



1
Welsh porcelain campana vase, painted by William Billingsley, 'NANTGARRW' painted in red, c1813-23, 27.5cm. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Nov 02. HP: £30,000. ABP: £35,287.



2
Painted 19thC Nantgarw cabinet plate, The Three Graces, raised gold gilded borders, imp'd NANTGARW CW, 9.25in. Philip Serrell Auctioneers, Malvern. May 04. HP: £26,000. ABP: £30,582.



3
Nantgarw part dessert service, c1820, impressed NANTGARW CW. Dreweatt Neate, Newbury. Feb 04. HP: £15,500. ABP: £18,231.



4
Pair of Nantgarw porcelain oval plates, probably by Thomas Pardoe, 10 x 14.25in, c1820. Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Aug 03. HP: £9,400. ABP: £11,056.



5
London decorated Nantgarw plate, centre painted with 4 doves, 'C' scroll and foliate border, painted with sprays of pink roses on a gold seeded ground, 'Nantgarw CW' impressed, c1814-23, 25cm. Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Nov 01. HP: £7,500. ABP: £8,821.



6
Swansea porcelain 'London' shape part tea service, pattern No. 411, printed iron-red mark, painted iron-red pattern No., c1818. (slight damage) (54) Dreweatt Neate, Newbury. Nov 01. HP: £5,800. ABP: £6,822.



7
Nantgarw porcelain dessert plate, centre enamelled in colours, representing love and idleness, 8.5in dia. (discoloured, scratched and borders rubbed) Canterbury Auction Galleries, Kent. Aug 03. HP: £1,350. ABP: £1,587.

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



8
Swansea plate, painted with 'Billingsley' roses and other bright flowers, painted mark, 8in. Gorrings, Lewes. Dec 04. HP: £800. ABP: £941.



9
Swansea cup and saucer painted with floral bouquets in salmon pink panels on a rich blue ground, early Victorian period. Cotswold Auction Company, Cirencester. Aug 04. HP: £550. ABP: £646.



10
Nantgarw porcelain cup and saucer enamelled with loose sprays of roses, tulips and other flowers within gilt rims, c1820, some rubbing to rim of cup. Bearn's, Exeter. Jun 05. HP: £500. ABP: £588.



11
Nantgarw plate, c1813-1822, lobed and painted to centre, 9.75in dia. Cotswold Auction Company, Cirencester. Aug 04. HP: £460. ABP: £541.



12
Nantgarw long oval pen tray, 'Nant-Garw C.W.' impressed, c1815, 24cm. (some re-gilding to the rim) Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury. Sep 00. HP: £380. ABP: £446.



13
Swansea porcelain coffee cup and saucer printed and enamelled with the Parakeets in a tree pattern, saucer 14cm dia, c1820. Bearn's, Exeter. Jun 05. HP: £230. ABP: £270.



14
Swansea shell dish, 1814-22, painted with flowers and fruit on a table, within broad gilded border, painted mark, gilding worn, 9.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Jun 03. HP: £80. ABP: £94.

Nantgarw & Swansea porcelains of the early nineteenth century

In both my recent book, *Ceramics Prices at Auction, 2004-2007* it is clear that the Welsh porcelains produced at Nantgarw and at Swansea between 1813 and 1820 are held in the highest regard and represent the pinnacle of ceramic achievement in the field of soft paste porcelains. As such their rarity and desirability assures they hold an important market position. Readers with an interest in ceramics should be aware of their potential.

The driving force was William Billingsley of Pinxton fame and his driving ambition was to produce a thinly potted soft paste porcelain that would rival the output at Sevres. The secret formula was a synthetic mixture of alkaline and aluminium silicates and bone ash and the method used to achieve the desired perfection was high temperature firing. The failure rate was excessive, with perhaps 90% of the pieces warping and shattering. The successful firings produced quality that some would describe as perfection. The venture was never viable. Nantgarw closed in 1814 and porcelain production at Swansea ended in 1820. Much of the stock was sent to London to be decorated although Billingsley himself, as well as William Weston Young and Thomas Pardoe were involved in the decoration in Wales.

So little passes through auction that I am only able to illustrate about fifteen pieces. At **1** the campana vase was painted by William Billingsley himself. At over £55,000 in 2002 such pieces can only continue to increase in value. I remember the pair of oval plates at **4**, which although not in the best of condition, fetched an astonishing £11,000 at Canterbury Auction Galleries in 2003. I viewed this sale and remember also the dessert plate at **7** which was in such poor condition that its estimate was about £50-70. The Auction Room was astonished at the £1,350 hammer. Experts in Welsh porcelain have at times disputed auction attributions. Indeed it is a very specialist area. I can believe that most of the lots illustrated here are genuine. For example the Swansea plate at **8** printed with 'Billingsley' roses has the painted mark and fetched an appropriate price. However the description at **9** does not mention a mark and the early Victorian attribution is of course erroneous as manufacture ceased in 1820. But **9** is a London shape cup and saucer prevalent from c1812-15 and Swansea did make this shape and it did fetch £646. Collectors would be looking for the precise shape of the handle and of course the duck-egg translucency of the paste. I must assume it to be genuine as the handle seems correct. Again one must assume that **14** is also Swansea with the decoration in a very distressed state, hence the £94.

I have checked out the retail market at www.nantgarwandswansea.com There are nine items of Nantgarw for sale, mainly flatware except for a cup and saucer decorated by Thomas Pardoe, at £2,775. The lowest price is £725 for an 8.5in plate and the highest is £4,250 for a 9.5in plate in mint condition, impressed *Nantgarw C.W.* The average price for Nantgarw on this website is just over £1,980. Swansea prices are a little lower. There is a cup and saucer for £325 and the highest price is £3,550 for an armorial 8.5in plate. There are eleven pieces for sale averaging £1,465. The definitive book is *The Pottery and Porcelain of Swansea and Nantgarw* by E. Morton Nance available through www.Bookfinder.com