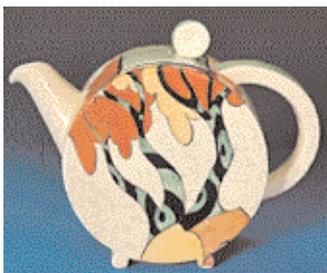




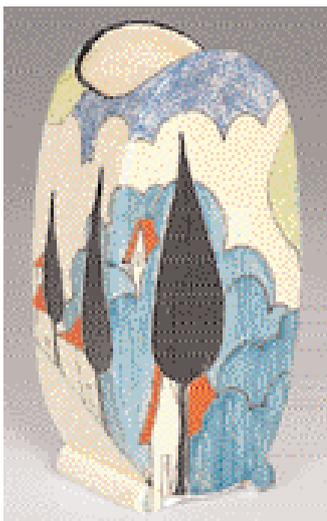
Conical shape 'tea for two' tea set in the Melon pattern, dating 1930.



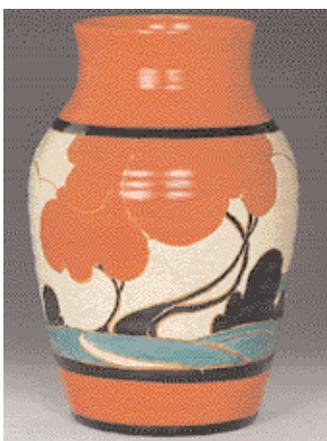
Stamford shape 'tea for two' tea set in the Delecia Pansy pattern, dating 1933.



Rare, large 'tea for six' Bonjour shape teapot, decorated in the Honolulu pattern.



May Avenue vase, 5in high, very rare shape.



Isis shape vase, decorated with Red Autumn pattern.

## Collecting Clarice Cliff with Price Guide

by Roland Head

The flamboyant Art Deco designs of Clarice Cliff are instantly recognisable to collectors of twentieth century ceramics. Clarice Cliff created a distinctive style and personal brand that was original and utterly of its time. In this feature, I'll highlight the prolific breadth of her output, as well as the state of the market for her work.

### Background

Born in 1899, Clarice Cliff was one of a family of seven children in Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent. Her career in 'The Potteries' began at the age of thirteen with an apprenticeship at a local pottery. By seventeen, Clarice had already switched employers twice, ending up at A. J. Wilkinson's, then a successful Burslem pottery, owned by the Shorter family. A combination of talent and initiative resulted in her being noticed by the pottery's management, and in 1922, she was promoted to become an apprentice modeller and given a position in the factory's design studio. In 1927, the combination of Clarice Cliff's talent, persistent suggestions and burgeoning relationship with Colley Shorter, the factory's managing director, who she later married, led to the birth of the Bizarre range and the Clarice Cliff brand.

Colley Shorter decided to take a chance on his new designer's judgement and gave Clarice her own studio at Newport Pottery, along with a full-time paintress. They immediately started work on transforming a quantity of hitherto unsaleable tablewares that had been inherited when Wilkinson's bought Newport Pottery in 1920. The result was Original Bizarre - the first Clarice Cliff pattern. Built from simple geometric designs of coloured bands, triangles and diamonds, the style rapidly proved to be both popular and effective at disguising the indifferent quality of the underlying wares.

### Clarice Cliff - The Brand

While the earliest wares to leave Clarice Cliff's Newport Pottery studio only bore the range name 'Bizarre', their success soon prompted Colley Shorter to realise that he had a major marketing opportunity in his hands. Not only was Clarice Cliff an eminently brandable personality, but the concept of 'by women, for women' would undoubtedly prove attractive to his primarily-female customer base. To cement this advantage, the legend 'by Clarice Cliff' was added to the existing pottery markings on the base of each piece, and in 1930

Clarice Cliff was made Art Director of the Newport Pottery; the first women in The Potteries to hold such a position.

### Tea & Coffee Wares

The Original Bizarre tableware was traditionally shaped, thanks to the Victorian designs of the underlying wares. The range's success meant that this old stock was soon depleted, however, and Clarice was free to start designing shapes that better-suited her modern, Art Deco-inspired patterns.

Aside from the fairly traditional *Athens* and *Globe* shapes, the first teaware that Clarice Cliff designed herself was the *Conical* shape. Based on triangles, pyramids and cones, it was drastically different to anything else on the market and an instant success - so much so that other potteries such as Shelley and Burgess & Leigh (makers of Burleigh Ware) soon produced their own variants on the idea.

Teaset sets were at the heart of Clarice Cliff's ranges of designs and were amongst the most popular and high volume of Newport's output. It should be borne in mind that the majority of her wares were sold at relatively modest prices and were put into regular use by their first owners. Nothing epitomises this better than the *Early Morning* sets, now more commonly known as *tea for two* sets. Made in a wide range of shapes and patterns, these were composed of two cups and saucers, a teapot, milk jug, sugar bowl and one side plate. They were intended for a husband and wife to use to have tea and a shared slice of toast in bed together before they got up in the morning. The *Early Morning* sets were a huge success and made a very popular and fashionable wedding gift. Good examples in collectable patterns can command thousands of pounds. The definitive Clarice Cliff teaware shape is probably *Stamford*, with its characteristic flat-sided teapot and solid-handled cups. Its combination of angles and curves captured the Art Deco style perfectly and the teapot's flat sides provided an ideal canvas for painting and displaying the ever-expanding range of Clarice Cliff patterns.

### Vases, Fancies & Sugar Sifters

Clarice Cliff's shape designs were not restricted to tablewares. Semi-functional shapes such as chargers, large jugs, pitchers and vases were also made, as were a number of pure 'fancies'; figurines, masks, bookends, candlesticks, beakers and other such shapes. These shapes were made in smaller

numbers and sold at higher prices than table wares, resulting in greater rarity. Larger pieces such as jugs, chargers and vases also provided an exceptional canvas for Clarice Cliff's patterns. The result is that good examples, especially vases in the highly desirable *Lotus* and *Isis* shapes, now change hands for thousands of pounds. At a recent auction sale, a Clarice Cliff *Bizarre Sunray* pattern vase in an unusual shape sold for a hammer price of £5,800. One final category of shapes that deserves singular mention is the *Conical* sugar sifter. Although sugar sifters were also made in more conventional, rounded shapes, the *Conical* sugar sifter is an iconic example of Clarice Cliff design. Good examples in rare patterns can fetch over £1,000 and a small but high quality collection could be built from this shape alone, should you wish.

**Patterns and Decoration**

One of the characteristic features of Clarice Cliff's work is its golden-coloured glaze. Known as Honeyglaze, this was Wilkinson's proprietary clear glaze, its colour the result of the addition of one per cent iron oxide to a clear glaze. Most of her work was glazed with Honeyglaze before being decorated overglaze. The coloured enamels were painted on after the ware had been glazed and fired. A final firing then followed to harden the enamels.

I have shied away from mentioning too many specific patterns in this feature. Clarice Cliff designed around 2000 and it would take more space and expertise than I have available to provide a meaningful and comprehensive guide to their desirability. However, some examples of Clarice Cliff's finest and most characteristic designs might include patterns such as *Red Broth*, *Solitude*, *Luxor*, *Orange Melon*, *Trees and House* and *Sunray*, in addition to the ubiquitous *Crocus* patterns.

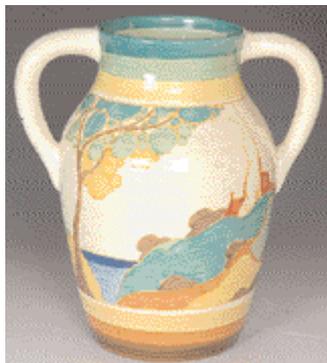
**Collecting Clarice Cliff**

The past twenty years have seen a huge increase in Clarice Cliff values. Bargains are scarce in the extreme. Ample exposure on popular television programmes has ensured that public awareness of the collectable value of Clarice Cliff is high. Given this situation, the mantra of 'buy only the best' is even more relevant than usual. Anyone hoping that their poor quality or common pieces will benefit from the rising tide that lifts all boats is likely to be disappointed.

There is a bewilderingly wide range of shapes and patterns on offer; Clarice Cliff was nothing if not prolific. Collectors should take the time necessary to gain some understanding of her work before beginning to invest the substantial sums necessary to buy interesting and desirable pieces of this pottery.



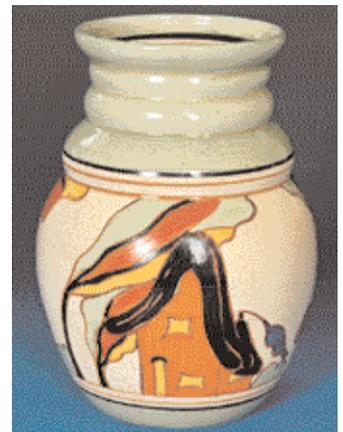
*Conical shape large bowl decorated in Crocus pattern.*



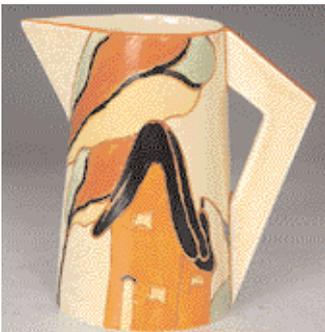
*Secrets patterned twin-handled Isis vase, dating 1933.*



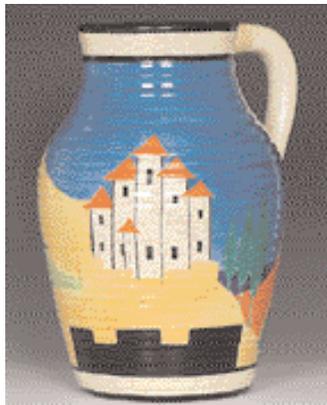
*Orange Picasso Flower pattern drum jam pot, dating 1930.*



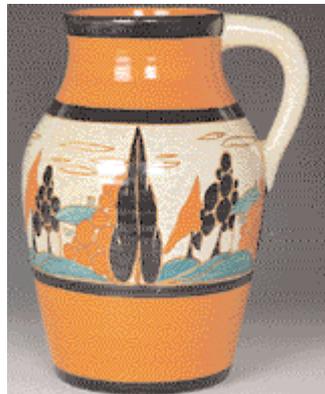
*Orange House pattern, shape 358 vase, dating 1931.*



*Conical jug in Orange House pattern, dating 1931.*



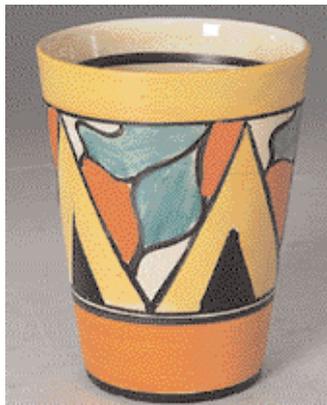
*Rare Appliqué Blue Lucerne pattern Lotus shape jug.*



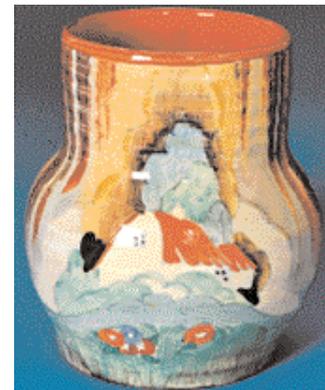
*Trees and House pattern on Lotus shape jug.*



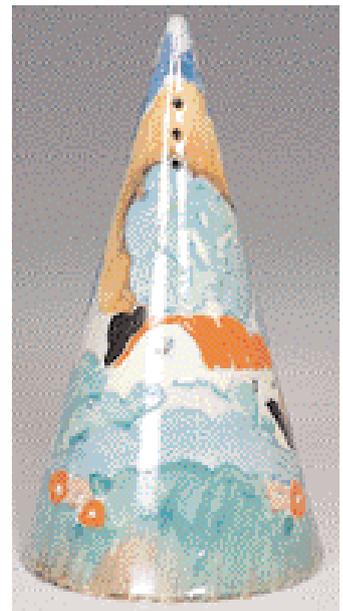
*Conical sugar sifter in Orange Roof Cottage pattern.*



*Double V pattern beaker, dating 1929.*



*Shape 565 Forest Glen pattern vase, dating 1935.*



*Conical sugar sifter in Newlyn pattern.*

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## Ceramics

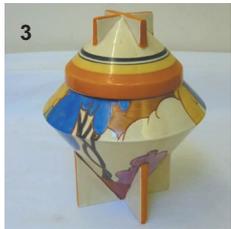


Clarice Cliff Bizarre 'Tennis' pattern lotus jug, printed marks, 29cm high. *Wintertons Ltd, Uttoxeter. Mar 06. HP: £7,200. ABP: £8,469.*



Clarice Cliff Bizarre Sunray pattern stepped vase, shape No. 369A, base with printed & impressed marks, 19.5cm. *Charterhouse Auctioneers, Sherborne. Apr 08. HP: £5,800. ABP: £6,822.*

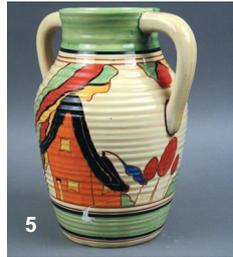
Prices quoted are actual hammer prices (HP) and the Approximate Buyer's Price. (ABP) Includes an average premium of 15% + VAT.



Clarice Cliff Bizarre ware lidded bowl, lid with cruciform top reflecting the four triangular feet, painted in the 'Autumn' design, orange banding, printed marks, 8in high. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Apr 08. HP: £2,200. ABP: £2,587.*



Dame Laura Knight, Clarice Cliff design for Circus Horses, Bizarre pattern plate, pencil sketch and watercolour with gilded highlights, signed and titled in pencil 'Design for small plate, all alike', 16cm dia, with a side plate in same design, puce printed mark, 1st edition 1934, 17cm. *Halls Fine Art, Shrewsbury. Mar 07. HP: £2,000. ABP: £2,352.*



Clarice Cliff Fantasque lotus vase, 'Orange House', printed mark to base, damage, 11.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 06. HP: £1,800. ABP: £2,117.*



Clarice Cliff Red Roofs Bizarre pattern wall plate, printed marks, 33.5cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 06. HP: £1,750. ABP: £2,058.*



Clarice Cliff Fantasque Bizarre viking boat, Bobbins pattern, 16in long. (minor chip to a foot) *Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Jul 06. HP: £1,500. ABP: £1,764.*



Clarice Cliff Bizarre Honolulu pattern vase, c1933/1934, 9in wide. *Ewbank, Send, Surrey. Jul 06. HP: £1,100. ABP: £1,293.*



Clarice Cliff 'Fantasque' pottery coffee service in orange, blue, brown and green, Sunrise pattern within wide banded orange and brown borders: 14 pieces, all with black printed marks to bases, and a similar matched sugar bowl banded in blue, orange, brown and green, 3.25in dia. (damage) *Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Apr 06. HP: £960. ABP: £1,129.*



Clarice Cliff Secrets pattern sandwich set, octagonal dish and six octagonal plates, facsimile signature, Royal Staffordshire printed marks, with a Secrets pattern toast rack. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 08. HP: £950. ABP: £1,117.*



Clarice Cliff Newport Pottery Lotus jug, 8.25in. *Louis Taylor, Stoke. Mar 06. HP: £800. ABP: £941.*



Clarice Cliff vase, 'Sunray', printed marks to base and impressed shape No. 350, 8in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 06. HP: £800. ABP: £941.*



Clarice Cliff Coral Firs pattern Lotus jug, 11.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 07. HP: £800. ABP: £941.*



Clarice Cliff Newport pottery hive shaped moulded ribbed conserve pot with bee finial, hand painted with unusual design of red castle/mountain, yellow tree with green trunk and red blossoms, black and purple bushes and blue sky. *Batemans, Stamford. Mar 06. HP: £780. ABP: £917.*



Clarice Cliff 'Orange Roof Cottage' pattern vase, shape No. 461. *Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Feb 07. HP: £760. ABP: £893.*



Clarice Cliff Blue Autumn Fantasque Bizarre vase, shape 342, painted in colours between orange and green bands, 8in high. *Golding Young & Co, Grantham. Feb 06. HP: £700. ABP: £823.*



Clarice Cliff 'Trees and House' pattern vase. *Henry Adams, Chichester. Oct 06. HP: £650. ABP: £764.*



Clarice Cliff Sunray Bizarre pattern bowl, printed marks, 20.5cm. *Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Apr 06. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Clarice Cliff Moonlight pattern conical sifter, 5.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jun 07. HP: £600. ABP: £705.*



Clarice Cliff crocus pattern teaset: teapot, 6 cups, saucers, plates and cake plate. (1 cup and plate def) *Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Jan 06. HP: £580. ABP: £682.*



Clarice Cliff Bizarre pottery vase, angular bulbous body (shape No. 342) decorated in green, blue, rose and brown with Inspiration Rose pattern on a mottled green and blue ground, 8in high, printed mark in black to base and titled in brown 'Inspiration'. *Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Apr 06. HP: £560. ABP: £658.*



Clarice Cliff Melon pattern vase, shape No. 264. *Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Jan 06. HP: £520. ABP: £611.*



Clarice Cliff Bizarre pottery single handled lotus pattern jug, ribbed body, enamelled in orange, blue, mauve and green with Autumn Crocus design, 11.5in high, black printed Bizarre mark to base. *Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Feb 07. HP: £500. ABP: £588.*



24 Clarice Cliff, pair of tapering vases, square bases, red, blue and green Chintz design, No. 461. Brightwells, Leominster. Jul 06. HP: £500. ABP: £588.



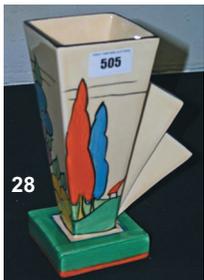
25 Clarice Cliff tea and coffee set 'Stamford' shape, Crocus pattern, 15 pieces for 6 place setting, includes milk jug and 2 sugar bowls, 6 cups with solid angular handles. Gorrings, Lewes. Dec 07. HP: £480. ABP: £564.



26 Clarice Cliff jug, 'Forest Glen', octagonal jug, shape 32, 7in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 07. HP: £460. ABP: £541.



27 Clarice Cliff ceramic wall hanging, in form of a star, puce decoration symbolising the Scorpio star sign, Clarice Cliff Wilkinson stamp to reverse, 7in. Hy. Duke & Son, Dorchester. Jul 08. HP: £460. ABP: £541.



28 Clarice Cliff 'Poplar' vase, shape No.461. Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Feb 07. HP: £450. ABP: £529.

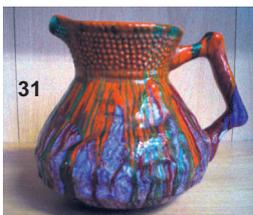


29 Clarice Cliff Pansies jug. Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Mar 06. HP: £430. ABP: £505.



30 Clarice Cliff part tea set 'Crocus', 19 pieces including two serving plates and milk jug. Gorrings, Lewes. Mar 06. HP: £420. ABP: £494.

This section is only a sample from 1000s of results from recent sales. See our website for an extensive selection.



31 Clarice Cliff jug, 'Delecia' 1930. Sandwich Auction Rooms, Kent. May 06. HP: £410. ABP: £482.



32 Clarice Cliff conical sugar sifter, 'Forest Glen', 5.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Dec 07. HP: £400. ABP: £470.



33 Clarice Cliff Bizarre ware bowl, painted with purple, orange and blue zig-zags, 6in wide, similar Fantasque ware bowl and two Clarice Cliff plates. (4) Hartleys, Ilkley. Dec 07. HP: £390. ABP: £458.



34 Clarice Cliff Fantasque pottery rose bowl in orange, green, black, mauve, blue and brown, Orange Gardenia pattern, neck/base banded in orange, yellow and brown, 4.75in high x 6.5in dia, black printed mark to base, pierced metal cover. Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Apr 06. HP: £380. ABP: £446.



35 Pair Clarice Cliff Fantasque Bizarre 'Gardenia' vases. Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Mar 07. HP: £365. ABP: £429.



36 Clarice Cliff sandwich set, 'Gayday', six octagonal plates and serving dish 11.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Feb 07. HP: £360. ABP: £423.



37 Clarice Cliff crocus tea for two, painted in colours between green, yellow and brown bands: tea pot, cream jug, sugar bowl, two cups, saucers and plates. Golding Young & Co, Grantham. Feb 06. HP: £350. ABP: £411.



38 Early 20thC Clarice Cliff Newport pottery conical sugar shaker, decorated in the blue chintz pattern, black printed Fantasque mark, 5.5in high. Diamond Mills & Co, Felixstowe. Mar 06. HP: £340. ABP: £399.



39 Deco Clarice Cliff bizarre oval sugar shaker, decorated with a cottage beside a river and bridge, 13cm. Calder Valley Auctioneers, Halifax. Apr 07. HP: £340. ABP: £399.



40 Clarice Cliff honey pot, 'Summerhouse', cover with bee handle, 1931-33, 3.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Oct 06. HP: £320. ABP: £376.



41 Clarice Cliff crocus pattern Dover shaped jardiniere, 8.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 08. HP: £320. ABP: £376.



42 Clarice Cliff jug, marked Newport Pottery Co. England No 41A, plain green ground to bottom half which is stepped, rope pattern to centre and autumn leaves and blue berries to upper half. Sandwich Auction Rooms, Kent. Oct 06. HP: £300. ABP: £352.



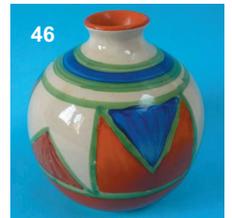
43 Clarice Cliff conical sugar shaker, Fantasque pattern. Cotswold Auction Company, Gloucester. Feb 07. HP: £300. ABP: £352.



44 Clarice Cliff 'Bon Jour' part coffee set: coffee pot, sugar, milk, 3 cups and 6 saucers, painted with blossoming branches on a pink ground, 7.75in high. (12) Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 07. HP: £300. ABP: £352.



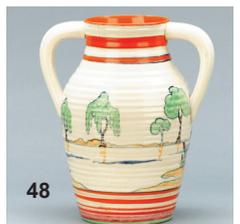
45 Clarice Cliff jardiniere, 'Sunrise' design in blue, orange and green, within yellow and orange borders, pad feet, 6.75in high. Hartleys, Ilkley. Feb 08. HP: £300. ABP: £352.



46 Clarice Cliff Bizarre bottle vase, painted chevron design, 7cm high. Richard Winterton, Burton on Trent. Jun 08. HP: £300. ABP: £352.



47 Clarice Cliff 'Bizarre' pottery vase, flared rim decorated in brown, green and black with 'Original Bizarre' pattern, 6.75in high, black printed mark to base and shape No. 196. Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Feb 06. HP: £280. ABP: £329.



48 Clarice Cliff 'Gloria' design two handled vase. Henry Adams, Chichester. Jul 06. HP: £270. ABP: £317.