

THE KEW PROJECT

The realization of a dream

In the early 1990's a group of people with a common interest in white ironstone got together. This group grew and a club was started with the first Annual Convention at Denver, Penn. The White Ironstone China Association known as "WICA" has always been interested in the researching of the dishes they collect and use. From previously published resources they found that many English proprietors (potters and modelers) would register their designs which held a patent on a design for 3 years. These documents were kept in the National Archives in London, near Kew Gardens. The possibility of sending some of the club members to England to do some in depth research on the designs that were registered from 1842 to 1880 was considered. Every time the subject came up at the annual meeting, the stumbling block was the cost, which would be quite high.

Years went by and after many great publications coming from the editors of the WICA Newsletter, Bev & Ernie Dieringer, which tried to delve into the marks, dates and design names of the different potters. The hope of seeing patent registries still eluded us. One of the reasons for this search was that for many years the WICA membership have been wanting to know the actual pattern names of their ironstone pieces. This was because very few of the English potters marked the pattern names on their pottery, resulting in the collectors naming the pattern using the shape or design details found on the different pieces. In the summer of 2010 Jane Diemer and the Dieringers found a researcher Rosalie Spire in England that had access to the Archives and was willing to photograph the drawings of ceramic and earthenware from 1842 through 1859 as stage one of a larger project. Rosalie sent these documents via E-mail to Jane Diemer. This was truly a dream come true.

The information received from Rosalie will be put together in a Power Point presentation along with a display of drawings and corresponding pieces of ironstone for the 2011 Annual Convention of WICA in York, Penn. The WICA club feels that this information would be beneficial to the other clubs as the basic body styles were expanded to other forms such as Tea Leaf, Flow Blue and Transfer. Any member of these "Sister Clubs" are invited to join us on Saturday, April 30, 2011 to see this presentation. Please contact Jane Diemer at 302-475-7415 or pahbubba@comcast.net for details.

Those who are interested in learning more information about white ironstone and the WICA club can visit www.whiteironstonechina.com and join the club or purchase some of the many resource books available in the WICA Shoppe. It is hoped that more people are intrigued by the history of ironstone, both English and American, and join us in York, Penn., April 28-May 1, 2011.