

MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 39 June 2008

Our Norman Heritage

Like Lucien Emile Boulemier (1877-1949) Norman Carling (1902-1971) was an immensely talented designer and modeller. Arriving at the Maling factory in 1935, it wasn't until 1937, that his figure production commenced.

It was mentioned in a previous newsletter (issue 37) that these figures were made in such small quantities that they almost don't exist and are more often known from the memories of ex-factory workers. However, on occasions when such rarities do turn up, they give us the opportunity to fully appreciate Carling's considerable skill.

Most of the objects would be made through the casting process with liquid slip. From his initial drawing of the design he would then model his creation in clay. A plaster cast would be taken from this, which would be known as the master mould and preserved. All working moulds would be made from a second mould known as the block mould.

Sadly, the production of Maling figures was never destined to be a commercial success, as the likes of Royal Doulton had already cornered the market. Because of this, "Lady Nicotine" modelled in 1937, but not launched until 1949, appears to have been the only figure entering full production (see photograph). Available in three colours, Yellow, Peach (a mixture of yellow and pink brush strokes) and Victoria green, she concealed beneath her skirt a container for

cigarettes and sat upon four matching ashtrays.

Trial sample figures by Carling are scarce, so to discover an original factory mould is just about as good as it can possibly get. Here featured is a disassembled three-piece original plaster mould and model of a 'Squirrel' garden ornament. The Squirrel (like the Owl featured in newsletter 37) was from a set of five garden ornaments that Norman Carling produced towards the end of the Second World War.

It is known that they were not made commercially, which could explain why this particular item only ever reached the biscuit firing stage and was painted outside the factory in gloss paint by a former Maling employee.

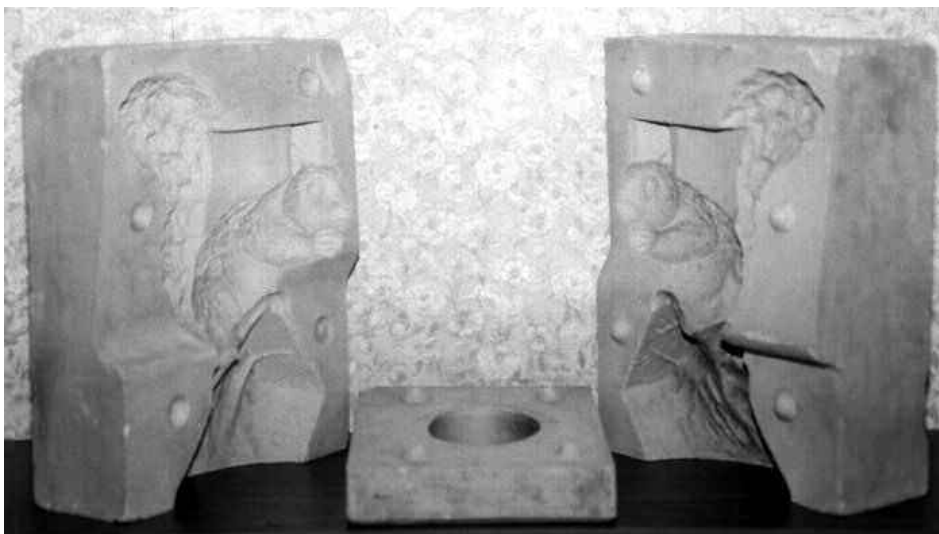
Norman Carling left Maling in 1946, with the firm's engraver Cecil Parker, to set up their own business in Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, called Plasta Crafts Co (Rubber Toy Makers). Here they made plaster decorative ornaments and rubber toys (see newsletters - issue 22 and 23). This company ended in the mid 1950s, but Norman Carling continued designing and modelling on a freelance basis from within his own studio, which he had once again established in Jesmond. Closure came in the late 1960s, by which time his eyesight had greatly deteriorated.

By David Johnson of Tyne & Wear.



Above: Lady Nicotine with concealed cigarette holder and four ashtrays - from private collection.

Below: Original factory mould and trial sample produced May 1945. From private collection - provenance known.



Get a grip on your handles

Experienced collectors will have developed their “eye” for Maling. Little clues such as shapes or colours will alert them to a piece when they visit an antiques fair.

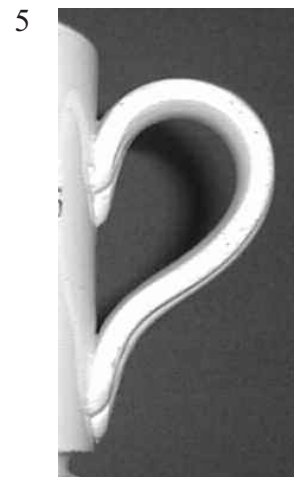
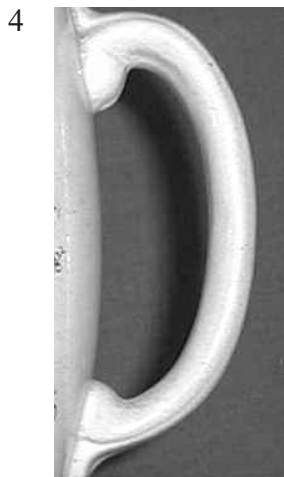
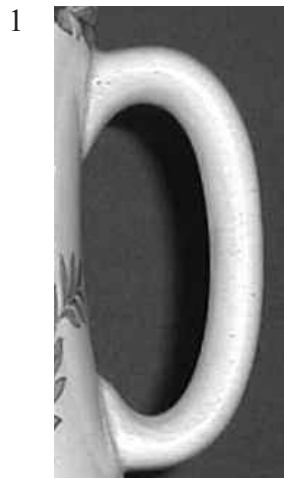
For the benefit of less experienced collectors, we offer a little quiz. Here are a few handles from Maling mugs or beakers. But a rogue handle seems to have crept in. Can you spot the non-Maling item and suggest the date and mug/beaker shape to which the genuine items belong? Answers are below – so no peeking!

OK - the quiz was a bit of a cheat. These pieces can all be accurately dated, because they are from my commemorative collection. But the mugs may well have been in production for decades. Indeed, several of them appear in the reproduction catalogue dated around 1930. However, you may like to know:

Number 1 is from a tankard to celebrate the 1953 coronation of our present Queen. It’s a shape often seen with a “Poor Richard” transfer for sale as a souvenir on transatlantic liners. But you’ll also find this tankard shape in the 1930 catalogue.

Number 2 is from a “Norfolk” shape mug for the 1911 coronation of George V. Again, it’s still in production some two decades later.

Number 3 is a “block handle” which you might well associate with the 1930s. As it happens, it’s another one from the 1953 coronation. Maybe the pottery was



using up old stock to cash in on the occasion (as they did for the 1929 NE Coast Exhibition).

Number 4 is from a “barrel” mug produced for the 1897 Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The shape was used again for the 1902 coronation of Edward VII and, yes, you’ve guessed it, it’s also

in the 1930 catalogue.

Number 5 takes us back to the 1897 Jubilee. Distinctive but I do not know the shape name.

Number 6 is the red herring. It’s my cheapo coffee mug, free with a couple of gallons of petrol some 30 years ago.

Schools project puts its first foot forward

Our schools initiative progresses slowly but surely. Member and maths teacher Ron Pilkington writes:

“I am in the middle of developing a project which involves maths and science. It will be introduced by a history of Maling and an exhibition of Maling chargers and plates. The maths part will be changing imperial measures of 11, 10, 9, 8, 7 inches to metric, then using pi for circumference and area. This will be delivered on a set of Maling plates cards which can be used to play “trumps” as an interactive learning activity.

“Then we go down to the science labs to show a snippet of the society video about the making of pottery. This leads to students learning the curriculum topic of

substances undergoing change – i.e. clay in the kiln, etc. We do have a kiln in school and I dream of a whole school project, but first this little pilot.

”This should culminate in a write up with NCETM (the National Council for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics).”

So come on the rest of you! Maling won’t promote itself. If you know a teacher, grab them and show them the ideas in newsletter 38. If we can find teachers from other disciplines we may yet have the basis for an education pack.

Maling doesn’t just have a past. It has a future as well!



Meet the Managers

Thanks to member Howard Cartlidge, we have photos and information on two family members who played key roles in the Maling pottery in the inter-war years. They are Howard's great-uncle William (pictured with glasses) who was General Manager, and Howard's father Rupert who was Works Manager.



Both were brought up in the Staffordshire potteries area. William, having served in the Boys' Brigade, became caught up in WW1. He joined the army as an instructor of drill and other military techniques.

An accident during a simulated trench attack brought him a broken leg and kept him out of active combat until a matter of days before the Armistice was signed. However he later served in Germany, facilitating the demobilization of Allied troops and helping to rebuild the defeated German nation.

D'ye ken the price?

Members sometimes ask why the society is reluctant to give valuations. In part, it's because we prefer to maintain an "academic" approach and value obscure facts over mere money. And partly it's because the market can just be too weird to predict.

For example, what would you pay for this plaster of paris tankard? It's from the hand of Norman Carling, and the story on page 1 should have filled you in with his post-Maling business venture with Cecil Parker.

They produced rubber toys for children and, when the price of rubber rocketed during the Korean War, they concentrated on plaster novelties. This tankard celebrates the legendary huntsman John Peel and combines a hunting scene with the words of the song which commemorate the man.

Similar items exist to celebrate the centenary of the Blaydon races and the adventures of Bonnie Prince Charlie. So there is a Maling connection here. But what would you pay for this item?

One recently came up on eBay, and the final price may surprise you.

It sold for just over 108 GBP. So the value of your Maling and related items is whatever you're prepared to fork out. This one certainly surprised me, and I would have made a complete idiot of myself if I had hazarded my own guess of about a fiver! There were only two bidders, and both appear to have been hunting enthusiasts. That's a view to a killing as far as the vendor was concerned.

Perhaps it was these administrative qualities which brought him to Maling's attention. He was, by all accounts, something of an authoritarian figure. Peggie Stewart sums it up well in our Maling Memories DVD. Standing in front of the clock tower in Hoult's yard, she recollected: "That was Mr Cartlidge's domain. And you never went in there unless you were summoned."

At some stage William was joined by his nephew Rupert. He had worked his way up through the Staffordshire potteries and had a "hands on" knowledge of the manufacturing process, including the chemistry of glazes and the intricacies of firing.

It is acknowledged that the two did not always get on too well. Possibly the "spit and polish" attitude of William did not sit too well with Rupert's more practical approach to getting the job done.

Both men later returned to Staffordshire. William maintained his interest in antiques through frequent visits to auctions. Rupert continued to work in the industry, with spells at Twyfords and Victoria Porcelain before he set up his own business decorating bought-in pottery.



Potty might mean crazy

People often ask why Maling seems so prone to "glaze crazing". In all honesty, it's not exclusive to Maling and doesn't seem to be associated with any particular period of the pottery's output. Potter Charlie Allen offers this explanation of what may have gone wrong:

"Ceramic materials - glazes and clay bodies - expand and then contract during the firing stage of manufacture. The glaze has to have a coefficient of expansion that matches the clay body.

"When crazing occurs it is due to the glaze not fitting the body. This could be a fault with the glaze or the body. If the body is not fired to maturity this may result in crazing. This can sometimes take a few weeks or months after firing to appear.

"On other occasions it can be seen fresh from the kiln and some studio potters intentionally encourage crazing as a decorative technique."



In a jam over Keillers jars

What is the fascination with marmalade jars? Hardly a week goes by without my receiving an email such as this. Tim Cannon writes: "I have a white ware marmalade jar, it has much crazing and staining. On the bottom is "S" on the top of "Maling" then "K", then "Newcastle". Is it an early piece?"

To which the answer is: "absolutely no idea". These jars were produced from the 1850s through to the 1930s and don't really show any change in shape.

Neal Cox adds a little more to the debate. He writes: "I collect and dig for Victorian pots and bottles. I very often find Keillers marmalade pots. The trouble can be in dating some of the tips that we dig.

One way of doing this is by using the "letter mark" that is at the bottom of the wreath transfer on every Keillers Marmalade pot that was made. There is a single letter at the bottom of the wreath. Unfortunately I am not able to find anywhere a date guide for these letter marks. Would you be able to help or point me in the right direction?

This is a topic we have covered before, but on which we can reach no conclusion. A member once recorded that his collection of Keillers ware contained jars with almost every letter of the alphabet. However, we have no way of knowing if these letters represent a particular year or whether they were used internally by Maling for stock control purposes.

Lend your support

Tyneside looks to be waking up to the potential of Maling as a tourist attraction. In March a new display opened at the Shipley Gallery in Gateshead. Although not exclusively devoted to Maling, the exhibition does feature some of the pottery's output. Assistant Keeper Alex Thirlaway writes:

"We do have some good specimens of Maling pottery included in our new Decorative Art, Craft and Design gallery entitled 'Designs for Life' here at the Shipley, together with a wonderful variety of other pieces from across Tyne & Wear Museums' collections. This new gallery opened to the public on 20th March.

"Also, the Laing has recently redisplayed the Maling on show in Art on Tyneside. There are also plans to redevelop Art on Tyneside

completely, and I'm sure that a good show of Maling will be considered in its replacement."

More good news comes from the Aspire project - a Byker-based community organisation which is hoping to convert St Michael's Church into an arts centre. A Maling day will be held in the church on Saturday, 5th July, and anyone with an interest in the pottery is invited to come along.

Although this isn't a society event, we are doing what we can to support it. Steven will be there and we hope that some of the former pottery workers will be able to make it.

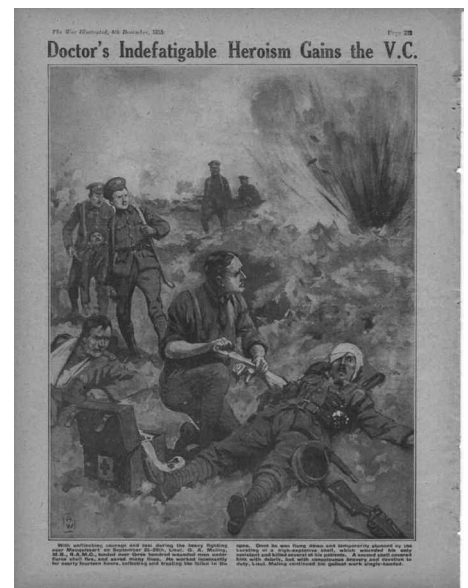
Please do your best to support these initiatives which are putting Maling back on the map.

Memories of Maling medal heroism

Not every member of the Maling family went into the pottery business. Many had distinguished careers in other walks of life.

Here we celebrate George Maling, a 26 year old, Lieutenant (later Captain) in the Royal Army Medical Corps, attached to the 12th Battalion, The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own) during WW1. The following deed earned him the VC.

On 25 September 1915 near Fauquissart, France Lieutenant Maling worked for over 24 hours with untiring energy, collecting and treating in the open, under heavy shell fire, more than 300 men. During the morning of the 25th he was temporarily stunned by the bursting of a large high explosive shell which wounded his only assistant and killed several



of his patients. A second shell covered him and his instruments with debris, but he continued his gallant work single-handed.

His Victoria Cross is displayed at the Army Medical Services Museum at Aldershot. We are pleased that the pictured magazine article was secured by our Patron, Heather Maling, as an addition to the family's historical archives.



www.maling-pottery.org.uk

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

Joining fee: £20 (UK); £25 (overseas)
Includes FREE Maling catalogue
Renewals: £10 p.a. (worldwide)

Gone for a song

The society basked in fame when a set of past newsletters was put up for sale on eBay in March. Would keen Maling hunters be at each others' throats to snap up this unique bargain?

Unfortunately, no. The set of 17 newsletters sold for a mere £4.49. Sometimes I wonder why I bother.