



Part of the present Poole Pottery complex.



A wonderfully artistic view of the pottery seen through the gate.



Exterior of the Poole Pottery building facing Poole Harbour.

Poole Pottery

by Judith Clarke

Poole Pottery is a bit of a phoenix. Throughout its long history it has consistently managed to emerge from the ashes of the dying kilns with new and forceful design initiatives. Innovative changes are particularly to the fore this year with the planned move of the pottery working site from its present location on the East Quay at Poole, home to the pottery since Jesse Carter took over Walker's Tile and Brick Works in 1873.

The museum at Poole Pottery houses a fine chronological display and the collection is not only beautifully laid out but is detailed without being overcrowded. It is fascinating to see the development of styles and the changing dominant shapes, colours and glazes of each decade all set out in one place. And where better than their rightful home?

The story comes right up to date with top designers like Tony Morris working on the premises and exhibitions such as that earlier this year featuring Studio and Atlantis pottery,

not to mention the activities of the Poole Pottery Collector's Club.

By the late 1870s Jesse Carter had established himself in the tiling business and the works of Carter and Co became increasingly well known and respected for their fine architectural and artistically pleasing tiles. There are some examples of turn of the century tiles in the museum (in 1895 Carter and Co took over the rival tile makers at Hamworthy) as well as several tiled panels from the 1920s and 30s both inside and outside the pottery.

The transition towards purely decorative pieces was boosted by the work of potter and modeller James Radley Young who produced tin glazed art pottery on a semi-stoneware body and Jesse Carter's son Owen who embarked upon the design of high quality metallic lustre glaze wares in the early 1900s. At today's auctions good early pieces are rare and may command prices in the region of £500 -£1,000 and upwards.

Moving on round the museum we come to perhaps the most prolific period yet in the pottery's history, the halcyon days of the 1920s and 30s when Jesse Carter's grandson Cyril came to the helm and enlisted the assistance of a formidable group of designers. These were Harold and Phoebe Stabler and John Adams and his wife Truda, who was later to marry Cyril Carter.

Many of the pieces that regularly appear at auction date from this period which was a real melting pot for all the different artistic and design influences known as Carter, Stabler and Adams from 1921. The museum shows off many of the particularly sought after Art Deco 'traditional' wares designed by Truda as well as those with 'jazz-style' motifs which are currently very sought after by collectors.

The museum also houses an example of the famous tin glazed galleon designed by Harold Stabler c1925 as well as pieces by John Adams that show the development of his work with distinctive silky glazes (especially seen on items such as the sailing ship figures in different sizes and colour ways and leaping gazelle bookends). A pair of elephant bookends in the Sylvan glaze recently attracted an auction estimate of £600-£700. From a decorative point of view ordinary



Fine display dedicated to the metallic lustre stoneware devised by Owen Carter.



Examples of early tin-glazed ware and other traditional wares of the early 1920s.



Display of Delphis and Aegean Ware.

tableware has only a limited appeal but Poole has been innovative in its designs since the 1930s in this area as well. The museum tells the story of the development of Streamline in the mid 1930s by John Adams and the work of Ernest Baggaley (who later set up Branksome China) who developed Poole's successful Utility Ware. The story continues with the phenomenal success of Twintone (many collector's first introduction to Poole Pottery) and the later work of Robert Jefferson (who became resident designer in 1958) in designing 'Contour' and 'Compact' tableware.

The 1950s marked another period of 'all change' with the pottery producing its contemporary Freeform ranges designed by Alfred Burgess Read. In turn these 'peppermint cool' wares have now been superseded by the general interest surrounding Poole's 1960s wares, in particular that of Delphis with its great big boiled sweets of colour launched as a range in 1963.

A new Craft Section was set up in 1966 and other Studio wares soon followed, namely the darker palette of the Aegean range and the rough/smooth hedgehog textures of some of the Atlantis ware by Guy Sydenham.

Poole has wisely reverted to an emphasis on these kind of hand painted and more individual pieces in recent years. Eclipse and Millennium designed by Alan Clarke are just two of the 'Living Glaze' designs which have attracted attention as well as designs by Janice Tchalenko, Anita Harris and, of course, Tony Morris who magnificently combines strength, power and meaning in his designs.

The majority of single pieces of Poole Pottery, whether old or 'new' fall into the £30-£300 price category which affords a lot of scope to the average pocketed collector. Prices have been going a bit silly of late for 1960s chargers by Tony Morris, as much as £3,500 in one instance. Virtual one-off pieces from any period can easily command over the £1,000

mark and Poole collectors will pay more for pieces decorated by particular painters such as Ruth Pavely.

Stand motionless in the museum for a while and you realise that this pottery has never stood still. In times of artistic slump or economic recession the right person or group of people have always come along to lead Poole off in a new direction. As the pottery faces its most dramatic change yet with the projected transformation of the quayside a last visit to the site should be part of any ceramic enthusiasts itinerary and these wonderful museum displays will definitely whet your appetite - for ever.

Further information Poole Pottery Collectors Club, The Quay, Poole, Dorset. Tel: 01202 666200. Cottes Auctioneers of Wareham hold regular specialist sales of Poole Pottery. The Market, East Street, Wareham, Dorset. Tel: 01929 552826.

More Poole Pottery News on next page.



Examples of the abstract floral designs of Truda Adams; sailing ship and early ship plate designed by Arthur Bradbury.



One of the 12 Perpetual Calendar plates designed by Tony Morris in 1971. 'December, Pig Killing'.



The Galleon, Red Faience. Architectural ware designed by Harold Stabler about 1925.



Tony Morris in 1999 working on his 'Dragonfly' charger design.



1950s Freeform vase: expect to pay between £150 - £350 for good examples.



Tile panel Rock-a-bye Baby designed for a childrens' hospital 1930s.



One of the many tile panels outside the pottery building.