

# MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 40 September 2008

## Les Dixon: in memoriam

Les Dixon passed away peacefully on Friday 23rd May 2008, at the age of 95 years. His close friend David Johnson writes: "With an unconditional friendship and his knowledge so often freely given, Les was the perfect gentleman."

"As a teenager in the late 1920s, Les joined C. T. Maling & Sons, in the packing warehouse. His hard work and dedication were soon recognised by Mr. Chris (Christopher Thompson Maling 1863-1934) and by the time Hoult's Removals had acquired the pottery (late 1947) Les had worked his way up the managerial ladder to General Manager.

"His working lifetime at Malings ended when closure came in 1963, but Les was immensely proud of his achievement - going in as a boy at the bottom and emerging as the gaffer at the top.

"Our friendship developed from an initial introduction in 1998 by a mutual friend and fellow Maling collector, Tom Edgar. Les's great enthusiasm and love of Maling pottery enhanced my interest and knowledge whenever we spoke. A warm, considerate and very humorous gentleman, he was kind enough to share his many treasured Maling memories with me.

"One such memory, would suggest that his career at Malings might have come to an abrupt end before it had begun, had it not been for Mrs. Eva Maling's sense of humour (or, I suspect, the recognition of his potential). 'It was the case of mistaken identity' Les professed, with a mischievous grin!



Les Dixon (left) with Frederick Hoult examining a lump of feldspar, the basic ingredient of glazes and clay bodies, 1948.

"After being hit on the side of the head with some frozen dung (left by the horses which were used both inside and outside the pottery for transportation), Les spotted the 'culprit' crossing the yard towards the building he was working in. Intending to get his revenge, he lay in wait behind the door until the person entered, and then gave a hard kick to the posterior as he passed.

"It wasn't until Mr. Chris Maling gave out a shout, that Les realized he had made a big mistake. As a result Mr. Maling gave Les a good ticking off and imposed a fine from his salary for unacceptable behaviour. However,

upon Mrs. Eva Maling hearing of this, she roared with laughter and actually thanked Les, saying someone should have kicked her husband years ago!

"She insisted Mr. Maling reinstate Les's full salary and suggested an additional sum as a reward! As Les quipped 'I started off at the bottom - and 'dung' good!'

"My sincere condolences go to Les's dear wife Agnes and all the family. He will be sadly missed by all Maling pottery enthusiasts, but especially by me."

## Your subs are due again

**It may not seem like a year has passed, but your subs are due again. Please send £10 to the address on the back of this newsletter. (And let's hope things go a little smoother this time around.)**

Last year, the PO Box service fell to pieces at our busiest time. Some cheques were delayed for months, and some never turned up at all.

It took three months of complaining, and receiving nothing but bland reassurances that all was OK, before I had to take the matter to the regulatory body Postwatch. Their efforts produced the following response from the PO:

"Due to auditing problems, we were informed not to deliver items of mail to some PO Boxes. This resulted in a great deal of confusion and this may have led to some customers not receiving the service they paid for.

"Unfortunately, the lack of an updated list of customer requirements compounded the problem. The issue was resolved just before Christmas 2007 and the PO Box is now correctly labelled and delivered each day."

*Continued on Page 4*

# As we were saying

You may have worked out that this is our 10th anniversary newsletter. A few years ago, we started a series on “The A to Z of Maling”. Circumstances meant that it never got finished. So, to keep faith with members, and to celebrate 40 newsletters, I have selected my own A to Z. The full stories are all available on the website and the relevant edition numbers are indicated with a #.

**Advertising** – Any piece of ephemera can increase your knowledge of Maling; shapes, pattern numbers, etc. We included quite a few ads (not seen in the reference books) in #30.



**Byker** – The home of the Ford B pottery and now the focus for a community centre in St Michael’s Church. The church spire appears in items produced for the 1931 Historical Pageant. #1.



2

**Coronet** – A mysterious mark, finally explained in #2 (though we still haven’t got definitive detail on the numbering system). As a bonus, we also gave you the **Coracle** mark in #7.



**Death of Nelson** – A front page story which turned out to have nothing to do with Maling. But it does show the lengths to which the society will go to pin down an elusive fact. #33.

**Education** – We are still working on a schools’ project which will bring on a new generation of Maling enthusiasts. Otherwise, valuable history may be forgotten or ignored. #38.

**FMF** – We raised the question of who made marmalade jars with this mark. Did it stand for “Ford Maling Factory”? It turned out to be the “Food Manufacturers’ Federation. #1

**Genii of the Teacup** – A story book intended for children (but with a pretty heavy promotional message). Produced for the 1929 Exhibition. We started our serialization in #10.

**Hunting** – A passion of some family members in the days when it was less controversial. Also an inspiration for several Maling designs, including the “fox head” stirrup cup. #24 & #25.

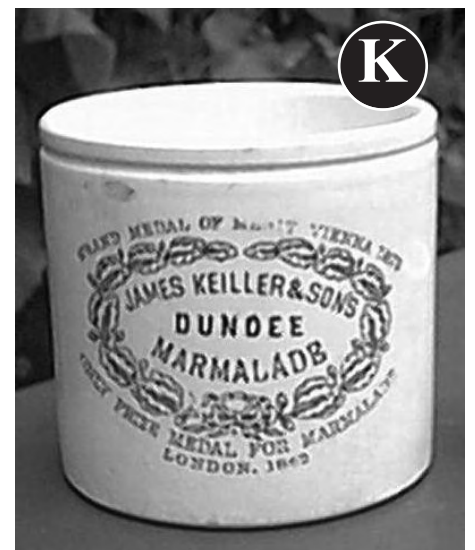
**Immersion** – Maling turns up in unusual places, including underwater. It has been found by scuba divers all over the world, usually in the form of marmalade jars. #24.

G



**Jimmy James** – Maling had agents in many places, mainly the former colonies. Mr James covered Canada and North America (a pretty big task for one man!). #2.

**Keillers** – We could hardly ignore one of Maling’s major customers in the packaging market. A series on the marmalade company ran through three issues. #4, 5 & 8.



**Lay Plates** – The plates such as “Windmill” or “Old Mill” which we now put on our walls were originally intended to be a posh substitute for table mats and were known as lay or service plates. #13.

K



# some years ago...

**Moulds** – One of the society’s earliest achievements was the recovery of moulds which had been sold off in 1963. They have served us well at collectors’ days over the years. #6.



**NE Coast Exhibition** – A fine opportunity to show off the arts and industries of the north east (and for Maling to make a few shillings!). The 75th anniversary was marked in a series beginning in #20.

**Ouseburn Bridge** – Prior to Ford “A” and “B”, this was Maling’s first pottery in Newcastle, following the move from Sunderland. What little of it remains was documented in # 23.

**Plaster of Paris** – Essential for making moulds, of course, and also the medium which Norman Carling and Cecil Parker chose to work in after leaving Maling post-war. #22.

**Queens** – From Victoria to Elizabeth II, Maling were able to capitalise on royal occasions (with the unfortunate exception of Edward VIII). A series on commemoratives began in #8.



**Retailers’ Marks** – Can you give any further information about the shops whose marks appear in #16? (And, if you thought “R” was going to be for **Ringtons**, we’re planning those articles right now.)



**Showroom** – The factory showroom was cleared a few years ago and a number of original features revealed. We provided “then” and “now” photos in #22. “S” is also for **Subscriptions** – so pay up today!

**Thunderbirds** – There’s no point having a hobby if you can’t have a bit of fun with it. So, did we really spot a piece of Maling in this 1960s puppet show? Judge for yourselves at #11.



**Up the Yard** – Geographically, the decorating department was “up” and the making departments “down”. In 2000 we recorded the demolition of the decorating department. #6.

**Video** – “Maling Memories” was another society achievement, with ex-workers demonstrating their skills and reminiscing about their time at the pottery. (Now available on DVD.) #15.

**Willow Pattern** – Author RC Bell identified at least five variations of this popular design in Maling’s output. We looked at some of them, and their associated marks, in #5.



**X1** – Bet you didn’t think we’d find an “X”, did you? But this mark appears to have been used by two different painters during the 50s and 60s, Audrey Dunn and Pat Hails. #4.

**Young Bull** – The younger Mr Boullemier (LGB) whose father (LEB) was known affectionately as the “Old Bull”. Four generations of the family are pictured in #29.

**Zoology** – OK, we’re getting desperate. But birds, fish and other assorted creatures appear regularly in Maling designs. A rarer example is the Norman Carling elephant seen in #5.



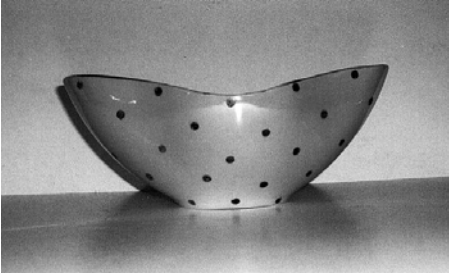
**This is no more than a random selection from past newsletters. You are welcome to offer your own suggestions for articles you’d like to see.**

Continued from Page 1

So we paid for a service which the Post Office was told not to provide. What a way to run a business! However, apart from the apology, the society also received a 50 per cent refund of the fees paid for the year.

Fingers crossed that we don't get the same problems again as you all rush to renew your memberships. Your cheque for £10 is due by October 1st.

## Well spotted!



A member asked about this vase from his collection. It has a pink body, but the black spots are overglaze. The member wondered if the spots were added outside the factory and, if so, whether they should be removed with Duraglit.

Steven comes to the rescue with the news that it's "Polka Dot" and is entirely as the pottery intended. It's a very late pattern (possibly even as late as 1963) so it's perhaps not surprising that it isn't seen too often.

Incidentally, we would not advise Duraglit, bleach or any other harsh treatment on your Maling. If in doubt, leave it alone!

  
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 Boullemier, Fred Houlst, Caroline  
Kirkhope, Heather Maling  
Dr John Maling,  
Steven Moore

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

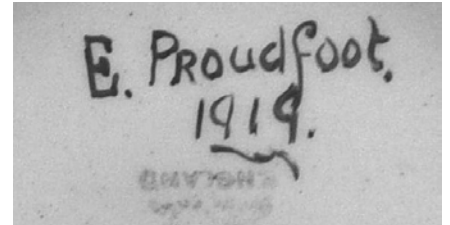
# Byker has a big day

**Around 100 people from the Byker region of Newcastle turned out in July to celebrate the pottery which had probably kept their families employed for generations.**

The day was devised by the Aspire Project, a local community organisation, and it no doubt brought back many fond memories for those who attended.

Of course, no one turned up with an unknown Aladdin's cave of Maling treasures (sorry, it doesn't exist), but a few interesting pottery facts came to light.

Milly McCabe identified Doris Hood as one of her colleagues in the photo shown here. Both were handlers - and that doesn't mean lugging the pots around in a big basket but, quite literally, applying the handles to items such as tea cups.



You have probably seen this photo before, and it may have occurred to you to ask what was the white, conical thing (a bit like a sugar or flour dredger) in the middle of the table? Thanks to Milly we now know.



It's a cup block and was used to reshape the still "leather hard" cups if they mis-shaped whilst having the handles added.

Also turning up on the day were a nice Theo Maling jug in an unrecorded design and an "Aquatic" vase signed "E Proudfoot 1919" for Ellen Proudfoot - the then head decorator, whose mark was "P".

A lady who had worked in the office brought in previously unseen ephemera, including letterheads and show cards (used for promoting ranges such as "Cobblestone").



The discoveries may not have been staggering, but every little fact helps to put the Maling jigsaw back together. Aspire offer their thanks to Steven, the paintresses and Charlie Allen for helping the day to come together.

