

A Chronological History of Fieldings Crown Devon

- 1827 Simon Fielding, founder of the firm is born.
- 1855 Simon's son Abraham Fielding is born in Middleton, Lancashire.
- 1870 Abraham begins his apprenticeship at what is to become Blyth Colour Works at Creswell on the river Blyth.
- 1872 Simon Fielding acquires Blyth Colour Works and his son, Abraham, becomes manager.
- 1878 Simon Fielding provides funds for three men to develop the Railway Pottery at Sutherland Street, Stoke-On-Trent.
- 1879 Abraham finds bailiffs in possession of the Railway Pottery. He pays off the debts and decides to become a pottery manufacturer himself.
- 1880 Abraham's son, Arthur Ross Fielding is born.
- 1882 Under Abraham's guidance, the Railway Pottery prospers. This results in a progression of extensions to the works, including a range of warehouses, workshops and two kilns.
- 1884 A fire at the works destroys all the buildings causing damage estimated at between 3000 - £4000. The factory is rebuilt within 2 months.
- 1887 Further expansion takes place as a new kiln is built, together with a three-storey building that will house over 80 workers.
- 1888 Another fire completely guts the buildings with everything in the workshops destroyed. Damage is estimated to be over £4000.
- 1889 The works are re-built to a design that will meet the working requirements of a modern earthenware manufactory.
- 1890 A new biscuit oven is constructed. It is fired on a new principle that regulates the flow of gases. The company patent this new system and make it available on licence to other manufacturers.
- 1891 A large glost oven is erected, together with two enamel kilns, giving the factory seven of the largest kilns in the potteries. Six cottages adjoining the works are bought and equipped with the most modern machinery available.
- 1892 Permission is obtained to close Sutherland Street and absorb the thoroughfare, together with the properties, into the factory site, thus providing land for the construction of printing and decorating departments, together with a warehouse and showrooms.
- 1893 A new glaze mill is built which enables the company not only to manufacture glaze for themselves, but also to sell it to other pottery manufacturers. A decision is also taken to build a colour mill that will make the railway pottery almost self-sufficient.
- 1900 A major strike effects the whole of the pottery industry.
- 1903 The silver wedding anniversary of Abraham Fielding and his wife Mary.
- 1905 S. Fielding & co becomes a limited company with a share capital of £13000
- 1905 Simon Fielding dies at the age of 78.
- 1911 The name of the factory is changed from railway pottery to Devon Pottery.

- 1911 Abraham Fielding is elevated to the judicial bench and to mark the occasion he presents 7 female and 12 male employees with a picture of himself in his hunting costume, together with a large jardiniere and pedestal bearing the inscription "a souvenir for 21 years continuous service in the employ of S. Fielding & Co Ltd"
- 1911 Another disastrous fire hits the pottery. The three storey main building containing painting and decorating shops, offices and warehouses are completely destroyed with damage estimated at £15000. 400 - 500 people are thrown out of work.
- 1912 The factory is rebuilt and important improvements are made, resulting in a well-appointed factory and decorating shops that have been installed with the most up to date machinery and accessories, together with an extension to the factory showroom.
- 1913 King George V and Queen Mary visit the Devon Pottery
- 1914 The outbreak of war does not have an immediate impact on the company but the shortage of manpower is to become a serious problem that involves all levels of staff. Abraham Fielding's nephew, Francis Edward (Ned) Taylor, who had been in charge of the potting department, goes to war with the North Staffordshire Regiment.
- 1917 A gas fired Dressler tunnel enamelling kiln is installed. It has a weekly capacity equal to 34 four mouth intermittent kilns, and increases the capacity threefold.
- 1926 Another fire destroys a flint grinding mill with damage estimated at between £3000 - £4000. Fortunately, no output or jobs are lost.
- 1927 Abraham Fielding suffers a heart attack but after a period of rest, he is soon back at work.
- 1928 300 staff and employees gather at Fenton Town Hall to celebrate the golden wedding anniversary of Abraham Fielding and his wife, the 21st birthday of his grandson, Reginald Fielding and the fiftieth anniversary of the Devon Pottery.
- 1930 With his son, Arthur Ross and his grandson Reginald actively participating in the company, Abraham decides to take a less active role.
- 1932 Abraham Fielding dies and his only son, Arthur (Alec) Ross Fielding becomes the third generation of the family to head the company.
- 1939 The outbreak of war prevents further expansion, including a proposed glost tunnel oven.
- 1945 After the end of the war, the whole factory site is surveyed and a major plan approved for complete reconstruction, including the implementation of the previously proposed glost oven and the replacement of the old Dressler tunnel kiln by a modern gas fired enamel kiln. All the main casting shops are entirely re-equipped and modernised. Electric jiggers replace those previously driven by an old steam engine. A modern drying system is also installed.
- 1947 Arthur Ross Fielding dies and is succeeded by his son Reginald, the fourth generation family member to head the company.
- 1951 Fire again sweeps through the factory, destroying some 44000 square feet of floor space. The decorating, aerographing and printing shops, glost and

biscuit warehouses are all destroyed. The glost oven and new enamel kiln are unscathed but large stocks of earthenware destined for export are lost. 320 workers are temporarily jobless.

- 1952 After 40 years service as head artist, Walter Lamonby dies.
- 1957 The building work is finally finished, thus completing the resurrection of the pottery.
- 1960 Abraham's nephew Francis Edward (Ned) Taylor dies at the age of 69. After being a director of the company for many years.
- 1963 Modernisation is again in progress with the replacement of the two bottle ovens, built in the earliest days of the pottery, with two Litherland intermittent kilns.
- 1963 Part of the company is sold to Douglas Kitchener Bailey who becomes joint managing director with Reginald Fielding.
- 1964 S. Fielding & Co Ltd takes over the rival earthenware manufacturers Shorter & Sons Ltd.
- 1965 Reginald Fielding suffers a heart attack.
- 1967 The Fielding family connection with the company comes to an end with the retirement of Reginald Fielding. Douglas Bailey buys the entire company.
- 1971 Douglas Bailey dies and his wife takes over the running of the company.
- 1976 Mrs Bailey sells the company to the Archibald Bathgate Group, a Liverpool based firm of accountants.
- 1982 The deepening recession that has destroyed 20000 jobs in the potteries industry takes it's toll. After suffering losses of nearly £500,000 in the previous two years, the firm finally closes its doors on 17th December 1982.
- 1983 The works, blocks & cases are bought from the liquidator by Caverswall China Company Ltd who transfers its mould making and printing departments to the Devon Pottery site. However, they run into financial problems and are bought out by Thomas Goode & Co, a retailer of high quality ceramics, glass and luxury goods.
- 1986. The Caverswall China Company is offered for sale and bought by Bullers Plc. A year later thousands of Crown Devon and Shorter blocks and case moulds are sold by public auction.
Following the three-day sale, the works are demolished.