I doubt it. They would have looked around and, if they spotted something they fancied, bought it.

Of course, it was far easier for the retailer to order a new bowl by reference to a pattern number from a catalogue. More convenient than ringing Maling and saying: "You know that bowl you do with the flowers... I think they're azaleas... or do I mean rhododendrons?"

Within the pottery, workers may well have

coined their own names to help them remember what they were supposed to be producing on any particular day. For example, the Chinese-influenced design "Ming & Chang" (as it is listed in catalogues) was referred to by workers as "Pitman's Derby".

We know that the existing pattern list contains errors and omissions. Equally, we know that pattern numbers were painted in haste and can be difficult to decipher. (We use the mark above as a test on the website to demonstrate this point to beginners. If you see 6542, think again!)

So, I throw the question over to you and look forward to your views. Do you collect by pattern numbers or just buy what you like?



The parrot's beaker

Sue Brown writes: "You say members are reluctant to provide feedback. I'm guilty. I have odds and ends of info such as my parrot beaker (pattern no. 9396 - not listed in TMOE) but don't get around to passing it on."

"Do you think that perhaps if you asked every member to send you a photo of their favourite piece, or their oddest or rarest, it may advance our knowledge by turning up new items, patterns or shapes? It's easier to put a photo in an envelope than to try and write about something, and you may get more response."

David adds: Here, by coincidence, we have an excellent example of how two pieces of information from different members can come together and take us off in a new direction.

The member who enquired about his ashtray (see page 1) was interested purely in the mysterious hole and made no reference to the pattern or number. (It turns out that, with typical Maling perversity, this piece carries no number.)

Yet the pattern on the ashtray is virtually identical to Sue's piece which, from the number, looks to date from the second decade of the 20th century. I am fairly confident that the ashtray is 1930s.

So here we have evidence of a pattern being re-worked and reissued over a period of some 20 years. Is it any wonder that we are reluctant to give any more than a ballpark estimate of dates?

Without two members working independently of each other, I wouldn't have been able to pull these threads together. So, let's give Sue's suggestion a try.

Send in a pic, and I'll see where it leads me. I might even feel inclined to offer a prize for the best line of research your evidence sends me on.

