

Art Fund helps save the Minton Archive for the nation

Following eight years of uncertainty, the Minton Archive – one of the great archives of industrial Britain – has been secured for £1.56m through a fundraising campaign led by the Art Fund and supported by a £1.16m grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

The Archive has been purchased from the Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton (WWRD) company and gifted to the city of Stoke-on-Trent, home of the Minton Factory until it was demolished in the 1990s. It will now be owned, managed and made publicly accessible by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council Joint Archives Service, who will also loan key parts of the Archive to the Wedgwood Museum and the Potteries Museum and Gallery for display and exhibition.

The Minton Archive is one of the great archives of industrial Britain and comprises hundreds of thousands of individual items, documenting more than two centuries of innovative pottery design, manufacture and production. It includes the comprehensive records of Minton, Royal Doulton (the two companies merged in 1968) and a further number of small but influential firms taken over by Royal Doulton in the 20th century.

The Archive contains an extraordinary collection of original designs, drawings and pattern books and includes the work of Augustus Pugin and Christopher Dresser, two of the greatest names in Victorian design, amongst many other artists. Together with the great archives and collections of Wedgwood and Spode, it tells a story of nearly 250 years of community, art and industry in the Potteries and North Staffordshire. The three firms, and the ceramics they produced, continue to be famous throughout the world. The Archive is a result of the careful preservation of design materials, unmatched by any other factory of the time. Other key artists associated with the Archive include Thomas Allen, whose work was included in the Minton exhibit at the Great Exhibition, distinguished sculptor John Bell and Marc-Louis Solon, a French porcelain artist.

Since 2007 – when the Minton Archive was first put up for sale by its former owners Waterford Wedgwood plc – the Art Fund has sought to protect it from sale at auction and piecemeal dispersal. Its current owners, WWRD, have engaged in productive discussions from the outset expressing a strong desire that the Archive remain in Staffordshire and accessible to all. Following the successful purchase of the Wedgwood Collection, the Art Fund brought together local and national partners with the aim of securing the Archive's future and keeping it in the Stoke-on-Trent area. On Tuesday 31 March 2015, the Archive was finally sold for

£1.56m to the Art Fund, who immediately gifted ownership to Stoke-on-Trent City Archives.

The Archive is currently stored at Bonhams - who provided expert assessment of the value and importance of the Archive - and at the Wedgwood Museum at Barlaston. A process to begin cataloguing the Archive in full for the first-time will now be undertaken by the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service, making it more readily available for research purposes at Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, and for public display at the Wedgwood Museum and the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.

The safety of the Minton Archive was first threatened in 2007 when its former owners Waterford Wedgwood plc appointed Bonhams to sell it at auction. The Art Fund led discussions between regional and national institutions to try and secure the Archive and agreed a grant to help support a potential fundraising campaign intended to result in the transfer of ownership to the Wedgwood Museum Trust. But in 2010 the Trust went into administration, bringing the attempt to save the Archive to a standstill. The purchase had been made possible by WWRD's wish that the Archive should now be owned and managed by a local public institution, and made as widely available to the public as possible.

The Art Fund has maintained a watching brief since 2010 but it is only in recent months, following the success of the campaign to save the Wedgwood Collection, that the Art Fund has been able to mobilise key local and national partners to find a solution and raise the funds required to purchase the Archive without turning to a public fundraising appeal. This has included significant support from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and donations from The Pilgrim Trust, the Bamford Charitable Foundation, the bet365 Foundation, William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust, Sir Siegmund Warburg's Voluntary Settlement, J Paul Getty Jr Charitable Trust and many other generous supporters.

Stephen Deuchar, director of the Art Fund, said: *"For years, the Art Fund has fought to protect the Minton Archive, keeping it in its rightful place in Staffordshire, and bringing it into safe public ownership. We're delighted that an Archive that incorporates major works of art amidst a treasure trove of industrial history has finally been saved for the nation. Through its scope and scale it offers unprecedented insight into design and manufacturing processes from the 18th to the 20th centuries, thereby telling the fascinating story of Staffordshire's renowned pottery industry in colour and depth.*

We thank and salute all those donors - and especially the National Heritage Memorial Fund - who helped make this possible. We are also grateful to WWRD for agreeing to sell the Archive intact to a public institution, and for working with us closely and co-operatively throughout."

Anthony Jones, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of WWRD: *"The Minton Archive is a vital part of the history of the British potteries industry. We are delighted that the Archive will remain in Staffordshire, accessible to all and a reminder to the world of our rich industrial heritage."*

Charlie Stewart, assistant chief executive, Stoke on Trent City Council, said: *"We are absolutely delighted this wonderful archive is coming home to Stoke-on-Trent. Along with the Spode and the Wedgwood archives, it is one of the great industrial archives of the ceramic industry, and has importance not only nationally but internationally. The archive gives us a direct insight into the lives of Stoke-on-Trent people in the 19th and 20th centuries and is a priceless window into the city's industrial heritage.*

"A lot of work will now be taking place to catalogue everything so that people can come into the Stoke-on-Trent City archives and see this magnificent collection directly themselves. The council's Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, which is no stranger to hosting world-class exhibitions, will be putting on an initial display later in the year and in the coming years we will be showcasing different aspects of the archive with displays both at the museum and the new World of Wedgwood displays at Barlaston."

Philip Atkins, Leader of Staffordshire County Council, said: *"The Minton Archive is a magical collection and I am absolutely delighted that it has been saved for the county, the city and the country to view, enjoy and learn from. As a county we supported appeals to keep both the Staffordshire Hoard and the Wedgwood Collection together and it is fantastic to hear that Minton Archive will now be coming home."*

The Minton Archive

The Archive includes a vast range of items currently stored at Bonhams and at the Wedgwood Museum in Barlaston.

It includes:*

Designs, drawings, prints, art materials, etc:

The total number of items in these portfolios is in the tens of thousands, ranging from slight tracings to large and elaborate watercolours. It represents the work of named artists and designers and of the many others, unnamed, who worked as artists, designers or copyists for Minton. This includes 120 drawings by Christopher Dresser who worked for Minton in the 1860s and early 1870s, and 26 drawings by Augustus Pugin. Some of the original watercolour designs that survive in the archive are dated 1850 or 1851 and include not only doorplate and plate designs but tile designs for the Great Exhibition Stove.

Minton Pattern Books:

This series of 520 pattern books, beginning c1800 and complete from the mid-19th century, is believed to be the essential core of the Minton archive. They contain patterns (often shown in delicate watercolour) with crucial and historically important annotations, details and information.

Royal Doulton Archive and other pattern books:

In addition to the Minton material, the Archive also comprises the artwork, pattern books, and a large archive of documentary material for the Royal Doulton factory and company together with pattern books for many of the individual firms eventually absorbed by the Royal Doulton Group. These are separately important as records of the design and work of individual factories, and in many cases they appear to be the only surviving manuscript records of that work.

Key artists associated with Minton include:

Thomas Allen joined Minton in 1845 and his work was included in the Minton exhibit at the Great Exhibition, after which he left the firm until returning in 1854 where he was associated with the Sèvres style of floral and figure painting.

John Bell, a distinguished ceramic sculptor, most associated with the Parian wares introduced by Herbert Minton in 1849. His Miranda was exhibited at the Great Exhibition. By the time of the international Exhibition at London in 1862, his reputation resulted in him designing the cast iron and bronze entrance gates, which were the major feature of one of the entrances.

Christopher Dresser, a designer recognised for the astonishing originality of his shapes. The Minton archive contains the largest collection of his surviving drawings, which drew on influences as diverse as the pottery of Pre-Columbian America and Japan.

Louis Solon was a major influence at Minton from his arrival in 1870 bringing his experiences from Sèvres to Minton. He developed the Sèvres aspects of Minton's output and the pâte sur pâte technique.

** Information taken from Bonhams' Guide to the Catalogue of the Minton Archive, and associated collections*

Notes to Editors

The Art Fund

The Art Fund is the national charity for art, driven by the belief that everyone should have access to great art. In the past 5 years the Art Fund has given £34m to help museums and galleries acquire works of art for their collections. The Art Fund also helps museums share their collections with wider audiences by supporting a range of tours and exhibitions, including ARTIST ROOMS and the 2013-18 Aspire tour of Tate's Constable's Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows, and makes additional grants to support the training and professional development of curators.

The Art Fund is independently funded, with the core of its income provided by 117,000

members who receive the National Art Pass and enjoy free entry to over 230 museums, galleries and historic places across the UK, as well as 50% off entry to major exhibitions. In addition to grant-giving, the Art Fund's support for museums includes the annual Art Fund Prize for Museum of the Year (won by the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in 2014), a publications programme and a range of digital platforms including a website and the Art Guide app, promoting a network of over 650 museums and galleries across the country.

National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF)

The National Heritage Memorial Fund was set up in 1980 to save the most outstanding parts of our national heritage, in memory of those who have given their lives for the UK. It is receiving £20million Government grant in aid between 2011-15 allowing for an annual budget of £4m-5m. www.nhmf.org.uk.

These items join a diverse range of over 1,200 iconic objects and places which have been safeguarded by the NHMF to the tune of over £300million. These include:

- The Coenwulf Coin
- The Mary Rose
- The Flying Scotsman
- The last surviving World War II destroyer, HMS Cavalier
- A collection of the work of WWII code-breaker Alan Turing
- The personal archive of Siegfried Sassoon, WWI soldier, author and poet.
- Skokholm Island, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Pembrokeshire

About WWRD

WWRD is a leading provider of luxury home and lifestyle products worldwide. WWRD manufactures, distributes and sells well-recognised brands including Waterford, Wedgwood, Royal Doulton, Royal Albert and Rogaška. WWRD maintains unique licensing arrangements with some of the most high-profile designers and innovators in the home and lifestyle market, including Vera Wang, Jasper Conran, Monique Lhuillier, John Rocha, Gordon Ramsay, Donna Hay, Jo Sampson and Miranda Kerr. WWRD products are distributed through premium department stores and independent retailers and wholesalers around the world, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Canada, Australia and Ireland. The company employs 3,800 people worldwide. WWRD is the proud holder of the Royal Warrants by Appointment for tableware and giftware to Her Majesty The Queen for Wedgwood, and to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and Her Majesty The Queen for Royal Doulton.

For more information on the WWRD Portfolio, please visit www.wwrld.com

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