

CARLTON WARE NEWSLETTER #58

from

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It has been over a year since we wrote our last Newsletter but, in that time, we have been searching for Carlton Ware in Canada and the USA. Our search has turned up some interesting pieces for our collection that we would like to share with you. However, the foremost reason for writing a Newsletter at this time is to share with you the exciting news of the publication of a new book on Carlton Ware from researchers Barry and Elaine Girling. But first, our finds and some other interesting Carlton Ware.



In early 2011, we found a lovely, true pair of Blush Ware vases in Tennessee. The vases are quite tall, measuring 13" high and have a soft high glaze, unusual for Blush Ware. However, what really struck us about the pair is that they must be Carlton Ware's earliest example of a SPIDER WEB pattern. The spider can be seen sitting on its web strung between the blossoms and leaves. There are raised, over glaze enamels on the flowers, leaves and bramble berries, and the handles, tops and bases are heavily gilded. The bases are marked with the early 1900s blue W&R Crown mark and have the pattern number 57/1776.





On eBay recently there was a NEW FLIES bowl that featured the spider again in a later pattern from the 1920s. This was a popular pattern, produced in several different colourways; this one being a dark, lustre blue, pattern number 3023. The bowl is completely covered with the web and the spider is sitting in the middle. The pattern also features pretty butterflies and an intricately designed border.

Finally, in the late 1930s, Irene Pemberton designed the SPIDERS WEB pattern. This proved to be immensely popular with the public for a long time. Production continued after the war years, even as late as the 1960s. The pattern was produced in a large number of colourways, including the popular Royale range. Here we have a large bowl on a light green lustre ground. Once again, the spider is sitting in the middle of the finely gilded web and the pattern features dragonflies and bell flowers. However, it is interesting to see that Miss Pemberton used the blackberry that we had found on our much earlier Blush Ware vases.



Later in the year in Ohio, we found an outstanding garniture of a pair of ginger jars and a gondola bowl in the TEMPLE pattern. This stunning set is in the vivid gloss yellow and matte black colourway, pattern number 2928. The ginger jars, marked with the 125/2 shape number, measure 10" high. The interior of the gondola bowl is finished in the matte black.

Shortly after finding these pieces, we found another gondola bowl in California. Once again, it was in the TEMPLE pattern but it also included its original flower frog. This set is in the matte cream and black colourway, pattern number 3027. The frog is a heavy piece of pottery and the flower holes are gilded to the interior. It is interesting to note the different interior finishes used by Carlton Ware on their gondola bowls, with this colourway of the TEMPLE pattern being totally gilded.



Early in the Canadian winter, we received an enquiry from a lady in Winnipeg who had a piece of Carlton Ware that she had inherited. She said that, about 20 years ago, her mother had bought a box of dishes at a local auction and this bowl was part of the contents. She wondered if we could give her some information about the bowl, including its possible value. The picture that was attached to the email was just the kind of piece that we would all like to find in a box of dishes in an auction! It was a beautiful piece of SUNFLOWER GEOMETRIC in the orange lustre ground, pattern number 3334. We replied with as much information as we could about the piece, commenting on how lucky she was to have inherited such a desirable and hard to find bowl and gave her what we felt was a fair valuation.



About a month later, we heard from the lady again, wondering if we would be interested in buying the piece. Well, SUNFLOWER GEOMETRIC is not a pattern that one sees too often so we said we would be delighted to buy it. One nice side of the transaction was that the lady was going to be coming to Calgary in early December and she would be happy to deliver it. Well, you can't ask for more than that and on the much awaited evening of the delivery, we were happy to show her more Carlton Ware.

Just before last Christmas, we found a very seasonal piece in Ohio again; a jug in the very hard to find HOLLY pattern. As well as being a pattern that we wanted, it was also a shape of jug that we had much admired but did not have in our collection. This beautiful HANDCRAFT piece, pattern number 3418, is a highly stylized pattern that works very well on this geometric shape. It has a nice soft gloss finish and the handle and interior are finished in gloss black.



We are very much into balance and symmetry in our Carlton Ware display so, in April this year, we were delighted to find a piece on eBay in the same jug shape, listed by a seller in the Netherlands. The jug was in the SKETCHING BIRD pattern on a Ruby Lustre ground, pattern number 3889. This is always a well executed and pleasing pattern to see.

Both these patterns were designed by Violet Elmer. Several other examples of her designs can also be found on this shape, all working well on the geometric body.

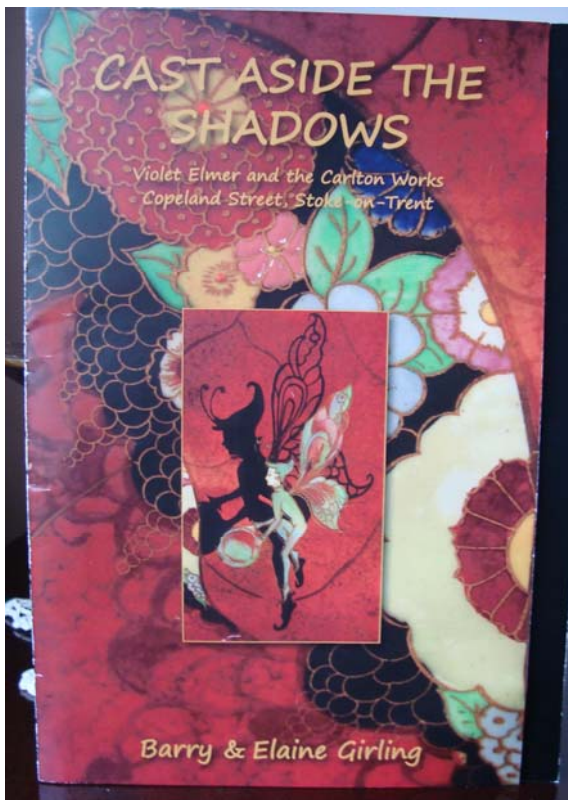


FLORAL COMETS (3422); Flower Medley (3588); Dragon & Traveler (3656); FLOWER & FALLING LEAF (3949)

We do not think that we have ever read of any attribution as to who designed Carlton Ware's many shapes; however, in an upcoming book, which we hinted at

in the opening paragraph of this Newsletter, additional information is at last coming to light. In their new book "Cast Aside The Shadows", Barry and Elaine Girling reveal on page 43 that "New patterns or shapes, by, say Violet Elmer, would be submitted to management and possibly a sample made. A decision as to production would then be taken by Mr Cuthbert Wiltshaw, in conjunction with the opinion of the salesmen." Then, on page 131 we learn that "Present in the 1920s was Bob Mitchell, who, with Ron Hopkinson, worked closely with Miss Elmer, modeling shapes." From this new information, can we dare to assume that this very modern shape was designed or influenced by Violet herself to compliment her equally modern pattern designs?

Well, at this point, we are delighted to make the following announcement:



"Cast Aside the Shadows", is a new book concerning Carlton Ware by Barry and Elaine Girling. Seen from the perspective of Violet Elmer and the factory's other creative forces, it is in part, a biographical reference. Whilst not claiming to be definitive, details are included of employees, founders and products. Several years in the making, it is the fulfillment of the authors' ambition to bring to a wider audience, original information and previously unseen illustrations, in recognition of the achievements of Wiltshaw and Robinson.

This book traces the life of ceramic designer Violet Elmer [1907-1988], her friends and those who ably assisted her at the Carlton Works, Copeland Street during the period 1928-1938. That she may be remembered as one of the finest designers of the art deco

era. A history of the factory is included which contains reference to the other creative forces.

And what a history this is! We read our early printed copy of the book immediately upon its arrival and it contains information about all of the various owners and people working at the factory, from the top to the bottom. Reading the history of these folk was like looking in on an episode of Downton Abbey, with the Wiltshaw's and Robinson's ancestors upstairs and the Elmer's, Boulton's and many others downstairs. Although, as years past and times changed, a blending does slowly emerge.

The first chapter of the book recounts the history of Violet Elmer's family, right up to the time when Violet began working at the pottery. The second chapter gives us an amazing wealth of information about the Company and its owners, as well as a history of the day to day working life at the factory and how that changed over time, both socially and technologically. Next, we have several chapters chronologically detailing the history and work of the various designers, both before and after Violet's time at the factory. Of course, the lengthiest section here is dedicated to Violet Elmer and her contribution to the Best Ware years of 1928-1938. This section breaks down the patterns she designed by year, with lots of wonderful pictures of those sought after pieces. There are also chapters on production and decoration techniques and finally a chapter on Violet's life after she left the factory. The book is supplemented with lists of designs, designers, modelers and employees associated with Carlton Ware and some family trees.

The quality of this publication is second to none. This is a thread sewn, hardback book with laminated dust jacket, measuring 16cm x 24cm. It is printed on top quality paper and contains over 170 pages, including numerous photographs.

Copies will be available from June 15, 2012 at £47 plus £6 p & p UK (£12 p & p. Australia and Canada). Delivery 7-10 days.

Greeting cards of Miss Elmer's watercolours (see below) are also available at £5 a pair and can be included with the book. If required, kindly add the remittance to the cheque, payable to B & E Girling.

All requests to Leiston Press, Unit 1, Masterlord Industrial Park, Leiston, Suffolk IP16 4JD. Please mark your envelope "CATS" top left hand corner.



A book like this is well overdue and Barry and Elaine are to be congratulated in sourcing the previously unreleased information. It is a very worthy tribute to a true, unsung hero of British design. Her name does appear more and more in places such as eBay as her patterns become recognized, but from now on, Violet Elmer should be included in all future lists of the Pottery Ladies, currently occupied by Clarice Cliff, Susie Cooper and Charlotte Rhead.

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Acknowledgements: We would like to thank Harvey Petit and the Carlton Ware World collectors club www.carltonwareworld.com and Terry & Heather Wise for permission to reproduce the picture of the FLORAL COMETS jug, pattern 3422.