



Group of Royal Worcester highly desirable Helen's Babies, based on an 1876 book by John Habberton. The original trio was first produced in 1880. Budge and Toddie were reproduced in 1976 and the original 3 are currently reproduced in a limited edition by Royal Worcester. Photo courtesy of Tony Horsley.



From left to right. 1. Old Woman first introduced in 1879, reproduced in this 1976 version. 2. & 4. Mr Caudle and his wife were characters originated by Douglas Jerrold for Punch magazine. Produced from 1855 to the 1950s and reproduced in this 1976 version. 3. The Abbess was produced continuously by Royal Worcester from 1855 to the present. 5. Japanese Girl, the smallest of the Royal Worcester extinguishers was first produced in 1870. We know this version is pre 1950s because of the yellow kimono and blue scarf. Later versions had different coloured kimonos. From 1976, the chipstick went from hand to bowl, rather than hand to mouth as here. 6. French Cook also known as Farmer's Wife was made from 1855. This is the 1976 reproduced version. Photo © Bonhams.



The Rivals by Minton were based on Lady Teazle (L) and Mrs Malaprop (R) from the Richard Sheridan comedies 'School for Scandal' and 'The Rivals'. They were cleverly modelled so that when placed on their base they glance scowlingly at each other. They were first produced in 1845 and relaunched in the 1880s. The later versions can be identified by having plainer, less patterned dresses. Photo courtesy of Tony Horsley.



This group were made by Royal Worcester around 1872 and shows the famous Titchbourne Trial of 1853 which centres on an inheritance dispute with a butcher; Arthur Orton claiming to be the long lost son of Baronet Titchbourne. The butcher's block candle holder is covered by the figure of Orton and the Lawyer extinguisher covers that figure to represent his claim eventually being extinguished. Photo courtesy of Tony Horsley.

## Porcelain Candle Extinguishers

by Zita Thornton

When a new candle wick was invented in the early 1800s, which didn't need to be trimmed as well as snuffed out, extinguishers that simply put out the flame, took over from the scissor shaped snuffers of previous times. They were made from metal, often silver or brass, and usually conical with a handle on the top or side, or they were bell shaped, with a long handle. The first porcelain extinguishers reproduced this conical shape and often stood on a base which sometimes functioned as a candle holder. The factory mark was on the base and, as many of these haven't survived, extinguishers can be difficult to identify. The rarest are pairs of cones on a small tray made by Minton. The Cone and Double Cone designs made by the Grainger company in 1860 are also hard to find, especially with their base. At the other end of the scale are the cones made in the thousands by Goss, for the souvenir market, complete with town crests.

The first novelty, or character extinguishers were made by Minton in 1845. Only a few designs were made and in limited quantities, so they are rare. They were exquisitely modelled and some had lots of fine detail which was more akin to sculptures than functional candle extinguishers. They were made in pairs on a tray, for instance The Rivals - Lady Teazle and Mrs Malaprop, or singly as with The Nun or The Monk. The next factory to produce character extinguishers, and certainly the most prolific, was Royal Worcester. Established as Kerr & Binns in 1852, it changed its name when Kerr retired ten years later. Consequently, extinguishers of the same design may have either mark.

The company first made character extinguishers in 1855. The first were The Monk and The Abbess, both produced continuously ever since although there have been many decorative amendments to the original shape over the years.

For instance, the Kerr & Binns original version has the monk's habit draped as though he is about to kneel. When Worcester took over production in 1862 he lost the bend in his knee and his habit was mostly produced as brown rather than grey although other rare colours are known to exist. The currently made Monk uses the same upright mould but reverts once again to the grey habit.

Rare Worcester examples, such as The Lawyer and The Motorist, would be worth a fortune, if they ever came up for sale. The Lawyer is listed in the pattern books but no photographic evidence exists. This should not be confused with The Lawyer from the Titchbourne Trial group of extinguishers made in the same year, although it is thought that the former may originally have been intended to be a part of that group. The Motorist was first produced in 1909 to herald the new age of motor cars but it had a tendency to fall over so few have survived. In 1976 the company tried using the old moulds but so few examples were made that these too are extremely rare.

Amongst the other highly desirable Royal Worcester extinguishers which do come up for sale are Helen's Babies, based on the adventures of two little boys dressing up in adult clothes, from the 1876 bestselling book of the same name by John Habberton. The original versions consist of Budge, Toddie and an additional Boy removing Coat. Budge and Toddie were reproduced in 1976 and again are currently available along with the third boy. The latest new versions can be identified from the older examples by a much brighter colour palette.

Other factories which made character candle extinguishers included Copeland, Derby, Grainger and Goss. Identification can be complicated because modellers would often work for more than one

factory, taking the moulds with them and amending them only slightly. Factories would also buy moulds from each other, so The Monk, which was first produced by Minton, was later made by Kerr & Binns, Worcester, Derby and Goss.

A good example of the re-use of moulds is Elizabeth Fry, first made by Copeland around 1850 and now difficult to find. An almost identical version was made twenty years later by Derby and is much more common. However, as the base on which it stands that carries the Derby mark may be missing, a clue to its origin is that the second example is not so finely detailed and is missing the hole for a match between fingers and thumb. When a piece has been reproduced by a factory in later years, you need to identify the slight differences in style to tell which versions you have. Most newer versions have a brighter colour palette.

Fortunately for collectors, a comprehensive identification guide is available, compiled by expert extinguisher dealer Tony Horsley. 'Distinguished Extinguishers' includes colour photos of character extinguishers from each manufacturer including reproduced versions. Date, size, colour variations and rarity value are included. There is also a section which illustrates the different maker's marks. It is available from the author for £32.50 including postage and packing from Mr. A. Horsley, P.O. Box 3127, Brighton BN1 5SS. Tel: 01273 550770.

In the twentieth century there was no real need for candle extinguishers but a few were still made for decorative purposes, particularly by Royal Worcester. In 1976 they produced fourteen extinguishers using old moulds. Production ceased ten years later but from the start of the 1990s they have reproduced a range of candle extinguishers, many in limited editions, to appeal to the collectables market. Other companies such as Bronté Porcelain and more recently, Royal Doulton, also produce collectable candle extinguishers. Old extinguishers are available from the larger auction houses and specialist dealers such as Tony Horsley. Given the difficulty of identifying and dating extinguishers, it is always best to buy from a reputable source.

## Values

The following are sample values from Tony Horsley:

- Copeland conical on base c1850-1870 £145
- Copeland pair Normandy Maid and Man 1860 £225
- Copeland Elizabeth Fry £500-£550
- Goss Welsh Lady 1900 £100
- Goss Monk, Nun or Mitre 1900 £180
- Grainger Tyrolean Hat 1895 £110-£130
- Grainger Monkey Head 1901 £350-£400
- Grainger Normandy Maid £400-£450
- Kerr & Binns white Kneeling Monk also known as The Friar 1855 £500-£600
- Royal Worcester Plumed Hat 1904 £100-£120
- Royal Worcester Abbess 1903 £300
- Royal Worcester The French Cook late 19thC £300
- Royal Worcester The Owl 1923 £138
- Royal Worcester rarities sold at auction: Bonham's ( Including buyer's premium)
- Toddie, one of Helen's Babies 1882 £3,000
- Boy Removing Coat 1882 £3,200
- Coloured Friar or Kneeling Monk 1893 £1,300
- Mob Cap 1881 £980



*Boy taking off his coat, 1882, is the rarest of Royal Worcester's highly desirable Helen's Babies extinguishers. Sold at Bonhams for £3,200. Although a part of the Helen's Babies trio, the boy was not a character in the John Habberton book but was thought to be based on Howard, the son of the modeller James Hadley. Values include buyers premium. Photo © Bonhams.*



*The most common of the Grainger extinguishers, the Tyrolean Hat was produced in different colour versions. 1875. Photo courtesy of Tony Horsley.*



*The very rare Grainger Cone 1860 reflects the shape of earlier metal extinguishers. A similar design was produced ten years later by Royal Worcester and called The Torch. Photo courtesy of Tony Horsley.*



*Copeland Punch was produced in 1860. An almost identical white glazed version was produced by Goss in 1900. Although some white glazed Copeland examples are thought to have been made, only the multicoloured version has been seen. Photo courtesy of Tony Horsley.*



*Toddie another of Helen's Babies from the same year sold for £3,000 at Bonhams. Values include buyers premium. Photo © Bonhams.*



*The Derby Priest has only recently been discovered in a private collection. Thought to have been made around 1870 it is most likely that it originally stood on a base. Photo courtesy of Tony Horsley.*



*These three examples of Helen's Babies are current reproductions from Royal Worcester, each in a limited edition of 750. They can be identified from the originals by their brighter colours. Photo courtesy of Royal Worcester.*