

The Glass Code

No.1. March 1984



The Glass Cone

The newsletter of the
Glass Association
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Cover Illustration

Glass Makers' Union Certificate, designed by Benjamin Richardson and John Northwood. The interior view shows men at work on pressing, bottle-making and general blowing; the central group at the top of the designer and workman represents the Alliance of Art with Manufacture.

This issue is published with the aid of a financial contribution from the Broadfield House Glass Museum.



The Glass Cone

In the 1950s Arthur Churchill's Glass notes combined the latest news from the glass world with serious articles on all aspects of glass collecting. That idea seemed to hit the right proportion between glass journalism and scholarly presentation - it is the mark of its success that it is still a universal source of information.

The Glass Cone is based on a similar approach but with the added benefit of a much wider audience of glass enthusiasts. The far reaching interests of these enthusiasts will be reflected in the contents. Regular features include notes on collections, studio and factory glass, general news items and information on other Glass Societies. Future numbers will include notes on exhibitions and sales, museum acquisitions as well as an exchange of and requests for information.

Every two years the News Letter will be complemented by a journal containing major illustrated articles. The two publications in conjunction can provide a body of information of both national and international significance.

To achieve these aims your assistance with news and articles is requested.

The Glass Association

During the autumn of 1983 eleven people gathered informally to discuss the idea of a new glass society which would cater for a wide range of glass interests, cover all parts of the country and provide a varied and entertaining programme of events. Rules were drafted, printing costs for newsletters were obtained and a programme of events was suggested.

On Guy Fawkes day the Inaugural Meeting was held at Stourbridge College of Art when about 90 people came from as far afield as Newcastle and Cheltenham. Since then membership has grown to 140 with many more application forms already being sent out. Sponsorship has also been promised by one Stourbridge glass firm. Therefore this new venture is assured a successful future.

Glass has for too long been the poor relation among the decorative arts but we hope that with your help the Association will promote and increase the understanding and appreciation of the art of glass.



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Glass Societies

The Carnival Glass Society (UK)

The Carnival Glass Society aims to serve the collector of this very exuberant and complex glass. It also hopes that it will be instrumental in documenting in a sensible and accurate way, the history of this popular art glass. There is a great deal of myth, misinformation and whimsical nonsense surrounding Carnival Glass. It has been denied its proper and correct place in glass history due to lack of reliable source material. It is linked to the Stourbridge area through the Northwood family. Techniques and design notions from Webbs, Stevens and Williams and Richardsons are all to be found in popular transformations. Venetian edgings and crimpings were expertly added by immigrant Bohemian workmen. The glass is an amazing amalgam of European workmanship and the American genius for mass production. It is a truly historical glass with a fascinating lineage.

Hopefully, other glass collectors will be kind and try to understand that this very vibrant, beautiful and complex artefact deserves its rightful place in the sequence of glass production. We are not asking anyone to like Carnival Glass. We ask only for your help in its rehabilitation.

The Carnival Glass Society is also trying to help its members understand that there is glass other than Carnival.

We have regular meetings and this year's AGM and Open Day will be on Saturday, 18th August, at Broadfield House Glass Museum.

There are regular News-sheets, a quarterly Journal and many pattern data sheets. Local Groups have some very enjoyable and informal social evenings to exchange news, glass and gossip.

Membership details and Prospectus from the Secretary, The Carnival Glass Society (UK), 29 Windsor Road, Wanstead, London E11 3QU.

Ray Notley

Detail of Heavy Grape Pattern by Imperial Glass Corporation, Bellaire, Ohio. A beautiful and artistically successful example of mould cutting. From "Carnival Glass" by Raymond Notley, Shire Album 104 (95p).

XX Showcase

Glass on Tyne & Wear

Whether blown, floated or pressed, whether for window, table or mantelpiece, glass has long been associated with the North East of England. During the 18th century some of the finest quality lead crystal emerged from this area whilst in the 19th century the glasshouses along the rivers Tyne and Wear were as prolific in their production as those of the Midlands and the South.

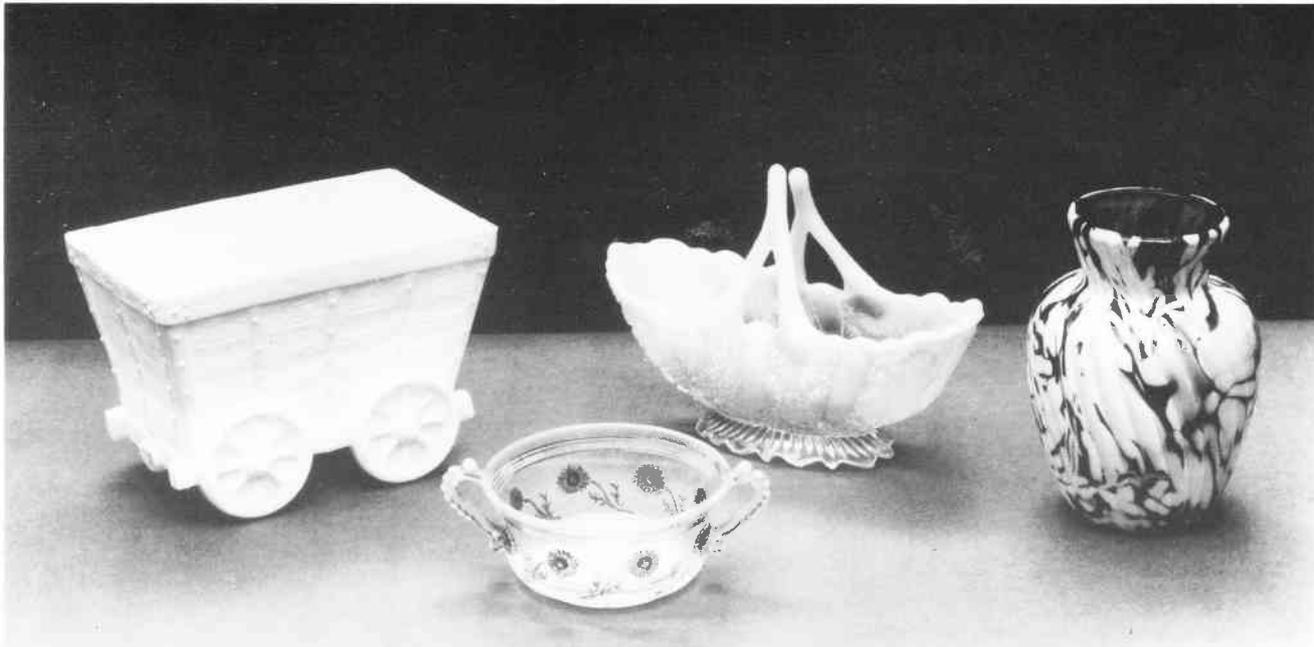
It was during the 17th century that the seeds of this success were sown originating with the glass monopoly awarded to Sir Robert Mansell which enabled him to establish a glasshouse on the Tyne in 1619. This flourished and grew in importance much to the detriment of its longer established contemporaries elsewhere. Today, a glass industry still exists on Tyneside but on a much reduced scale. For enthusiasts of glass the inheritance of the North Eastern glass-making tradition can be seen in the collections of Tyne and Wear County Council Museums. A county-wide policy has ensured that this legacy is promoted through a variety of displays at the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle,

Sunderland Museum and Art Gallery and the Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead.

The glass collection at the Laing Art Gallery has grown out of various gifts, bequests and loans. With special emphasis on Newcastle's contribution to the manufacture and decoration of glass, the displays illustrate its historical development. This is supported by a large display of fine English and Irish glass from 1680 to the turn of the present century. Although the principal products of Tyneside during the 17th and 18th centuries were window and bottle glass, some high-quality flint glass was made for tablewares. Among the several examples of this glass in the collection, the famous Newcastle light baluster is well represented. Whilst there is contention that those light balusters with Dutch engraving were produced elsewhere, the examples to be seen are nonetheless, a beauty to behold. An engraved ship goblet of the 1740s signed by Jacob Sang and a stipple-engraved light baluster wineglass illustrating a pair of carousing cherubs, are

among the best known pieces.

However, the glass for which Newcastle is principally famous is that decorated by the Beilby family during the period c.1760-1778 of which this County holds the largest collection in the world. Using locally-made glass (probably from the glasshouse of Airey Cookson) the Beilbys mastered the technique of firing the enamel onto the glass so that the two materials fused to form a permanent bond. The Beilby's subject matter, as represented by the thirty-six examples in the loan and permanent collections, ranges from armorial, pastoral scenes and architectural views to the fruiting vine motif. The finest pieces are the Henry Partis goblet in full polychrome enamel, the exquisite Margaret and Winneford ship bowl (from the collection of Squadron Leader James Rush), a cordial glass with a glistening blue thread insert in the stem and the 'Truth and Loyalty' decanter which bears the rare signature of William Beilby above the crest of the Payne family. The entire collection has recently been rehoused in a specially constructed display area,



◀
*Late 19th C.
Pressed Glass
by Heppell and
Sowerby.*

► *Beilby Enamelled Glass – the Margaret and Winneford Bowl, the Henry Partis Goblet, Cordial with Hunting Scene, Wineglass with fruiting vine, Decanter with polychrome arms of Linskill impaling Robinson, c1765.*

Further outstanding examples of 18th century Newcastle glass in the collection includes a decanter, c.1790, with the name Tyzack engraved on the shoulder – a name long-associated with the local industry – and a rummer bearing the engraved arms of Newcastle and the later date, 1801.

Among the 19th century Tyneside examples there is an important selection of copper-wheel engraved pieces of which three bear the signatures of their decorators. The first, a goblet of the 1840's, charmingly engraved by Thomas Hudson with Neptune in a chariot borne by a pair of hippocamps, is only partially eclipsed by a monumentally large goblet with a detailed view of the Quayside and the old Tyne Bridge. This latter is signed by an unidentified A.C.

and was produced in the 1820s.

However, the earliest piece a rummer



signed by John Watson and dated 5th July 1823, with a delicately engraved view of St. Nicholas's Church, Newcastle, is the most delightful.

The mass-production of cheap, decorative and utilitarian pressed glass was pioneered in the North-East, most notably in Gateshead by Sowerby's Ellison Glass Works and George Davidson and Company. The gifts of Matthew Bell (1925) and Lady Ursula Ridley (1973) make the pressed glass collection at the Laing mostly Sowerby in origin.

There are examples of their colourful fancy and Venetian ware produced in the 1880s together with a unique group of hand-blown Art Glass from the short-lived studio of J.G. Sowerby.

From bottles to air-twist wine glasses, from tankards to gilded, coloured and cut-glass decanters, the permanent collection of English and Irish glass dates from c.1700–1900 and it includes a number of the standard products as well as pieces of greater interest. Although unfortunately



► *Covered Vase and Jug from the Londonderry Service, c1824.*





Gallery, the glass collection is both of historical and technical interest. It was in 1696 that a Company of Glassmakers was established in Sunderland. However, the boom period was to come in the 19th century. Engraved and cut glass from the early 1800s form the bulk of the display of historical glass, the highlight being the fine examples from the two hundred piece cut-glass service made by the Wear Flint Glass Company for the 3rd Marquis of Londonderry and on loan to the museum from the family. From its appearance, this high-quality glass was thought previously to be Irish in origin. However, the thickly blown and deeply cut glass was made at Deptford in Sunderland in 1824. Other examples include a number of both large and small rammers engraved variously with views of the Wear Bridge, opened in 1796. An obvious subject for the decoration of glass articles in Sunderland is the Exchange Building of 1814 and there is one magnificent example in the collection.

A new permanent display is to open shortly which will illustrate the technical development of glassmaking both in its local and national context from the 18th

century to the present day. Pyrex, the subject of a recent major exhibition, brings the technological survey to its close.

The Shipley Art Gallery's most recent development is the assembling of the County's Contemporary Craft Collection. Of their contemporary glass, there are examples from both the region's and Britain's major glassmaker's and decorator's workshops. The work of Pauline Solven, Dillon Clarke, George Elliott, Anne Mieke Lumsden, Stephen Proctor, John Cook and Willie Anderson is strongly represented. A new display of this collection is soon to be opened and will provide a focus and encouragement for studio glassmaking in the North-East. The Gallery also possesses a large and significant collection of press-moulded glass, especially that made by Sowerby in Gateshead in the late 19th century, and a small collection of locally engraved glass.

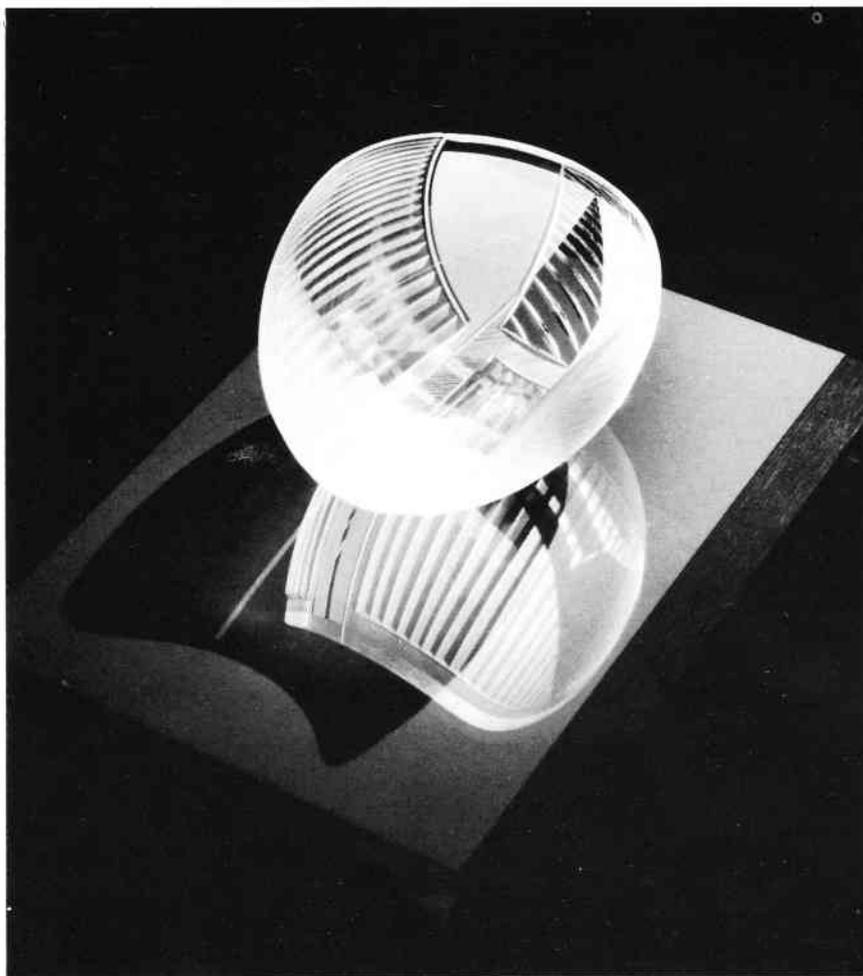
Thus, the County of Tyne and Wear can rightfully boast an impressive collection of glass, the richness and variety of which can only be appreciated at first hand.

Simon Cottle

damaged, a rare sweetmeat set, c.1745, with floral engraving is one of the highlights. Together with a silesian-stemmed salver and sweetmeat glass, there are eight engraved jelly glasses, each of which sits neatly arranged around the sweetmeat glass and on the salver itself. A major recent loan of almost forty pieces of 17th, 18th and 19th century English glass from the collection of Peter Meyer, has broadened the historical significance of the British and Newcastle glass display. This remarkable collection includes among several rare 17th century examples, an Anglo-Venetian wineglass probably from the Savoy Glasshouse of George Ravenscroft, c.1680. Colour twist wineglasses, a Jacobite firing glass, a superb Dutch engraved light baluster wineglass of the ship *Kattendyke* attributed to a member of the Sang family, and a rare Beilby wineglass with a shipping scene, are among the important 18th century examples being lent to the Gallery. A rare decanter with an engraving of the Wear Bridge and a goblet illustrating a lady smoking a pipe in the smoker's carriage of a Planet type locomotive are just two of the 19th century examples which, with all the earlier glass, makes this one of the most exciting loans to any museum of glass in this country.

Lastly, a pair of 14ft. stained glass windows depicting Fortitude and Charity respectively, by Sir Edward Coley Burne Jones (1833-1898) for St. Cuthbert's Church, Newcastle, have recently been erected in the Gallery as a permanent display feature and indicates the wide variety of glass decorating methods to be seen in Tyne and Wear's collections.

At Sunderland Museum and Art



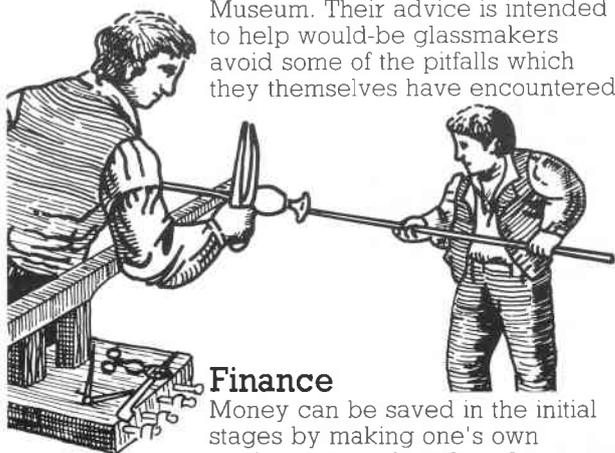
◀ *'Journey Through Light', blown, cut, sandblasted and engraved by Stephen Proctor 1981.*



Blowing Iron & Cutting Wheel

Setting up a Glass Studio

This short article is the first in a series about the setting up and running of a studio glass workshop. Future articles written by glassmakers and technologists will provide more specialised information. The information here results from a discussion with Richard Golding and Nicola Osborne who are Okra Glass and work at Broadfield House Glass Museum. Their advice is intended to help would-be glassmakers avoid some of the pitfalls which they themselves have encountered.



Finance

Money can be saved in the initial stages by making one's own equipment e.g. benches, frames etc. A general course in metal working/welding would provide the necessary skills. The amount of price-saving can be impressive. Okra equipped their studio for £4,000 whereas a similar range bought commercially would cost £7,500-£8,000. The added advantage is that self-help is at hand should anything go wrong.

The Glass Mix

Many studios use Dartington cullett (£180-£200 a ton) which is good quality but variable. However the price is reasonable as the costs for melting a 24% lead glass would reach £600 a ton using ready made batch. Soda glass can also be a good alternative. Richard Golding recommends the following batch to melt out at 1300°-1350°C overnight:— 18·5% Soda (Na_2O), 8% lime (CaO), 1·5% Borax (B_2O_3), 0·1-0·2% Refining agent such as antimony oxide (handled with care as it is an accumulative poison worse than lead), 72% sand/silica. Lime can be added as calcium fluoride/fluorspar which aids refining due to its volatile nature.

The Furnace

An open-pot furnace is recommended using a free-standing Dyson 17" x 10" Sillimanite pot. Casing the pot in cement may extend its life but it creates problems when it comes to

renewal. A free standing pot should last 6 months. Production levels should be about £100 a day - the cost of one pot.

Refractory bricks of good quality are difficult to find. Most are not fired over 1450°C. The small orders placed by studio glass makers cannot influence an increase in quality from the large manufacturers. The best quality Sillimanite and Mullite should be used while Zircon Alumina from France is also very good but expensive as it is cast at 2400°C. Recent experiments by some studio glassmakers may eventually result in better quality refractories.

The Studio

The first possibility is to set up in a tourist area selling glasses at £1-£5 each with the occasional more expensive item. The range could include pressed ashtrays, candlesticks, birds, swans, vases, pressed discs and tiles.

The alternative is to produce an article of higher quality and consistency and sell via the trade. Repeat orders must be available. This is a much slower market to break into - one way of achieving it is to start with cheaper items, then increase quality and price. The standard mark-up is 115% (100% + 15% VAT) therefore a £5 item will sell for £11·50 in the shop.

The third possibility is to deal through art/craft galleries, even on a sale or return basis although the latter is not recommended. Generally speaking sales through galleries may be slower as one is usually marketing a name as an artist for an exclusive one-off product.

Colour

The German firm of Kugler is the main supplier of glass colours. The high costs of £5-£10 per kilo, depending on colour, are increased by shipping costs. There is a minimum order with a surcharge on orders under £500. Kugler supply approx. 90 colours of which 15-20 are base colours. The variations give a subtlety not available from English firms such as Plowden and Thompson at Stourbridge. Many studio glass firms are becoming increasingly aware of the great risk involved by relying on one outside supplier

who may end production or may be involved in a take-over bid resulting in higher prices. A programme of research to produce one's own colours is urgently needed but due to the friction between various groups any success in this field is kept a close secret. A change in attitude could lead to the idea of selling colour recipes while the basic information of setting up a studio should be given freely and readily.

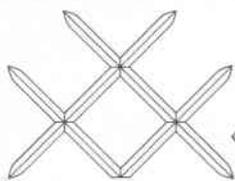
Home-made colour can cost as little as £1 per kilo but it may involve a long process of trial and error e.g. Okra's attempts at a selenium sulphide red have resulted in 17 different melts and still without success. Colour melting requires an experimental furnace using tiny, tea-cup size crucibles which will keep costs to a minimum. Each crucible is only used once. Books of recipes are available but final results depend on a variety of factors including oxide content, expansivity, furnace atmosphere, chemical conditions in the melt itself, and oxidation or reduction in varying degrees. However once colour is produced the great advantage is that it is immediately available. Today Okra Glass are one of the few studios in this country, large or small, who gather hot colour out of their furnaces. The majority of major coloured glass manufacturers use Kugler glass.

Sales

It is much better to use the professional assistance of an agent rather than travel oneself. A day off work costs lost production (£100 minimum) and only about 4 shops can be covered in one day. Even if orders of say £350 are taken this is reduced by expenses and lost production totalling up to £200. In choosing an agent, who will make a standard charge of between 10-20%, find out what other goods the agent carries and if they are compatible with your own. Ask to see the other ranges and find out which shops are visited. It is necessary to obtain a contract of work with an initial 3 month trial. If this fails only the samples will have been lost. Orders are often placed directly with the studio. In this case good studios will give the agent a commission on these and then pass the customer to the agent for future sales.

Richard Golding





Shearings News & Views

Glassworks Closed

At the end of February the Trent Valley Glassworks at Scropton Lane, Tutbury, Staffordshire finished production after a long and impressive history. The factory was established during the early years of the 19th century; by 1824 it was supplying glass to the Marquis of Hastings. During the 1870's it was known as the Royal Castle Flint Glass Works when the owner was J.T.H. Richardson, a member of the famous Stourbridge family. In more recent years production has consisted of pressed wares including scent bottles and ashtrays.

Before the factory closed, Broadfield House Glass Museum was able to photograph and video the site and it is hoped to produce a video film of the firm and its history. Mr. Harry Shaw has been especially kind in providing access to the works. With his help it is planned to give a fuller account of the factory in a future newsletter.

Competition Invitation

A competition is being organised jointly by the Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Painters of Glass and the Central Electricity Generating Board. The competition is for a design for two fixed translucent panels in the Main Entrance Hall of the Converter Station now under construction at Sellindge, near Ashford in Kent. It is intended to fit the panels during August/September 1985 to coincide with the completion of the building and in time for the official opening. Prizes are of £750, £400 and £200.

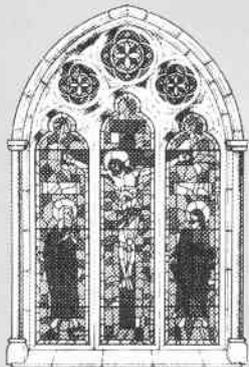
Closing date for submission of designs is 30th March 1984. Details of the competition are available from The Architect, Transmission and Technical Services Division, CEGB, Burymead House, Portsmouth Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 5BN.

New Shops in London

Towards the end of 1983 Alcoholics Antiques opened in Burlington Gardens. Facing the Museum of Mankind, the shop is run by Jeanette and Malcolm Hayhurst and Brian Beet who are always keen to talk glass. Items in stock range from late 17thc. glass to some fine 19thc. examples. Nearby in Piccadilly between the Royal Academy and Piccadilly Circus, Adam Aaronson has opened a new Coleridge shop to complement his existing premises in Highgate. The luxurious surroundings provide a

superb background to the widest range of studio glass on sale anywhere in the country. A welcome section deals with hard-to-get foreign catalogues on studio glass.

Glass and Architecture



An international meeting to discuss Glass and Architecture is to be held at Sars Poteries, France, from 4-7th April, 1984. Lectures and talks will be complemented by working sessions in the studios where all the hot glass techniques will be available. Anyone interested in attending this project and also seeing a very exciting set-up at Sars Poteries should contact Louis Meriaux, Musée du Verre B.P. no. 2, 59216 Sars Poteries. Phone 27 61 61 44

The Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers of London Award

Entries are now invited for this Award which is available to persons resident in the United Kingdom, who will be judged by the Adjudicating Committee to have made an outstanding contribution to art, craft, science or technology of glass during, say, the past two years.

Entries must be submitted by 31st July, 1984, and may, for example, take the form of relevant publications in the areas outlined above or works of art or design. The Award consists of a suitably inscribed scroll and trophy and a cash sum.

Application forms are available from: **The Hon. Secretary, The Society of Glass Technology, 20 Hallam Gate Road, Sheffield, S10 5BT**

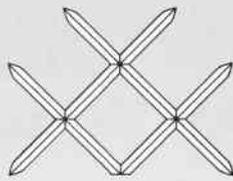
Reflections

100 years ago

For all snooker, billiards and pool enthusiasts the following notice is reprinted from Pottery Gazette, December, 1884:

CRYSTAL GLASS BILLIARD TABLE - we have recently had the pleasure of inspecting a magnificent billiard table, the entire frame work of which is made of richly cut crystal glass. It has been manufactured by the executors of the late Joseph Webb of Stourbridge, for a wealthy East India merchant. The work is very finely executed, and the effect when lit up by a brilliant light, is truly beautiful. This enterprising firm has been very successful lately in obtaining orders from India for crystal glass furniture and they have now, we understand, another billiard table in hand, in addition to a suite of chairs, settees, sofas, etc. We are pleased to see Stourbridge coming to the front with this class of work, which we believe has hitherto had its home in Birmingham, and wish the executors of the late Joseph Webb every success in the new branch of the trade they have taken up. Drawings of the billiard table and other furniture may be seen at their London showrooms, 30 Holborn, E.C.





Facets Regional Reports

Reports on Group Meetings

Since the inaugural meeting two regional groups have been formed which have all the makings of lively, informative and convivial get-togethers. Other groups will be formed as membership increases. All members of the Association are entitled to attend any of the local groups and their activities will be reported in the newsletter. The following reports of the Manchester and Stourbridge meetings will give some idea of the range of events discussed so far.

North-West

The North-West group met at the Athenaeum, Manchester, on Saturday, 3rd December. Cherry Gray opened the meeting with a history of glass-making in Warrington beginning with the Bank Quay works established in 1757. The 19th century saw other glassworks open in the town including Robinsons who continued until the 1940's. The firm must be one of the most under-rated of 19thc. firms for they produced fine quality table wares and by 1862 provided 80,000 pieces for the London exhibition. During the 1920's they continued production of delicately blown wares, supplying an order of glass for Princess Mary's wedding.

Peter Helm continued the session with a general appraisal of the Manchester industry including slides of remaining glass sites. One of the most interesting details was about the procession, after the Reform Act, which included glassmakers carrying two goblets of 10 and 7 gallon capacities, 2 lobby lamps, a fish globe, birdcages, silvered globe ornaments with sceptres, crowns and blue wands. By 1929 the most famous firm, Molineaux Webb and Co., had closed and Manchester glass was largely forgotten.

Janice Murray completed the story of North West glass with the St. Helens industry. Major development came in the 19th century with firms such as Cannington Shaw, Nuttall & Co., and the Foster Glass Co., all specialising in bottles. Perhaps the most interesting set of slides, especially to glass technologists, showed the last surviving example of a Siemens regenerative furnace. An exciting restoration project is

planned for the building.

Following a break for coffee, the meeting discussed future plans. General agreement was for talks and collectors' evenings interspersed with Saturday visits to collections. Although an interest in local glass was important, a wider scope was necessary to attract a larger membership. Many people wanted more time at meetings for discussion; research was also felt to be of paramount importance. Finally everyone agreed to 3 regional meetings in March, May and September consisting of a museum visit, a talk and an open evening. These would fall between the national meetings in April, June and October.

Midlands

The Midlands group met at Broadfield House Glass Museum at Kingswinford on Thursday, 8th December. Charles Hajdamach showed a selection of slides taken on a visit to Corning, U.S.A. in October, 1982. A connection with Stourbridge was highlighted at the Rockwell Museum and the marvellous displays of glass by Frederick Carder, the founder of Steuben Glass. Roger Dodsworth gave a humorous description about the growth of his glass collection, selecting as a focus about 20 pieces ranging from pressed glass to Stourbridge wines. Roger stressed the need to understand methods of production which could endow even the most non-descript glass with an interesting story.

The first session ended with a showing of a 15-minute film about Whitefriars and Chances, both firms tragically lost in recent years. After the coffee break discussion centred on two main points i.e. the spread of knowledge about techniques and the importance of collectors' evenings.

The latter perhaps could be combined with private views at the Glass Museum. Following a very enthusiastic meeting (which continued well after closing time) the decision was to hold a collectors' evening on 1st March, to be followed by a lecture/s on contemporary glass techniques.

Members in the South-West and in London are currently looking at the formation of new groups. Anyone

who is interested in joining these or in forming new groups, will be able to obtain a list of members in their area from the Treasurer.

Future Group Meetings

North-west

Saturday, 31st March at 2 p.m. at Whitworth Gallery, Oxford Road, Manchester.

Cathy Ross will talk on the Development of Glassmaking on Tyneside

Saturday, 2nd June at 2 p.m. A visit to the new glass displays at the Harris Museum and Art Gallery. Market Square, Preston, with an introduction by Alexandra Walker. (Anyone needing further information should contact Ian Wolfenden on 061-273 3333 ext. 3619).

A Demonstration of Stained Glass Making by Paul San Caschiani is to be held at Pilkingtons Glass Museum between Monday, 2nd July and Friday, 6th July, 1984. Practical workshops will be held on Tuesday and Thursday - there are limited places at a cost of £25 per person per day. Contact Ian Burgoyne at Pilkingtons Glass Museum, Prescott Road, St. Helens, Tel. St. Helens 28882 ext. 2499.

North-East

Simon Cottle at the Laing Art Gallery, Higham Place, Newcastle on Tyne, is keen to form a local group and would like to hear from members in that area about a possible first meeting.

Midlands

Thursday, 17th May, 7.30 p.m. at the Glass Centre, Moor Street, Brierley Hill. Glassmaking investigation into techniques.

National Meetings

Saturday, 7th April at Pilkington Glass Museum. A visit to the Float Glass Process and discussion by Martin Harrison with John Piper about his stained glass designs. Members will have received separate notification of this event.

Visit in late June/early July to Bristol to see the Bristol Glass exhibition. Details of this outing are still in preparation.

