

In October 1899 the journal “The Artist” published an article which has become widely quoted in the circles of Shelley/Wileman enthusiasts. No surprise really, because in its nine pages it illustrated over 90 pieces of earthenware and in its 1400 words described the new ranges of pottery which the artistic director, Frederick Rhead, had initiated for the firm’s owner. “The designs are mainly due to the taste and enterprise of Mr. Percy Shelley”. This was a rare example of designer and manufacturer coming together to combine artistic excellence and commercial success:

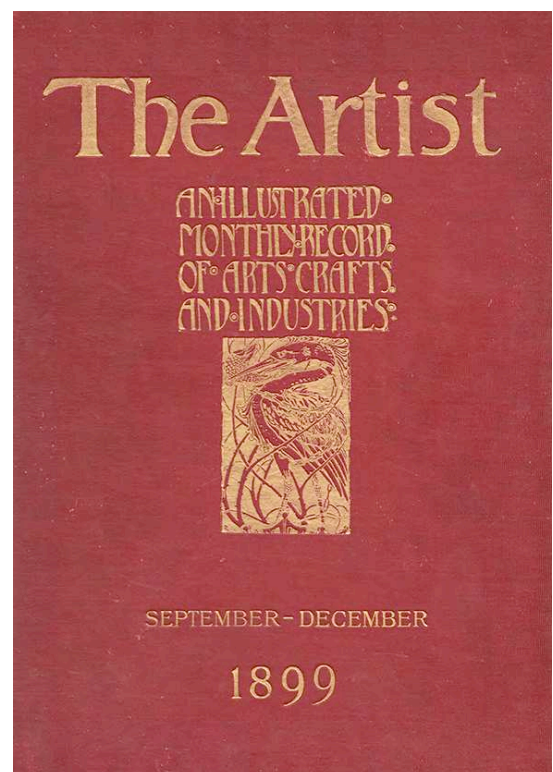
“Some beautiful English pottery”

The Artist (1899) vol. 26, pp. 76-84.

“so entirely different from anything in the market”.

The journal described how five types of pottery were produced and gave their appreciation clearly: “a series of examples of pottery superior to any contemporaneous British pottery”.

Photography was by Hudson & Kearns, who were noted for photographing palaces, people and exhibitions. Victorians could print in colour: indeed this journal carried a colour plate in the same issue. So ...





GROTESQUES

BY WILEMAN & CO.

SOME BEAUTIFUL
ENGLISH POTTERY

IT would be both interesting and profitable to investigate the reasons why the Continental designer of a certain standing devote, more of his time to the decoration of pottery than his English confrere. If pottery afforded no exceptional opportunities for decorative treatment, or if English potters were technically inferior to their Continental competitors, one might understand the British designer's neglect of this fascinating branch of industry. Designers of the first class are not uncommon among us, and we may reasonably claim that we lead the van in all the art industries, with the single and most important exception of pottery.

Two of the chief reasons for this state of things lie between the designer and the manufacturer, the former of whom does not take the trouble to master the somewhat complex technicalities of the Ceramic industry, and the latter, who will not budge an inch from his established methods to meet the requirements of the designer. By



'INTARSIO' POT AND PEDESTAL
BY WILEMAN & CO.

SOME BEAUTIFUL ENGLISH POTTERY

this course of procedure, the designer loses a new and delightful field for the exercise of his art, and the manufacturer loses the prestige and the commercial benefits which would accrue to him if he adopted better, saner, and more modern decorative methods. The general public are quite prepared to purchase better pottery, and this statement is proven by the fact that they do actually buy eagerly anything that is ever so little in advance of the abominable trash which is exhibited in the windows of our crockery shops. Therefore, when we discover any serious and determined attempt on the part of our English makers of crockery to improve this state of things, we conceive it to be our duty to put it on record. We know that earnest efforts are being made in various quarters, and in some cases with excellent results, but our chief complaint is that among the eight hundred manufactories of china and earthenware which exist in England, the attempts at betterment are so few and far between. And it is a regrettable fact that (with about one exception) it is not the old and historical firms that we may look to for reform. These firms seem to be directing what little energies are left to them to the development of machinery for increased production rather than the improvement of design and the advancement of craftsmanship. It is from the younger and more vigorous firms that we obtain encouragement.

Messrs. Wileman and Co., of the Foley Potteries, Longton, are making pottery which they frankly state is intended to be produced upon a purely commercial basis, and they modestly limit their claim to as much art as the commercial conditions will allow. But we think they have succeeded in more than this. They have shown that



*FAIENCE UMBRELLA STAND
BY WILEMAN & CO.*

it is possible to produce well-designed pottery, manufactured by legitimate methods and covered with beautiful glazes and enamels, at a price within the reach of the average citizen. They have had the courage to fling aside all the cherished traditions of the modern British potter, and have been rewarded by the instant approval of the buying public. We have so often, in these pages, advanced the theory that added artistic excellence in manufactures must ultimately mean added commercial success, that we are glad to quote Messrs. Wileman and Co. as a case in



JUGS AND GROTESQUES

BY WILEMAN & CO.



*FLOWER POT AND
VASES IN 'PRIMITIF'*

BY WILEMAN & CO.



*CUPS, POT-POURRI VASE, COFFEE-POT
AND FLOWER HOLDER IN 'INTARSIO' WARE*

BY WILEMAN & CO.



VASES, FLOWER-POT AND JAR
IN 'SPANO-LUSTRA' WARE

BY WILEMAN & CO.

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VASES AND JUGS
IN 'URBATO' WARE

BY WILEMAN & CO.

THE FOLEY POTTERIES, LONGTON

VASES, JARS AND PILGRIM
BOTTLES IN 'INTARSIO' WARE
BY WILEMAN & CO.



VASES AND TEA CADDY
IN 'INTARSIO' WARE
BY WILEMAN & CO.



*BOTTLE JAR AND VASES
IN 'URBATO WARE
BY WILEMAN & CO.*



*FLOWER POTS
IN 'INTARSIO' WARE*

BY WILEMAN & CO.



*LOVING CUP, JUG, CATETIERES AND
PILGRIM BOTTLE IN 'INTARSIO' WARE
BY WILEMAN & CO.*

SOME BEAUTIFUL ENGLISH POTTERY



*VASES, JAR AND COFFE POT
IN 'INTARSIO' WARE*

BY WILEMAN & CO

point. Their pottery, as will be seen from our illustrations, is so entirely different from anything in the market that it needed a certain degree of boldness and faith in their theories to provide the necessary outlay for what was really, after all, a huge experiment. The result has been a series of examples of pottery superior to any contemporaneous British pottery, with the sole exception of certain isolated exhibition pieces. The 'Intarsio' ware is executed under the glaze, entirely by hand.

The outline is prepared by the designers and is then filled in by lady artists and girls according to a fixed scheme of colour. The palette is a very beautiful and extensive one, and the colouration is too varied for a detailed description. The tall Persian-shaped cafetiere, with conventional swans, is a scheme of creamy white, olives, citrons, deep purple and peacock blues, and the tall jar with a frieze of Cupids has an Indian yellow background to the ornament, and a very deep brown background to the Cupids, which are tinted naturally. The flat-sided vase or pilgrim bottle is a rich and almost audacious scheme of colour, but is most skilfully kept in perfect harmony. The flowers are brilliant yellow, with sober russet centres, and the leaves are sage, myrtle, and other low-toned greens with a deep

green-blue background. The 'Urbato' ware is pottery of the most legitimate kind. The 'body' is porcelain of the finest quality, and the decoration is an adaptation of the process known as 'Sgraffito,' but with the difference that it is polychromatic instead of being in two colours only. The 'Urbato' decoration is executed solely by hand, and without mechanical aids of any kind.

The vase (made usually of a dark-toned clay) has one or more films of clay of different colours on its surface, on which the pattern is sketched. The design is then scratched or incised with a steel tool through the film to the darker coloured background, which is then scratched away, leaving the pattern in, say, drab, on a dark blue ground. Portions of the drab film are then scratched away, but only to the surface of the second or underlying film, which is perhaps buff. There is then a drab and buff pattern on a dark blue ground, and other colours are added with the brush if desired.

The 'Spano-Lustra' ware is executed by similar methods to the Urbato, but is 'Sgraffito' work in one or two colours only. It is then covered with iridescent lustres, which are applied in a liquid state or obtained by fumes in a kiln according to the tint required. Many charming

THE FOLEY POTTERIES, LONGTON



VASES IN 'SPANO-LUSTRA' WARE

BY WILEMAN & CO.

and unique effects are obtained by this method. The other processes employed by Messrs. Wileman we are precluded from describing in detail through want of space.

The 'Pastello' decoration consists of figures, flowers, and various natural objects executed on a dark ground, cameo-fashion, in a semi-transparent paste. The figures show an advance on anything of the kind previously produced in the excellence of design, correctness of drawing, and delicacy of modelling. We cannot pass over the 'Primitif' pottery without a brief notice. In this the effects are obtained (as is the case in the finest antique Japanese and Chinese pottery) by what may be described as 'directed accident.' The effects are all accidental, but are always

more or less under the control of the artist, who knows with tolerable accuracy what the general effect will be, but who never knows exactly what delightful passages of colour may gather in certain parts or what beautiful play of textures and lines, like the swirl of water round and over stepping-stones in a brook. It requires an artist, too, to know what to add and what to leave alone.

Messrs. Wileman & Co., with their two hundred lady and girl artists, and their score or so of male designers, have the necessary material at hand, and every piece which they send forth may be relied upon as being unique and artistic.

It may be of interest to mention that the bulk of Messrs. Wileman's artistic staff are or have



VASES AND JARS
IN 'URBATO' WARE
AND 'PRIMITIF' WARE

BY WILEMAN & CO

SOME BEAUTIFUL ENGLISH POTTERY

been connected with the Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, or Fenton Schools of Art. Messrs. Wileman & Co. make a number of very quaint grotesque and toby jugs, which are of considerable interest.

The designs are mainly due to the taste and enterprise of Mr. Percy Shelley, the proprietor of the firm, aided by the three Messrs. Rhead, Messrs. Stephen Hartley, Leaden, Banks, Wood,

Forester, the Misses Robinson, Price, Brown, and others.

Designs have also been supplied by the late Rowland Morris, P. G. Riley, Mrs. Waterhouse, and many other well-known artists. A selection of the Foley Art Pottery (Messrs. Wileman's Faience) may be seen at Messrs. Liberty's, in Regent Street, by those who are interested.



*VASES, BOTTLE, JUG AND CANDLESTICK
IN 'INTARSIO' WARE*

BY WILEMAN & CO

Key to Illustrations in

The Artist (1899) article “*Some Beautiful English Pottery*” on Wileman wares.

PAGE	Original CAPTION (not always 100% accurate)	PATTERN NUMBERS
76	<i>GROTESQUES</i> <i>‘INTARSIO’ POT AND PEDESTAL</i>	3117, 3082, 3087, 3098, 3077, 3080, 3099 3103 on 3119
77	<i>FAIENCE UMBRELLA STAND</i> <i>JUGS AND GROTESQUES</i>	3118 3096, 3134, 3138, 3105, 3078
78	<i>FLOWER POT AND VASES IN ‘PRIMITIF’ WARE</i> <i>CUPS, POT-POURRI VASE, COFFEE-POT AND FLOWER HOLDER</i> <i>IN ‘INTARSIO’ WARE</i>	12012? (11012), 12029, 12026, 12003, 11011, 12064 3026, 3053, 3102, 3022, 3075
79	<i>VASES, FLOWER-POT AND JAR IN ‘SPANO-LUSTRA’ WARE</i> <i>VASES AND JUGS IN ‘URBATO’ WARE</i>	10014, 10036, 10003, 10002, 1001 (c), 10010 1020, 1056? (4056), 1014, 1084, 1044 (4044), 1008 (c), 1036? (3036)
80	<i>VASES, JARS AND PILGRIM BOTTLES IN ‘INTARSIO’ WARE</i> <i>VASES AND TEA CADDY IN ‘INTARSIO’ WARE</i>	3018, 3044, 3024, 3092, 3018’ 3012, 3011, 3025, 3021, 3056
81	<i>BOTTLE JAR AND VASES IN ‘URBATO WARE</i> <i>FLOWER POTS IN ‘INTARSIO’ WARE</i> <i>LOVING CUP, JUG, CATETIERES AND PILGRIM BOTTLE IN</i> <i>‘INTARSIO’ WARE</i>	1023, 1022, 12033? (11033), 11036, 11003, 1016? 3061, 3059, 3058, 3060, 3062 3073, 3051, 3028, 3094, 3002, 3057, 3081
82	<i>VASES, JAR AND COFFE POT IN ‘INTARSIO’ WARE</i>	3107, 3015, 3072, 3001, 3052, 3016, 3029
83	<i>VASES IN ‘SPANO-LUSTRA’ WARE</i> <i>VASES AND JARS IN ‘URBATO’ WARE AND ‘PRIMITIF’ WARE</i>	10015?, 10011, 10018, ?(10017), 10006 ? (c), 12007, 12015, 11017, 1021, 1057 (c), 10032? (c)
84	<i>VASES, BOTTLE, JUG AND CANDLESTICK IN ‘INTARSIO’ WARE</i>	3023, 3074, 3084, 3091, 3042

Pattern numbers followed by question mark are unconfirmed numbers.

Pattern numbers in brackets are a close substitute for the unknown piece

(c) denotes a coloured scan

1000 series = Urbato (sgraffito)

3000 series = Intarsio

(4000 series = Urbato: later, tube-lined)

10000 series = Spano-Lustra (sgraffito plus iridescent glaze)

11000 series = Faience

12000 series = Primitif (some sgraffito plus drip glaze)



Bonus image: an unmarked, possibly trial vase on pate-sur-pate decoration, signed by Stephen Hartley who is mentioned on the last page of the article.

More Beautiful Pottery!

CW
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