

LEGEND LANE COLLECTORS CLUB
NEWSLETTER ISSUE 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FRED WRIGHTS STORY TOLD BY HIS
WIFE IN HER OWN WORDS

THE FALSTAFF PANEL

THE BIRD OF PARADISE PLAQUE

THE 1ST HENRY VIII & LORD NELSON
WALL MASKS

THE HIGH RELIEF 12"
WALL PLAQUE RANGE

WRIGHTS

MILLERS COLLECTIBLES BOOKS AND GUIDES

HAVE RECENTLY INCLUDED THE LEGEND LANE RANGE OF 16 MINIATURE COTTAGES. YOU CAN SEE THEM PICTURED ON PAGE 111 OF THEIR COLLECTIBLE GUIDE 19??

THIS WILL OF COURSE MEAN THAT THE LEGEND COTTAGES WILL THEREFORE BE MORE VALUABLE AS TIME GOES ON AS THEY APPRECIATE IN VALUE BECAUSE ONLY A SMALL NUMBER WERE MADE.

MARTIN CLARK

A Legend collector has written in to us and sent some photographs. Shown below are his Shakespearean Falstaff picture panel which measures 12"high x 9"wide This plaque was modelled by Mr Frank Garbutt in 1965.

The bird of Paradise picture plaque measures 18" high x 12" wide modelled by Mr Fred Wright in 1973. Painted in gold, red and black colours.



BIRD OF PARADISE 18" x 12



FALSTAFF 12" X 9"

Although our collector's club was started due to a demand from collector's of wall masks, many people write to us as they have obtained other pieces sculpted here at Legend. During the 54 years of the company's history many different ranges have been modelled and sold.

They include Animal plaques, Full figure painted picture plaques, Classic cars, Birds, African masks, Viking boats, Steamships, Lamp bases, Locomotives, literally hundreds of plaque designs depicting flowers And countryside scenes. Here is a more detailed look at one plaque range.

THE HIGH RELIEF 12 INCH WALL PLAQUE RANGE

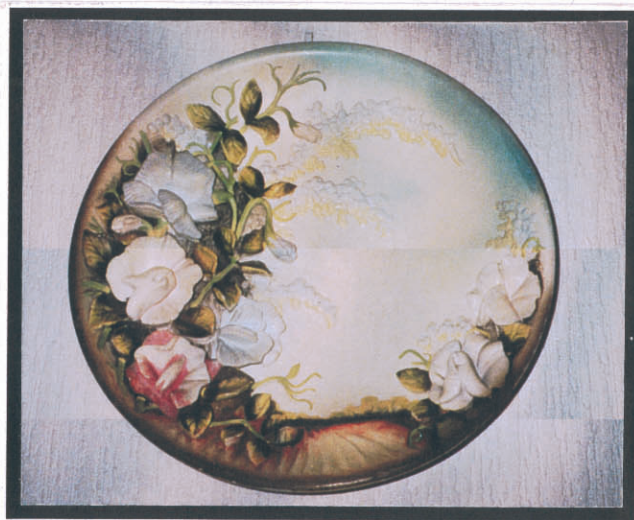
THIS RANGE WAS MODELLED BY MR FRANK GARBUTT
BETWEEN 1955/59

THE FOLLOWING DESIGNS WERE MADE.

1. SPRING DAFFODILLS & CATKINS
2. CHRYSANTHEMUMS
3. CONWAY CASTLE WITH BRIAR ROSES
4. A ROSE BOUQUET
5. SWEET PEAS & FIELDS
6. ELIZABETHANTYPE HOUSE WITH ROSES
7. HUNTSMEN & HOUNDS COUNTRYSIDE SCENE
8. A COACHING SCENE AND INN
9. MALLARD DUCKS FLYING OVER A LAKE WITH GRASSES
10. THE LAUGHING CAVAILIER
11. MRS SIDDONS
12. ST. BERNADETTE & OUR LADY OF LOURDES

Legend Collector Kathy McGreal found a good example of the Sweet Peas plaque in excellent condition and bought it straightaway she has sent in a picture of it.

Shown Below.



FRED WRIGHT'S STORY

THE STORY OF HIS CAREER, TOLD BY FRED'S WIFE KATHLEEN WRIGHT IN HER OWN WORDS

Fred my husband was born the second child of William and Harriet Wright, he was an identical twin, but his brother died at childbirth. In early years Fred showed a remarkable talent for drawing and painting. He painted at a very early age, Portraits of remarkable likeness, they were as good as photographs, they were so real. He studied anatomy, so he knew the structure of animals birds and people, it was therefore a great help to him in later years when he came to model them in clay.

At fourteen he attended the Burslem school of Art in Stoke on Trent this was a two year course. At sixteen Fred went to work at the 'Doulton' China pottery in Burslem Stoke on Trent, painting fine china and he was there until 1937 when war was looming. He knew that he would be called up for the forces so he decided to volunteer for the Royal Air Force.

I met Fred at Doulton's where I also was painting figures having attended Burselm school of Art. It was a short courtship for us, but our letters kept the courtship going.

Fred was in the desert as an engineer maintaining the planes for the pilots to fight with, for four and a half years he lived in terrible conditions there. Even in the desert he painted pictures of fighter planes in action, and these he sold.

After four and a half years the war was over with Germany, so he came home and the flags were flying and everyone was so happy to have their loved ones back home again, We were married and went to live at Baldwin's Gate near Newcastle in Staffordshire. Fred was de mobbed and went to work at the 'Paragon' china works at Longton stoke on Trent, painting beautiful roses on to china plates. Some of these lovely lifelike pieces were made for Royalty. Also Fred painted roses on a huge vase and it went on show at Harrod's store in London.

After working at the 'Paragon' pottery for seven years, it was suggested to Fred that he might try his hand at modelling. Although he had not done any since he was at the school of art. So he got a ball of clay and he modelled an old Persian man, he got my father to sit and he modelled his hands. If he had done modelling all his life he could not have done any better, it was so real, Fred had it fired and painted it himself. I have this figure in my room. It is a one off.

Having had this success Fred gave up his job and went to work freelance. The first company he worked for was Halls China Works of Longton Stoke on Trent. Where he was modelling birds and animals, they were very lifelike, but he needed more work. He had been doing work for Mr Alec Cochrane of Legend Products in Stockport near Manchester for quite some time but he needed more work to fully utilize his working day.

It was decided therefore that an advert would be placed in the Stoke Sentinal, Mr Bossons was one of the people who replied. Both Legend and Bossons were making small plaster plaques so Fred worked on small pieces for both firms for a while, soon thereafter Mr Bosson had Fred work on some larger plaques with flowers on them, roses chrysanthemums, spring flowers. Mr Bosson was so pleased with them that he offered Fred a job full time as his modeller, Fred accepted and was soon underway modelling heads with turbans, Indians with feathered headdresses, birds, heads of all nationalities.

Mr Bosson would look in to Books and then Fred would model the head from the book he had chosen. I must emphasize that Fred was the modeller, he breathed life into clay, also he painted the pattern for the girls in the factory to copy.

We were living at Alsager now, Mr Bosson's firm started expanding, orders for countries abroad, besides the home market, he made great wealth but this did not come our way.

Mr Bossons dropped Fred's wage twice, so Fred gave his notice in. Because Fred was leaving Mr Bossons would not let Fred have his pension transferred, but his firm was never the same after Fred had left. He had no new models to bring out, so slowly it went down. Now the firm is closed and Mr Bossons is not a well man.

(Mr Bosson has since died in 1999)

Fred then joined Alec Cochrane's company in Macclesfield. Fred had modelled for Alec before when he was free lance. Many people could not understand why the Legend Products heads were so like Bosson's the reason is they both had employed Fred to do work for their firms.

Fred enjoyed working for Alec Cochrane and his son David, Fred he modelled the same type of work ,heads, birds, plaques. Because it was a more relaxed atmosphere he looked forward to going to work. After working at Legend for a few years , Fred decided to go back to a china firm, he got a position at Anysley China works, Stoke on Trent, they wanted to open a works making something called animal kingdom, they made a wide search for modellers of high standards, Fred got the position and started modelling animals and birds. They sold very well most of them were huge and limited edition of 750 pieces making them much more valuable in years to come.

Fred modelled a bald eagle, it looked so real, it was nineteen inches high standing on a rock. The Queen and prince Philip were going to America to commemorate the Bi Centenary of the United States of America in 1976. All the leading firms were asked to submit a piece of china for the queen to take as a gift she choose Fred's bald eagle. Her majesty Queen Elizabeth and his Royal Highness Prince Philip presented it to the Bostonian society and it is preserved today in the old courthouse, Boston Massachusetts. The bald eagle is an impressive true to life sculpture in fine porcelain of the national emblem of the United States of America. Mr Gillow was very pleased with at this honour He gave Fred an Eagle, it is so real, when I dust it I feel it may peck me.

If you can buy any of Anysley's animal kingdom, they will be very valuable due to only so many being made.

Fred was very happy working for Mr Gillow at Anysley's, but when he was sixty five he decided to retire from full time work and take up part time work at Legend products. This being the third time he worked for Alec and David Cochrane at Macclesfield. Fred was working there when he had a massive stroke paralysing him down him down his right side.

Fred was in hospital for twelve months, he came home, but he was in a fit state to be home. I looked after Fred myself for two years without help from the nurses. Our minister Mr Challinor was a great help in my trouble, he did things for my husband no one else would have done. We got him on his feet with another mans help and he took him to chapel in his car, we walked him up and down in the school room. For a time Fred was then able to go once a week to a day centre.

All through Fred's life he had a great love of fast cars, so he struggles to get better so he could drive again. Our Doctor called to see him and Fred asked him if he could have his driving license so he could drive his car, but the doctor told him you will never drive again.

When I was out of the room alone with the doctor I told him you should not have told Fred he would never drive again, he will give up trying to get better. at this time I was also in a poor state of health. I wondered who would go the first, so the social service nurses came to help. We all struggled to keep Fred going but he died on June 6th 1994. I loved my husband and life will never be the same . Fred was an unusual man in many ways. He was a perfectionist, that showed up in his work, he also painted some very good pictures and sold them. I have some up in our home. We had a caravan in Wales, and Fred like nothing better than packing to go. We both had a great love of dogs and over the years we had three spaniels and an English red setter. They were like our family we had no children.

Fred made models of aero planes and went flying them, he also made model boats, a special one he made all himself, it had sails and rigging he did not have a kit to make it, he just cut it all out himself. It was a large boat about 4 ft long.

They used to sail them on the Thames, they have dark red sails, Fred gave it as a gift to David Cochrane.

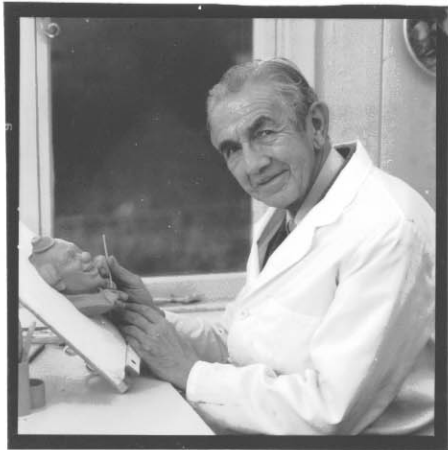
Fred also built a sports car it was finished off in all details and was registered as a new car.

The other love of his life was going on holiday to Cornwall, he would have liked to have lived there, but I enjoyed it as a holiday but not to live there.

As I look back Fred would have been better off working free lance all his life, he could have got high prices for his work, we would have had more time in our caravan in Wales and we could have gone to Cornwall more. Fred was an atheist, he did not believe in an after life. I do , I am a Christian. Fred was buried from our home. Mr Challinor our minister spoke of the life of Fred to the friends and relatives who had attended the funeral. Fred's grave is the churchyard of Christ Church, Alsager, Cheshire.

At the end of this book of Fred's I should like to thank neighbours, friends, relatives and nurses, also Sheila & David Cochrane who helped me in caring for Fred during his illness, without them I could not have carried on.

Kathleen Wright



Pictured :- Mr Fred Wright when working at legend Products