



Darbyshire Pottery Society

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darbyshirepotterysociety.org

Hi collectors and friends of the DPS I have finally finished my book “Tangaloo” and have found the time to put together another newsletter for the Pottery Society.

I have heard that quite a few of you are interested in the history of Darbyshire Ware so I have copied a chapter from my book.

Darbyshire Pottery

After the second World War, in 1947, my father Bill and his second wife Jean (he was divorced from my mother in 1941) started a business in Wellington St. Perth.

Among other things they made, ceramics was the most successful. Jean the Potter, studied ceramics in her early life in Kalgoorlie, when she was Jean Elliott. My father Bill was the Managing Director and Accountant.

Jean was clever at finding the right clay and had a secret recipe for the glazing, given to her by an employee whose name was Mr Gough. Over the next few years, after lots of testing and hard work, the pottery expanded, so much so, that in 1952 they built a purpose designed factory in Odin Road Innaloo.

Here they made delightful vases and an assortment of stand-alone animals and bird pieces, including Kangaroos, Emus, Koala Bears, and Kookaburras.

Their bread and butter line however was Salt and Pepper Shakers, of which they made 66 different sorts.

These included fruit and vegetable shapes and lots of animals. They also specialized in Aboriginal Figurines which are now very popular collectors' items. Other highly collectable items were the famous "Urchins" designed by Paul Rigby and dressed in West Australian football team colours. Around 1952 Stirling Shaw (Jean's son) and I worked in the factory in the school holidays.

Apart from earning some pocket money the attraction was that we could borrow the small grey utility and take a girl to a dance or the pictures.

Darbyshire Ware Pottery was so successful that by 1954 over 60 staff were employed fulltime.

Most of their Pottery went to the Eastern States and quite a lot to New Zealand.

The story is that in 1956 the banks put pressure on the big retail stores to import most of their stock from Europe and Asia, including Japan. Sales tax rules were also changed which made imports cheaper.

Orders dried up and the Pottery was forced to close.

When the Factory closed, as we were family we were given some of the best pieces, including Aboriginals and some of the Salt and Pepper Shakers.

Little did we know that Darbyshire Pottery was to become famous because it was unique, and because there were so few Australian Potteries in production.

As the years went by people realized that no more of this exact style of Pottery would be made and so it became very collectable.

The prices went up and we wished we had taken more care of the pieces we had been given because many of them had been broken and thrown out.

Sales

Because of the financial downturn the sales on ebay seems to have slowed down for Darbyshire Pottery, the price for some of smaller pieces (salt & peppers for example) seem to be still good value.

The top of the line items (Kangaroos, Kookaburras & Aboriginals etc.) are tightly held by their owners.

If I had any spare money I would love to buy an Urchin or a Kookaburra or a Possum or a Kangaroo.

Sometimes they come up for sale at a reasonable price

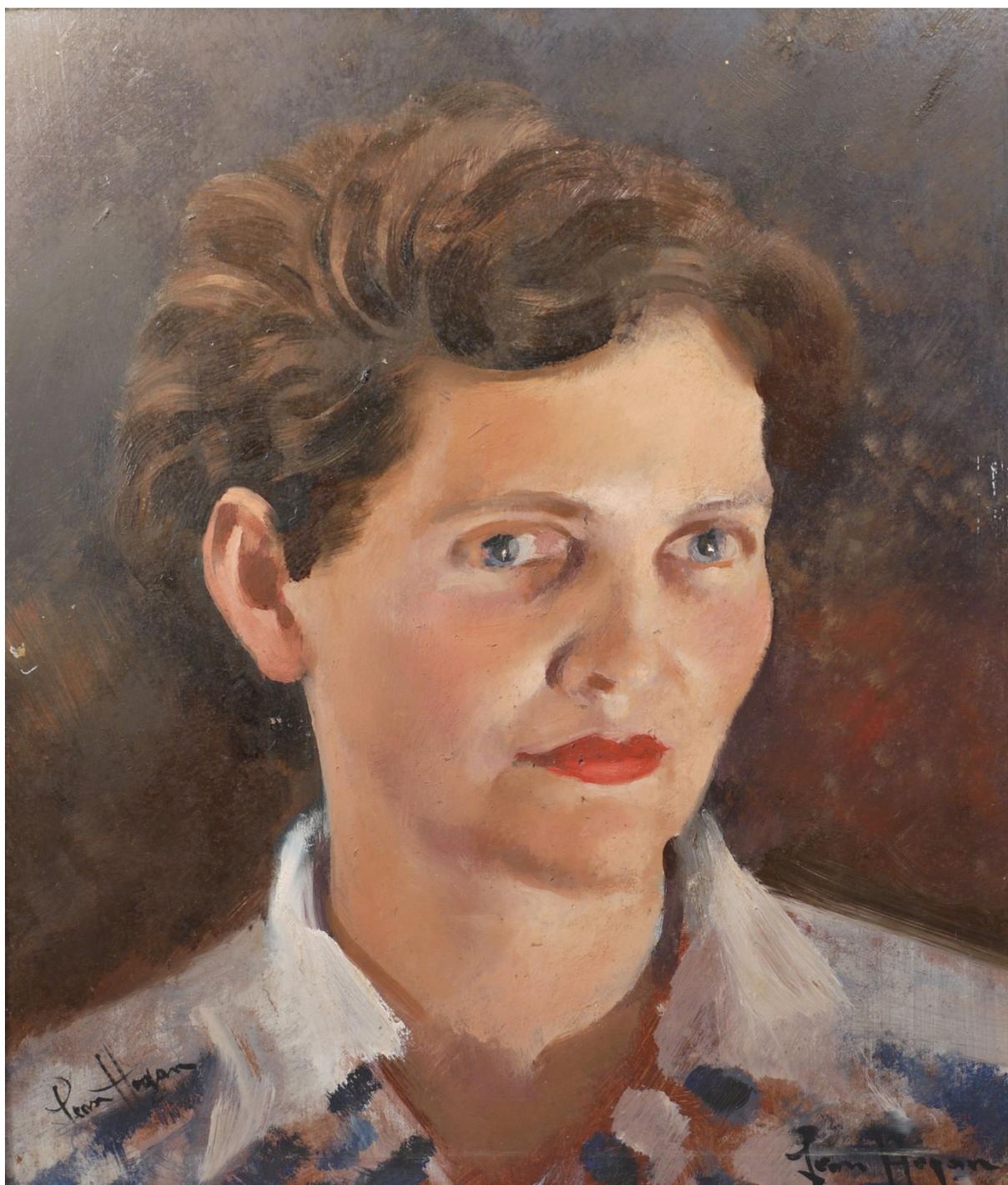
And I have heard that some might become available at an Auction in Melbourne in 2 or 3 weeks time to be held by Mossgreen Auctioners. Keep an eye out for this it may be your big chance!

Most of you will realize that Paul Bisby has written a prized collectors price guide for Darbyshire Pottery. If you want one of these excellent books ring Paul on 0419483647

I would be really interested to hear back from some collectors about your collections or how you came to be a collector. Anybody dropped a favourite piece?
Or found something special at the local antique shop?

Cheerio and happy collecting TD





Jeans portrait by artist Leon Hogan.