

Fielding's Crown Devon - Overlooked & Underappreciated?

by Roland Head

Fielding's Crown Devon is a name that will be familiar to many collectors of twentieth century ceramics, but not perhaps as familiar as names like Shelley or Carlton Ware. Like its contemporary in Stoke, W&R Carlton Ware, Fielding's Devon Pottery was founded in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It rapidly built a reputation for making a wide range of quality pottery, mostly vellum 'blush' wares. Only some of these wares remain attractive to buyers today. As the market for decorative wares grew steadily in the early twentieth century, Fielding's 'Devon' branded output grew accordingly, to include some extremely fine examples of decorative pottery. Fans of the Royal Worcester style of painted game and farm animals in pastoral settings may well find Fielding's ranges of handpainted plaques and decorative wares to be of interest. The work of decorators such as Coleman, Cox, Hinton and Lamonby remains in demand and good examples can fetch strong prices at auction.

A Decorative Revolution

The rise of the Art Deco movement in the 1920s coincided with a range of technical advances in ceramic manufacturing. It was to be 1930 before Crown Devon truly took the opportunities these changes provided to heart, however. The turning point in Crown Devon's output came with the recruitment from nearby Carlton Ware of that company's Sales Director and Design & Decorating Manager. George Barker and Enoch Boulton transformed Crown Devon's decorative output, combining innovative design and decoration with a renewed understanding of the marketplace. Two ranges of designs in particular were highly successful and remain popular with collectors today.

Matt Glazed & Lustre Wares

At the top end of Crown Devon's ornamental range, a number of patterns were designed that were applied completely by hand in coloured enamels and were usually enhanced with fine gold transfer printing. Some of the best examples of these patterns are *Fairy Castle*, *Chinese Dragon* and *Orient*, themes which will not be unfamiliar to collectors of competing Carlton Ware decorative wares from the same period. These superbly detailed and extravagant patterns were available on a choice of backgrounds, either a matt glaze or a rich lustre. All good examples of such patterns are desirable, but for many collectors, the matt-glazed versions are most attractive, in particular those with a Mattajade glaze. As its name suggests, Mattajade was a jade-green matt glaze developed for use on Crown Devon's premium decorative wares. It was launched at the British Industries Fair in 1932 and was an immediate success. Queen Mary is said to have bought several pieces of Mattajade whilst at the fair and there is no doubt that when coupled with a pattern such as *Fairy Castle* it remains one of the finest examples of Crown Devon's decorative output.

A range of other matt glazes were also used as grounds, including yellow, pale blue, black and stone, and many of the same patterns were applied with equal fineness to lustre wares, most commonly with ruby or blue lustre grounds. These lustre glazes played host to many more patterns, some with oriental themes distinctly reminiscent of 1920s Carlton Ware patterns such as *Mikado* and *Chinese Figures*. Perhaps this is not surprising, considering the design influences that must have prevailed at the time. These patterns and glazes were put to work on a wide range of decorative shapes, while suitably modified derivatives were also used to decorate Crown Devon's surprisingly fine-bodied coffee sets. These decorative sets remain in demand with collectors today, especially if complete and in excellent condition.

Musical novelties for all tastes

Musical novelties have always been popular with collectors and the range of musical wares introduced by Crown Devon in the 1930s became extremely successful in the UK and abroad. Designs were applied in colourfully-painted relief moulding and were initially based on folk themes such as 'John Peel' and 'Widdicombe Fair'. The design scope was soon expanded to include tributes to popular and famous people, including monarchs such as King George VI and popular singer Gracie Fields. Each piece contained a Swiss musical movement from Thorens SA, Reuge & Co or Adrian Lador. Although complex, many of these movements remain in good working order today, much to their manufacturers' credit. If buying, check the functioning of the movement carefully by winding it up and listening to it play its complete tune. They are extremely difficult to repair and unskilled attempts at maintenance or repair are likely to end up causing more problems than they solve. Although the musical novelty range was very large, production volumes of different designs and shapes varied widely. A number of country-specific models were made to mark business trips abroad by Reginald Fielding, then Commercial Manager of the company. Good and collectable examples include the South African Sarie Marais design, the New Zealand centenary commemorative model and a similar design for the Australian market.

Some shapes are rarer than others. Tankards are generally most common, while shapes such as large jugs and cigarette boxes are more desirable in any design. Not all designs were applied to all shapes, many low volume designs were only produced in one or two shapes. Although this range primarily appealed to fans of musical novelties, the royal pieces also had an important secondary market of royal memorabilia collectors. Fielding's understood this well and produced a large (12in) 'Superjug' shape for the two 'King' designs, commemorating the coronations of George VI and Edward VIII. These were each made in a limited edition of 1500 and originally came in a presentation box with a scroll. but are few and far between today. Of particular interest is the Edward VIII Superjug. Edward abdicated while the jug was still in production, and it is unclear if the limit of 1500 was ever reached. It's certainly true that good examples change hands for £1000 upwards at present, especially the unknown number that bear the additional legend 'Abdicated Dec 10th 1936'. These jugs play either the national anthem or 'Here's a Health unto His Majesty'.

Musical collectors are spoilt for choice by Crown Devon. Production of some models continued into the 1950s and there are 238 recorded designs, with more unconfirmed. Anyone planning on collecting these items would do well to refer to what must be the definitive book on the subject, *Crown Devon Musical Novelties*, by Alan H. Roberts.

Market Conditions

Although this article has focused on some of Crown Devon's most outstanding ranges of wares, the pottery produced much more than this and was for many years an outstanding success. Buyers today should however understand that not all of the company's output is very widely appreciated by today's market. Prices have generally weakened in the last few years and while the finest examples should maintain their appeal, there is no guarantee that the market will turn. Buyers would be wise not to take book prices and auction results from past years too seriously, pay only what a piece is worth to you. More than ever, buying on quality, condition and attraction is vital, but chances to acquire truly special pieces are increasingly rare, so be prepared.

See pp 38 and 39 for auctions price guide.

Ceramics



Crown Devon 'Sarie Marais' musical tankard, c.1930s.



As left -reverse showing musical verse.



1936 Crown Devon Edward VIII Coronation Superjug. No. 43/1500, bears additional legend 'Abdicated Dec 10th 1936'.



1930s Crown Devon Mattajade vase, pattern M334.



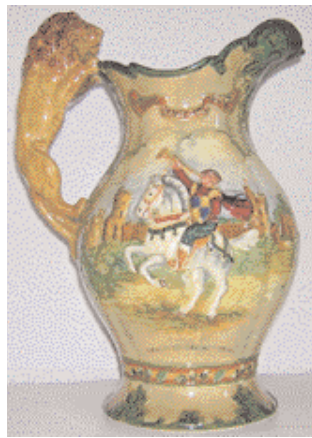
1930s Crown Devon matt-glazed vase with Galleon, pattern M169.



Crown Devon Fuchsia pattern lidded preserve pot with matching spoon. (c1960s)



Crown Devon 'On Ilka Moor Baht'at' musical tankard, 1936 onwards.



As above, reverse of jug.



1930s Crown Devon Mattajade vase with Fairy Castle pattern.



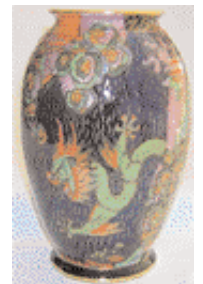
As above but with main body of pattern in close up.



Crown Devon 'On Ilka Moor Baht'at' musical jug, 1936 onwards.



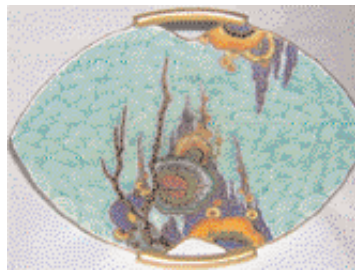
As above, close up of 'Abdicated 10th Dec 1936' legend.



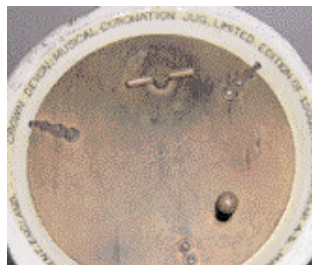
1930s Crown Devon Blue Lustre vase with dragon, pattern 2069.



Crown Devon Ruby lustre vase in pattern 5033. (c1950s)



1930s Crown Devon Mattajade footed dish, pattern 2342.



Limited edition markings and original musical movement to the base of an Edward VIII Superjug.



As above, side view.

Ceramics

Crown Devon feature continued from pp 36 & 37. This price guide has been selected from the higher end of the market. For a fuller picture of Crown Devon prices see www.antiques-info.co.uk



1
Crown Devon figure of a lady in floral and parcel gilt flapper dress, black oval base, No 2280, 13.5in, small chip on inner rim of base. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 00. HP: £1,650. ABP: £1,940.*



2
Pair of Crown Devon plaques painted by R. Hinton, each depicting setters chasing game, 23 x 17.5cm. *John Taylors, Louth. Sep 04. HP: £1,520. ABP: £1,787.*



3
Crown Devon Fieldings musical jug 'Sally', from the film 'Sally in Our Alley', 9in high. *Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Drifffield. Jul 99. HP: £1,050. ABP: £1,235.*



4
Rare Fieldings Crown Devon wall plaque painted with a view of Trentham Hall. *Richard Wintertons, Burton on Trent, Staffs. Aug 02. HP: £1,000. ABP: £1,176.*



5
Composite Crown Devon Fieldings coffee set, painted with ducks, dogs/game birds in a rural landscape, gilded interiors/rims, each signed either R. Hinton, J. Coleman or W. Lamony. (8) *Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. Jul 03. HP: £680. ABP: £799.*



6
Pair Fieldings Crown Devon 2-handled vases/covers, painted with pheasants and wooded landscapes, fluted pedestal bases, one cracked, cover chipped, 16in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 03. HP: £650. ABP: £764.*

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



7
Crown Devon twin handled vase signed 'Coleman' and painted with a grouse and pheasant. *Richard Wintertons, Burton on Trent, Staffs. Nov 01. HP: £550. ABP: £646.*



8
Crown Devon coffee set in Art Deco style, 15 pieces for a six-place setting, enamelled in green, orange/black with gilding, a cup cracked, coffee pot 8in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 05. HP: £540. ABP: £635. ABP: £611.*



9
Crown Devon vase, signed 'Cox', painted with highland cattle. *Richard Wintertons, Burton on Trent, Staffs. Nov 01. HP: £480. ABP: £564.*



10
Crown Devon figure 'Rio Rita', signed K. Parsons to base, No. 2280. *Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Jun 05. HP: £440. ABP: £517.*



11
Fieldings Crown Devon, Eton Boating, musical tankard, 7.25in. *Louis Taylor, Stoke. Sep 04. HP: £430. ABP: £505.*



12
Pair of Crown Devon pottery vases and covers, painted with pheasants by J Coleman, unmarked, impressed No. 89? to base, 33cm high. *Rosebery's, London. Sep 02. HP: £360. ABP: £423.*



13
Fieldings Crown Devon vase, 15in. *Louis Taylor, Stoke on Trent. Sep 03. HP: £320. ABP: £376.*



14
Crown Devon Rouge Royale coffee set, patt. 5003, coffee pot, sucrier; milk jug, 6 cups/saucers, hand painted pendulous flower heads, cups and jug with gilt interiors. (15) *Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Drifffield. Mar 04. HP: £320. ABP: £376.*



15
Crown Devon fantasy landscape charger with flowering gilded trees, blue ground, 15.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 02. HP: £300. ABP: £352.*



16
Crown Devon Fieldings musical jug, printed with 'Auld Lang Syne' within portrait of Robert Burns and figurial scene, 7in high. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Dec 06. HP: £270. ABP: £317.*



17
Crown Devon music box, relief moulded with John Peel themes, hinged fall-front, 8.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £260. ABP: £305.*



18
Pair Fieldings Crown Devon vases painted with highland cattle, signed G. Cox, 9.25in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Oct 02. HP: £260. ABP: £305.*



19
Pair Crown Devon Fieldings pottery vases, painted by J Coleman with pheasants, gilt highlights, 10.25in high, signed. *Hartleys, Ilkley. Jun 06. HP: £250. ABP: £294.*



20
Crown Devon Fieldings musical jug, Daisy Bell, inscribed with verse and outdoor scene, 8in high. *Peter Wilson, Nantwich. Apr 00. HP: £250. ABP: £294.*



21
Crown Devon Fieldings musical John Peel spirit flask, 8in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Apr 01. HP: £250. ABP: £294.*



22
Crown Devon art deco figure of a nude lady holding a ball by Kathleen Parsons, 7in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Sep 00. HP: £200. ABP: £235.*



23
Crown Devon ovoid vase, abstract geometric pattern, black printed mark and gilt pattern No. probably '2115', 11cm. *Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Sep 00. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



24
Fieldings Crown Devon Bulldog, standing four-square, smoking cigar and wearing naval officer's cap, collar and bow tie, cigar re-attached, 6.5in. *Gorringes, Lewes. Jul 03. HP: £180. ABP: £211.*



25
Pair of Crown Devon wall plaques from Children of the World series, Austrian Boy, 26cm and a Dutch Girl, 25.5cm. Boldon Auction Galleries, Tyne & Wear. Sep 04. HP: £170. ABP: £199.



31
Art Deco Crown Devon jug, c1930, mottled green ground, scale motif and decorated with flowers in colours, gilt highlights, 26cm high, printed mark to underside. Rosebery's, London. Mar 05. HP: £140. ABP: £164.



36
Crown Devon John Peel musical cigarette box inscribed with verse, 8in. Gorrings, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £110. ABP: £129.



41
Crown Devon Fieldings musical jug moulded in relief with Inn scene and script of Auld Lang Syne, Rd No: 804873 (two), 17cm high. Lambert & Foster, Tenterden. Feb 04. HP: £70. ABP: £82.



46
Crown Devon musical mug, 'The Irish Jaunting Car', 5.5in high. Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Jul 04. HP: £65. ABP: £76.



26
Pair of Crown Devon lustrine vases, in gilt with mermaids and fish, 32cm high. Gorrings, Bexhill. Dec 05. HP: £170. ABP: £199.



32
Crown Devon musical jug, 'Harry Lauder I Love a Lassie', 9.5in high. Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Jul 06. HP: £135. ABP: £158.



37
Crown Devon Fieldings musical mug with Auld Lang Syne, 6in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 01. HP: £95. ABP: £111.



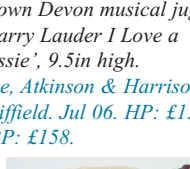
42
Crown Devon musical 'Old Lang Syne' mug, 6in high. Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Nov 04. HP: £70. ABP: £82.



47
Crown Devon Fieldings footed bowl with stylized floral design. Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Mar 07. HP: £65. ABP: £76.



27
Pair of Crown Devon pottery bookends, shaped triangular form, abstract design in black, yellow and orange, 7.5in high. Hartleys, Ilkley. Oct 06. HP: £170. ABP: £199.



38
Crown Devon lusted desk set: inkwell on stand & pair of candlesticks, decorated with fairies & lizards. Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. Feb 07. HP: £85. ABP: £99.



43
Fieldings Crown Devon earthenware musical John Peel jug, decorated with a moulded fox handle and various hunting scenes, 8in. Gorrings, Lewes. Jul 04. HP: £70. ABP: £82.



48
Three Crown Devon ginger jars and covers. Gorrings, Bexhill. Sep 04. HP: £60. ABP: £70.



28
Crown Devon musical earthenware jug titled Daisy Bell, inscribed with verse, 9in. Gorrings, Lewes. Jan 02. HP: £160. ABP: £188.



33
1930s Crown Devon John Peel musical mug, 5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 01. HP: £130. ABP: £152.



34
Crown Devon Fieldings musical jug, printed with 'Widdicombe Fair' moulded with gentleman and horses, 7.5in high. Hartleys, Ilkley. Dec 06. HP: £130. ABP: £152.



39
Crown Devon covered jar, impressed No. 1062, form of a seated terrier dog, cover its head, 9.5in high. Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Mar 04. HP: £80. ABP: £94.



44
Crown Devon Fieldings musical tankard, mildly waisted form, moulded with On Ilkka Moor Baht'at, 5.5in high. Hartleys, Ilkley. Jun 07. HP: £70. ABP: £82.



49
Crown Devon 21 piece part tea service, leaping red reindeer motif on a cream ground. Gorrings, Lewes. Mar 04. HP: £60. ABP: £70.



29
Fieldings Crown Devon plaque, painted with pheasants, signed W. Lamont, 7 x 9in, moulded oak frame. Gorrings, Lewes. Dec 04. HP: £150. ABP: £176.



35
Crown Devon cellulose Sutherland figure, flamenco dancer wearing a black and brown dress, paper label, height 7in, with a Crown Devon Fieldings figurine of a young girl in a blue dress, height 4.25in. Fellows & Sons, Birmingham. Jul 03. HP: £120. ABP: £141.



40
Crown Devon 'John Peel' musical jug c1930, cream body decorated with a fox hunting scene and inscription to John Peel, handle as a fox, painted in colours, factory mark to underside, 18cm high. Rosebery's, London. May 06. HP: £75. ABP: £88.



45
Crown Devon 'lustre' vase of fruit pattern on iridescent blue background, 22.5cm. Boldon Auction Galleries, Tyne & Wear. Sep 04. HP: £65. ABP: £76.



50
Fieldings Crown Devon two handled offset vase, mottled yellow and blue ground, painted with spring flowers, 5in high. Tring Market Auctions, Herts. Mar 05. HP: £60. ABP: £70.



30
Crown Devon Cretian ware ginger jar, tubelined geometric design, mottled blue ground, impressed No. 27, 9.5in and matching pot, domed lid and finial, impressed No. 26, 9in. Gorrings, Lewes. Mar 04. HP: £150. ABP: £176.



51
Crown Devon Fieldings, early 20thC lustrine bowl, internally decorated with flower fairies, exterior with gilded blooms on a mustard ground, 24cm dia. Locke & England, Leamington Spa. Mar 06. HP: £60. ABP: £70.