



# Majolica Matters

## Touring the Potteries and Pots of England

by Wanda Matthes

### *Editor's Note:*

*Tour privacy, security and restrictions on some of the tour venues prohibited us from taking pictures and asked that we not use their complete identification of the extremely private collections.*



**Oh so many tour memories, Victorian potteries, ceramic discussions, history, demonstrations, molds and masterpieces, one after another!**

Early in the New Year, Suzanne Hood, of America Ceramic Circle, a group that several of you are also members of, sent out an email and detailed information about the ACC's proposed trip to England that they would be taking June of 2016. I finally forwarded the email to Duane. At dinner that weekend, he said, "I think we have to do this!" I was shocked but, agreed that it sounded like a "once in a lifetime" trip. We both decided to commit and after speaking with the travel agent, we called Joan Stacke Graham. We knew this was a trip she had been dreaming about...as soon as I spoke to her, she too made the commitment to go on this special trip. In the following article, I will share our adventures. I hope you will enjoy my words and the photos.

### **Friday, June 10, 2016**

Duane and I arrived in London about 6:30 am. By the time we got to the Rembrandt Hotel, directly across from the Victoria and Albert Museum, it was about 9:00 am. so, we had our first true English breakfast. Our playmate, Joan, had arrived the night before and by the time we called to wake her up it was after 10:00 a.m. and breakfast at the hotel was over. Being the trooper that she is, she arrived downstairs, sans make-up, and with just a strong cup of coffee, she managed to hang out and play with us all day.

See you at  
**CONVENTION 2016**  
**BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**  
**August 25 thru 28th**

<http://majolicasociety.com/convention-2016/>

### Inside this issue:

- Touring the Potteries and Pots of England



**Historic Venues**



**Old/New Relationships**



**Privileged Handling Sessions**





The Victoria and Albert – this world class museum was just across the street!

used in Sculpture Victorious exhibition when it was at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. in the spring of 2015.



Harrods ceiling tiles in their retail spaces



A detail of one of Harrods ceiling tile scenes



These three snapshots display the color and designs of the walls and columns and Victorian tiles in Harrods tea department



Harrods escalator access: "The Egyptian Staircase"

Our first exploration was to take the short walk to Harrods's to explore their use of Minton tiles...and of course, we needed to see the Egyptian staircase! Next on our list was to go to Thomas Goode's and get up close and personal with the two Minton elephants...quite impressive, since Duane and I did not manage to get to see the single elephant which was



Sharing two pictures of the Minton Elephants at Thomas Goode's tableware shop, circa 1827. On the left Joan took it from inside the shop showing Wanda and Duane posing. On the right Duane shot this photo from outside the shop window with the huge reflection of the Victorian roof tops from the other side of the street.





Two examples of the decorative tiles used throughout Thomas Goode's shop

The three of us had watched the Selfridges series on PBS so we felt that it was important to see that too. The department store was not as grand as their TV sets but interesting to see, none the less.

Finally it was time to grab a cab and head back to the hotel. Joan wanted to change to a different room..." a room with a view". After all, we were going to be in this hotel for multiple days. By now, it was time for lunch. So, once again we walked through our South Kensington neighborhood. We found a darling Italian restaurant, Pierino Pizza Pasta, for a delicious lunch and our first bottle of rosé. After a relaxing lunch, we walked to the Victoria and Albert Museum for the first time. This museum is such a treasure and it opened on June 2, 1857. We had fun exploring their wonderful Della Robbia pieces on the first floor and, of course, visiting the gift shop. Early Saturday was to be spent at Portabella Road. All three of us were suffering a bit of jet lag so, it was time to try to get some sleep!



A roundel made for Jacopo de Pazzi, councillor to Rene of Anjou (1466-78), King of Naples. Made by Luca della Robbia (about 1400-82) and workshop. The stemma was displayed at Pazzi's family villa at Montughi to indicate his royal favor. The item shows Renee's arms, initials and motto (Dardent Desir or "Burning Desire"). Pazzi displayed the stemma on the exterior of his family villa at Montughi. Diameter: 11 feet across



Joan and Wanda are always up for fun: At the V&A we stopped just long enough to participate in the "Create Your Own Botticelli" photo contest for social media.

### Saturday, June 11, 2016

We met Joan downstairs for a great English breakfast...nobody ate the beans, but we tried pretty much everything else. We took a cab to a street at the top of the hill and began our walk down Portabella Road.



A crowd scape of Portabella Road, and then the Copeland centerpiece and its marks

Almost as soon as we walked into to first stall, we spotted a majolica fruit stand by Copeland...one none of us had seen before! I asked if it would be possible to look at it...it was on a high shelf with mounds of china piled in front of it. The dealer replied, "of course! Give me five minutes to move things about." We returned shortly and were able to examine it...it did not make my heart sing and she wanted 750 lb., so after all of the trouble we put the poor dealer through, we walked



away empty-handed. We saw lots of interesting Chinese Export pieces but I tried to ignore the temptation to buy since our trip had just begun. I spotted some green Chinese export parrots which I wanted to see...I could sell those in my shop...suddenly; I spotted a stack of Japanese Imari fish plates, something else, I collect. These are not easy to find and these were very nice and... they were small, which meant I would be able to bring them home in my carry on. The dealer had four...I purchased three and felt very proud of my "find". My shopping gene had been satisfied...temporarily!!!

Next, we were off to Alfie's Market, which was once great antique shopping, but most of it is now Mid-century Modern, which is not my taste. We shopped along the street at places where we once found great things but although the things were nice, they were not to our taste. Not to worry, we got a great shop keeper's recommendation for an upscale fish and chips restaurant called, Seashell of Lisson Grove. It was a beautiful restaurant and their air conditioning felt great after our long walks. We dined on fish and chips a number of times during our fifteen days in the UK but this was a special experience! By the time we left the restaurant, it was beginning to rain so we took a cab back to our hotel to rest a bit before dinner.

Because of Queen Elizabeth's 90th birthday celebration and many traffic diversions, we had a long, expensive ride back to the hotel but we needed time to rest before our dinner at Signor Sassi's. This was a well-known Italian restaurant in Knightsbridge Green. It was crowded and fun, with a wonderful menu...a glamorous place to dine...Joan compared it to eating at Sardi's in Manhattan.

Sunday, June 12, 2016



V&A exhibit (left) is a Minton Jug with stand modeled by Hamlet Bourne c. 1858 and exhibit (right) is a Palissy Jug made in France in the manner of Bernard Palissy c. 1580-1600.

We started our day with a traditional English breakfast at the Rembrandt. While we were at Portabella Road, we found information about an antique show which was being held at our hotel...a once a month occurrence. The show was small but the dealers had nice inventories and I managed to find a few small things to purchase.



The V&A exhibit of the Minton Prometheus Vase is the painted version and was designed and modeled by Victor Etienne Simayn and painted with scenes of a boar hunt by Thomas Allen. It was shown at the Paris International Exhibition of 1867

Today was rainy so we walked across the street to spend some quality time at the Victoria and Albert. The ceramics galleries were open so we were able to roam at will, drinking in these treasures, especially their good representation of Victorian majolica pieces.



This imitates Italian painted tin-glazed earthenwares (known as maiolica), but only rarely did they reproduce designs precisely. On this example, a Renaissance-style portrait of Queen Victoria is surrounded by 'grotesque' ornament. Displayed by Minton at the Paris Exhibition of 1855. This plaque was painted by Thomas Kirkby.

When we were hungry, we walked a short distance in the neighborhood to find a place to relax and enjoy lunch. First we headed back to Pierino's where we had



eaten on our first day...it was much too busy so we walked a short distance to Daquise, which has been serving delicious home-cooked Polish food in South Kensington since 1947. Duane and Joan had the wild boar... I chose something tame, the pork tenderloin!

Afterward we walked back to the hotel to rest and get ready for our next adventure! As we walked toward Bond Street, there were small parties of people carrying their food hampers who had participated in the Queen's 90th birthday celebration. We walked past the Ritz Hotel, overlooking Green Park at 150 Piccadilly which has been around since 1906; to our destination Bond Street. As we walked, we passed well-known shops including Armani, Louis Vuitton, Cartier, Dolce & Gabbana, Tiffany & Co., Hermès, Polo Ralph Lauren, Chanel, Prada, Gucci, Salvatore Ferragamo, Burberry, DKNY, Yves Saint Laurent, Bulgari, Harry Winston, Dior... Oh my goodness, the window shopping was fantastic and, since it was late in the day on Sunday, thank goodness, the shops were closed!!!



**New Bond Street was quiet on our Sunday visit but Duane found some great American and British friends to share time with!**

Again, we were tired and hungry. Duane walked down the hill to 5 Bruton Street while Joan and I, not wanting to expend our dwindling energy, waited at the top. He found a great pub, Coach and Horses. This narrow, mock-Tudor pub served real ales on tap and great fish and chips. Dating back to 1770s, the Coach and Horses is thought to be one of the first properties to be built in Bruton Street. Standing as a handsome establishment steeped in history among its more modern neighbors. The people watching was fantastic! There were families with teen-agers in from a fun day at the park and one lady in particular, who looked like

a professional, who might have worked at one of the shops we had passed, who stopped in for some good food and a glass of wine.



**Joan was ready to line them up at the Coach and Horses Pub**

**Monday, June 13, 2016... last day before the tour.** We met Joan for breakfast and then took a cab to the historic Covent Gardens. Apple Market, at Covent Gardens has antiques for sale on Mondays. I found bits of silver to take home as gifts to friends, then we went to the Jubilee Market. This market has antiques but their goods were less desirable but I did manage to buy a darling cinnabar bracelet.



**Joan and Wanda doing what comes natural at the Apple Market in Covent Garden, London**



**Grays Market had a shop with a fantastic collection of Winston Churchill jugs (left) but we only found one piece of majolica (right) and it was an underplate for a potted palm in a plastic pot!!!!!!**



It was raining hard now so we took a cab to Gray's Market, former home of Britannia, owned for many years by Rita and Ian Smyth. Again, so much had changed! There were nice things...lot of high end jewelry and fine Chinese export pieces but no majolica! Soon the sun peeked out and we walked a bit. The sun did not last long so, once again, we grabbed a cab and headed back to the Rembrandt. Tonight was our dinner at Rules. This is said to be the oldest restaurant in London, established in 1798, serving classic British food (especially game) in Edwardian décor. Duane and I have eaten there on several occasions on our early trips to London but Joan had never been there. It continued to rain on our cab ride back to the hotel. Now we needed to get "home" and pack up for our departure on the tour which was to begin at 9:45 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

**Tuesday, June 14, 2016, tour day one:**

We met our fellow tour members at the Rembrandt at 9:45 a.m. and got ready to have our bags placed aboard the bus for our trip to Staffordshire.



**Hosts Peter and Janis Rodwell**

Our destination was the Potteries and the city of Alsager, but first we would stop to visit our first collection of the tour. It was raining hard most of the morning as we headed to the Pottery District. Our first stop was at the home of Peter and Janis Rodwell, who shared their collection of predominantly early 19th century Spode (also Copeland & Garret and Copeland period) of various bodies including porcelain, creamware, drabware, astbury ware, chalcedony, dry-

bodied stoneware, and stone china. Their collection also contained examples of transfer printed, bat printed (including rare gold bat-printed) and hand painted (including works by important named artists) ware, as well as moulded and sprigged wares. Other manufactories included Minton, Davenport, New Hall, H. & R. Daniel, and others. As the bus arrived at their home, the sun peeked out and we were able to enter their home without umbrellas.

Peter and Janis had prepared drinks and sweets for us to enjoy on their lovely sunporch before we viewed their collection. At the end of the visit, the group presented the Peter and Janis a copy of a recently published book British Ceramics 1675-1825 based on the Mint Museum of Charlotte, North Carolina and written by its curator of Decorative Arts, Brain D. Gallagher who was a member of our tour group. Pat Halfpenny our tour leader was a contributor to this book.



**The Rodwell's had many collector areas throughout their multi story home that was thrown entirely open to our feasting ceramic eyes!**



**The Rodwell's collection of Copeland biscuit barrels in the shape of a handbag, c. 1883**





**The Rodwell's collection of majolica items was small and seemed to be organized just for Joan and Wanda**

By the time we left Peter and Janis's home it was nearing 3:00 p.m. and we were due at our Best Western Manor House Hotel in Alsager, north of Stoke-on-Trent about 4:30. Once again it was raining hard! When we arrived at the hotel, it was hard for the driver to find a spot for us to disembark the bus without wading through puddles. This hotel would be our home away from home from the next three nights. A buffet dinner was served at the hotel, followed by a talk by our tour leader, Pat Halfpenny where she introduced us to the upcoming events of the tour.



**A hard rain had us jumping puddles frequently!**

**Wednesday, June 15, 2016, tour day two:**

We met in the hotel lobby and boarded our bus at 9:45 a.m.

Our first visit was to Rode Hall for a visit with Sir Richard Baker Wilbraham and Lady Ann. Their son Randle and his wife Amanda had graciously agreed to open the house for us to study Sir Richard's collection, considered one of the great English porcelain collections. We would also see an important Derby botanical service decorated by William Billingsly, a collection of 18th century porcelain teapots, and a large collection of table and ornamental wares from Bow, Chelsea and Worcester. Sir Richard's collection also

included the only complete collection in the world of pots designed by Walter Crane for Maw & Co. in 1890. When we entered Rode Hall, after meeting our guides, Julie McKeown, author of *English Ceramics, Two Hundred and Fifty Years of Collecting at Rode* and our other guide, Neal, we were introduced to Sir Richard. The group was divided into two groups and Duane and I were with Neal, a friend of the family and a regular guide at Rode Hall. He was an amazing guide and his knowledge of the collection was broad.



**Rode Hall, one of Cheshire's most exquisite country houses. The Baker Wilbraham family has owned it for approaching three hundred and fifty years.**



**Rode Hall drawing room displays a fine collection of family portraits. A highlight of the room is the cabinet display of 18th English porcelain teapots (far right). The collection of rare and early designs has been amassed by Sir Richard.**



**A Royal Crown Derby dinner service, purchased in 1809, was on display (on the far left).**

The one piece of majolica in this collection was the Minton, blue tit bird on and oak leaf, referred to as...the Wilbraham tray. This piece was designed by Mrs. Bootle Wilbraham of Blythe Hall, Lathom, in 1869.



The piece is pictured on page 109 of Julie McKeown's book "English Ceramics at Rode Hall" which is based solely on the collection.



**The Wilbraham bird... Minton's blue tit, c. 1869**

Following the tour, we walked passed the huge family garden where Lady Ann was working. We saw the goats, visited the gift shop and we were treated to a delicious traditional English lunch in the Stables Tea Room on the property.



**The Rode Hall stables served us a wonderful lunch and Joan entertained our Rode Hall guide Neal.**



**The Rode Hall garden was the source of our lunch, but there was no "Goat" on the menu.**

Following lunch, we once again boarded our coach for our short trip to Middleport Pottery, located by the Trent and Mersey Canal, and operated by Burgess Dorling & Leigh (Burleigh for short). It is now the oldest working pottery in Staffordshire, and continues a tradition of producing fine quality, pure English earthenware products using traditional processes of the highest standard, decorated with transfer printed patterns.



**Middleport Pottery, The old Burgess Dorling & Leigh mark (left) as "Burleigh" and then a modern gift shop wall (right).**



**Middleport Pottery, in the heart of Burslem, has been using traditional methods since 1889. In June 2011, The Prince's Regeneration Trust acquired the site and is restoring it as a working tourist site.**



**A Middleport Pottery guide shows off an unglazed teapot (left) and then demonstrates how Victorian glazes were applied to a teapot (right).**

Once again, we were divided into two groups for a guided factory tour and demonstration of how workers apply the tissue paper transfer prints of popular patterns on different pottery forms. Next, Jemma Baskeyfield gave us an introductory talk on Burleigh's history and the factory processes.





Looking at the bricks and cobblestone walk in the Middleport Pottery, you wonder what Victorian stories they hold?



Middleport Pottery: 19,000 master molds are tied and stored (left) and then (right) was our view from the floor of one of the Victorian kilns and up through its chimney.

Tea and biscuits were served then we were able to spend time in their gift shop where current Burleigh ceramics were available for purchase. They can also be purchased from their web site [www.middleportpottery.org](http://www.middleportpottery.org) . Once again, it was time to board the coach for the short ride back to our hotel.

We had a short time to freshen up or rest before boarding the coach again for our ride to the nearby Pecks Restaurant, one of the area's finest restaurants, where we enjoyed drinks and dinner. A wonderful activity packed day!



A Middleport Pottery worker demonstrates how to rub on the yellow transfers to a plate and then I found the trash with used and scrap purple transfers.

**Thursday, June 16, 2016, tour day three:**

We met in the hotel lobby to depart for the village of Hanley with our first stop at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, which houses the world's greatest collection of Staffordshire ceramics. Remember it is also the home of one of Minton's grand peacocks!

We visited the exhibits and their extensive reserve collections and had the opportunity to participate in two handling sessions, one on 18th-century Staffordshire pottery, led by Miranda Goodby, Senior Curator of Ceramics at the museum and one on art pottery. Miranda was our most 2016 lecturer at the Joan Stacke Graham Lecture Series at Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture.

The other session was led by Miranda's brother, Ben Miller, a recent recruit from the Wedgwood Museum. After lunch at the museum, we had additional with time to visit the galleries and museum shop.



The entrance of the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley pays homage to the past with a fantastic brick mural. In March 2015 the Art Fund generously presented the City of Stoke-on-Trent with the Minton Archive. The archive consists of tens of thousands of documents relating to every possible aspect of company and factory life.





**Miranda Goodby (on the right in both photos led this handling session while we did the handling, note taking and shot photos!**



**Gladstone Pottery found us playing in the pottery kiln again.**



**The charm of this Gladstone Pottery is that it was “working”. All the Victorian tools were everywhere. Carts, barrels, and saggars all ready for work!**

Our afternoon stop was the Gladstone Pottery Museum, a unique working Victorian pottery factory. The origin of the pottery known as the Gladstone Works dates back to the birth of the pottery industry as we know it today. At the end of the 18th century, Longton was the next largest pottery town after Burslem, and the future growth of Longton was made possible by the sale of the Longton Manor estate in the

1780s, which allowed the Burslem potters, and others, to buy land at a time when there was a shortage of developable land in the Burslem area. Here, we were divided into two groups for an introductory talk about bottle ovens and firing followed by a private tour of the museum and opportunity to walk inside the huge bottle ovens.

It was in March 1960 that the ovens last fired; but decorating and then only shipping departments were active until May 1970 when Thomas Poole and Gladstone China put the works up for sale.

During the 1960s when the old pottery factories and bottle ovens were being demolished there was a group of local people centered on the Trustees of the Cheddleton Flint Mill who were interested in saving part of the traditional landscape of The Potteries. Many sites were considered but the Gladstone site was considered the best example of a medium sized typical potbank. When the factory was due to be demolished to make the site more attractive to purchasers, a local businessman, Derek Johnson of H&R Johnson the tile manufacturers, bought the site and turned it over to the Staffordshire Pottery Industry Preservation Trust to be run as a museum. The museum was opened in 1974 and officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester in 1975.



**The chart just above the flower makers head shows the 3 tools she needed: wooden scraper, screened cup, and a comb. The bottom photo is a collage of glazed and fired flowers.**



In May 1994 ownership of Gladstone Pottery Museum passed to Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Here, we saw demonstrations of bone china flower making, pot throwing, casting using liquid clay, and hand painting on and applying transfers to pottery. The flower maker could make a flower a minute! Their skilled demonstration staff has decades of experience in the pottery industry and they were also highly knowledgeable about conditions and working practices of a Victorian factory. The tile gallery features one of the best decorative tile collections in the country and celebrates the way in which ceramic tiles have given beauty and color to floors and walls over the centuries. This was a very interesting visit...a television crew from CNN was filming on the day that we visited.

Our day was not finished! We left the Gladstone at 4:30 and boarded our coach for the short ride back to our hotel. By 5:30, we were refreshed and back on the coach to head for the Spode Visitor Center. Here, we enjoyed a wine and cheese reception hosted by Paul Wood, former managing director of Royal Worcester Spode and now chair of the Spode Museum Trust. The Center is located at the now shuttered Spode Factory, still on its original 18th century site. The museum contains an unrivalled collection of factory productions from 1770 to the present. There were demonstrations of printing and painting and a new display timed for our visit and which we were the first to see.



**Spode Museum Trust contains an unrivalled collection of factory productions from 1770 to the present. This is just a small part of the new display!**



**We did find some majolica in this new display. Both vases were labeled c. 1890-95 and in the Arts and Crafts style. The one on the right reminds me of the Wedgwood primrose pattern.**

We were soon back on the bus to transport us back to our hotel to allow us to freshen up for dinner at the Potters' Club, a members'-only club. The British Pottery Manufacturers' Federation Club, or Potters' Club as it's usually referred to, was founded in 1951 to provide facilities for the directors of local pottery companies to entertain their visitors and guests, many from around the world, including royalty and VIPs. Today it welcomes members from all walks of business.



**The Spode Museum Trust formal dinner of our tour. The room included commemorative wall photos, documenting Queen Elizabeth's visit to this very room in the "Potters' Club".**

**Friday, June 17, 2016, tour day four:**

At 9:00 a.m., we were back on our coach for the half-hour drive to the recently renovated Wedgwood Museum in the village of Barlaston.



**The Wedgwood Museum tells the story of the Wedgwood brand from its incarnation in 1759. On display are many items from the company's history, including the First Day's Vases, thrown by founder Josiah Wedgwood on the first day of production.**





**Wanda, Joan, Gaye Blake Roberts, Director of the Wedgwood Museum, and Duane met before we experienced the session where we were allowed to handle the original majolica pattern books.**

Our visit was hosted by its Curator, Gaye Blake Roberts, who was a past speaker at one of our Joan Stacke Graham Lectures at Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture.



**The pattern books were laid out on large pillows and Joan was able to turn the pages, finding the original pattern drawing of many favorite George Jones, Wedgwood and Minton majolica items.**

Once again, we were divided into two small groups for a guided tour of the museum and special visit to the archives to see pattern books and other materials. This was very exciting. Not only do they have a very nice collection of majolica pieces from many manufactures, but they hold the archives from many of the manufactures.

The original pattern books were laid out on large feather pillows and, after putting on our white gloves, we were able to turn the pages of pattern books such as majolica pieces by George Jones, Minton and Wedgwood...too bad we could not use our cameras in these rooms but there were many "pinch me moments" on this day!

We were given an hour to visit the café and shop, then we were back on the coach for a boxed lunch and our

ride back to London for our first official visit to the Victoria & Albert Museum where we were treated to a handling session with Curator Terry Bloxham discussing the evolution of tin-glazed earthenware from its 9th century beginnings in the Middle East and its travel through Spain, Italy, France and Holland ending with 18th-century England.



**V&A Museum handout of the evolution of tin-glazed earthenware from its 9th century beginnings in the Middle East. Follow the arrows.**



**V&A Museum curators Rebecca Wallace (left) and Terry Bloxham (right) discussing the evolution of tin-glazed earthenware.**



**V&A Museum was pretty liberal with their handling session of these treasured representative ceramics.**

When Terry's session ended, we were able to linger at the V&A to see other galleries and special exhibitions. The V&A had several restaurants open for us to refresh ourselves with food and wine and the museum was open until 10:00 p.m. Our hotel, the Rembrandt, was directly across the street so we were free to do as much or as little as we choose.



**Saturday, June 18, 2016, tour day five:**

Our morning was free to enjoy a visit to Portabella Road Antique Market or see some of the sites of London. The coach departed the Rembrandt at 1:00 p.m. for the home of Jonathan Gray, a young London banker, in Highbury Fields for a talk about American connections with Welsh ceramics and a handling session of ceramics and related material. Jonathan also collects funky folk art pieces and paintings.

Our next stop of the afternoon was a visit to a private collection near Hampstead Heath where we saw an exquisite and very sophisticated collection of mainly French, English and German 18th-century porcelain around the house. The house and its grounds were a treasure to behold. We were divided into three groups to tour the collection, one lead by Pamela, another by Nick and the third by Tish Roberts, a member of our group. The weather was threatening so we enjoyed a cup of tea and a biscuits in the kitchen. This was a wonderful afternoon of outstanding ceramics.

**Sunday, June 19, 2016, tour day six:**



**Henry Willett a founding father of the Brighton Museum was a man of great energy and wide-ranging interests. Willett's first collecting was of chalk fossils, which he excavated from Sussex Downs. His most innovative collection was that of pottery and porcelain illustrating British popular history.**

At 9:00 a.m., we departed The Rembrandt by coach to Brighton. We arrived at Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, located in the Royal Pavilion Garden. The Brighton Museum and Art Gallery was originally built for the Prince of Wales, later George IV and completed in 1805. It was initially intended as a tennis court but

had never been finished, and later served as cavalry barracks. It has been a museum since 1902 and has numerous collections. Our focus will be the Decorative Art collection of British, European and American applied art and design from the 17th century to present day including ceramics, glass, metalwork, furniture and jewelry.



**Brighton Museum tours were directed by Stella Beddoe (center), author of a recently published book, A Potted History: Henry Willett's Ceramic Chronicle of Britain.**

We were welcomed by Stella Beddoe, former Senior Keeper and the author of a recently published book, A Potted History: Henry Willett's Ceramic Chronicle of Britain, who began with an introductory talk. She then led a tour primarily focusing on the Willett Collection, on display and in reserve. We were able to see other collections of English pottery, namely 18th-century earthenware and soft-paste porcelains, a collection of brown salt-glazed stoneware and 19th and 20th century European production ceramics.



**Brighton Museum exhibits included great aesthetic furniture along with our favorite ceramics.**

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Duane was interested in this Brighton Museum exhibit. This is a piece by Martin Brothers, Southall, and Middlesex. We often see their grotesque birds but this represented pottery makers of the "Wheel boy", "Bench boy" wedging clay and "Thrower" making a pot, c. 1880. This piece brought back memories of the Stoke-on-Trent Victorian potter's wheel he had seen just days ago!

Next, we were given free time with audio-guides to explore Brighton Royal Pavilion, an exotic palace in the center of Brighton with a colorful history. Built as a seaside pleasure palace for the Prince Regent, later King George IV, this historic house mixes Regency grandeur with the visual style of India and China. Among the collections are Chinese porcelains together with English ceramics commissioned to blend with the Prince's taste for Chinoiserie. Duane and I had visited the Royal Pavilion before, but having the audio-guides and a lot of time to take things in was a whole new experience. Duane, Joan and I really enjoyed our experience and our lunch at the Royal Pavilion tea room.



Royal Pavilion exterior (left) and internet photos of the Victorian kitchen (right), and the entry hall (bottom), no photos allowed!

We left Brighton at 4:00 p.m. for our trip back to London. Dinner was on our own so we chose to dine at Bibendum Restaurant and Oyster Bar which was a short walk from our hotel. The building was, originally the British head-quarters for the French tire company Michelin in 1911, the Michelin Building was lovingly restored to a restaurant, shop and office space in 1986. It was bought from Michelin by Sir Terence Conran and the late Lord Paul Hamlyn who had long admired it. The restaurant was a great choice, with fabulous French cuisine and beautiful surroundings.

#### Monday, June 20, 2016, final tour day seven:

We were back on our coach at 9:00 a.m. for our trip to Westcott, a suburb of London and the home of Peter and Mary White to see one of the finest private collections of ceramics in the world with examples from pre-dynastic Egyptian to 18th-century England via the Exotic East, the Far West, as well as Europe and all places in between. At their home, we were treated to a teach-in with Peter and Mary, with members of the group contributing their own knowledge and experience. We were divided into two groups and were able to experience both sessions, one on Chinese ceramics led by Mary, and one on English porcelain led by Peter. Peter and Mary served a beautiful and tasty lunch which was served indoors, looking out at their plush and perfectly coiffed gardens because of the rain earlier in the day. At approximately 2:30, we were back on the coach for our return to London.

Our next adventure of the day was a visit to Bonhams, Knightsbridge to meet members of the British Ceramics Circle and a talk by Sally Kevill-Davies entitled, "Hans Sloane Decoration on Chelsea Porcelain" followed by a private reception. Next we were back on the coach for a short ride to our farewell dinner at Bar Boulud, at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Hyde Park. The family-style menu was created by award-winning Head Chef Thomas Piat. The restaurant was within walking distance our hotel so when dinner was finished, Duane and I chose not to board the bus but to enjoy the cool evening air and walk the short distance home.

#### June 21, 2016, a day to enjoy one our own.

Joan, Duane and I had our full English breakfast at the Rembrandt with several members of our tour group then got directions for a visit to Windsor Castle. The three of us had never visited Windsor so we felt this the time to get that off our bucket list! We took a cab to Waterloo train station. The day was a beautiful, sunny and pleasantly cool.

When we arrived at the station in Windsor, we explored the shops in the little city as we neared the Castle. Of course, we found an antique shop or two but we did not make any purchases.





**Our day with royalty! We spent the day at Windsor Castle, and the city of Eton on the Thames**

After our visit to Windsor, we stopped for a nice lunch and a glass of summer rosé, at Marco Pierre White Steakhouse Bar and Grill, a darling restaurant with extremely slow service but we did enjoy a short rest while waited for our orders. Afterward we explored the city of Eton, the home of Eton College, an English boys' boarding school which was established by Henry VI of England in 1440.

Eton has produced nineteen British Prime Ministers, including Sir Robert Walpole, William Pitt the Elder, the first Duke of Wellington, William Ewart Gladstone, the fifth Lord Rosebery, Arthur James Balfour, Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan, Alec Douglas-Home, and David Cameron. Prince William and Prince Harry, and members of the extended British Royal Family also attended Eton.

When we returned to the hotel we rested a bit then walked the short distance to Aubaine, a darling French restaurant on Brompton Rd, a short walk from the hotel. Another great day in London Town!

**Wednesday, June 22, 2016**

Today was Joan's last full day and she wanted to visit the Tate Modern (very modern) Museum. Interesting, to say the least! After lunch at the museum, we decided to walk back toward our hotel. We crossed the Millennium Bridge, spotting Big Ben and St. Paul's Cathedral as well as other well-known sites.

When we reached Buckingham Palace we decided it was time to take a cab to Kensington Church Street to see some of the antique shops. We finally came back to our hotel so that we would have time to rest a bit before another lovely dinner at Aubaine.



**Colorful shopping on Kensington Church Street!**



**On Kensington Church Street we discovered this very large, wooden framed, Minton Art Pottery wall plaque (see marks details).**

**Thursday, June 23, 2016**

This was our last breakfast with Joan but she chose to walk with us across the street to the V&A to say goodbye, before her car came for her to take her to Heathrow.



**The V&A's Minton Fountain c. 1877 and shown at the Paris International Exhibition 1878. Probably designed by Leon Arnoux and Charles Toft.**



After Joan left, Duane and I explored the V&A for treasures we had not yet experienced and then walked to Kensington Gardens, Albert Memorial West Lawn. We could see the tent set up for the antique show, Arts and Antiques of London. There was a fine mist coming down by now...a dealer, who was out for a smoke told us that their show started the next day but he insisted that we wait while he went in to get free tickets for us, which assured that we would be back on Friday.



The greatness of Prince Albert is reflected in his Memorial in Kensington Gardens. This was commissioned by Queen Victoria in memory of her beloved husband, who died in 1861. The corner detail (right) is one of the four allegorical sculptures representing Europe, Asia, Africa and The Americas. Each continent-group including several figures and a large animal. Pictured is the bison for the Americas.

We spent more time exploring the shops along Kensington Church Street. We wanted to have a pub dinner tonight so we took the recommendation of our friend, Gary, who had lived in London for several years. His recommendation was the Scarsdale Tavern in Kensington. The food was great and the atmosphere very interesting which we topped off with dessert...again. When we got back to our hotel, there was one surprise, and not a pleasant one...the air conditioning, which had been so perfect, was not working!

Friday, June 24, 2014

The air conditioning was working again and the news of the day was that Britain voted 52% to 48% to leave the EU! London voted 72% to stay and the pound fell immediately. Quite a memorable day to be in Britain! As our new friend Jonathan Gray, a London banker, had predicted, David Cameron resigned as Prime Minister of Great Britain.

We met friends from the ACC at breakfast then walked the short distance to Art and Antiques of London at Albert Memorial, West Lawn, Kensington Gardens. We looked at the outstanding 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century pieces...all wonderful but not "us". We saw no Victorian majolica but one piece of Palissy ware.



Here are two Art and Antiques dealer exhibits that deserved our second looks. The Trompe L'Oeil Oyster Barrel (top) was a Wedgwood creamware piece c. 1850-60 and (bottom) the wall hanging candelabras were tagged as Palissy School early 16<sup>th</sup> - late 17<sup>th</sup> century

We ate lunch in the "1851 Café" and shared a carafe of rosé, and then headed back to Covent Gardens. Once again, we stopped at Apple Market. Today, there were no antiques but the vendors did have nice handmade jewelry, linens etc. Now it was time to follow our tradition and go to the central courtyard and watch the "buskers" entertain before heading back to our hotel for our last evening in London. Tomorrow was departure day so it was time to pack and go out for one more special evening in London.

This was a wonderful, event filled fifteen days, both with our dear friend Joan Stacke Graham and our new friends from ACC tour but, all good things much come to an end. It was time to return to Texas.