

Majolica Matters!

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE MAJOLICA INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
www.majolicasociety.com

February 2002

MAJOLICA INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOURTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING MAY 3-5, 2002, ATLANTA GEORGIA

The fourteenth Annual Meeting of the Majolica International Society is to be held in Atlanta at the Westin Atlanta North Perimeter on May 3rd through 5th, 2002. The meeting format has been altered slightly to provide more time for member education and interaction. The meeting will open Friday afternoon at 3PM with a series of round table discussions focused on your collecting and internet dealing. We will then be free for dinner at the many restaurants in the area and will regroup for MajoliCake and Coffee at 7:30 Friday evening. Joan Stacke-Graham will present "A Retrospective" and Ed Flower will speak about his collection---sounds like two real treats.

On Saturday morning we will have a variety of activities. Buy and Barter will take place during breakfast and again will be a silent auction. We will also be selling items as a way to raise money for the society, so bring something to contribute to the items being sold on behalf of the society. Your gift will be tax deductible and hopefully we can raise money to expand our activities and reach into the majolica world. After breakfast there will be more round table sessions covering collecting, insurance and other topics. Presentations by Frances Rothschild on Decorating with Majolica and by Wanda Matthes are also scheduled. Starting at 11:30 AM is an optional bus tour which will visit at least two antique shopping areas, include lunch, and return to the hotel at 4:30 PM in time to prepare for dinner. Cocktails are scheduled for 6:00PM on Saturday evening followed by dinner and "mystery entertainment." Marilyn Karmason will relate some of the experiences she and Joan Stacke-Graham have had in their revision of "A History of Majolica". Our featured speaker will again be Paul Atterbury who has so delighted us in the past. His talk will be "Majolica and The Victorian Vision".

Sunday will begin with breakfast at 9:00 AM, followed by our business meeting. Majolica Heaven 2002! opens that morning at 10:30 am and is located in the hotel.

A wonderful weekend is planned by LeRoy Davis and Gail Deering so bring your friendship, your inquiring minds and a little money---we will have a great time. See you in Atlanta!

CHIPS FROM THE EDITORS DESK

Moe Wizenberg

First of all, I don't want to hear from anyone about other uses of the word "chip" in the rural parts of this country. I prefer to think of "Blue Chip", but suit yourself..

The Annual Meeting time is upon us and Leroy Davis and his team have cooked up what looks like another winner. The hotel also looks as though they will go all out for us, and Atlanta has no shortage of antiquing venues and other attractions. The registration materials are enclosed in this mailing---register soon and bring majolica loving friends to join in our meeting and Majolica Heaven. A separate membership renewal form is also enclosed for those who are unfortunate enough to not be able to attend, or who wish to join for more than one year.

In this issue we continue with our Victorian Recipes (also known as, "What can I serve in that wonderful piece?"). Deborah English has produced a recipe for Jellied Veal and Ham Pie that is absolutely mouthwatering, Jim Trout writes from personal experience about the majolica habit (incurable except by poverty!), and Bob Goldberg has written about antiques as a source of comfort. Duane Matthes, Marilyn Karmason and others continue to provide material for the newsletter. I thank all of my contributors for helping to make Majolica Matters happen.----- now for the rest of you. This is your publication and I need your help if we are to keep providing interesting and timely content. How about writing something for Majolica Matters? I know you are interesting people with interesting collections, and you are interesting to talk to---please share in print with others by sending me your ideas about collecting, decorating, caring, great finds or great disappointments---anything dealing with majolica. Although I'm the editor, I don't grade severely, and I will be appreciative of your efforts.

Last but not least. Phil English cracks the museum barrier! The Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, Maryland will show pieces from the English's collection on the 18th and 19th century floor beginning June 14th, 2002. More information in next issue, but for now, congratulations Phil.

MIS ANNUAL MEETING SONGFEST

Those of us who were at the last annual meeting will never forget Jerry Leberfeld's presentation of *The Quest*, sung to the melody of *The Impossible Dream* from *Man of La Mancha*.

The Quest

To Find The Most Beautiful Piece
To outbid the unbeatable foe
To deal with unbearable weather
To search where the wimps dare not go
To write the unwritable check
To spot cobalt glazes from afar
To shlepp when your arms are so weary
To reach the unreachable find.

This is my quest, Majolica
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far
To fight when in sight
without question or pause
to be willing to go into debt
for this heavenly cause

And I know if I'll only be true
to this glorious Quest
that my heart will be peaceful and calm
when my collection's the best

And my heirs will be better for this
that one collector torn and covered with scars
still search with his last ounce of courage
To find the most beautiful Piece.

Rest assured Jerry will be back with another (just my wild guess) , but we have decided to throw the songfest open to all. Put on your musical caps and come up with something. For those who cannot carry a tune there will be a section for rap songs during which rhythmic monotones will suffice. Just to inspire you I decided to provide an example of a limerick usable as a rap song!

A lady with an Onnaing rooster
Discovered a piece by Royal Worcester.
Then Minton, Wedgwood, Jones and Lear,
Holdcroft and Copeland too, we fear.
Now she's a confirmed Majolica booster.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Moe Wizenberg, Editor
Helen Cunningham, Associate Editor
Deborah English, Associate Editor

CICADA TOOTHPICK HOLDERS



The yellow toothpick holder which measures 1 5/8" high, has a cicada with folded wings on one side and on the opposite side, one with wings outspread. Carla and Bob Benhardt found two others late last year in different colors, so we know there are at least three variants and all are unmarked as to maker. Anyone have any other color or any idea about the maker? Please send any information to the editor or the Benhardts.



Please send your comments and material
for the newsletter to:

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Accenting with Majolica

Jim Trout

We have been led to believe majolica can be used as an accent only—I suppose it could happen although my experience suggests otherwise. Compelled by deep concern for fellow majolica lovers and collectors I submit for your consideration this happy warning---you may not be able to accent only!

Majolica has invaded my home and is depositing itself on every conceivable surface, both horizontal and walls. Plates and chargers are particularly insidious invaders.

The "Creeping Collection" syndrome started innocently enough with a few selected majolica pieces alongside less expensive knick-knacks. Soon the latter were no longer in evidence as additional majolica replaced them. The seriousness of what was happening didn't occur to me until other more expensive accessories relinquished their spots as well. Meissen, Galle, Silver, Van Briggie, Tiffany and others gave way, disappearing into storage and perhaps to never be seen again. The purpose of furniture became manifest as something upon which to set majolica. Desks and coffee tables were particularly susceptible as majolica bearers and became permanent displays for certain pieces, transitional for others.

Paintings and family portraits were similarly susceptible since wall space is limited. Plates, platters, chargers and tiles simply proliferated, and sconces and wall platters were quick to accompany them.

Kitchen countertops proved to be first rate majolica repositories—that the display eliminated food preparation was of no matter. Establishing new eating habits seemed simpler and more acceptable than breaking collecting habits.

I have personal knowledge of a collector whose "overflow" pieces have taken over what was once the pantry. Every shelf and the floor are filled with pieces waiting to be displayed, repaired or sold.

No room is immune. The library with shelves containing never read leatherbound books has seen their removal to a lesser place. Bathrooms too have been easy prey. Tops of water tanks, and lavatory and dressing table tops, especially those readily seen from the bath or shower, have suddenly surrendered space formerly reserved for utilitarian items and seen them replaced by infinitely more attractive majolica. The line was drawn however—positively no room additions, and the garage is absolutely reserved for vehicles and junk only! No I haven't forgotten basements---majolica was once there---NEVER AGAIN.

Since I subscribe to the "if one is good two are better" school of collecting it is highly unlikely that less will ever be more in my home: when one piece is purchased I'll soon seek out another like it, and another....well, you get the picture. Duplication minimizes the need for creativity in decorating. Remember—repetition is boring only in someone else's collection. From floor to ceiling and from wall to wall, and on the furniture in between, majolica rules. Invaded by our passion we are delighted to surrender.

MAJOLICA MATTERS

PAGE 3

For those continuing to believe that majolica can be used as an accent only---you've been warned!

MIS ANNUAL MEETING DINNER SPEAKER

Paul Atterbury

We are delighted to again have Paul Atterbury as the speaker at our annual meeting dinner. He specializes in the art, architecture, design and decorative arts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Trained initially as a graphic designer, he later studied art history and then worked for Sotheby Publications, as a historical advisor for Royal Doulton and then as editor of Connoisseur magazine. Since 1981 he has been a freelance writer, lecturer, broadcaster and exhibition curator - in this capacity usually for the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. His recent exhibitions there include Pugin: A Gothic Passion (1944) and Inventing New Britain: The Victorian Vision (2001).

Paul has written or edited over thirty books, mostly on ceramics, but he is also known for his travel writing, and for books on railways and canals. Among his books are Moorcroft Pottery, Poole Pottery, The Dictionary of Minton, Cornish Ware, 20th Century Ceramics, Ruskin Pottery, The North of France, Exploring Britain's Lost Railways, Country Railways and The Thames.

For the past eleven years he has been a member of BBC TV's Antiques Roadshow team of experts, working usually in the miscellaneous section which gives him ample opportunity to explore the antiques and collectables of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During this time he has taken part in over a hundred Roadshows and has also appeared regularly on the Great Antiques Hunt, the Antiques Show and on Hidden Treasures on BBC Radio Four.

Over the last thirty years, Paul has given over 2000 lectures on many aspects of the art, architecture and design history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He has lectured at universities and colleges, antiques societies and collector's clubs, auction houses and galleries all over Great Britain as well as in the United States, Canada, Australia and The Netherlands. He also is a lecturer for the National Trust and on cruises for P&O and other shipping lines, for Christies Education and for the Victoria and Albert Museum. On a lighter vein he gives lunch and after dinner talks.

Paul's pleasures are equally diverse and include walking and cycling, the enjoyment of landscape and architecture, railways, his garden and his two daughters. He lives partly in London and partly in Dorset.

His presentation to the society will be "Majolica and The Victorian Vision".

(Thanks to Marilyn Karmason for the biographical information).

FEBRUARY 2002

ANTIQUES-COMFORT FOR TRYING TIMES

Robert H. Goldberg

The destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11 and subsequent events have shaken the faith in the future of many Americans and created a lack of certainty in our lives. In these times we turn to familiar concepts, such as family, home, friends and religion, which provide emotional equilibrium. Our surroundings can also contribute to a sense of assurance and continuity. The antiques in our lives can be icons of stability, yielding a reassuring look back at the past, and supplying evidence that life continues, even in perilous times. I find comfort in seeing and touching the familiar things in our home. Simply the act of running my hand over the 250-year old walnut chest of drawers calms me. My grandmother's Art Deco onyx ashtray mounted with a bronze figure of a crane gazing into its shallow bowl, as if to snag a fish, conjures up visions of a happy and secure childhood.

The objects that inspire those warm and fuzzy feelings don't have to be one or two hundred years old. If they connect with you emotionally and remind you of a beloved family member or childhood experience, that's enough. That kind of nostalgia can be mined from your old tin lunch box, a piece of vintage costume jewelry or a family bible. The end result is more important than the means.

The appeal of antiques is enduring, but we know that their prices can fluctuate over time. After enjoying two bountiful decades of increased demand for everything from armoires to Yorkshire chairs, the events of September 11 brought the antiques trade, like most other areas of commerce, to a standstill. As the population dealt with the attacks, interest in acquiring anything above the necessities of life was swept away. The pleasures of shopping seemed somehow irrelevant next to the tragedies unfolding in New York. Antiques shops saw few, if any, buyers. The New York international auction houses postponed some of their sales. Both locally and out of town, those auctions that were held weeks after the events, experienced diminished bidding and plentiful buy-ins. But the American spirit is resilient. In recent conversations, antiques dealers tell me that their clients are slowly returning, inspired to go on with their lives, despite the uncertainties. New Orleans' two major auction galleries are optimistic. Henry "Mac" McCall, president of the Neal Auction Company reports that their Louisiana Purchase Auction of October 13 and 14 was highly successful, with their auction room crowded on both days and local antique silver fetching strong prices. Rebecca Ramos of the New Orleans Auction Galleries St. Charles gallery told me that the sale held on October 27 and 28 had plenty of competitive bidding in most areas. The catalogue for their

next main gallery auction in the Warehouse District location, featuring furnishings from a prominent Tennessee plantation, is already in circulation. This optimism is tempered with the knowledge that the U.S. had a slowing economy, even before the terrorists struck, and that antiques buyers may be cautious until the future becomes more assured. So what does this all mean to the casual antiques fancier or the homeowner contemplating exchanging that contemporary décor for a more traditional interior?

Simply put, it means that with demand softening, auction prices should be more affordable and shop prices more flexible. The wave of patriotism sweeping the country may heighten consciousness of our history and increase interest in Americana. Although I believe that antiques should not be purchased for investment purposes, they do offer certain advantages over contemporary furnishings. First, they have an inherent beauty brought about by age, often lacking in modern pieces. And second, their resale value, if you must sell, is almost always superior. Our region is flush with antiques purchasing opportunities. From Natchez to Baton Rouge, and south to New Orleans, the shops are well stocked with whatever your heart desires. If you're planning to stay close to home enjoying domestic pursuits and the tranquility of familiar surroundings, this may be the chance to purchase some furnishings with history and conjure up some calming visions of your own.

{This article first appeared in Country Roads Magazine published in St. Francisville, LA. We appreciate being able to reprint it for our readers, editor.}

A Plea From The Editor

Your article, picture or other submission could help fill spaces like this. Please help your editorial staff avoid blank pages by contributing.

BEWARE

One of our members submitted the following item dealing with problems arising in shopping at fairs, and from the current production of majolica items intended to deceive the unwary (and sometimes even the very wary). While many of the reproductions are crude and easily recognized, some are very skillfully produced and can lead to an unhappy purchase. I understand that Palissy style pieces are being produced in large quantities such as the many crab and oyster plates which appear regularly on Ebay. In the case of Palissy Ware in particular, there are some very skillful modern artists who sign their work and who are to be commended for their artistry and honesty--two such artists are Christine Viennet and MIS member Geoffry Luff. For more information about their work see "Contemporary Palissy Ware" by Marshall Katz in the Summer 2000 issue of Majolica Matters. There is also much to be said for buying from a reliable dealer who is prepared to stand behind what they sell. (The Editor)

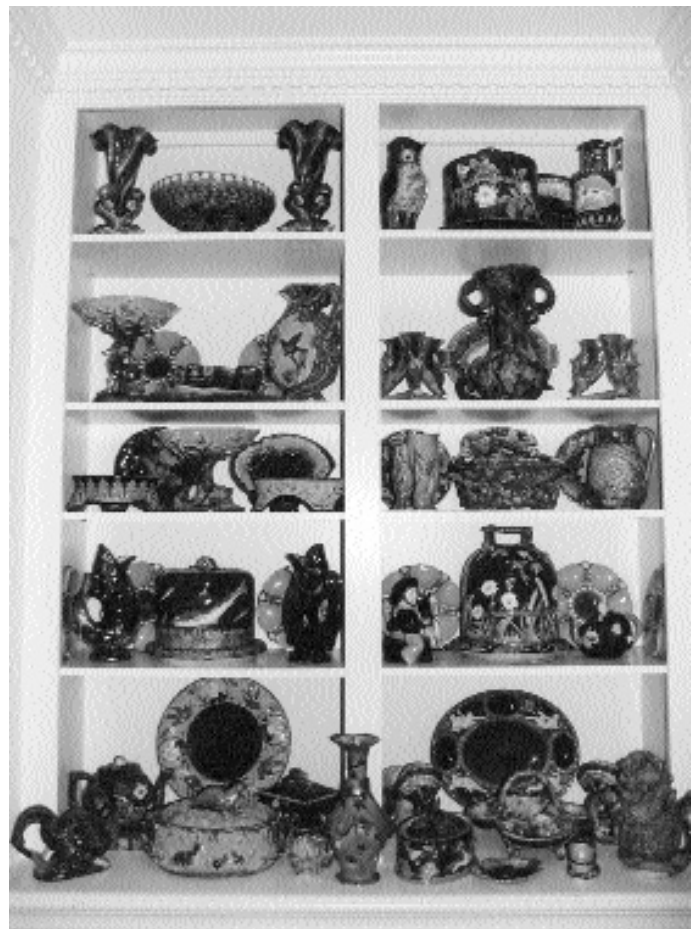
Experiences in the Ongoing Quest for Majolica

The French antique fairs were great this time and each of the three had a little different flavor. The first in Beziers was the smallest with only 1600 sellers. It was by far the most frustrating in terms of organization because unlike most events, sellers were allowed to start setting up the day before. The problem being that most of the worthwhile pieces got snatched up the night before. We arrived early in the morning before the 8 o'clock start and decided (by chance again) to park on the opposite side of the grounds along the road. As we were getting out of the car we realized that people were darting over (and under) the fence to get in to buy before the masses. The little devil on one shoulder was saying "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" and the angel on the other was saying "I think the red guy is right this time", but off we went. It was a good thing in that virtually all of the purchases we made were prior to the legitimate opening. The other two days were much better organized with strictly enforced rules on entering, buying or setting up early. Big security guys in black with army boots and the works, lots of them too. We prefer that by far as everybody gets a fair crack at the good stuff.

I found an incredible Palissy platter and plunked down 12,000 F (app \$1,600 US) just knowing it was worth ten times as much. The problem (I soon discovered) was that it really was MINT, MINT, MINT and also a perfectly executed COPY complete with a Landais signature both front and back. The work was the best that I had ever seen, and my disappointment was only saved by the fact that several colleagues joined me to confront the dirty dealer. It

worked and I quickly pocketed my money and counted my fingers. This was another close call and a nice lesson on Palissy reproduction. I need to get the word out that (signed) copies are circulating and bad dealers are lurking to snare optimistic Americans like myself.

**Part of a wonderful collection you
would have seen on our tour at the
2001 Annual Meeting.**



COMING SOON TO BONHAMS



Not many left. Start saving now. See page 7.

Jellied Veal and Ham Pie

Deborah English



2 pounds lean veal
1 veal knuckle, cracked
2 onions, sliced
2 carrots, sliced
1 cup dry white wine
1 tsp. salt
a few peppercorns
1 bay leaf
a few sprigs parsley
1 tsp. mixed sweet herbs
1/2 pound cooked ham
2 hard boiled eggs, sliced
pie pastry to cover dish

Put veal and veal knuckle in a kettle with the onions and carrots. Add wine and just enough water to cover. Add salt, peppercorns, bay leaf, parsley and herbs. Simmer, covered, until veal is tender and remove. Strain the stock and reduce. Cut the ham into thin slices and the veal into small pieces. In a deep pie dish arrange in layers the veal, ham and eggs and repeat the layers to fill the dish. Pour in the seasoned stock to fill the dish and cover with the pastry crust. Prick or vent the crust, bake in a 425 degree oven until the crust is nicely browned. Cool and refrigerate till served.

Mrs James CHESTON'S Everyday Book, 1857, via Maryland's Way Cook Book

Minton Museum Sale

Bonhams, April 30 2002

Bonhams are to sell the impressive collection of Minton ceramics from the Minton Museum, Stoke-on-Trent in their New Bond Street rooms this year. The collection will be dispersed in two installments, with the first 400-lot dispersal scheduled for April 30.

The Minton Museum Collection is owned by Royal Doulton who acquired Minton in 1968. It comprises a cross-section of wares produced by the factory over the two centuries since it was founded in 1793: a mixture of trial pieces, prototypes plus examples of exhibition pieces and other samples of the best work produced by the factory which it decided to keep for reference. This reference collection was formerly housed in the Minton Museum at the company's former head office, Minton House in Stoke-on-Trent, but the museum has been closed to the public for the past five years and Minton House itself, which the company left last October, is now being sold.

Royal Doulton have held a series of dispersals from their holdings in recent years. In 1999 they offered a small selection of pieces from the Minton Museum, along with Royal Crown Derby porcelain, at Sotheby's while two sales of Doulton wares from the Royal Doulton reserve collection, mostly duplicate pieces, were held by Phillips in 1999 and 2001.

A selection of pieces from the Minton collection were put on display in an exhibition at Bonhams' (then Phillips') New Bond Street rooms last summer and that gave a taste of what one can expect to see coming up for sale this year.

The widest selection will come from Minton's 19th century products. These will include important examples of techniques in which the firm excelled such as *pâte sur pâte* wares by Louis Solon and their majolica ware headlined by a model of a peacock that is expected to fetch around £100,000 as well as pieces designed by leading 19th century innovators such as AWN Pugin and Christopher Dresser. But there will also be later wares from the firm dating right up to the second half of the 20th century such as a 1953 Coronation mug. Royal Doulton are keeping all the Minton factory's artwork and archival material and may retain a small representational sample of the Minton ceramics.

MICHAEL STRAWSER SPRING 2002 AUCTION HATFIELD, PENNSYLVANIA

Michael's Spring sale has been moved to Hatfield because of a scheduling problem with the facility in Fort Wayne. The sale will now take place in Hatfield, Pennsylvania on April 5&6, 2002. The Hatfield facility is great as those of us who have gone to the Autumn sales can attest, and Spring is a great time to visit that part of the country. More details, of course, available in catalog or directly from Michael at www.majolicaauctions.com or 219-854-2235.

MAJOLICA HEAVEN 2001
Error of omission----not being there!



The wonderful Majolica you see above could have been yours if you had come.
Big chance to atone for past deficiencies May 5th 2002. Don't miss it.