



## *GlassCuts*

The informal email bulletin of the British Glass Foundation

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### Special 'Pull Out and Keep' Edition

A single-topic extravaganza featuring  
The Portland Vase

Hallo, and welcome to what is now officially recognized as the nation's hottest, most popular fave-rave glass fanzine from the *Wonderful World of Glass*<sup>©GF</sup> (Source: Editor. Would I lie to you?)

First, a message from our *We don't just throw these things together, y'know* Department ...

Here, in the shimmering opulence of the Editorial Suite at *GlassCuts Towers*, our aim is always that you should be the first to know. We described *GC33* as 'bursting at the seams with tales of aspiration, attainment and sheer philanthropic goodwill' that so typifies the Stourbridge Glass industry. Further back in *GC24*, we dropped the bombshell news that Ian Dury, Project Coordinator for the 210 Portland Vase Project, intended to present the artifacts from the project on permanent loan to the proposed new glass museum.

And now, in the light of latest developments hot off the press, we are delighted to combine these elements and bring you fully up to date by devoting this entire issue of *GlassCuts* to a collation of what possibly amounts to the most memorable series of events in the area since the late Pope John Paul famously delivered his Christmas Mass at Wordsley Community Centre. (Research Dept: you may want to check that one out please, we don't want to look like idiots - Ed.)

### One Million Years BC - the story so far



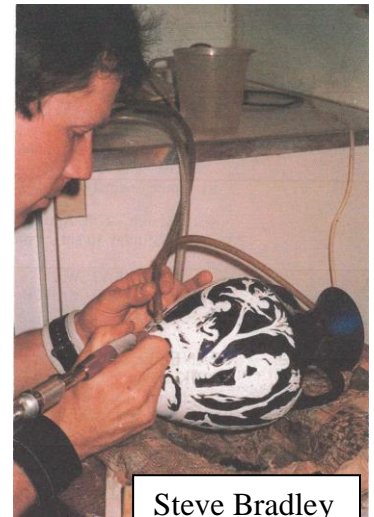
Anyone who doesn't know that the Portland Vase is Roman, lies in the British Museum and is probably one of the most enigmatic pieces of cameo glass the world has ever seen, write me a hundred lines of 'I must get round the Glass Museums more' and have it on my desk by the end of this *GlassCuts*.

Those of you slightly more in tune with local glass history will know that the vase was spectacularly recreated not once, but twice, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, by Stourbridge craftsmen. There is a connection here for our inland waterways fans; they were made within yards of each other, on opposite sides of the road that goes over the Stourbridge Canal Main Line at Wordsley.

Both the Richardson-Locke attempt (which was uncompleted; the figures weren't finished) and the Northwood-Pargeter effort and now housed in the Corning Museum of Glass, Corning, NY, where, you will recall also from *GC33*, Richard Golding is delivering his Masterclasses at the end of this month. Not wishing to put ideas into your head, Richard, but if you have got a jacket with large pockets ....

Anyway, back to the tale.

Serious students of the vase will also be aware of a couple of further recreations in the 20th Century, notably the amphora interpretation of 1990 by Steve Bradley, a man with local connections now based in Devon, who completed the entire process himself, from blowing the blank to effecting the decoration and making a stand. There is also the 1987 undertaking by Josef Welzel, who reproduced an amphora with lid, in deference to scratching on the original that suggests it may have been capped.



Steve Bradley

Which brings our yarn into the year 2011 and a memorable summer's morn when Yours Truly was summoned to a quiet meeting up the corner of the café in the Ruskin Glass Centre, Amblecote. Present were Ian Dury, of Stourbridge Glass Engravers, and Centre Manager Leigh White. Ian's announcement, delivered in his typically understated manner, was, over the forthcoming months, destined to consume a large part of not only my life, but numerous others drawn into the plot: *'We intend to recreate the Portland Vase for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'*.



Ian Dury

Ian's intention was to demonstrate that Stourbridge still has the skills within its ranks, and to lay to rest the myth that the Stourbridge Glass industry is dead. Which, most assuredly, it is not. This *per se* is a laudable aim; it is the manner in which he chose to go about it that will, we believe, elevate his entry in the text books to the ranks of the extraordinary.

The rest is, as they say, history - it will eventually become the stuff of legend - as, supported by numerous artisans and back-

room enthusiasts, all sharing the same passion, the aspirations of 2011 became the realities of 2012 when, on that incredible day in September, glassblower Richard Golding blew the blanks upon which Terri-Louise Colledge was then let loose to weave her magic.

The 'hot' team produced a total four flat-bottomed vases, one amphora and an Auldjo Jug, this last piece being a possible precursor to the original Portland Vase. Of these, one flat-bottomed vase, the amphora, and the Auldjo jug were engraved, together with a replica base disc. A 'spoilt' vase was to be carved with Greco-Roman sporting figures, in recognition of 2012 being London Olympics year.



Ian Dury, Richard Golding,  
Graham Fisher MBE and Terri-Louise Colledge.  
Photograph: Graham Dale Photography



The Auldjo Jug was first to be fully completed, quickly followed by the flat-bottomed Portland Vase. Though Terri had welcomed all-comers to her studio at Ruskin to see carving in progress, they were 'officially' displayed to the public at *From Rome to Stourbridge*, a gala afternoon held at Hagley Hall on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012 that featured addresses by Dr. Paul Roberts of the British Museum, and locally-based glass expert Charles Hajdamach.

Further appearances included the 2012 International Festival of Glass (IFoG), Kinver Fayre and numerous other events since. It is fair to say that the vase and jug have caused something of a sensation wherever they have touched down.



*Former Mayor and Mayoress of Dudley, Councillor Melvyn Mottram and Michelle Mottram with Ian Dury, Richard Golding, Graham Fisher MBE, Dr Paul Roberts, the late David Whitehouse and Terri-Louise Colledge. Hagley Hall 22 August 2012*



*Charles Hajdamach and Meriel Harris  
Hagley Hall, 22 August 2012*

*Photographs by Graham Dale Photography*



The story of this momentous achievement is recorded in the official biography *The 2012 Portland Vase Project; Recreation of a Masterpiece*. I declare an interest here, since I am the author, but that's hardly the point. Copies are available from various outlets, including, of course, British Glass Foundation, Stourbridge Glass Engravers and Ruskin Glass Centre.



*Terri-Louise Colledge with the current Mayor and Mayoress of Dudley Councillor Alan Finch and Heather Finch  
Photograph by Ian Dury*

But there was still work to be done.

### ***Bringing it all bang up to date***



*Photograph by Mike Perkins, Amblecote History Society*

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013 marks two years to the day since, as Ian Dury lovingly puts it, his 'little babies' were born. In August 2013, almost exactly a year since the official launch of the Portland Vase and the Auldjo Jug, Ian informed us that Terri had finished the last vestiges of carving on the final piece in the jigsaw, the amphora Portland Vase.

All is now complete, and we are proud to have been given the opportunity to be the first to disseminate the news. It is also worth recording for posterity that, assuming the original Portland Vase was engraved by a man (a wholly reasonable assumption), and knowing the provenance of all the others, this represents the first time in history that a Portland Vase of any description has been fashioned by female hands.

The fact that this entire collection was fashioned by the same hands, namely Terri's, gives an extra *frisson* to a project that is highly unlikely to ever be replicated.



*Photographs by Ian Dury*

What is more, let us all shout it again from the rooftops, **ALL OF THIS HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE GLASS QUARTER**, down here in l'il old Stourbridge.

A dead industry, eh? If I ever hear that expression again, I promise I will .... *(at this point the Editor can be seen making signs of slow manual strangulation)*

This means that Ian's magnanimity in offering the pieces on permanent loan to the proposed new glass museum, under the auspices of the British Glass Foundation, will afford visitors the opportunity to see the entire completed collection under one roof. In addition to associated trial items, documentation, images and suchlike, the compendium amounts to a flat-bottomed Portland Vase and its base plaque, the amphora Portland Vase with stand, the Auldjo Jug and the Olympic Vase. The last piece has no historical precedent; it is simply a stunning exposition of commemorative glass artistry and I have known entire exhibitions to be set up just for the one item of this calibre.



*Graham Knowles  
Chairman, British Glass Foundation*

Maybe we at *GlassCuts Towers* are a bit biased, and do write in to correct us if we are mistaken, but we are not aware of too many other facilities that can lay claim to anything like such an assemblage. *(Memo to Research Dept: I think you will find the answer to that one is 'zero' - Ed)*

Ian Dury's motivation for his largesse is to promote the rich history of Stourbridge's glass past in order to help advance its future. And, we believe, there can be no finer exemplar of that than the 2012 Portland Vase.

Here in Stourbridge, we are so fortunate to have people like Ian and his colleagues, together with an appreciative audience for one of the finest collections of glass in the world, plus a lorry-load of hugely talented folk ever-eager to add to it. The only missing ingredient is a suitable home for them all - a new Museum of Glass.

With your support, we can do it.



*Artists Impression of new Museum of Glass at White House Cone Site, Wordsley*

*Thanks, everyone*

The full list of participants in **The 2012 Portland Vase Project** can be found in the official biography, mentioned above. The British Glass Foundation considers itself honoured to be associated with this venture, and wishes to formally congratulate all who have contributed to what will be seen in years to come as a truly historic achievement to match - perhaps, even, to surpass - any similar endeavour of the past. But, there are, sadly, a couple of friends who are not able to share this moment with us.



Cameraman **Andy Hayes**, who was recording the project for DVD, was, together with his father, tragically killed in an air incident shortly before the official launch of the vase at Hagley. His affable nature meant that he was a joy to work with; his contribution was considerable, and a tribute was included in the biography prior to publication.

**David Whitehouse**, a world authority on the Portland Vase and a supporter of the project who also kindly contributed a Foreword, was diagnosed with cancer shortly after returning the USA after IFoG. Following a brief but brave battle, he died in early 2013. Many fulsome obituaries ensued, but the most germane in this context is the one issued by his beloved Corning Museum of Glass at [www.cmog.org](http://www.cmog.org)



On behalf of the BGF, the *GlassCuts* team would like to dedicate this *Special Edition GC34* to their enduring memory.

**Toodle-pip for now**



So, there you have it; a pull-out-and-keep souvenir potted chronicle of **The 2012 Portland Vase Project**, from start to finish. And, believe me; in the not too distant future, when contemporary events have ripened to become the stuff of historical record, there will be those of us who will be proud beyond our station to look back and say '*I was there*'.

Normal *GlassCuts* service will be resumed shortly. In the meantime, Keep it Portland Vase.

**Graham Fisher**  
Press & Publicity,  
pp British Glass Foundation  
[www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk](http://www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk)



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#### **Disclaimers 'n stuff**

You know the score by now about 'whilst every effort is made...blah...no responsibility...etc. (*usual caveats apply*)'. This is a special moment for Stourbridge Glass, so, just for once, gimme a break, eh? Cheers.