

Where has all the signed, hand-painted Doulton Burslem and Royal Doulton Artware gone?

A reader's letter poses a very interesting question and the Editor carries out some instant research which helps prove the lack of good quality hand painted Doulton which has appeared in the market in recent years.



1
Royal Doulton Titanian ware porcelain vase, 1916-29, painted with a polar bear and cub in an arctic landscape by Harry Allen, titled 'Beyond Man's Footsteps', 31.5cm high. Rupert Toovey & Co, Washington, Sussex. Aug 03. HP: £3,000. ABP: £3,528.



4
Doulton Lambeth charger by James Cruickshank, painted with a profile portrait of a pre-raphaelite female against a mottled blue-green ground, 16in. Gorrings, Lewes. Sep 05. HP: £600. ABP: £705.



7
Doulton Burslem earthenware oviform vase, c1905, 31cm high. Peter Wilson, Nantwich. Jul 02. HP: £420. ABP: £494.



2
An impressive Royal Doulton hand painted vase, 31in. Louis Taylor, Stoke on Trent. Jun 02. HP: £2,800. ABP: £3,293.



5
Late 19th/early 20thC Royal Doulton vase, painted to the front with a young maiden, standard printed factory mark, also painted initials and numbers 'RA 7183', 8.25in high. Fellows & Sons, Hockley, Birmingham. Jul 03. HP: £560. ABP: £658.



8
Victorian Doulton Lambeth tobacco barrel, painted with a continuous band of geese in coloured slips against a brown ground, with cover, 5.25in. Gorrings, Lewes. Jun 05. HP: £400. ABP: £470.



3
A Doulton Lambeth studio decorated charger, painted with figures on a wooden bridge after Birkett Foster by Lizzie Arnold, Sept 1881, 15.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 00. HP: £1,000. ABP: £1,176.



6
A Royal Doulton bone china vase, painted with a young girl and butterfly by Leslie Johnson, twin gilt-mask handles, 8.25in. Gorrings, Lewes. Mar 03. HP: £460. ABP: £541.



9
Doulton Luscian ware vase depicting a Beefeater, entitled to base 'Tower Warder', London 1896, signed W. Nunn, 19cm high. Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. May 05. HP: £300. ABP: £352.

Dear Editor

Following my earlier letter and our lengthy telephone conversation (a pleasure to speak with you). I enclose an expanded version which I hope might meet with your approval. Hope this is helpful. Your sincerely, David Waithman

My wife and I have been keen collectors of Doulton for several years and soon became aware of the vast range of artware which has been produced at both the Lambeth and Burslem factories. Decorated salt-glaze stoneware, Faience, Impasto, Silicon, Carrara Wares, to name but a few, produced in the earlier years in Lambeth, followed by an explosion into fine earthenware pottery and china produced in Burslem. We decided that for us the Burslem wares would be our choice, but which? Series wares, Kingwares, Holbein, Morrisian, Luscian, Lustre, Flambe, Sung, Chang, Titanian, Advertising or Commemorative Loving Cups, Character and Toby Jugs, Rack Plates or figures - the list appeared endless.

In 1884, when over 500 employees worked at the Nile Street pottery in Burslem, a very large and gifted number of artists were employed, many of whom had been attracted from Worcester, Coalport, Copeland and Wedgwood, etc. and who joined the already formidable group of Doulton artists. These included George White, Calliner, Percy Curnock, Fred and Joseph Hancock, William Hodkinson, Leslie Johnson, Walter Nunn, Harry Nixon, John Plant and Edward Raby. In 1901 Doulton was awarded the Royal Warrant and the Doulton Burslem products became the Royal Doulton Artware.

My wife and I become very attracted to the hand-painted and signed Doulton Burslem and later Royal Doulton items and finally decided to, at least, enjoy seeking these out and collect if we could both agree on a piece and afford to buy. However, in recent years it has become almost impossible to even locate signed Doulton Artware unless examples are either damaged, or are exhibition pieces commanding large prices outside of our price range. Thousands of items were produced between between 1880 and 1960, much exported to the U.S.A., Australia and New Zealand, but still leaving the bulk here in the U.K. Where are they now? We continue to search the whole country without success. Speak to dealers and auctioneers and it is always the same answer. These wares have vanished from the market.

Many suggest they have left these shores. Certainly the largest dealers in Doulton are in the U.S. and recent books are mainly published across the water. Have we really lost such a huge and important part of our heritage in ceramics, or can someone shed any light on the subject?

Editor's Analysis

Of the twenty examples shown only ten can be confirmed as definitive examples of David's category, a tiny part of a huge Doulton market. I have included Doulton Lambeth and some printed wares for comparison.

1. A definite example by Harry Allen and the most expensive lot on our database.

2. David admits that there are a few exhibition pieces around and here is one of them. Another good example. Note the height of 31 inches. The auction description excluded any reference to an artist.

3. A fine charger by Lizzie Arnold, dated September 1881 but of course not produced in Burslem!

4. Another fine charger by James Cruickshank but again made at Lambeth.

5. This appears to be a good example of what David is looking for. This sold for £658 in 2003.

6. Another good example of a porcelain vase painted by Leslie Johnson at Royal Doulton.

7. Included because of the high price. The caption is inconclusive regarding hand painted or printed. David or any other specialist would be able to tell. Two points. Firstly auction catalogues could be much clearer on such an important point. Secondly, get to know the difference between painting and printing!

8. Fine example of hand painted work from Lambeth.

9. Walter Nunn is included in David's list of Doulton artists so I am assuming this is hand painted. It may not be. The specialist will know. Another example of poor description.

10. Unclear on the source but probably Burslem and another example of what we are looking for.

11. Presumably hand painted by Albert Green, but did he work at Lambeth or Burslem? Again the description is found wanting.

12. Almost certainly printed but one cannot know from a small photograph. A specialist will. Description lacks clarity.

13. Fine pair of vases painted by Mary M. Arding but clearly Lambeth and not Burslem.

14. One of our few clear examples of Burslem hand painting by Harry Mitchell.

15. Royal Doulton, but what does decorated mean? Almost certainly printed and of course those attending the sale could see for themselves.

16. This description clearly states that this plaque is painted and not printed. A specialist will know by the price. We must assume that it is hand painted but this shows the need to consult with auctions when in doubt or view the lot yourself.

17. Hand painting over printing but I am not certain that David would consider this piece as a specimen of the type of Burslem wares he is seeking.

18. Painted or printed? The description doesn't say. We must assume that is is printed.

19. Hand painted by the artist 'NS' but a Lambeth example and not Burslem.

20. Clear hand painting on this impasto work but again, does this really come into David's category?



10 Doulton luscian Ware vase, painted with mermaids in the sea, 19cm high.

Great Western Auctions, Glasgow. May 05. HP: £270. ABP: £317.



11 Doulton faience jardiniere, decorated by Albert Green with autumnal leaves and blackberries, faded brown and lemon ground, impressed marks, painted signature, 12in high. Amersham Auction Rooms, Bucks. May 04. HP: £240. ABP: £282.



12 A Royal Doulton jardiniere, underglaze blue, children playing hide and seek around a tree, 24cm high. Richard Winterton Auctioneers, Burton on Trent, Staffs. Apr 03. HP: £220. ABP: £258.



13 A pair of Doulton Lambeth faience vases painted with crab apples on blue grounds by Mary M Arding, 7in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 00. HP: £210. ABP: £247.



14 Pair of Doulton Burslem cabinet plates, c1900, painted with a wild turkey and lapwings by Harry Mitchell, richly scrolled gilt borders, printed marks, manufactured for Phillips, Oxford Street, London, 23cm. (2) Sworders, Stansted Mountfitchet. Nov 05. HP: £200. ABP: £235.



15 A pair of Royal Doulton Natural foliage ware vases, typically decorated in mottled shades of green, yellow and ochre, 10in. Gorrings, Lewes. Apr 05. HP: £160. ABP: £188.



18 A Royal Doulton vase with autumnal leaves, 9.5in. Gorrings, Bexhill. Mar 02. HP: £130. ABP: £152.



16 Royal Doulton oval earthenware plaque, painted with a mother and child walking a country path, in underglaze blue, 9.5 x 7.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Jan 04. HP: £150. ABP: £176.



19 A Doulton Lambeth Carrara ware vase, of bulbous shape painted with flowers and leaves against the crystalline matt glaze, painted artists' initials NS, 7.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Jan 04. HP: £120. ABP: £141.



17 Royal Doulton 'Under the Greenwood tree' charger, printed and painted with Robin, Maid Marion, Friar Tuck and followers under an oak tree within an oak leaf and acorn border, 15in dia. Dee, Atkinson & Harrison, Driffield. Feb 05. HP: £140. ABP: £164.



20 Doulton Impasto ware vase, decorated with a blossom spray against a blue ground, dated 1886, impressed marks, 10.5in. Gorrings, Lewes. Oct 04. HP: £90. ABP: £105.