

HISTORY OF FIRMS USING PERFINs

ROYAL DOULTON

Rosemary Smith

John Doulton was just 22 when he staked his £100 life-savings on a partnership in the pottery that had taken him on after completing his apprenticeship three years earlier. The pot-house was in a backwater of the village of Lambeth, close by the Thames. It was the year of Waterloo, 1815.

The gamble paid off, for the modest business in household stoneware was soon producing vessels for the burgeoning chemical industry. The firm moved on to a larger building, later to become famous as the Lambeth Pottery.

Here it was that John's son Henry started work in 1835, aged 15. Dedicated and visionary, Henry made the firm's fortune by setting up the world's first factory for making pipes - for the hundreds of miles of drainage being laid under Britain's towns in the 'sanitary revolution' that began in the 1840's.

The security provided by pipes and other associated products enabled Henry to pursue the ambitions he had long cherished for the firm's decorative work. In the 1860's he opened a studio at the works where artists produced the Doulton Wares that within a decade were internationally renowned.

In 1877, Doulton bought a small earthenware factory at Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent. He attracted to it some of the finest artists of the day, and was soon producing some of the most beautiful tableware, figures and other ceramic work in the world.

Doulton's works at Lambeth and Burslem brought about a renaissance in English pottery, and Henry's influence was rewarded by countless honours, including a knighthood from Queen Victoria - herself a keen admirer of Doulton Wares - in 1887. In 1901, four years after Sir Henry died, King Edward VII presented the company with the Royal Warrant, and with the additional, rarely conferred honour of authority to use the word 'ROYAL' to describe their products.

Today, Royal Doulton has 15 factories in Britain employing some 8,000 people. A member of the Pearson Group since 1972, it is the largest manufacturer of fine bone china in the world.

Dates known at present:-

D0010.02 1941-85 D0860.01 1925-39 D0860.02 1945-85
 D0860.02a 1941-45 (Prov) D0860.04 1890-1939

