

Royal George and Galleon Patterns



Earl Royal George 9" Vase



Royal George Back stamp



Early Royal George Potpourri Jar



Full Pattern Royal George Pin Dish

One enduringly popular Crown Devon design is that of the Royal George pattern. Royal George had its beginning as a Lustre Pattern that was introduced at the British Empire exhibition at Wembley in 1924.

The earliest of the Royal George patterns featured a dark slate blue ground at the base varying in hue to the saxe blue tones of L1 lustre, with swirls of mauve and light blue giving off the effect of clouds. The galleon and surrounding sea were created by underglaze colours of jade green, plum, russet, white and iridescent green: the shape of the ship, swirling seas and distant mountains defined by delicate gold transfer work. Two seagulls, outlined in gold over underglaze colours of white and plum, placed in the foreground on either side of the galleon, lent a three dimensional effect to the scene. The rim was coated in best gold and was surrounded by transfer relief work of suns and other motifs that were curiously Chinese in nature. The finishing touch to this magnificent design was a final coat of lustre, giving a golden luminescence to the wares. The pattern also came out in a cobalt blue lustre with underglaze colouring as detailed above

The early Royal George patterns did not carry a pattern number because the name Royal George was incorporated into the Fieldings back stamp and all carry the 1910-1930 company logo. Some designs included a small dinghy adjacent to the galleon flying the red and white flag of St. George, while others did not.

The choice of Royal George as the name for the pattern was not accidental. It was named after and eighteenth century 100 gun galleon of the same name that foundered at Spithead with a loss of around 1400 lives on the 29th August 1792.

The Royal George was one of the largest warships of her time, and notwithstanding her stature, she was a rather neglected young maiden who turned into a cantankerous and unstable 2072 ton old aunt. Launched in 1756, she was today's equivalent of a battleship. She saw action initially during the Seven Years War and the Battle of Quiberon Bay before languishing for more than 16 years on stand-by in Plymouth. She was overhauled extensively but left to idle her time away until 1778 when, in a somewhat unfit state, she was pressed into service against the French.

The galleon came to an ignominious end during repairs at Plymouth. With a crew of about 800 and hundreds of tradespeople, family of the crew and visitors swarming over her during a repair to a water release valve that required the ship to list of one side, she keeled over. Only

about three hundred souls were rescued, thus ensuring her notoriety in British maritime history.



1930s Pattern 2973 Ruby Lustre Art Deco shape

Shortly after Enoch Boulton joined Fieldings in 1929, Royal George was relaunched on both new and old shapes. Boulton recognised the popularity of the pattern and decided to contemporise the design to make it more suitable to modern tastes. Regrettably, the name Royal George and its link to a tragic moment in British maritime history was dropped in favour of the more generic description of 'Galleon'.

The breathing of new life into the old Royal George pattern exemplifies a particular gift of Enoch Boulton. He had a remarkable flair for taking an idea, old pattern, a drawing, or even a design produced by a competitor and transforming them into decorative masterpieces. In drawing together, or reconstituting existing design elements, Boulton bestowed on them a freshness and originality that more than often eclipsed the original idea.



1930s Pattern M169 on a primrose ground

The Royal George pattern appeared on a ruby lustre ground as 2973, introducing stronger underglaze colouring that animated the sea and adding colour to the mountain backdrop, thus lending more depth to the design. Enamel highlights were applied to give the pattern even stronger definition. The example opposite is composed exquisitely and exploits fully the modern shape upon which the pattern is placed. This is an impressive accomplishment in design, particularly when one remembers that Royal George conveys essentially Victorian sentiments, and yet, on the Art Deco pieces opposite there is no suggestion of obsolescence.

The pattern also appeared in a variety of wares on a primrose matt ground, from large ewers to chargers, bearing the pattern number M169. The Ewer opposite has different colouring that the ruby lustre pattern. Here, the galleon becomes the centrepiece of the design, a dramatically coloured and defined ocean creating the impression of it riding a troubled sea. A faux drip glaze effect around the rim and gold transfer highlights and gilding of the rim and handle give the ware a luxuriant finish. The charger below has a more evenly applied drip glaze effect and the hand applied colouring is not defined with gold transfer to the degree it is on the ewer.



1930s Charger. Primrose ground hand decorated

In the post war period Royal George was again launched, this time as pattern 5257 in the ruby lustre and pattern 5256 in the blue lustre ground. It also appeared on a Mediterranean sky blue ground in a range of post modernist and classical shapes.



1950s Galleon design. Full pattern featuring underglaze colours and enamelled highlights

The post war examples of the pattern were expensive to produce at a time when many potteries were eliminating much of the labour intensive work applied to their wares. The Galleon pattern of the fifties still featured underglaze decoration and hand finishing over the transfer pattern applied at the biscuit stage. The wares were clear glazed several times and fired at high temperatures in Glost ovens. On-glaze decoration and enamelling finished off the effect.

The patterns differ from those of the thirties, taking on some of the features of the 1920s pattern. Relief work around the lip or rim of the wares was simplified and the best pieces featured gilded handles and rims. The pattern retained most of the characteristics of the pre WW2 designs and was clearly earmarked for the higher end of the market.



1950s light blue Lustre and signed D Cole

The signature 'D Cole' often appears on post war pieces. However, a review of the 1950 Fieldings wages book does not reveal the name Cole amongst the list of male and female painters. The Cole signature is probably a continuation of the long practice at Fieldings of inventing the name of an artist rather than featuring the name of a real artist on their wares.

The Galleon patterns continued to be a popular choice amongst buyers of Crown Devon through the fifties and 1960s. It was one of the chosen patterns for a series of humidors commissioned by Openheimer & Co in 1963, offered in blue, ruby, green and black lustres.



1950s Pattern 5256 in Blue Lustre

The Royal George/Galleon patterns continue to be a favoured option amongst Crown Devon collectors and antique ceramic lovers today. The rich symbolism of the designs, together with quality execution on a broad range of shapes appeal to people as much now as they did in 1924 when Fieldings first introduced the pattern