

CARLTON WARE NEWSLETTER No. 61

from

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In June, an unusual piece of Carlton Ware came up for sale at an auction house in Chiswick, London. We wrote to the auctioneer requesting a condition report and asked if there were any numbers on the base along with the backstamp. They replied that the vase was in good order and that it had the numbers **1695/E** on the base. Unfortunately, that is the shape number and not a pattern number.

What is this piece? We have discussed the vase with other collectors and have come to no definite agreement as to whether this was a factory trial piece or a blank piece painted outside the factory.

In our opinion, it is a factory made piece. The enameling and the colour palette used are similar to that used in the factory; the design of the trees, mountains and butterflies are reminiscent of other patterns, even Carlton China patterns; and, most of all, the gilding and interior border frieze were applied at the factory. Most pieces painted outside the factory have no gilding, as can be seen on the Carlton Ware World website, in the Monogrammed Mysteries section.

It would seem that there were other people who also thought this piece came from the factory as it sold for £200 plus commission.

Does anyone know of any other pieces in this pattern?





Another interesting item seen on eBay recently was an 11 inch vase in the **BUBBLE** pattern, number **2446**, on a gloss yellow ground. The interesting oddity about this pattern is the addition of the words **SHAPE _____ DECO 2446** to the backstamp, as shown on the right.



We had previously seen this backstamp on a piece in the collection of Betty Hart here in Calgary. Betty has an 8 inch vase in the **Carp** pattern, number **2438**, on a pale lustre blue ground. (More information on the **Carp** pattern can be found on page 5 of this Newsletter.)



We asked Bruce Nichol, of Nicholnack art in pottery, if he had seen this particular backstamp before and Bruce sent us pictures of the **NEW PRUNUS** pattern number **2463** on a gloss blue ground and **2472** on a gloss yellow ground.





So, what is the reason for this additional backstamp? These particular patterns are from the early 1920s and the word DECO was not used back then as we use it today. The term Deco or Art Deco was

popularized in the late 1960s and early 1970s, so we suspect that the word DECO on the backstamp is just short for the word Decoration. We wrote to Harvey Pettit at Carlton Ware World to ask him if he knew the origin of the backstamp. Harvey replied: "As you say,



DECO is an abbreviation for Decoration. The printed Shape/Deco

mark was probably introduced as an attempt to assist decorators and possibly retailers/customers, though its use appears to have been brief. It must not have been found to be an improvement on the usual method and also involved extra unnecessary work. I first thought it was used on popular patterns but clearly this is not the case. It seems that rarely was the shape number added." Harvey added that the **BUBBLE** pattern was also known as **BUBBLE BORDER** when the "mosaic" was not used (left).



We suspect that there are other patterns in this number range, (2400 – 2500), that use this addition to the backstamp. One that comes to mind is **Rainbow Portal** seen here (left) on a large vase in gloss yellow, pattern number **2497**. We have also seen this pattern on a gloss purple ground, number 2500; a similar ground to the **BUBBLE** vase (right), pattern number **2454**.



Do you have any pieces in your collection with this additional backstamp? Please let us know; pictures and details would be much appreciated.



In our last Newsletter, we discussed the oddity of the **Hummingbird** pattern having the same pattern numbers as the **SKETCHING BIRD** pattern. Charlie, one of our readers from California, wrote to us suggesting that the **Shabunkin** and **RIVER FISH** patterns also share pattern numbers.

There certainly is more than one style of fish seen in this pattern; on the left we have a downward swimming fish on a 6 inch vase, shape **457**, and on the right is a



different fish swimming upward on an 8 inch vase, shape **443**. Both pieces have the pattern number **3971**, so could there possibly be more than one pattern?

Once again we consulted Harvey Pettit to see what he knew about this pattern. Harvey replied: *“The pattern name **Shabunkin** was adopted before knowing that the pattern was named **RIVER FISH** on the works and that three different fish were available for use on the pattern. According to the records, there were 13 variants of this pattern; though to date, only **3970**, with a Grey ground and **3971**, with an Ivory & Green ground, have been recorded. The weeds and shadows in the background are all hand painted so will vary considerably depending on the whim of the paintress.*

*“To understand why all three fish are named the same, a little understanding of the design process is needed. Patterns were engraved onto a copper plate from which they were printed onto ware. The copper plate for **RIVER FISH** would have had all three fish engraved onto it – hence it is the same pattern. The printer would print all three onto a sheet of transfer paper and the decorators would cut out which one was most suitable for the item to be decorated. Which fish was used depended on the shape to which the pattern was applied. For any pattern introduction, the designer had to take into consideration the large range of shapes Carlton Ware produced, from a small preserve pot to a large vase or jug; some of which were tall and some squat. The fish shown on the vases above are not to scale but the fish on the lidded pot (right) is smaller and clearly it would look lost on a large vase.”*



To recap then, pattern numbers **3970** and **3971** are both **RIVER FISH**. **Shabunkin** is just an adopted name, similar to how **Shadow Bunnies** has been adopted for the **RABBITS AT DUSK** pattern. Therefore, if this is correct for the **RIVER FISH/Shabunkin** pattern, is this also the same then for the **SKETCHING BIRD/Hummingbird** pattern, in that the smaller bird we have been calling **Hummingbird** is actually a smaller engraved transfer for the **SKETCHING BIRD** pattern? We posed this theory to Harvey Pettit who responded that the answer is rather involved but has promised us an explanation. More then on this subject in a future Newsletter.

Incidentally, the question of the spelling of Shabunkin has been raised. Both the Oxford Dictionary and Wikipedia spell it Shubunkin; however, in the Carlton Times, volume 12, page 17, the Naming Committee spelt it Shabunkin and that has stuck with some collectors.

While we were researching the fish patterns discussed above, it became obvious that there was some confusion on pattern names. This has come about due to incorrect information published in the Collecting Carlton Ware series of books that was sometimes used in The Carlton Times and has, therefore, become commonly accepted. Therefore, some pattern name corrections are in order.

The early 1920s fish pattern shown below is commonly referred to as Fish & Seaweed. However, that is a factory name given to a late pattern issued in the 1950s, shown on the next page. The factory name for this pattern is unknown and was given the name **Carp** by Harvey Pettit and Peter Cochrane.



Carp

- Pattern **2437 POWDER BLUE**
- Pattern **2438** light blue lustre
- Pattern **2440** white ground with lemon lustre
- Pattern **2441** pink lustre
- Pattern **2457** matt black & lemon lustre

FISH & SEAWEED



Pattern **4542 ROUGE ROYALE**
 Pattern **4543 VERT ROYALE**
 Pattern **4544 BLEU ROYALE** (not pictured)
 Pattern **4546 POWDER BLUE**

As you can see from the **VERT ROYALE** piece above, the lighter was made for the Dunhill cigarette company. Carlton Ware was commissioned to produce several of its tobacconalia pieces for Dunhill and had a special backstamp for the company:



Dunhill ashtray & pipe stand, special backstamp, Dunhill humidor



As well as the **ROYALE** colourways, the **FISH & SEAWEED** pattern was also used in combination with the **CORAL** range introduced in the 1950s. Here we have a tray in a **GREEN PERMAFLEC GLAZE**, pattern number **4539**.

Those of you who have a copy of *Cast Aside The Shadows* by Barry & Elaine Girling, will have seen the watercolours on pages 15 and 16 painted by Violet Elmer in 1927. The watercolours feature fairies, pixies and ethereal creatures set in a floral landscape:



All four paintings are now available as greetings cards, either as individual cards or as a set of four. Each card measures 5" x 7½" and comes with an envelope.

The prices are as follows:

Single card £1.75

Two cards £3.50

Three cards £5

Four cards (full set) £6

P + P extra - as a guide, postage for a set of 4 in the UK would be £2

To order, contact Barry & Elaine directly at elainegirling@btinternet.com .



Before we finish this Newsletter, we thought we should update our earlier article about the interesting backstamps on patterns in the 2400 – 2500 number range. In late July, a pretty tea caddy was listed for sale on eBay in the **GATE BORDER** pattern. The seller posted a picture of the backstamp which also included the **Shape** _____ **Deco** addition, with pattern number **2324**. Clearly then this backstamp



was in use on a wider range of patterns. Another pattern in this particular range is **CURTAIN BORDER**, seen below on a very unusual cruet set. This is pattern number **2387** but the bases of the cruets would be too small for any additional backstamp.



We hope you enjoyed another Newsletter and found something of interest to you. Your comments are always welcome.

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