The Emergence of Art Pottery in Bovey Tracey in the 1920s

Viv Styles

Figure 1: Little Bradley Ponds Nature Reserve, Bovey Tracey.

Anyone who has walked around the Little Bradley Ponds[1] nature reserve in Bovey Tracey during a spell of wet weather can be in little doubt about the nature of the ground beneath. Thick, pale grey clay makes walking difficult and leaves a residue on the walking boots. Now a haven for more than 20 species of dragonfly and damselfly, the ponds are a relic of ball clay extraction, once a thriving place of employment for the clay and pottery industries. Ball clay deposits are formed from the erosion of kaolin-rich rocks into freshwater basins. There were two major deposits in Devon: the Bovey Basin, between Newton Abbot and Bovey Tracey, and the Petrockstowe Basin in North Devon.

Figure 2: Clay Pipe Fragments found on the site of the Old Thatched Inn

[1] Devon Wildlife Trust, www.devonwildlifetrust.org/nature-reserves/little-bradley-ponds.

A massive fault line, termed the Sticklepath-Lustleigh Fault Zone, created freshwater lakes into which sediments from the surrounding landscape were deposited. In the Bovey Basin, the swamp vegetation led to the creation of beds of lignite, also known as 'Bovey Coal'. The depth of the Bovey Basin, estimated to be over 1,300 metres, led to an abundance of both lignite and clay beds.[2] The weathering of Dartmoor granite produced ball clay, a kaolinite clay, with a coarser grain than china clay but with a distinctive white colour when fired. It is now a feature of our daily lives, from tableware to toilet bowls.

Excavations carried out in 2018 at the site of the Old Thatched Inn in Bovey Tracey, unearthed a huge number of clay pipes. Ball clay was ideal for pipe making, and it has been suggested that the enormous demand for clay pipes helped to create the early ball clay industry.[3] From the beginning of the nineteenth century, individual clay merchants began to form partnerships, and by 1860 there were three companies: Whiteway & Co., the Devon and Courtenay Clay Company, and Watts, Blake, Bearne and Co. (WBB), with the latter being the dominant force. The company thrived, having interests in several mineral extraction industries throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, but the First World War brought setbacks for the South Devon clay producers. The workforce was depleted when men left to join the armed forces, and clay production was not considered vital to the war effort. This slump was followed by a boom, when the price clay rose to 55s per tonne from its 1915 price of 25s.[4]

At the same time, many potteries across the country were closed or idle. The miners' strike of 1921 led to a shortage of coal for the kilns. This, coupled with pressures from continental markets, would lead to potteries looking for ways to diversify their ceramic products, creating sidelines in novelty items that would appeal to the burgeoning tourist industry.

A long history of pottery production in Bovey Tracey

The *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* reported 'Interesting Finds at Bovey Tracey' on 29 March 1934. Excavations on a building site in Fore Street, Bovey Tracey, revealed the remains of a pottery kiln and some semi-glazed vases. The front was smashed during the building work, but the sides and base remained intact. The news article reports an interview with Mr John Joll, aged 96, the oldest resident of the town who had 'a very wonderful memory' and who declared he could remember the site for the previous 92 years and had no knowledge of the kiln's existence. The site owner, Mr Carpenter, declared, 'that definitely proves that my findings are at least a century old.'[5] The kiln was moved to a site owned by Candy Tiles Company at Heathfield and subsequently removed to its present location at the Bovey Tracey Heritage Centre.[6]

[2] The Ball Clay Heritage Society, *The Ball Clays of Devon and Dorset* (Cornish Hillside Publications, 2003).
[3] Ibid, p. 9.
[4] L.T.C. Rolt, *The Potters' Field* (David & Charles, 1974).
[5] *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 29 March 1934.
[6] Bovey Tracey Heritage Centre, The Old Railway Station, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9QZ.

Figure 3: The kiln being lowered into place at Bovey Tracey Heritage Centre in 2007.

Figure 4: Some pieces believed to have been found at the site of the Fore Street kiln in 1934.

The kiln may have been part of a pottery established by 'Mr Hammersley and his sons from Staffordshire' in Bovey Tracey in the middle of the eighteenth century, and there is evidence that it was used for salt-glazed ware. The pottery relics appear to have been sold at auction, and only photographic evidence of these remains. The raw materials were available locally: lignite for fuel and abundant deposits of clay.[7]

Other evidence of early pottery production in Bovey Tracey comes from the reminiscences of William Ellis the Fourth, grandson of the founder of Indeo Pottery. Ellis moved to the USA. in 1849 and published his 'Sketches of Bovey Tracey, Historical and Legendary' when he was 68, in 1883.[8] The articles were reprinted in the *South Devon Weekly Express*. While William Ellis the Fourth may have been prone to 'embellishment' of his history, some facts can be substantiated. William's grandfather, William Ellis the second, was born in Bovey Tracey and he went into partnership with Mr Tuffnell, who owned land and property in the area known as Indeo, and the Indeo Pottery was established. A second site at Bovey Heathfield was developed as a separate

[7] Brian Adams and Anthony Thomas, *A Potwork in Devonshire* (Sayce Publishing, 1996).

[8] William Ellis (1883) *Sketches of Bovey Tracey, Historical and Legendary* (Handbound copy in Bovey Tracey Heritage Centre Archives).

enterprise, later known as 'The Folly Pottery' due to the failure of various speculators. By 1820 there were around 50 potters working at Bovey Heathfield, producing a 'considerable quantity of blue and white earthenware.' Notice of the sale of The Folly Pottery was published in the *Western Time*s on 16 April 1836 and shortly after the Indeo Pottery was also advertised for sale. The advertisement in the *Western Times* stated:

> This pottery may unhesitatingly be designated one of the largest and most complete in the West of England, situated 14 miles from Exeter, and 28 from Plymouth, on the Great Western Road, and possesses local and other advantages which no other ever possessed – Its situation being in the LAND OF CLAY, from which nearly all the potteries in Staffordshire draw their supply and having thereon an inexhaustible COAL MINE, with a railroad from the pit to the kiln's mouth.[9]

The pottery remained for sale until 1842 when it caught the attention of Thomas Wentworth Buller and his brother-in-law, John Divett. Buller and Divett went into partnership and set up a new business on The Folly Pottery site in 1843, trading as the Bovey Tracey Pottery Company. They expanded the site and continued to exploit the local lignite supplies as well as supplementing the fuel with coal brought into Teignmouth, transported along the Stover canal and from there to the pottery.

John Divett died in 1885, leaving the pottery to his daughter Mary and his nephew George Ross Divett, but perhaps without experienced hands at the helm the pottery began to decline. Workers went on strike in 1891 to protest a reduction in their wages. Several hundred local workers and their families were dependent on the pottery and supporting businesses, so it must have been a devastating blow to the town when the pottery continued to struggle and by the beginning of 1894 had been declared bankrupt and was closed. Charles Davy Blake of Newton Abbot, a ball clay supplier, purchased the freehold in 1894.

The new Bovey Pottery Company Limited was incorporated on 22 December 1894, under the directorship of T. B. Johnson of Bristol. Investment in new buildings and designs gave fresh impetus to the business, and by the 1920s the pottery was once more a thriving concern. An increase in continental competition, the general strike and the depression of the 1930s meant the pottery was in gradual decline. Despite a post-war recovery, the pottery continued to struggle and finally ceased production in 1957.

Meanwhile, just a few miles away alongside the Heathfield Railway Station, The Great Western Potteries Brick Tile and Clay Works was founded in the early 1870s by Frank Candy, producing bricks and salt-glazed wares. The business was incorporated to form Candy & Company Limited and expanded rapidly thereafter.

In 1885 the company's clay extractions caused conflict with the Great Western Railway Company, who alleged that the clay pit threatened the stability of the Moretonhampstead branch railway. Ownership of the company transferred to the Fox family in 1887 and remained in their ownership until 1991. With John Limpus as manager, Candy & Company Ltd became a major supplier of ball clay and manufacturer of bricks, drainage pipes and tiles. By the end of the

[9] *Western Times*, 16 April 1836.

nineteenth century, the works 'covered 53 acres and employed 250 hands, the pit was being worked at a depth of 70 feet, the railway siding had accommodation for 40 wagons.'[10]

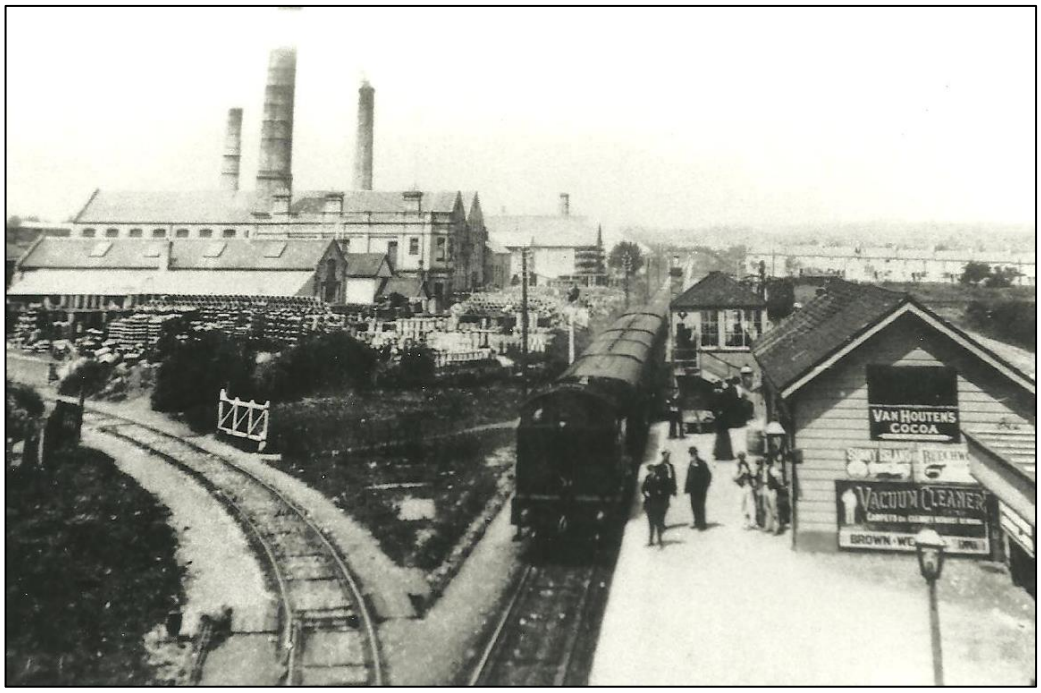

Figure 5: Candy & Company Ltd.[11]

Twentieth-century developments

Candy Art Pottery

Candy & Company Ltd. launched their distinctive range of art pottery with a full-page advertisement in the *Pottery Gazette* in January 1922. An accompanying article reported, 'The new wares are seen to present three main styles of treatment, i.e. plain glazed, mottled and metallic finished.'[12]

Marketed as 'Westcontree Ware', the range was exhibited at the 1922 British Industries Fair. The company's decision to diversify their products in this way has not been documented, but it may reflect national trends in design education. Turner cites an article in the *Pottery Gazette* in 1921, reporting a speech given to the National Pottery Council by Gordon Forsyth, one of the founder members of the Design and Industries Association (DIA).[13] The DIA was established in London in 1915 and sought to promote better understanding between manufacturers, designers, and retailers and to foster 'a more intelligent understanding amongst the public for what is best and soundest in design.'[14] While encouraging sound artistic ideals, it was clear that such diversification was aiming to reach a new market, with 'good honest craftsmanship' in evidence, but which would also provide a range of 'good sellers' in an increasingly competitive economic

[10] Ian Turner, *Candy Art Pottery* (Hillian Press, 2000).
[11] Reproduced courtesy of Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust.
[12] Ian Turner, *Candy Art Pottery* (Hillian Press, 2000).
[13] Ibid.
[14] Oxford Reference, 'Design and Industries Association', www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095712859.

environment. From a business efficiency viewpoint, it also served to fill up empty space in the kilns when firing tiles.

Little is known about the designers and potters of the early Westcontree range. Art Pottery manufacture continued with various phases and developments for the next 30 years, with a break for the duration of the Second World War.

Figure 6: Items of Westcontree Ware from the collection held by Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust.

Sid Dart and Vic Towillis were both expert potters who worked together making Candy pottery until Sid Dart left the company in 1953, when he returned to work at the Watcombe factory, making Torquay Ware.

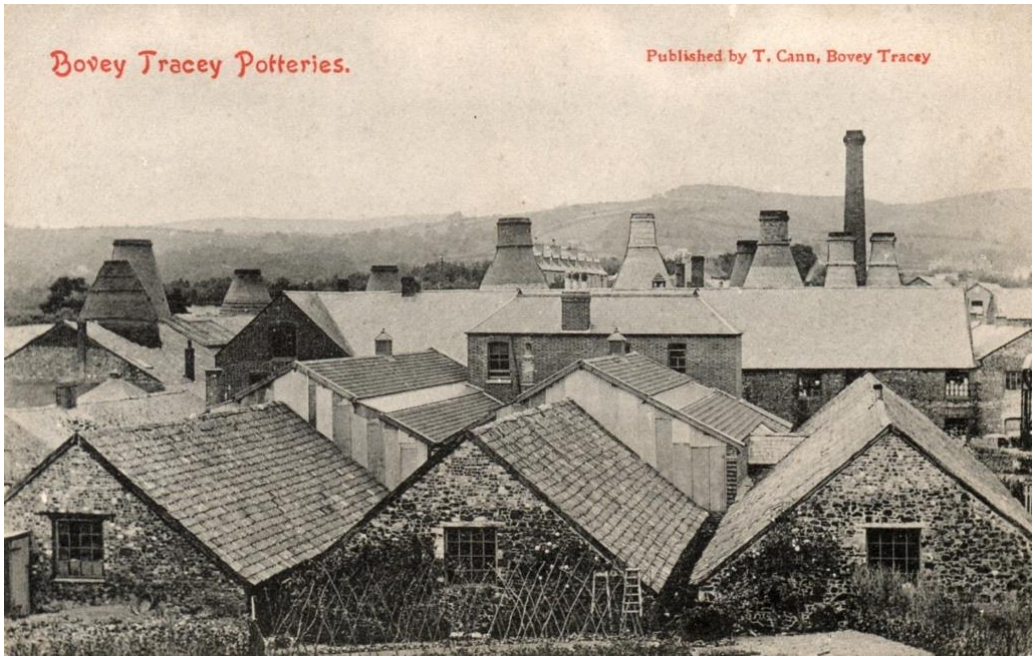

Figure 7: Bovey Pottery Company Limited.[15]

In the early years of the twentieth century, the Bovey Pottery Company Limited benefitted from strong investment in new buildings and equipment as well as new designs, and despite the difficulties caused by the First World War, remained a thriving concern into the 1920s. William Samuel Bond moved to Torquay from Staffordshire to work at the Watcombe Pottery in the 1890s. He married and had three sons: William, Frank and John. The family moved to Bovey Tracey where William was employed by the Bovey Pottery Company until he died of silicosis, aged 54. His sons William and Frank learnt their trade as potters, using the wheel, mould making and decorating. The reminiscences of John's daughter Joyce Harfield (née Bond) were published in the *Torquay Pottery Collectors Magazine* in 1991.[16] She recalled from the late 1920s that work at the pottery would start early, but the workers had two breaks – one for breakfast, the other for lunch – and most went home for their meals. There were night shifts for those attending the kilns. Water was channelled to the pottery from the pond in Pottery Road. Joyce described a hive of industry, with the decorators working in a long row, facing one side of the 'shop'.

> Apprentices would run with long planks, shoulder high, on which were dozens of handles, and then run back with completed wares.
>
> Further down there were the huge bottle kilns where men carried, on their heads, round saggars filled with pots ready for firing. They would mount ladders to enter the kilns

[15] Reproduced courtesy of Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust.
[16] J. Harfield, 'Reminiscences of the Devonshire Potteries', *Torquay Pottery Collectors Magazine* (1991), pp. 146–48.

where everything was stacked beautifully, ranging from large pots at the bottom to small at the top. When ‘stoked up’ the heat from the ovens could be felt from the roadway.

A railway ran behind the pottery buildings, providing easy transport for their china, which would be packed, with straw, in wooden crates.

Figure 8: These photographs were taken at the Bovey Pottery Company in the 1940s, illustrating methods of working and production.[17]

The pottery frequently employed several members of the same family, for example, the 1921 Census returns show that while George Hydon was working as a slaughterman at the local butchers and his wife Bessie was engaged in home duties, three of their seven children living at home were employed by the Bovey Pottery Company Ltd.; Alfred (b.1896) was a kiln fireman,

[17] Reproduced courtesy of Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust.

while Audrey (b.1901) and Ruby (b.1904) were ‘earthenware pottery workers’. Two of the three sons of Thomas and Eliza Brealey were employed at the pottery; Alfred (b.1904) was an assistant saggar maker, while his brother Arthur (b.1904) was employed as a ‘plate maker potters help’.

Figure 9: Albert is pictured here on the left, still employed at the pottery some 20 or more years later.

Cheryl Buckley, in her book *Potters and Paintresses*, has suggested that women made a substantial contribution to the pottery industry, representing half the workforce. Pottery manufacture involved a series of stages, which began with unloading and forming of clay and ended with the packing of the finished items. Women were employed at all stages, working as assistants to the men throwers and turners. Most of this work was unskilled and these jobs were also given to teenage school leavers, such as Arthur Brealey mentioned above. Where women were engaged in more skilled work was in the decorating processes, painting and applying transfers. The craft trade unions, which represented different sectors of the pottery trade, perpetuated the divisions of labour, which benefitted skilled men. Until the First World War and the formation of one union to represent all aspects of the industry, women were virtually absent from the craft unions.

> They [women] were thought to be more dextrous and better able than men to undertake repetitive, detailed work. Combined with this was the notion that women had a natural facility for decorative work […] suited to the design of surface decoration rather than design of pottery shapes.[18]

Unskilled work paid lower wages, and although the First World War saw a rise in women’s wages, they were still only 60 per cent of that paid to men. In 1924, warehousemen were paid on average 45s, whereas warehousewomen were paid 24s.[19]

[18] Cheryl Buckley, *Potters and Paintresses: Women Designers in the Pottery Industry 1870–1955* (The Women’s Press, 1990), p. 22.
[19] Ibid., p. 34.

Devon Tors Art Pottery

Figure 10: Arthur Steer, pictured left.

William and Frank Bond both served in the First World War, and after returning from war, they got together with two other Bovey Pottery employees, Ernest Wyatt and Robert Fry to open their own pottery in 1921. The Devon Tors Art Pottery, housed in wooden huts, was situated on the road to Newton Abbot. In the early days, they continued with their day jobs at the Bovey Pottery and then crossed over the road to work at Devon Tors in their spare time. They made souvenirs and domestic ware, hand thrown on potters' wheels, using red clay. This family business produced a range of items including traditional slip glazed items and mould made wares such as Toby jugs and small animals.

Figure 11: Devon Tors Art Pottery scent bottles and pomanders.

They employed Joseph Nekola who had worked with his father at the Wemyss pottery in Scotland as well as other notable decorators, Arthur Bowden and Sam Shufflebotham. Arthur Steer was an expert thrower, who also taught throwing at evening classes in Exeter. Devon Tors

Art Pottery became known for their colourful Widecombe Fair souvenirs. They produced scent bottles and pomanders, decorated with flowers, which were sold to Aidees of Torquay for their Devon Violets scent.

Joyce Harfield recalled visiting the huts, which were lined with benches, interspersed with potters wheels. Brackets above took the planks which held the unfinished products drying out ready for biscuit firing. Moulds for making Toby jugs and Dartmoor Pixies were stored underneath the benches. Visitors were welcomed during the summer months, when charabancs of holiday makers would arrive several times a week, no doubt leaving with ceramic reminders of their time in Devon. The Bond family ran the pottery until 1968.[20]

The Bovey Tracey Art Pottery

Not far from the Devon Tors Art Pottery was another smaller pottery, the Bovey Tracey Art Pottery, which was established in 1919 as a subsidiary of the Torquay Pottery Company owned by Enoch Staddon. Control was passed to Enoch's son-in-law, Vincent Kane, in 1923, who ran it with his wife Marjorie until it closed in 1946. There would occasionally be an interchange of workers in quieter periods, leading to similar styles of product between these pottery neighbours.[21]

The Devonmoor Art Pottery

A third small pottery concern sprang up in the area in the 1920s. The Liverton Art Pottery was established in Liverton in 1913 but was only active for a year before it closed. The site attracted the interest of Mr Herford Hope – 'a potter of considerable experience'[22] and his wife Jennie, who moved to Liverton from America in 1922. Leslie Manley, then a teenager in a family of potters, met the couple and took a keen interest in their plans. The Hopes formed the Devonmoor Art Pottery and Leslie Manley was one of their first employees; he continued to work for them for more than 30 years. A bottle kiln was transferred to the site from Candy & Co., enabling work to begin again in 1923.

Leslie Manley, born in Liverton in 1908, was a prolific writer in his spare time. He recorded many of his conversations with older residents, taking a particular interest in their recollections of the potteries in Bovey Tracey. From the late 1920s until the 1990s he wrote thousands of words in longhand on any scrap of paper that came to hand, including the insides of cardboard cereal boxes and biscuit packets. Some of his original writings are stored in the archives at Bovey Tracey Heritage Centre and Newton Abbot Museum, where much of his work has been transcribed by volunteers. He contributed greatly to the booklet on *Devonmoor Art Pottery and its Manufacture* by John Hobbs.

Devonmoor is best known for its Toby jugs in different sizes and colours. They made sturdy mugs, Widecombe Fair character jugs and a series of miniature cottages. Jennie Hope was an accomplished decorator, known as a paintress. Over the years, Devonmoor employed many

[20] Virginia Brisco *Devon Tors: A Family Pottery* (Virginia &Bill Brisco, 1998).
[21] Brian Adams, *Bovey Tracey Potteries: Guide and Marks* (House of Marbles, 2005).
[22] John Hobbs, *Devonmoor Art Pottery and its Manufacture* (Torquay Pottery Collectors Society, 2000).

paintresses whose initials were recorded on the base of the wares they decorated. A prolific paintress was Daisy Emmett (DE), who later signed DRH when she married Mr Rees Hill.

Figure 12: Devonmoor Art Pottery Toby jugs: 'Uncle Tom Cobley' pictured left.

An advertisement in the *East Kent Gazette* in 1928 announced that W. J. Parrett Ltd. was now the sole agent for Devonmoor Art Pottery, which was 'made in a large variety of shapes, and has some wonderful colourings'.[23] Toby jugs, Widecombe Fair characters and Devon thatched cottages reached markets well away from Devon. The southwest was coming into its own as a popular holiday destination and Bovey Tracey was a convenient 'gateway' to Dartmoor. The Plymouth Cooperative Fleet advertised charabanc excursion to Bovey Tracey [24]

Southwest newspapers frequently extolled the virtues of Bovey Tracey. In an article entitled 'The West is the Best', the *Western Morning News and Mercury* of June 1927 described the 'holiday joys that Bovey offers' calling the town 'the guardian of the moor's beauty':

> In increasing numbers people are learning to love the moods of Dartmoor, its smiles, and its tears: its fierceness and its tranquility; its companionship and its loneliness. Bovey Tracey is one the towns that are profiting accordingly. The pottery works and agriculture are its only industries, but it is fast making a name for itself in the manufacture of health.[25]

[23] *East Kent Gazette*, 20 October 1928.
[24] *Western Morning News*, 10 July 1928.
[25] *Western Morning News*, 16 June 1927.

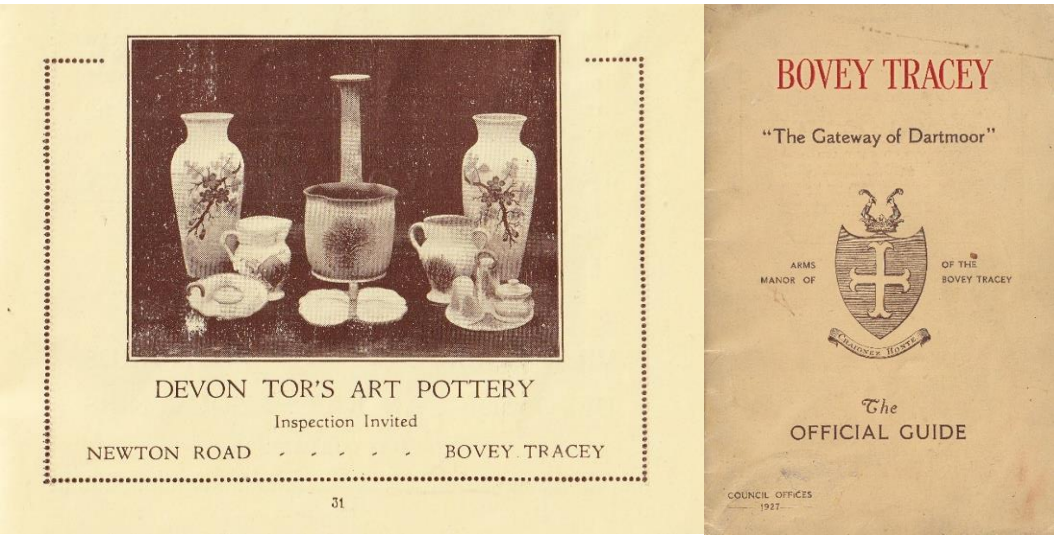

Figure 13: *The Official Guide* to Bovey Tracey, issued in 1927, makes sure to mention the two large pottery concerns in the town as well as carrying an advertisement for Devon Tors.

Figure 14: One of the first Devonmoor Art Pottery Toby Jugs made in 1922. Later designs featured space for the name of a village or town and the pipe was left white.[26]

[26] On loan to Bovey Tracey Heritage Trust from the collection of Mr P. Carrett.

Art pottery versus studio pottery?

There is little doubt that visitors were well served with souvenirs and novelty items produced by these small family concerns throughout the 1920s. The concept of 'art pottery' was not a new one and had served to distinguish utilitarian ceramic items for daily use from 'ornaments' produced for decorative purposes since the nineteenth century. The concept of studio pottery was now emerging as a further distinction, with potters in the southwest playing a significant role in the studio pottery movement.

The studio pottery movement formed part of a revival of interest in craft in the post-war period. In an article entitled 'The Development of Handcraft' in 1927, the *Western Morning News* remarked upon the trend for the creation of articles that might combine utility with artistic aims, for example:

> The blacksmith whose trade has fallen off owing to changes in methods of transport is directing his attention from shoeing horses and repairing farm implements to the production of articles in which beauty is combined with utility.

The article goes on to suggest that:

> Pottery and weaving are also to be numbered among ancient industries which have survived, but they are a far more assured position. Modern processes and commercialism have entrenched upon the field once occupied by the handworker, but have not wholly displaced him. He still manages a market for his products. It interesting to learn that the potteries of Devon have a longer history than any others in England. At Barnstaple the potters' art claims an unbroken tradition of 1,500 years, which takes us back Roman times. […] Then in South Devon we have potteries at Kingsteignton, Bovey Tracey, Watcombe, and Aller Vale, all drawing upon local claybeds.[27]

While effectively dismissing developments in Cornwall, the author does mention that there is at 'St Ives a small industry of an artistic character'. This must surely refer to the studio set up by Bernard Leach in 1920.

The inspiration for studio ceramics in England can be traced to 1920, when Bernard Leach (1887 –1979) set up a pottery in St Ives, Cornwall. Leach had travelled to Japan in 1909 intending to teach printmaking, but he became interested in Japanese pottery and received training under a master potter. Leach developed a different way of looking at ceramic production on his return to Cornwall. Working in his studio at St Ives, Leach and fellow potter Shoji Hamada, stressed the importance of using good materials in the creation of form and function. Their belief in the need for a potter to control the whole process of making a pot was later described in Leach's classic work, *A Potter's Book* (1940).

Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst invited Bernard Leach to visit Dartington in 1927. In its early years, Dartington's interest in art, crafts and designs reflected national debates concerning art

[27] *Western Morning News*, 29 March 1927.

and utility. The Elmhirsts patronised English crafts both for their own daily use and for their decorative arts collection.

> There was considerable support for Bernard Leach, whom Leonard had first met in 1925. In turn he had a pronounced influence on the ceramics collection, and their understanding of the object as an expression of the inner self, a philosophy that they came to apply across the arts.[28]

Leach was invited to establish a pottery at Dartington, which he was reluctant to do. He later recalled,

> Leonard and Dorothy wanted me to uproot from St Ives and settle at Dartington, but I already knew how long it took for a potter's workshop to put down roots and establish itself – also, candidly, I did not want to be advised through Central Office what pots to make for the public.'[29]

Turning down the offer, Leach proposed the appointment of one of his former assistants, Sylvia Fox-Strangways (1890–1975), as artist potter and teacher. The pottery department opened in 1927 under the leadership of Fox-Strangways (known as Jane during her time at Dartington). It was her intention to organise a series of exhibitions of 'Design and Workmanship' to demonstrate the values of art and design in everyday objects. Although a skilled potter, Fox-Strangways had no teaching experience before taking up the post and she left after two years. Her ceramic tiles can be seen around the Dartington Estate. Sylvia's grandmother was Harriet Fox-Strangways, who resided in Fore Street, Bovey Tracey, until her death in 1903.

Bernard's son David Leach set up the Lowerdown Pottery in Bovey Tracey in 1955 and remained there until his death in 2005. Jeremy Leach, the younger son of David, was born in 1941, trained with his father at Lowerdown Pottery, Bovey Tracey, and continues to live and work in the town.

Conclusion

The production of ceramics in the Bovey Tracey area derived from a combination of readily available fuel in the form of lignite and the abundance of ball clay – the result of the Sticklepath-Lustleigh Fault Zone. The two main commercial pottery manufacturers, The Bovey Tracey Pottery Company and Candy & Company Ltd. flourished during the nineteenth century, building on a long history of pottery production and benefiting from the branch railway line, which opened in 1866, providing means to transport coal in and pottery out of the town.

The outbreak of the First World War meant that pottery production struggled with a depleted workforce and only the most resilient pottery concerns survived, using industrial methods of manufacture, which could remain economically viable in difficult times. The tradition of hand-crafted pottery was in jeopardy. The setting up of small family concerns in Bovey Tracey in the

[28] D. Jeremiah, ' Dartington – A Modern Adventure' in Sam Smiles (Ed.) *Going Modern and Being British* (Intellect Book, 1998).
[29] Dartington Trust, 'History of the Studio Pottery Tradition at Dartington', www.dartington.org/about/our-history/studio-pottery-tradition.

1920s not only served a commercial purpose to supply the growing tourist industry with souvenirs and novelty items, but also preserved the notion of the art pottery and coincided with the developing ideas of the studio pottery movement and the resurgence of interest in rural crafts. There is no identifiable link between these small art potteries and the studio pottery movement other than geographical proximity. There was a hand-crafted element to their wares, but they were essentially commercial enterprises.

Although describing the Watcombe Pottery in Torquay, this could equally depict the Devon Tors, the Bovey Tracey Art or the Devonmoor potteries of Bovey Tracey:

> The Watcombe Pottery in Torquay, catered specifically for the tourist trade, establishing a huge range of 'souvenir' pottery, depicting naïve interpretations of the Devon landscape. Typical pieces carry rural scenes of thatched cottages or rhymes and phrases in sgraffito text, composed in phonetic, colloquial Devonian. It was by the promotion of a stereotypical quaint and rustic Devon that such potteries marketed their wares, conjuring up an image of a romantic, lost in time Britain, with an epitomizing sense of pastoral escapism.[30]

A strong defence of art pottery was put forward in *The Pottery Gazette and Glass Trade Review* of April 1925. The author, in giving a glowing review of Herford Hope's Devonmoor Art Pottery, launched a spirited attack on 'arty' pottery. The author praised:

> […] wares of attractive characteristics capable of appealing to the aesthetic impulses of all classes. Although these productions are classed as artware, may we say that they are not of that 'arty' pottery, in which art is the all dominant characteristic and technique secondary, if not entirely subjugated? […] It is not this type of pottery which Mr Hope produces […] for the wares emanating therefrom are both technically and artistically good. They are commercial pottery first of all, and art pottery incidentally.[~~7~~31]

~~26.~~
~~27.~~

~~Viv Styles 2024~~

[30] D. Fitch, The Ceramic Heritage of Devon in Sam Smiles (Ed.) *Going Modern and Being British* (Intellect Book, 1998).
[31] John Hobbs, *Devonmoor Art Pottery and its Manufacture* (Torquay Pottery Collectors Society, 2000).