

FAIRY LAMP CLUB NEWSLETTER
ISSUE XXXIII
NOVEMBER 2004

TAYLOR TUNNICLIFFE & COMPANY
by Jim

Very little is known about the history of the Taylor Tunncliffe & Company during the late 1880's - 1890's. It was during this period that they were commissioned by Samuel Clarke to make custom designed pottery bases for his fairy lamps.

Samuel Clarke licensed the Taylor Tunncliffe & Company to manufacture pottery bases for his fairy lamps. These bases, unlike some other bases used for fairy lamps, were specifically designed for fairy lamps and bore the Clarke name along with the Taylor Tunncliffe trademark.

It is important to understand that there is no evidence that the Taylor Tunncliffe & Company manufactured any fairy lamp shades. They manufactured only the bases to support the shades. The pottery bases were made in two sizes, Fairy and Pyramid. There is no evidence that they made any Wee-size bases. Without exception, the known bases bear the Clarke name and almost all bear the Taylor Tunncliffe trademark and associated model number. A few bases bear a British registered design number or patent number. The registered designs, however, were recorded by Clarke, not by Taylor Tunncliffe & Co.

At least six different Taylor Tunncliffe trademarks have been found on their fairy lamp bases. Two configurations are the same but printed in two colors, black and blue. In addition, anomalies have been discovered that include one with the word "PATENT" scratched out, and one with a slightly different crown design. In some cases, the

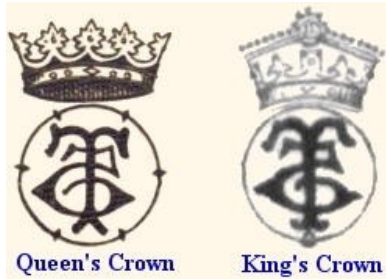
same model of fairy lamp base has been found with different Taylor Tunncliffe trademarks. While the documentation of the various trademarks is interesting, the exact time period each trademark design was used or other significance remains a mystery.



The most common, shown on the right, is printed in blue and contains the initials "TTC" within a circle under a crown. A similar style of trademark is identified in *Koala's New Dictionary of Marks - Pottery and Porcelain, 1850 to Present* as:



The Koval example of the trademark, however, is significantly different than what is found on most fairy lamp bases. The crown shown in the trademark, known as the "Queen's Crown," is a more common Taylor Tunncliffe trademark found on other pottery products. This version of the trademark, however, is rarely found on fairy lamp bases. The crown illustrated on the Taylor Tunncliffe fairy lamp bases is a rare version known as the "King's Crown" and includes a dentil design above the crown.



The other Taylor Tunncliffe trademarks employ the word "PATENT" and some include the letter "S" below the trademark. Certainly, these modifications to the trademark have some significance but only more detailed documentation from the company archives will shed any light on it.

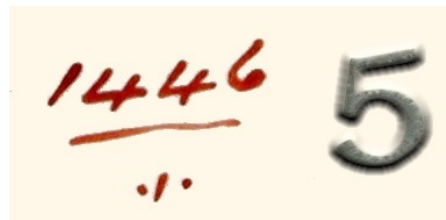
With few exceptions, the Taylor Tunncliffe trademark is stamped in blue ink on fairy lamp bases. There are, however, some fairy lamp bases (without model numbers) with the trademark stamped in black ink. Club member, Louis, reports: "When the company was reformed under the name 'Taylor Tunncliff (Eastwood) Ltd.'; in 1901 they continued the series of pattern numbers, but with black back stamps. While the exact date of the color change is unknown, the black color may have been out of respect for Queen Victoria who passed away January 22nd, 1901 at the age of 81. This practice continued until World War I when operations ended."



Almost all of the Taylor Tunncliffe fairy lamp bases bear a hand-written design

number. It is located somewhere on the bottom of the pottery base and not necessarily near the Taylor Tunncliffe trademark as shown above. The number is usually written in a reddish color and may include the suffix "A" signifying a pyramid-size. The "A" suffix, however, is not always present on some pyramid bases. Clarke, on the other hand, used "1/2" or ".5" to signify a pyramid size in his model numbers. The Taylor Tunncliffe model number appears to be associated with the decoration and not the shape of the base. There appears to be no correlation between Taylor Tunncliffe's model numbers and Clarke's model numbers.

A few Taylor Tunncliffe fairy lamp bases also include what I consider "maker's marks." They may be a simple line with a series of dots associated with the hand-written model number and a number (most often a "5") or other unidentified symbol pressed into the clay.



While there is no real documentation as to what these marks are, I consider them to be potters marks and decorators marks.

Many documented Taylor Tunncliffe bases were produced in both "fairy" and "pyramid" sizes. The designs were similar in each size but the decoration and "hand-tooled" features were slightly different to accommodate the change in scale.



These examples are Taylor Tunnicliffe model numbers 1443A (pyramid-size) and 1443 (fairy-size). They are illustrated true to scale in order to appreciate the difference in size. The actual difference in size will vary somewhat depending on the style of the base. The decoration, while similar, is quite different to accommodate the scale.



In addition, the potter has modified the rim of the base slightly — perhaps intentionally or perhaps simply a use of "artistic license." I suspect nothing was left to the whim of the potter and the change in design is intentional. It is also interesting to note that the design called for both pressed and hand-tooled shapes to be joined together to form the base. Clearly, the production of this pottery ware was no trivial process and involved several artisans and craftsmen.

All known Taylor Tunnicliffe pottery fairy lamp bases are identified as being for use with Clarke's fairy lamps. These two examples show how the pyramid and fairy sizes are marked. It is also interesting to note that the pottery base includes the ridges in the lamp cup consistent with Clarke's patented design, a design he fiercely protected.

As with so many other examples of Clarke's fairy lamps, those bases manufactured by Taylor Tunnicliffe were documented in color advertisements. The example below is from a supplement to the *Pottery Gazette*, August 1888. It is characteristic of Clarke's

marketing skills while promoting his new line of fairy lamps. It is interesting to note that Clarke gave no credit to those who manufactured his products. In this case, neither Thomas Webb nor Taylor Tunnicliffe received any credit for their fine work.



While many of the advertisements of Taylor Tunnicliffe bases show Burmese shades, it is not necessary that a Burmese shade be included with the base to be complete. As with so many of Clarke's designs, it was the decision of the final consumer to determine which shade to purchase with the base and "mix and match" was a common practice — as it is today.

This article is a brief excerpt from the Taylor Tunnicliffe and Co. on-line database. The remaining portions of this article and complete documentation of all known Taylor Tunnicliffe & Co. fairy lamp bases can be found on the Fairy Lamp Club's homepage.

FAIRY LAMP CLUB NEWSLETTER
ISSUE XXXVIII
FEBRUARY 2006

TUNNICLIFFE OR TUNNICLIFF? by Jim with contributions from Louis

Reference materials of all types are an invaluable resource for the avid fairy lamp collector. They provide information that enhances our collections and certainly contributes significantly to our appreciation of their long and colorful heritage.

The most common references for many of us are the material published by well known authors such as Tibbetts, MacSwiggan, Anthony, Godden, and, of course, Ruf. Without their dedicated research, we would not be privileged to have the wealth of information they collected over many decades.

Published materials, however, represent information known by the author at the time. It would not be reasonable to expect the information to be complete or, in some cases, even accurate. Such is the case with the spelling of the surname name "Tunnickliff."

Very little is known about the history of the Taylor Tunnickliff & Company¹ during the late 1880's - 1890's. It was during this period that they were commissioned by Samuel Clarke to make custom designed pottery bases for his fairy lamps.



These two examples are Taylor Tunnickliff model numbers 1443A (pyramid-size) and 1443 (fairy-size). The pyramid-size is illustrated in R-505 and is but one of many documented in *Fairy Lamps-Elegance in Candle Lighting* by Ruf and on our Club's web site.

Samuel Clarke licensed the Taylor Tunnickliff & Company to manufacture pottery bases for his fairy lamps. These bases, unlike some other bases used for fairy lamps, were specifically designed for fairy lamps and bore the Clarke name along with the Taylor Tunnickliff trademark. In addition, almost all the fairy lamp bases had Taylor Tunnickliff as well as Clarke model numbers assigned to them. The examples illustrated are Clarke models 245 (fairy-size) and 245.5 (pyramid-size).

The purpose of this article, however, is not to document the wares of Taylor Tunnickliff, but to set the record straight on the correct spelling of the surname "Tunnickliff."

With the assistance and many contributions from Louis, we have ample and convincing evidence that the correct spelling is "Tunnickliff" and not "Tunnickliffe" as documented in several published references

¹ Thomas Taylor and William Tunnickliff

including *Fairy Lamps-Elegance in Candle Lighting* by Ruf, *Encyclopaedia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks*" by Geoffrey Godden², and *Kovels' New Dictionary of Marks* by Ralph and Terry Kovel. (I suspect there are many other publications with an incorrect spelling as well.) The following are several bits of information that support this conclusion.

First, this company's description from the Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce:

*TAYLOR TUNNICLIFF & CO. LTD. This firm, which has achieved world fame in the manufacture of high-grade ceramics for the electrical industry was founded in the year 1867 by Thomas Taylor and William Tunnicliff for the purpose of making specialized pottery articles.*³

This brief company record was the first clue that the surname "Tunnicliff" was spelled without the "e". There is, however, much more convincing evidence including a portion of the UK Registered Design 58461 for a biscuit jar showing the company name Taylor Tunnicliff & Co.



This patent application clearly shows the correct spelling "Tunnicliff." It is also very interesting to note that the company name is "Taylor Tunnicliff" and not "Taylor and Tunnicliff."

In addition, there are contemporary advertisements (1950s) that show the proper name as Taylor Tunnicliff & Co. These advertisements are documented on our website in the section, "Manufacturers of Samuel Clarke's Fairy Lamps."

While the evidence is certainly convincing, the coup de grâce was found on this Taylor Tunnicliff match holder.

² It was this reference, according to Bob and Pat Ruf, that was adopted in the preparation of their book, *Fairy Lamps-Elegance in Candle Lighting*

³ *Prestige and Progress - A Survey of Industrial North Staffordshire*. 1955 publication of North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce - page 77 www.thepotteries.org/brochurelp77.htm



however, I am sure he would be pleased that we have finally "got it right."

The match holder was designed to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1837-1897). The front is decorated with a portrait of Queen Victoria and the initials "V R."⁴ The back of the match holder is inscribed "Henry Palmer from Wm. T – 1897." It is possible that "Wm. T." is William Tunncliff? The most important information, however, is found on the bottom of the match holder.



In addition to the Taylor Tunncliff trademark, there is a date stamp. It reads: "Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Major Tunncliff, Hanley, June 22, 1897."⁵

This is the only example of Victorian era pottery that I have seen that shows the correct spelling of the surname "Tunncliff." It is what I would consider the "smoking gun" of the proper spelling.

So, not to belabor the issue further, I think it is safe to assume that this seemingly unimportant issue is put to rest. To William,

⁴ Latin: Victoria Regina (Queen Victoria)

⁵ Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was marked by many celebrations, including on 22 June 1897, a procession to St. Paul's Cathedral, where a short service of thanksgiving was held outside the building, as the Queen was too feeble to manage the steps.