

# MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER Issue 1 December 1998



**W**elcome to the society's first newsletter. Our thanks go, in particular, to those of you who don't have access to the Internet and the society website, and who didn't come to the first Collectors' Day. You have waited long enough to see something!

Inside you will find a full review of the Collectors' Day, some newly discovered information about pieces of Maling ware, and details of the various research projects with which we require your help. Please send in your questions, photographs anecdotes and information.

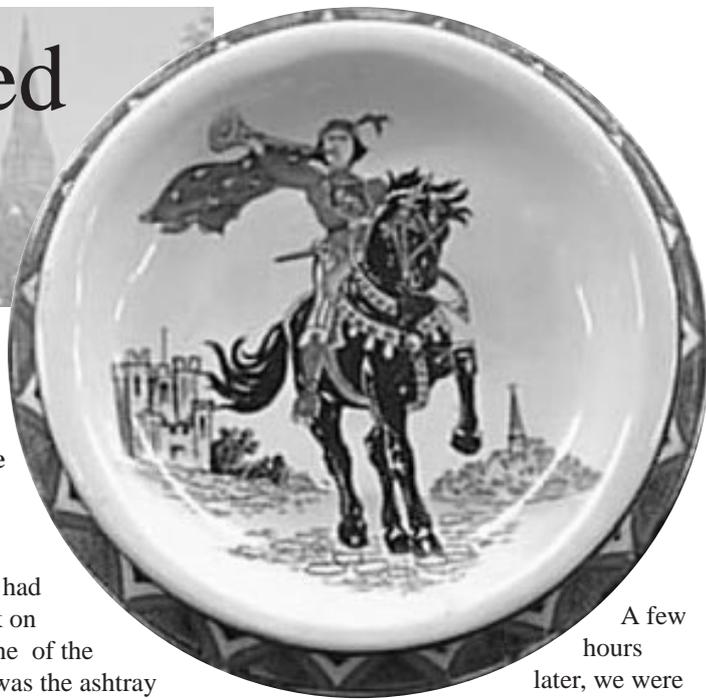
Finally, we were pleased to receive these words of support from Paul Atterbury of the BBC's Antiques Roadshow "*Maling was certainly a very diverse and imaginative factory and I am glad there is a thriving collectors' society to fly the flag...*".

## Inspired by a spire

New information about Maling ware turns up in the most surprising ways, as this anecdote from the Collectors' Day illustrates.

In the morning, Steven had given an illustrated talk on Maling's designers. One of the pieces shown on slide was the ashtray produced for the 1931 Historical Pageant.

In the foreground, a mounted herald blows his trumpet to proclaim the event. In the background, to the left, is a rendering of the Newcastle Castle Keep, while to the right is the spire of a church rising from behind a clump of trees. In passing, Steven commented that the church had never been identified.



A few hours later, we were at the factory site.

Standing in the yard, one of the members - who had never been there before - looked up over the roofline and spotted a strangely familiar landmark... yes, that spire!

The church has since been identified as St Michael and All Angels in Byker and would have been clearly visible from the Boullemiers' studio window.

## Clocking on at the Collectors' Day

"So where, exactly, is it you want to go?"

The coach driver's question didn't inspire confidence.

Here's a Newcastle man asking us - most of whom have travelled from a fair distance (Bristol, London, Glasgow, for example) - how to find the former Maling site! It was the biggest pottery in the world, for goodness' sake. And (no disrespect intended) our driver for the day looks as though he's comfortably old enough to have been around during the factory's working years.

Has the Maling name slipped so far out of people's consciousness in the intervening three and a half decades? Well, not in the case of the society members who attended the collectors' day in September.

A talk from Steven Moore, a look behind the scenes at the Laing Art Gallery's collection of Maling rarities, a chance to show and talk about some of our more interesting pots and a tour of the Maling site with a demonstration of painting techniques by former Maling workers. All in seven hours flat!

Of course, the bus driver did find the site. And, for those of you who couldn't attend, the pictures on pages 4 and 5 tell something of that fascinating day.



Tea time at Ringtons

# The quest for sixteen thousand patterns

**F**rom 1885 until 1963, Maling produced 16,000 patterns. When “Maling a Tyneside Pottery” was published in 1981, it claimed to list all the known pattern numbers from circa 1927 until 1963, transcribed from “the original pattern books.” It stated that “the gaps in the numeric order occur because those missing pattern numbers were given to plain white and transfer printed pottery.” The truth is that this list was compiled from the memory of an ex-Maling employee and the gaps were those numbers that he couldn’t remember!



Floral - 7177

When Maling closed in 1963, over the next five years all of the records were destroyed. The pattern books and other priceless documents were sold for waste paper and the pottery’s collection of copper plates melted down. Consequently there are no pattern books to turn to and the only way find out what the 16,000 patterns looked like is to rediscover them in people’s collections.

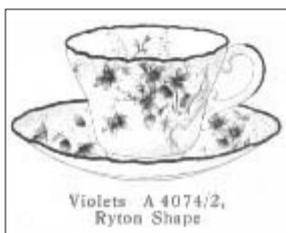
This is why the society has decided to attempt (remember we are talking 16,000 missing

patterns!) to photograph ALL Maling designs and record their pattern numbers. This is where we need your help. If you have any examples of Maling ware with a pattern number EARLIER than 6300 (in the 1920-1963 sequence) or ANY pre 1920 pattern number ranging from 1-9999, we would like a photograph of the design and a note, or better still a picture of the number. Please also make a note if a pattern name is included in the mark.

Send them off to the society’s usual address and let us try to rediscover the lost designs of our favourite pottery. Once we have a good number of these we can make them available to all members. In the meantime, we are compiling a computer database and will answer your queries on request.

## Why are we doing this?

The answer is simple, because this is vital information. It also shows how much Maling’s later designers owed to their much-misunderstood predecessors. Many “original” Boulemler designs are in fact clever reworkings of designs, 20, 30 and even 40 years old!



Violets - 4074

When Maling began making decorated wares in 1885, they began with pattern number 1 and this sequence ran up to pattern number 9999 which was introduced in circa 1920. When CETEM WARE was launched in 1908, a new sequence was started, possibly to separate the older patterns from the first sequence, which was still being produced at this time. This new sequence ran up to number 6639, Maling’s last design in 1963.

The discovery of two catalogues in a private collection, dating to 1898 and 1903 have given us about 300 early sequence numbers and their correct names. But don’t hold out for anything devastating. Many Maling names are quite boring - as the pieces illustrating this article show! Ten out of ten to Mr Miguet for inventiveness! At least he was a great designer, about whom we still have a lot to learn.

## VARIOUS VASES

Finding all the missing Maling vase shapes is, perhaps, an easier project than identifying all the “lost” pattern numbers and names. Maling only made 158 different vase shapes from 1908 until 1963. Most (but -



typically Maling - not all!) vases will have an impressed number from 1 to 158



somewhere on the base. The society is looking for these missing vases. Once we have them, we can compile a list showing all Maling vase shapes. So far we have about one third of them.

Here is the list of the missing numbers;

2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 66, 68, 70, 71, 72, 76, 77, 79, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 103, 105, 108, 109, 110, 111, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 133, 134, 138, 139.

Again we will need a clear picture, preferably taken straight on, showing the profile. Send them to the usual address.

As yet, the newsletter has no title. Your suggestions would be welcome.

# The life of a pottery girl

Marion (Davies) Robinson, a Maling paintress from 1948-1963, has written an account of her years at the pottery.

It was Friday when I left school in December 1948. I was taken into the staff room to see Miss Keen my headmistress. Mrs Muldoon my last teacher stood beside me and gave me a reassuring hug. I would miss her most of all. I could smell her eau-de-cologne as she constantly wiped the corners of her mouth with her hanky. A white belt gathered her blue dress around her small waist. I had loved her soft-spoken Irish voice, the feeling of security when I was with her, and the joy I felt as I took my first steps into the intoxicating world of words, poems and stories. She talked to us all about life's dreams, dramas and disappointments. Yes! I would miss her.

I sat on a balloon-backed chair as Miss Keen read out a list of vacancies. One in a fire lighter factory - I didn't like the prospect of smelling of Naphtha; the pickle factory - I liked less to smell of pickled onions; and then Maling's Pottery, decorating plaques teapots and jugs.

I loved art, so it didn't take me more than

a moment to make my mind up. There was only one snag. I would have to travel from Gateshead to Newcastle where the pottery was. It would be a tram car ride and a trolley bus.

So I left school on Friday afternoon with my leaving certificate, a report, a reference and directions as how to get to the pottery to see Mr Dixon the Manager. With a good luck handshake from Miss Keen I left the room with tears in my eyes.

I ran down the old concrete stairs, which were well worn in the middle where so many children had run up and down before me. I touched both sides of the sickly green painted walls with my outstretched arms, through the cloakroom, having my last drink from the silver fountain, and out into the school yard.

I looked around me, seeing the dirty windows where the sun couldn't shine



Marion Davies demonstrates her skills with "Springtime"

through, and everywhere mounds of blackened snow. The broken down outside toilets. I wouldn't be jamming my fingers in those doors any more. I pushed open the big black iron school gates and with a struggle pulled them shut behind me and I leaned my back against them. I was lost in the bricks and concrete which had witnessed my tears, laughter and secrets, but now the sun was out, the sky was blue. I was 14 and free to start my new life.

*To be continued...*

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## Cracking the Coronet code

**The Coronet mark is one of the biggest Maling mysteries, but one which I hope to be close to cracking. The first thing that one notices about the Coronet mark is that it seems to be rare and that Coronet mark pieces always have a different pattern number to the standard Maling system.**



All these facts suggest that the Coronet marked pieces were made for a retailer, but whom? From my researches it would seem that this retailer was based in Canada or the USA and ordered wares from Maling circa 1925-1930. Coronet marked wares seen in this country are either:

- returned to this country from abroad; or
- frustrated export orders dumped on the home market in 1930 after the Wall Street crash.

At least three other, non-Maling, Coronet marks are known to exist. Although similar to a Maling mark, none of these carries the words "Maling" or "Newcastle upon Tyne". The alternative wording on these marks may be: "Art Pottery"; "Czechoslovakia" or "Germany". These are NOT by Maling!

As soon as I get confirmation on my theory, all will be revealed!

SM

# SCENES FROM THE Collectors' Day



Clocking on. Members arrive at the site. The wall on the right of the photograph is attracting attention because the coal trains used to arrive on the far side of it and dump their cargo through holes (now blocked up) to the kilns beneath.

Miss Theo's workshop. The site is now a complex of small industrial units. Hard to believe that, in the early 30s, Miss Theo Maling created her adventurous designs in a workshop in this building. Former paintress Peggy Stewart tells the tale.



Looking back. The view from the top of the site (outside the Boullemiers' studio) towards the main gate. Although much has changed over the years, this is also a look back to the great days of Maling, and several of the buildings are still recognisable from earlier photographs.

# SCENES FROM THE Collectors' Day



Clock watching. Members pause by the clock tower and fire station building - one of the most distinctive landmarks remaining on the site.



Having a go. Members were invited to try their hand at decorating a plate - not easy when you don't have years of experience behind you!



Back at work. Charles Allen runs Maling site. In his studio, Margaret Dixon introduces members to the technique of "waving". (Although the term "thumbprint" is often used to describe this effect, it's all done with a brush, and "waving" is technically more accurate.)

For the first time in 35 years, Maling paintresses are painting Maling patterns on the site of the former Maling pottery. Marion Davies and Margaret Dixon are concentrating both on the Springtime plates in their hands and on the flow of questions from the society members who are crammed into present day potter Charles Allen's studio on the Ford B site.



"Storm" from the 50s...

# Painting up a Storm

It's just like another day at work - hands doing what comes automatically from months of training and years of experience; mind free to indulge in a good gossip.

First, the green leaves are painstakingly filled in. As she paints, Marion reminisces: "We painted Azalea, Iris, Daffodil... I knew as much about flowers as any gardener when I was working. If someone said: 'fetch me a dozen Delphinium', you had to come back with the right ones."

The anecdotes range from memories of fellow paintresses (mostly complimentary) to those about the "bosses" (usually rather less so).

Someone asks whether there were any patterns which the paintresses didn't enjoy painting. Without pausing from their work, Marion and Margaret answer as one: "Storm!"



Maling Street. The tour also included stops at the site of the Ford "A" pottery and the Ouseburn Bridge pottery. Little remains to be seen, but the Maling name is, at least, commemorated by this street sign.

"It was awful to paint," says Margaret. There was nothing to it".

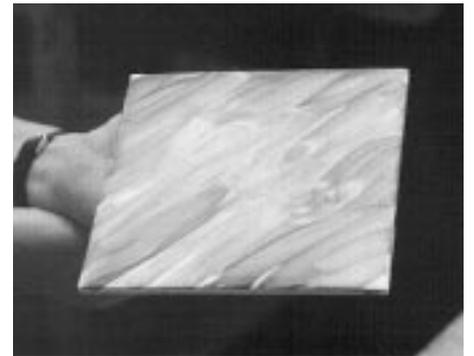
The Springtime plate goes down on the work bench and Margaret picks up a blank white tile which has been provided for the paintresses to mix their colours.

A dip of the brush into the water pot, then into the paint. "First you put on the yellow for the sunlight" - diagonal stripes of yellow are slashed across the tile.

Dip... dip... slash. "Then the pink for the cloud where the sunlight peeps through". The yellow is suddenly surrounded by a horseshoe of pink slashes.

Again... and the tile is virtually covered in blue paint, leaving only a vivid central stripe of yellow bordered by pink. It's a piece of "Storm"!

I fiddle with the settings of my flash gun and try to get the focus right on my SLR camera (I don't trust these modern "do it all for you" affairs). In the meantime, Margaret has picked up a damp cloth and contemptuously wiped the tile clean again.



... and the 90s!

"Errmm... I was going to take a picture of that..." No problem to Margaret. Dip... dip... slash. And again. And again. In seconds, another "Storm" tile is lying in her hand.

To me, it's wonderful. The paintresses may not think much of it, but the first piece of Maling I bought back in the early 80s was "Storm". At the time, I didn't know what it was or who this "Malling" company might be.

It's been a long and enjoyable journey of discovery and, thanks to Margaret and whoever asked that apparently innocent question, I've learned a little bit more.

DH

# Oddities & Rarities

In this series of articles, we'll try to bring you information about pieces which you may not have come across before.

According to the inscription on the back, this Maling drinking horn was produced to mark the centenary of Durham's Castle Eden brewery in 1926. But, who are the people on the front?

We are indebted to Nick Redman, Company Archivist at Whitbread plc, for the following information.

The transfer shows four generations of the Nimmo family. At the top: John

on the cricket field where lunch, tea, sports, dancing and music were provided. The employees presented a silver bowl to Mr and Mrs Nimmo, and a case of silver toilet brushes to Eileen Nimmo whose 21st birthday it was.

"A centenary dinner was held in the Masonic Hall at Castle Eden for past and present members of the parish council. £100 was given to the Orthopaedic



Nimmo (1800-1867) the founder of the brewery. Centre left: William Nimmo (1828-1901) son of the founder. Centre right: William John Nimmo (1869-1952) grandson. Bottom: William Leslie Nimmo (1899-1918) great grandson.

According to information supplied by Mr Redman: "A day's holiday and entertainment was given to all employees. This took place on June 8th

Department of the Cameron Hospital. "The most significant gesture was the gift of £1,250 for a children's ward in the new Morison Wing at St Hilda's Hartlepool Hospital. The wing was opened by HRH Princess Mary on 10th August, 1926."

Next question: were Maling mugs produced to mark the opening of the new wing of the hospital?

We were saddened to hear of the death of Derek Maling, son of F. T. Maling. An appreciation will follow in the next newsletter. We also regret to report the death of society member Lionel Lindsley-Dixon. As an expatriate Geordie, living in Canada, Lionel pursued his love of Maling on several continents both in person and via the Internet. His contributions to the website will be missed.

## Special offers for members

Discount is available to members on Maling publications. "The Trademark of Excellence" is normally available in the UK for £17.95 + p&p. Members may buy at:

UK - £15.95 inclusive

Canada & South Africa - £20.70 inclusive

Australia & New Zealand - £21.45 inclusive

The reprinted 1920s catalogue (usually £7.95 + p&p) is also available to members at a discount: UK - £6.50 inclusive

Canada & South Africa - £8.18 inclusive

Australia & New Zealand - £8.44 inclusive

Prices for overseas include airmail. Payments should be in sterling and made out to "The Maling Collectors' Society". As these offers are strictly "members only", please send your orders to the society at: The Maling Collectors' Society, PO Box 1762, North Shields NE30 4YJ.

Books can be signed and dedicated by Steven Moore. Please send a note of any special wording you would like.

Christmas postal deadlines are 5th December for overseas and 15th December for the UK.



**Q** A dealer recently told me that the Limoges porcelain used by Maling in about 1900-1910 had come from a factory called Haviland, that this factory had a mark made up of three castles, and that Maling had adopted a version of the three castles as their logo as a result of trying to hide the Haviland mark. I found this hard to believe, but a few stalls later there was a Limoges specialist with some Haviland plates. So I asked him if I could look at the marks. In fact he got a book out and showed me the Haviland mark for 1890-1900. Yes, it was three castles, placed in a triangle, almost identical to the Newcastle coat of arms. I had always assumed that the Maling logo was based on the castle of Newcastle. This story indicates that the castles originated from the Haviland logo. What do you think?

**A** The Limoges thing is a bit of a red herring. Yes Maling used Haviland china - plus other people's! Yes, they did use a castle mark, but it was Fred Maling who chose the Newcastle Keep mark to

cover over the 'Limoges France' found on such pieces. It is possible that the idea of using a castle came from Limoges though!

**Q** Among my Maling collection I have five different pieces (bowls and dishes) of the dark blue Peona pattern - this being my favourite. I understand that some pieces of this pattern incorporate butterflies along with peonies. Is this particular pattern rare?

**A** Butterflies appear on the plaques, but not on vases bowls, etc. This is because the backgrounds were harder to paint. Less area to paint meant a time saving! Poorly painted background were more noticeable on flat surfaces than on shaped ones.

**Q** I purchased a "Maling" fruit bowl recently for a friend while in Grassmere. The shopkeeper assured me that the piece was Maling even though the marking was Price Kensington. I was told that this was the name of the receiver who sold off the remaining stock when Maling went out of business. Have I been taken advantage of, or is the shopkeeper's information correct?

**A** Price Kensington were another British pottery. They did buy some Maling moulds when Maling went out of business, but anything they produced thereafter in these moulds was labelled Price Kensington and was their product rather than Maling's.

So the story about that being the name of the receiver is not true. Whether the dealer got hold of a garbled version of the true story and misled you quite

innocently, or whether this was a deliberate deception, we couldn't say.

**Q** I recently purchased a pint pot which looks like Maling, although it has no factory mark. The scene is an oriental one, and the only other information is a crown incised into the glaze with the lettering "GR" and below that "71". I realise that the "71" can't be a date, as there was no King George in 1871, and the factory was closed by 1971. Is it Maling?

**A** 71 was the Newcastle district's number for items which needed to be stamped under the Weights and Measures legislation. A Weights and Measures officer was stationed permanently at the Maling factory in view of their huge output of such items. That, in itself, makes Maling a strong possibility. The shape is recognisably Maling, and the pattern is one used by the factory and called "Eslington" (although, as with "Willow" pattern, other factories also used this transfer).

**Q** I have two marmalade pots marked with the letters FMF on the bottom, with the first F back to front, and the 3 letters run together, so the verticals of the Fs are part of the M. This mark is impressed. Does it stand for Maling Ford Factory?

**A** Sorry, but the "FMF" mark is not a Maling one. You'll find that the body and glaze are quite different from Maling's. As to a factory, we're not sure, but it's not Maling.

Send in your questions, and we will answer them by e-mail - david@cello.easynet.co.uk - or by post - The Maling Collectors' Society, PO Box 1762, North Shields NE30 4YJ. Visit the Society website: <http://www.geocities.com/rodeodrive/6544/>

## Join the Maling Collectors' Society

Annual membership of the society costs £20 (UK) or £25 (overseas). We regret that we are only able to accept payment in Sterling. Please send cheques made payable to "The Maling Collectors' Society" to: PO Box 1762, North Shields NE30 4YJ.

I wish to join the Maling Collectors' Society.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

'Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### The Maling Collectors' Society

Chairman: Steven Moore

Secretary: David Holmes

Patrons: Roger Allan,

Tony Boulemier, Fred Hoult,

Caroline Kirkhope,

Dr John Maling