

CARLTON WARE NEWSLETTER #57

from

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March 2011



Our final full month in the U.K. started off with the big showground fair at Ardingly in West Sussex. We arrived early on the first day while most dealers were still unpacking. We started off our search for Carlton Ware in the Abergavenny Building and about half way down the first row of tables, we spotted a vase in a most unusual colourway for the pattern; it was a gloss yellow **RABBITS AT DUSK** piece; a colourway we had not seen before. The vase was large, 10" high, and the pattern was well displayed on the ovoid **443** shape and the backstamp included the **pattern number 4256**. We checked it over in the poor light of the early morning and could find no damage. The vase rang well and the vendor assured us that it was in perfect condition. So we bought it!

It took us a little while to come down from the high that comes from finding such a beautiful and unusual piece, as we carried on with our search. However, nothing else in that building, or any of the other buildings and outside stalls, sparked any type of interest after our initial find, and we left the show without buying anything else.

While we have been in the U.K. this winter, we have been selling as well as buying – after all, a 4½ month vacation doesn't come cheap! So that evening, I photographed and listed the **RABBITS AT DUSK** vase on eBay. In no time at all, the bids started to come in and within the first 24 hours it had already reached £335. Then, an eBay user with the ID name "potteryvillage-dot", sent us a message saying "no mention on the listing of the repaired hairline to rim?" We had no idea who this person was or how she knew about the condition of the vase but, on receiving her message, we immediately inspected the vase again and, sure enough, soon spotted the hairline that we had previously not seen!





Well, the high we had felt the previous day was now totally reversed with a big sinking feeling of disappointment!

We had no other choice now but to cancel the bids on the eBay auction, end the sale and relist the vase again with a revised condition report.

We did this immediately and, as well as the description revision, we also lowered the reserve, as the value had obviously been reduced. However, this did not affect the interest in the vase and within 24 hours the bidding had reached £457, even higher than it had reached before we had ended the previous auction! Our reserve was £495 and by the time the sale finished a week later, the vase sold for a very respectable £595.

It certainly is a pity that this beautiful and rare piece has a hairline but, as the new owner of the vase has commented in his feedback “what a PEARLER OF A VASE – WOW!”

A footnote to this story comes from Derek & Jane Towns, collectors of this pattern, who, it turns out, had seen this vase at a previous Ardingly, and had pointed out the hairline to the seller, hoping to get her to reduce her asking price! So, it turns out that the seller did know that the condition was less than “perfect” – we will certainly be careful in dealing with this person in future!



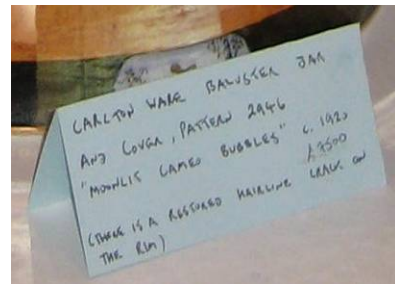
In the middle of the month, the Antiques for Everyone show was on for four days at the NEC in Birmingham. We have always wanted to attend this fair but have never been in the U.K. when it had been on. So we were eager to see what it was all about and arrived at the NEC at 11 a.m., opening time on the first day. Plenty of well organized parking is available and then a shuttle bus takes you right to the entrance to the fair. It was very busy and, although the NEC is huge and this fair was occupying three exhibition halls, the aisles were narrow and some of the booths were quite small. Consequently, if there were a couple of people already in a booth, there was no chance of seeing what was in the cabinets. So the going was slow but, with lots of interesting stuff to look at, we were in no particular hurry.

There were some beautiful pieces of Royal Worcester, Royal Doulton, Moorcroft and Wedgwood Fairyland Lustre to admire and a few pieces of Carlton Ware.

The first piece that we saw was an 11" **SKETCHING BIRD** ginger jar, **shape 311**, in the gloss cream colourway, **pattern 3891**. It was a beautiful piece but, unfortunately, the finial had been restored. However, the price of £375 reflected its condition.



The next piece we saw was an unbelievably large temple jar in **Moonlight Cameo** measuring a staggering 26" high! It was in the gloss orange and lustre blue colourway, **pattern 2946**. We stood and admired it for some time but at the equally large price of £7,500 we were in no position to buy it – besides, it would cost another fortune to get it safely back to Canada. The jar had 4 cameos around the centre and 4 smaller ones on both the base



and neck rims, plus 4 more around the lid. However, as the price tag shows, it had a restored hairline to the rim. Nevertheless, it is an important and impressive piece of Carlton Ware!

Further around the show, we saw a very striking coffee set in the **AMORY shape**, in one of the **Medley** colourways, **pattern 3600**. We spoke to the vendor and he said that the set was in mint condition with no damage to the paintwork, a common problem with this pattern. We thought that it was fairly priced at £365 but coffee sets are not a shape we collect, due to the space they require for proper display. (Shape name and pattern number courtesy of Harvey Pettit).





Another big fair during the month was the Peterborough Festival of Antiques at the East of England Showground on March 25th & 26th. It was a good 2 hour drive for us and we didn't arrive there until about 11 a.m. on the first day. There was quite a traffic jam getting into the showground and the parking areas were filling up fast. There was a long but fast moving queue to pay at the entrance and, once inside, the interior buildings were very crowded. We took our time walking round the

buildings and exterior stalls, where there were displays from the regular dealers that we were now running into at most of the shows, and we found nothing new or exciting in any of the booths. However, the old saying that "the early bird catches the worm" is obviously true, as fellow collector Chris Rutter had better success by arriving at 9 a.m., the opening time for the public, and was rewarded with a great find of this beautifully enameled **Mandarin Tree** bowl on the yellow & ruby lustre ground, **pattern 3703**.



Our best buying success during the month was not at a show but was from a house that we viewed, whilst looking at property for sale. In a local village cottage that we arranged to view was a china cabinet with a collection of Shelley China on display in the art deco Green Blocks pattern, on the Vogue shape designed by Eric Slater, including 5 trios and some other pieces from a tea set. We find it hard



not to look at the contents of a house at the same time as taking in the property itself. Luckily, the estate agent was most obliging and was happy to comply with our request by asking the vendor if they were interested in selling their Shelley. Well, to cut to the end of this part of the story, the agent gave the vendor our phone number and they contacted us and we eventually agreed on a purchase price for their dishes.

In an amazing coincidence, the bar tender in one of our locals, The Ebrington Arms, turned out to be the Grandson of Eric Slater and we chatted with him quite a bit about his Grandfather's time in Stoke-on-Trent. As detailed on the Carlton Ware World website recently, there will be an exhibition of the Shelley Potteries at the Gladstone Museum towards the end of April. As for Eric Slater's Grandson Johnny, as interesting as this connection was, wouldn't it have been amazing if we had met up with the Grandson of someone who had worked at the Copeland Street works!!



It was not our intention to keep the pieces of Shelley but we had no idea that we would turn them over so fast. We had seen and admired a beautiful Crown Devon vase at a couple of shows over the past three months; firstly at Alexandra Palace and then at Woking Art Deco. The vase was in the art deco Fairy Castle pattern on the Mattajade finish. However, it was quite expensive and we could not justify buying a piece of Crown Devon at this price. The owners of the vase, Decoskin from Birmingham, dealt in other pottery, including Carlton Ware, Clarice Cliff and Shelley; so we contacted them to see if they were interested in trading the 5 trios for their vase. It turned out that they were interested and they even delivered the vase to us and picked up the trios. So we are now the happy owners of this outstanding 15" vase!

Our trip to the U.K. will be coming to an end shortly and we will be returning to Canada on April 14. It has been a most wonderful, long trip for us and we have really enjoyed staying in and getting to know the northern Cotswolds in Gloucestershire, as well as some of the other beautiful areas in the surrounding Counties. We hope you have enjoyed reading our last 4 newsletters, detailing our travels and shopping around the fairs and markets in the Midlands and the south of England. We have not detailed all of our purchases to you, as the majority are not Carlton Ware related but we have 6 crates of china and glass that we are shipping to Calgary and we look forward to unpacking it all once we are home.

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