

MALING

COLLECTORS' SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 5 December 1999

It's Blyth!

Do you recall the bowl featured in newsletter 3 - the one with a short pattern name ending in "TH"? We suggested that it might be called LEITH, MEATH etc. We (and you!) should have looked closer to home, as the actual name of this design is BLYTH. There is a marked example doing the fair circuit at the moment. It's been spotted at Newark and Harrogate. Priced at just £30, it's not that expensive for a rare design - admittedly on a fairly useless floating bowl.



The plate shown below is decorated with a design that we have known for a number of years as the "butterfly" pattern. It comes in all sorts of guises, but we can now reveal its true name, which is SYLVAN.

Looking through the existing list of pattern numbers in Trademark of Excellence, I noted how a few of them from the 1930s are unfamiliar to me. I raised this with another member who has collected for as long as I have and he commented that he had not recalled seeing them either. Have you seen these patterns?

"RICHMOND" nos. 6129, 6130 & 6131 from 1933 "LEAF SPRAY TRELLIS" Nos. 6227 - 6230. "BIRD & FESTOON BORDER" 6315 - 6317 both from 1935 and "WILD FLOWER" 6389 - 6394 from 1937. If you come across them let us know!



Maling Christmas to you

Seasonal greetings from Steven. This Edwardian postcard has never been sent to anyone so it can't be dated, but look at the vase. Is that a number 17 shape vase in "WILD ROSE"? Something tells me it's going to be about 1910. Have you spotted any Maling in print or on television?

A glimpse of Miss Theo at work

Theo Maling or “Miss Theo” to most Maling collectors celebrated her 91st birthday on December 5th. The oldest of Fred Maling’s four children she has outlived all of her siblings and shows every sign of “going strong” for many years to come.

Theo always told me that she rarely designed on paper, but would simply take a pot and paint directly onto it. Often these would be seconds or older pieces that she would find on her hunts around the pottery. She would play around with a design, refining it until she was satisfied with it. This is why there are inconsistencies in the quality of her work. Some pieces are not well painted or have obvious design faults.

Take for example the No 1 shaped vase illustrated in Trademark of Excellence. It’s a fine design, showing a Japanese carp, but the green chequer border does not really work. Later examples of this design have a stylised waves border which works much better.



The two vases illustrating this piece show how Theo has developed a design and refined and improved it. They illustrate a previously unrecorded design which is unusual in Theo’s studio work, as not only does it have a pattern number (5660) but is lustrated. The left hand vase is more simply painted in typical studio style, whereas the vase on the right is more refined and an overall tighter design. The flowers on version two are smaller and the centres have had stamens painted in. There is also a difference in the way each vase is marked.

The left hand vase is signed “T Maling Handpainted 5660”, whereas the right hand vase is signed “Hand Painted Maling Ware 5660.” Though not bearing her signature, the inscription is in Theo’s distinctive hand. Why this distinction? Only Theo’s private studio work bears her signature, but those designs she painted on behalf of the pottery bear just the Maling name. There are even examples with the simple mark “Maling Ware” painted on by hand.

Another piece has turned up which illustrates Theo’s practice of using a pot as a piece of paper to work out a design. This rare plate showing the recently opened Tyne Bridge has only just come to light. Although it appears to be unfinished it is not. This is how the plate was to have appeared. The fact the plate has been lustrated proves that this is the finished state. What could have been this plate’s purpose?

Here is an intriguing theory. In the same year Maling launched a new logo based on a silhouette of Newcastle with a new font style designed by Lucien Boullemier. Could the background be based on this plate and was Theo given the job of designing it? Was this plate one of a series of trials, perhaps for a finished example to be used in the pottery showroom? We might never know.

SM

The society website is now officially <http://www.maling-pottery.org.uk>. However, the old URL is still active and will get you to the same place (without additional banner advertising).

This month’s tip is about searching the ‘Net. How do you find what’s out there in cyberspace? Most people will be familiar with search engines - programs which search for key words or phrases you have specified. But why not use a “meta” search engine? That’s a search engine which searches other search engines. One of your editor’s long time favourites is Metacrawler: <http://www.metacrawler.com>. A newer kid on the block is InferenceFind: <http://www.infind.com>. Both are worth a visit.

Recent research showed that even the best search engines cover less than 20 per cent of all the sites out there in cyberspace, so it pays to have at least a couple of meta search engines bookmarked, rather than relying exclusively on search facilities provided by your ISP.

Of course, the technology is never 100 per cent accurate. One meta search engine tries to be helpful by second-guessing what you are looking for. Type in “Maling” and it asks if you are looking for “male celebrities in the nude”!

Canada's revenge!

Ex-pat Joe Forsyth spearheads the campaign to bring Maling to Canada.

In the last newsletter, Barbara Mills wrote about her successful 'hunt' for Maling on Vancouver Island. Yes, Barbara, Chemainus is a treasure trove for antique collectors!

So I thought it might be fun to pen a few words about my, Canadian, 'hunt' while in England on vacation this October. My first stop was to meet Steven Moore at the Laing Art Gallery. Steven had kindly arranged to meet my wife, Kay, and I and take us 'back stage' to view the treasures - and what a delightful 2 hours we spent. The large oriental chargers and the copper plate from which the 1929 Exhibition plates were made were highlights. So too were Steven's stories about the factory, the designers and the patterns. One of the patterns we really loved was the Aquatic pattern from the late 1920s with its gorgeous cranes - more later on that.

Pub pots

One place we never expected to find Maling was in a local pub. We went with friends to the Royal Oak in Great Ayton, Yorkshire, for Sunday lunch on our 35th wedding anniversary. We sat down and I looked around and almost fell out of my chair when I saw the Chintz teapot and two jugs in a showcase on the wall. On the other wall were 3 more very nice pieces of lustreware. The cases were, of course, locked and the young lady serving us had never noticed the collectibles. At the local antiques store down the street, I saw two more pieces outrageously priced and talked to the dealer. He, too, had never noticed the pieces in the pub. So, if you're ever in Great Ayton enjoy a meal and look at the pottery while eating!

As we travelled we always looked in the local antique shops and found several pieces in a shop in Yarm, right on the historic high street. The dealer had two examples of the Rington's large Pansy flower vase (fig. 5.8 or 6.8 in the book) for £125 each. I was delighted to see that, as I had paid much less for mine in Canada. Our next stop was York where I was to pick up the smaller Pansy vase from a young man who lived in Hull and

who had sold it to me over the Internet. We had a lovely visit with this teen entrepreneur and his father who turned out to have been a Rington's driver in his early working career. Price was £90 and well worth it.

While in the City of York we spent a couple of hours browsing and found lots of Maling in Stonegate Antique Centre. Included were two examples of the Aquatic pattern - a vase about 8" high and a bowl. Kay wanted desperately for me to buy the vase, but at £495 it was too rich for my budget that day.

Racing repro

Our next antiques visit was to the show at Wetherby racecourse. With about 500 stalls to visit it took some brisk walking. I was surprised at the number of reproduction Ringtons pieces on the stalls - it looked like Wade and Masons were doing a brisk business, but seeing the pieces marked up 50% to 100% from the price at which they sell didn't impress me. We found one lady with a stall devoted largely to Maling and Pendelphin - an interesting if eclectic combination. She had been collecting and selling for 20 years and indicated that it was becoming almost impossible to buy and resell for a profit any more. I came away with a dressing table set (tray, powder bowl and lid, and 2 candlesticks) in Peony Rose and it now sits nicely in one of our guest bedrooms. At £185 I was happy.

My final story concerns another buy from the Internet, still in Hull but a different seller. We met up with this fellow in a MacDonalds on the outskirts of Hull around 9:30 p.m. and shared stories before I came away with a Castles tea caddy. He had some interesting tales of Maling that he had found, including the Newcastle Castle Keep Model which he had found at Doncaster racecourse selling for £10. I should be so lucky!!

We enjoyed our antique hunting but the prices both in stores and at Wetherby were high by Canadian standards. Roll on our spring antique show in April.

Joe Forsyth
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Rare bits are Welsh, but which is Maling?

Quite a few examples of Maling's Gaudy Welsh designs exist in the collections of members and several distinct designs occur. This might make you feel happy to attribute unmarked examples to Maling safely. So when I saw one of these plates at a flea market recently priced at only £5, I felt sure it would be Maling - but it wasn't!

Even though, as you can see for yourself, the two are virtually identical, the fleamarket plate was not Maling but marked "WILSON." Question is who stole whose design? Many pottery workers were itinerant and moved from factory to factory. Perhaps one of Maling's decorators left and joined a rival firm or perhaps Maling poached one of Wilson's employees. We will never know, as both pieces date from the same period. As I have always advised, if it's not marked you can not be sure of a maker by style of pattern alone. These two plates prove this point. Can you tell which one is Maling? The answer is in the "society matters" column on page 8.

SM



Will you spot Which Willow's Which?

Here we have three Willow Pattern plates - the sort which lurk in cardboard boxes under almost every stall at an antique fair. Would you give them a second look? Well, in this case you should, because these particular ones are all examples of 19th century Maling.

In the Shire Album "Maling and other Tyneside Pottery", RC Bell records that Maling used at least five variations of three-man Willow. Take a closer look and spot some of the differences - for these pieces are, indeed, all different. Look at the size and shape of the tree on the island at the 11 o'clock position; the number and shape of apples/branches on the big tree; and the alignment of the path which leads down from the pagoda to the 6 o'clock position. Careful inspection will turn up several more.

The marks are shown below, exactly as they appear on the pieces. Number 1 is Robert Maling c1840 (the "gash" which appears across it is an impressed mark - two for the price of one!). Number 2 is CT Maling c1850 and also bears the impressed mark of his name. Number 3 is again CT Maling, but with a different mark and an impressed date of 1895.

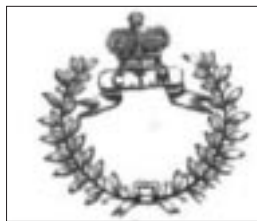
They may not be the most decorative pieces of Maling, but they do provide an interesting history lesson and deserve some respect simply because of their age.



Mark 1



Mark 2



Mark 3

The articles on Willow and Coronet show what can be done by members looking around their own collections and putting pen to paper. Why not have a go? The next newsletter will be out in March, and we welcome your contributions.



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3

Coronet numbers - do they add up?

Member John Bailey has come up with an interesting and plausible theory about Coronet markings. (You will recollect that Coronet wares were made by a number of companies for export to the States and Canada in the late 20s. Maling pieces carry the factory name, but they do not bear recognisable Maling pattern numbers and are usually numbered in the form xxx/xxxx.)

John believes that the first set of digits refers to the item's shape, while the remaining digits identify the pattern. He offers the following photographs as evidence.

On the right: two vases which appear to have identical shapes. The top one is

marked 152/1013, while the bottom one is 152/1042 - so 152 could well be the shape. Now compare the pattern of the top vase with that of the octagonal bowl at bottom left. The bowl is marked 24/1013 - so 1013 would appear to define the pattern. (Both the vase and the bowl are on the same colour ground.)

Finally, the ashtray is numbered 130/1046 (or possibly 190/1046). The pattern is that seen on the lower vase, and the difference in numbering could easily be explained by the fact that the ashtray is green while the vase is orange - the same pattern on two different grounds, hence the closeness of the numbers. Can members supply more examples to help confirm this theory?



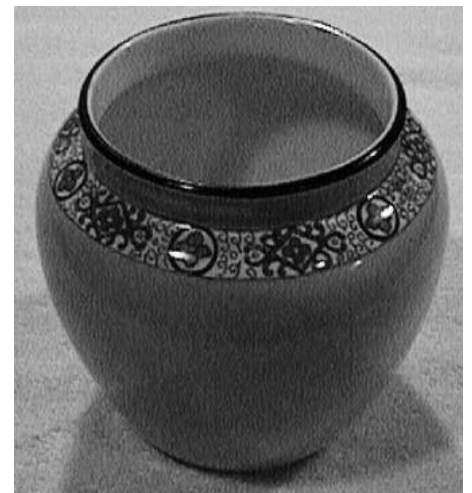
152/1013



24/1013



130/1046



152/1042

I was brought up trailing after my parents looking around antique shops so you would have thought I would have had enough of that, but no, I drag my husband around them now!

If he dare complain I tell him it is his fault I'm hooked on Maling as he gave me my first piece, a Voluta flower holder, Storm pattern, some 12 years ago on Valentine's day. Fortunately for us it wasn't a bad omen and our relationship has been far from stormy!

I spent the next 9 years trawling UK antique shops and attending many antique fairs searching for pieces, often with very little success. Then the Antiques Roadshow blew my cover and the world heard about Maling. Much to my dismay it appeared to become collectable overnight.

We are now temporarily living 1 hour from Newcastle (NSW, Australia) and one of the joys of living here apart from the blue sky and beautiful beaches is the abundance of Maling to be found at reasonable prices.

I "discovered" the Maling Society whilst

Tales from Down-Under

browsing on the Internet. I never thought I would become a "nerd" but I have to say my view on "that computer" in my husband's study changed when I found I could access information about Maling. I now even have a database with photographs and details of my collection.

I have learned so much in such a short time and would recommend anyone with

the slightest interest in Maling to join the society. I was amazed last week to come across a fake Ringtons teapot in Sydney as described on the website. Had it not been for your article I would have been none the wiser & thought I'd got a bargain!

My maxim on collecting Maling is to buy what I really like & not always in A1 condition e.g. the biscuit barrel minus lid looks wonderful filled with flowers or the cracked bowl brimming with pot-pourri is quite stunning. That's where I find the society interesting, we all collect but for many different reasons. I am a very keen gardener and I think that is why I am so attracted to Maling ware. I love the bright colours and flower patterns in particular. I would find it hard to choose a favourite design but I know I would never willingly part with my first piece of Storm.

We will shortly be moving on from Australia, and I am just hoping that the posting will be another Maling Haven!

Lesley Close

The Keiller Connection - 2

What follows is a verbatim transcript of all references to Maling's in the Keiller correspondence (Archive & Record Centre, Dundee) for 1871-74, the only period for which business letters survive. Some elision has been necessary to remove irrelevant material and bypass the odd illegible word. The comment is all in the hand of the senior partner in Scotland, Alexander Keiller, writing to his brother William in Guernsey. There is nothing momentous here: we are, however, provided with a rare documentary glimpse into Maling's affairs. In these few extracts it is clearly revealed that this, remarkably, was a trade conducted between two market leaders in their respective fields

In the nature of things, the potters were only mentioned when problems arose in what seems to have been a broadly satisfactory and enduring relationship. In the early 1870s, these mainly concerned the major inconvenience of shortfalls and delays in the supply of pots to Dundee and Guernsey - attributable, thought Alexander Keiller, to shipping difficulties in what was mainly a maritime trade, CT Maling's inability to deputise when ill, and distractions to do with faulty drive shafting at the pottery.

Keiller's also appeared troubled about their increasingly large outlays for marmalade pots. The figure of 2s 8d per dozen, anticipated in September 1872, compares with one of just over 1s calculable from the 1867 statistics cited in my previous article. This suggests that Maling's had the upper hand in the relationship - in turn, presumably, a consequence of near-monopoly in the provision of such industrial pottery. Keiller's never mention the possibility of finding an alternative supplier, despite the aggravations. The Dundee firm's similar dominance in the marmalade trade led not to a resistance to Maling pricing, but, as the last letter shows, to a confident transfer of the higher charges to consumers.

8 November 1871 "Some years ago Maling made for us a crate OM (orange marmalade) pots with lids that came down about a quarter inch over the mouth of the pot & made the pots as near as possible air tight. A number of these we filled with marmalade & put on the lids immediately & gummed the edges of the lids with paper after keeping these pots for 8 or 10 months".

18 December 1871 "Maling appears to find great difficulty in chartering a vessel to load your crates & there is no word of the Secret having arrived at Sunderland. I hope Maling will succeed in picking up a vessel soon or you may get into a mess for want of pots after you commence to make marmalade.... Of course it would never do to



Alexander Keiller, 1821-77, Senior Partner, Dundee.

have several 100 chests of sour oranges lying beside you getting out of condition waiting on pots...".

21 December 1871 "Maling is making a great mess about your crates & I fear will not be able to send you crates in good time for the Coquette's oranges. I have asked him to charter a vessel at once & send the number of crates you require. I suspect you will find it will prove the most profitable plan for you to send the half of the Coquette's cargo to Dundee.... At the same time CT Maling could be making pots earlier so that you could have all you require for the season in stock by the time you get oranges in hand".

29 December 1871 "C.T Maling has chartered the Rosa to load about 90 crates & 4 keels (c85 tons) of coals. 25 crates also go by the Staperayder (paddle-steamer on fortnightly London-Channel islands run), but even at this rate I do not believe that you will be able to get as many pots forwards in time so as to enable you to make up more than say one half of the Coquette's cargo of oranges...".

4 January 1872 "C.T Maling writes that he commences to load the Rosa with crates yesterday. This vessel has 75 tons of coals. We have asked Maling if he cannot get a vessel to take crates only, but he is unwell at present & does not appear to have any one at his place of business that can look after matters properly. I doubt much if you will even get in good time pots to hold the marmalade you can make from 300 chests sours in addition to the oranges you have already got. You should make a calculation - get Robertson (Keiller's marmalade foreman in St Peter Port) to do it - how many crates you will require for the quantity of oranges you have & let me have it at once & I will ask Maling to ship the crates at once".

12 January 1872 "CT Maling has had a breakdown of his shafting & has got behind with our & your pots. I fear we will have to

send you the 100 crates...from Southampton (i.e. by sea to London and by rail to the Solent) so soon as we can get them from Maling. I do not suppose the carriage will be much more than by Staperayder".

5 February 1872 "I note what you say about being able to make an additional quantity of oranges into OM at Guernsey & will take your assistance if I can get Maling to give us pots, but at the present time he is not supplying us with nearly enough for Dundee. However we are pressing him very hard & may get him to do better. If so pots shall be sent you for the oranges you have & if possible for an additional quantity. C&M (Cheeswright & Miskin, London shipowners) advise us that the Staperayder is to be put off for a time after the present trip therefore any crates to be sent you will have to go by Southampton".

26 August 1872 "I have in a previous letter written to you regarding pots for OM & as to Maling forwarding same. The Coquette will bring your oranges & is to be out at Seville about the 15th November & to load as soon thereafter as the port & season permit".

30 September 1872 "The London houses have ordered nearly 10,000 gross OM & ... conditionally another 10,000 gross will be required for the other parts of England & for Ireland Scotland etc but the difficulty is will we be able to get pots from C.T Maling. He is being tempted by new houses by a long price to supply them with pots. C.T. Maling's price is now 2/8 pr dozen for printed OM pots. Of course we have a contract with him for 4500 crates or as many as contain the whole of our next season's make whatever that may be at 2/3¹/d. The old price we paid for last season's pots was 1/10¹/d. We must of course make our price for OM to suit the advance in price of pots etc but that we can arrange again".

Bill Mathew
xmu21@dial.pipex.com



William Keiller, 1829-99, Partner, St Peter Port.

Oddities & Rarities

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

Our first item is, quite literally, Jumbo ware! The original model for Norman Carling's elephant model has been discovered in a private collection. Carling modelled this elephant in 1937 and it was one of a series of animal studies he produced, this being the only one known to have gone into production. The production versions are painted naturalistically, but this one has been glazed jet black to look like ebony and has real ivory tusks.

This superb study is cast from a ten-piece mould. These figures had a tendency to twist in the kiln, and this is the reason few were produced. Two were kept in the pottery's showroom and are now in private collections. This one adds just a little bit more to

our knowledge of how these seldom encountered beasts were produced.

Our second item may look less exotic, but it hides a secret and is a good example of Maling's inventiveness. At first sight it appears to be an ordinary cheese stand and cover in a typical late Miguet lithographic design. However, closer inspection reveals that the cover is pierced and inside is an unglazed pottery disk. Is it still a cheese stand, and why the differences?

The answer is that this is not an ordinary cheese stand but a "Cheese Preserver." A contemporary source states in 1910: "They are constantly bringing out novelties in their various

lines, but are not merely content with new shapes and new patterns, they aim at making ware that will perform new duties. For instance they have just produced a covered cheese dish of an absolutely new description. This dish is constructed with a view to ripening and keeping moist any kind of cheese for long periods and is equally suitable to preserve butter. For use either at home or abroad it will prove a domestic asset of great value; however numerous the insects about, none can gain admittance."

Presumably the biscuit part could be wet and the holes would allow air circulation and water evaporation, making this an early example of a Maling refrigerator!



For those of you who joined the society in 1998, subscriptions are due for renewal on January 1st 2000. Please send your cheque (£20 UK, £25 overseas) to the society's PO box by January 31st.



Q It seems to me that the “Old Mill” plaque is supposed to represent the old mill in Jesmond Dene, is that so do you know? Before coming to NZ we lived just at the top of Jesmond Dene which was a lovely park in those days. The mill is just a ruin now but, when I was a lass, the wooden wheel was complete, the building without roof but with walls and there is a footbridge just to the side of it, as in the plates, which made me think the plate was supposed to indicate how it was years ago.

A Steven says: It’s an intriguing idea and one I have heard before. It is interesting to add that Lucien Boulemier lived in Jesmond Park West, a few yards from the mill.

Q I have seen a 1938 Kingfisher plaque with a fawn background, not the dark blue version which I have seen on several occasions. Could you tell me if this is a rare colouration?

A Maling were experimenting with matt glazes in the late 1930’s, but only a few glazes seem to have been introduced on a commercial basis. Fawn (or Straw) pieces are rarer than the ordinary blue ground plaques, as they were not good sellers. Today, also, they are generally less popular. Two examples went not too long ago at auction for around £150 each.

Q Did Maling ever produce any cat figures? If they did maybe I could include a very short piece in my Cat Club magazine about pottery cat collectibles.

A As far as we are aware, no. Elephants, yes (see article on page 7) - but no cats!

Q I noticed in a previous newsletter a question about which items make up a dressing table set. I would like to know what makes a tea or coffee set.

A A tea set is usually 12 cups, while 6 is a half tea set. Coffee sets are usually 6 cups and generally don’t have a milk jug, but a hot milk jug (covered). A morning set has two cups and saucers, a teapot, milk and sugar and one small plate for spoons. But the truth is there is no answer, and if you wanted to buy a coffee set with 7 cups and saucers, you probably could do so!

Q I recently saw on the Internet a Maling Coronet bowl, but it didn’t look “right”. Was I right to be wary?

A Indeed. It wasn’t Maling, and the society advised the vendor accordingly. At the risk of repeating ourselves, several companies produced Coronet wares for the US importers George Borgfeldt & Co. If the mark says “Maling”, it is. If it doesn’t, it isn’t.

Q We have found at the bottom of the ocean (14 fathoms), a container that says on the front “JAMES KEILLER & SONS” and on the bottom it says “Maling K with a “>” tucked inside the bottom of the “K”, it also has No. 11227 A and patent. It looks like a storage jar of some kind. Any info anyone could give me on it would be nice. I’m using it as a short vase, but I would like to share the history of it with my children.

A In response to this and many other queries we have received via e-mail from non-members, there is now a Keiller page on the society website.

Society matters

Sorry we didn’t manage a second collectors’ day this year. We are thinking about running two next year, in May and September, to avoid the peak holiday periods and stand a chance of good weather for the factory tour. We’ll let you know in the March newsletter, when “Life of a pottery girl” will return.

The membership application form has just been reprinted in colour. If anyone would like a small supply to hand out to friends or fellow collectors, please get in touch.

Finally, in answer to the Gaudy Welsh puzzle on page 3, the Maling plate is the top one.

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.maling-pottery.org.uk>

The Maling Collectors’ Society

Chairman: Steven Moore

Secretary: David Holmes

Patrons: Roger Allan,

Tony Boulemier, Fred Hault,

Caroline Kirkhope,

Dr John Maling

Deliveries - the old-fashioned way

This photograph (courtesy of R & N Grearson/Ouseburn Heritage.) shows Jack Grearson of Stepney Road Newcastle. The photograph was presented to him by Malings and shows a cart piled high with Maling jars. Grearson held a contract with the pottery to transport china clay and finished goods on his horse drawn “rolleys”. A “rolley” to those of you who don’t know is a flat bedded horse drawn cart, just like the one shown here. His descendant Rita Grearson recalls: “Block carts were required for this work to offload china clay from ships’ holds, and rolleys on which to transport finished pottery ware to wholesalers. The china clay used to be offloaded from ships using scoop-like shovels.”

The photograph’s background is indistinct but seems to show chimneys which look rather like those seen at the pottery. Perhaps this was taken in Maling’s yard?

