



GlassCuts

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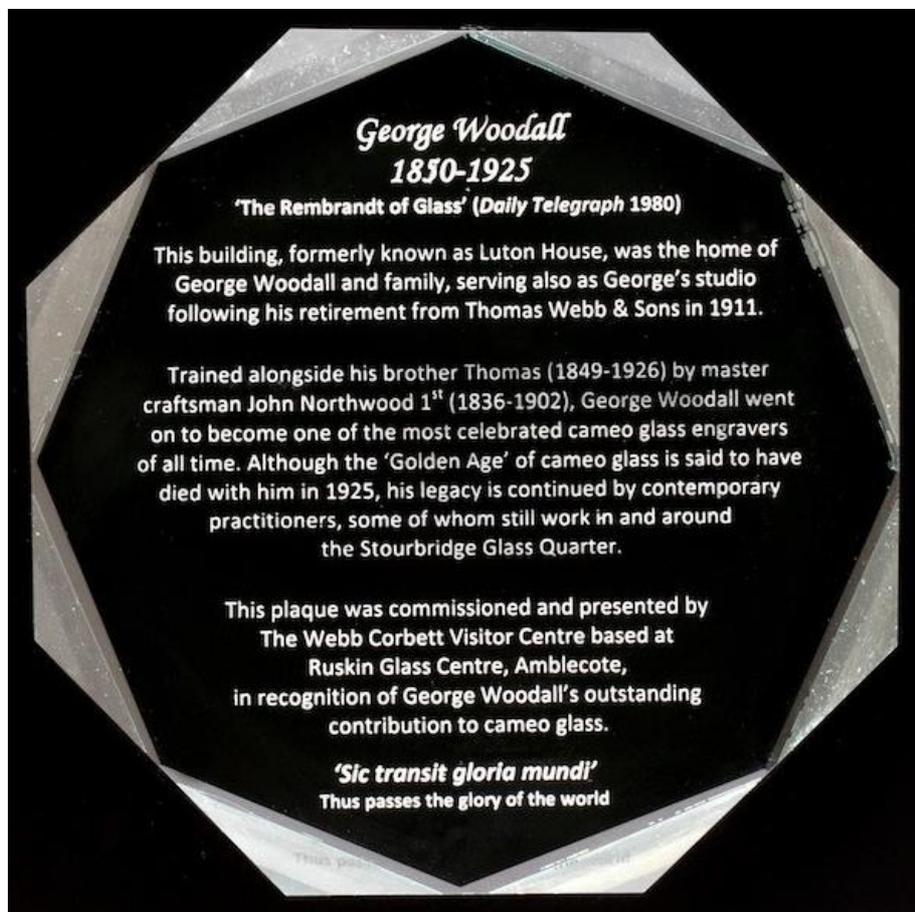
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Special 'Pull Out and Keep' Supplement to GlassCuts 41

Featuring the Woodall Plaque, 'In Our Time' and the final wrapping up of the
2012 Portland Vase Project

A bit of a busy day

Phew! Where to start? Thursday 12th December 2013 saw, not for the first time, the coming together of several events in the *Wonderful World of Glass*^{©GF} that were each memorable in themselves but which, collectively, merit recording for the archives; to wit, the unveiling of a rather distinctive plaque, the launch of a new book promoting the industry and the formal drawing to a conclusion of the 2012 Portland Vase Project.



And so, in this keepsake *special supplement to GlassCuts 41*, we are pleased to record for posterity a chronological account of what turned out to be, to say the least, a bit of a busy - and decidedly memorable - day.



The morning

Due recognition for a giant in his field

It all cracked off in earnest with a meeting of the great and the good at the **Thai Dusit** restaurant in Market Street, Kingswinford. This is the former home of George Woodall (*arguably the greatest cameo engraver of the 19th Century, do wake up at the back - Ed*) and the occasion was the culmination of many months' work - mostly by Ian Dury of Stourbridge Glass Engravers but supported by Yours Truly and the BGF - to install a commemorative plaque.

This was duly done, and, with Ian affording me the considerable honour of officially unveiling it, the near-iconic building has had its historical status fittingly recognized. Dare one say that it nowadays also happens to be a mighty fine restaurant too, and Our Host **Mr Guy Chanukal** did us proud in his celebratory Thai buffet, a hearty repast that was enjoyed by assembled guests including Patrick Harley (Group Leader, Conservative Group DMBC); Natalie Neale (Candidate Councillor, Kingswinford North and Wall Heath); Ian Dury (Stourbridge Glass Engravers and Project Coordinator); John Workman (Black Country Bugle) Chris Smith (Village Voice) and Mike Perkins (Amblecote History Society).



Thanks, everyone; a job well done. It's early days yet, but this just may be the catalyst for a series of such plaques to commemorate the stars and their haunts that are the bedrock of our unique glassmaking history. That's for another day, but, for now, the Thai Dusit plaque will always be *Numero Uno*, a suitable accolade for one of our greatest glass-forebears.



The afternoon

The view from The 'Bridge is lovely



Another one of my catchphrases from my halcyon days on the Breakfast Show; over the past few years, 102.5 the 'Bridge has established itself as a beacon of community engagement via its cultured debate and reasoned broadcasting.

Until broadcaster Mark Williams and I get together, that is, when it all seems to unravel in a tangled barb of mirth and irreverence. Great stuff, great entertainment and I was undeniably very happy to be back on air chatting affably with 'Mr Tea and Hob Nobs' himself as the conversation ranged in desultory good humour from the causes in the change of the obliquity of the ecliptic to the price of rice pudding.

In the occasional moments of higher seriousness, we discussed the events of the day in some depth and I am most grateful to Mark for extending me the courtesy, and the airtime, to promote the world of glass and beyond.



Details of *The Mark Williams Afternoon Show* can be found by following the links at www.thebridgeradio.net where you can also click on 'listen live' to access its output from anywhere in the world. Or, if you are in the area, set the cat's whisker to 102.5FM on your crystal set. And you're really showing your age if you know what that means. Thanks, Mark.

The evening

Wrapping it all up neatly

Photography by Phil Riley

In the last edition of your fave-rave glass fanzine I mentioned the launch of my latest book *In Our Time* at the Webb Corbett Visitor Centre on Thursday 12th December. My sincere appreciation to all of you who turned up for what proved to be a rather splendid evening and my tacit apologies for simultaneously springing the *Postscript* on you unannounced. As explained on the night, we weren't sure if this would be back from the printers in time, so couldn't declare it beforehand. However, with a few shoves in the right places and the calling in of one or two favours, I was really pleased that we were able to wrap the whole thing up in one go. For those of you who couldn't make it, allow me join up the dots.



In Our Time is a commemorative work focusing on *GlassCuts 34*, and the 2012 Portland Vase 'special pull out and keep' edition. The success of *GC34* took us all a bit by surprise to say the least, so we decided to maintain the momentum by way of a celebratory publication bringing together the vase, the Stourbridge Glass industry and the BGF. Written and produced *pro bono*, any monies raised from this will go to BGF coffers.

Now, this is entirely separate and distinct from my *The 2012 Portland Vase Project; Recreation of a Masterpiece* (available from various outlets including Amazon, BGF sales or sparrowpublishing@mac.com) which is the officially authorized account of the venture from start to finish. Hailed as 'an astonishing work of literary genius from a true giant in his field' (but, unfortunately, only by me and my mom) this was released at the same time that the vase was first shown publicly back in late 2012 with turnover from the event (and that from sales

at the International Festival of Glass a few days later) being donated to BGF.

In order to launch the book simultaneously with the unveiling of the vase, the vagaries of deadlines meant that the book had to be with the printers several weeks beforehand. Which in turn meant that certain assumptions had to be made, and some ends left untied.

For example, we could promote the proposed Gala Afternoon at Hagley Hall, but were obviously unable to record just how well it actually went.

Similarly, we knew one blank was destined to become the Olympic Vase, but couldn't show it when it had yet to be completed. As for the spectacular transatlantic link-up during the splendid International Festival of Glass IFoG, itself fated to become remembered as one of the best to date; well, all that was still to take place. You get the idea.



Two years down the line, and the 2012 Portland Vase Project has now gone from a concept in the head of Project Coordinator Ian Dury, through to the reality of blowing, engraving and completion; the artifacts have been documented, photographed and shown widely to the public before then being magnanimously loaned to the BGF as the centerpiece for the proposed new museum. Though the project will continue to be celebrated for years to come before ultimately settling into its rightful niche in folklore, this phase of its journey has now come neatly to a natural conclusion. We now move into the phase of securing its provenance.

And so, following discussions with Ian, it was felt that this was an appropriate time to conclude the story so far by way of a *Postscript* to the original book. Its opportune return meant we could launch this alongside *In Our Time*, thereby, as the heading above suggests, 'wrapping it all up neatly'. (*Don't overdo the smartypants stuff - Ed*)

The *Postscript* is neither an *addendum* nor *erratum*, but more a tidying up and clarification. It has been funded by Sparrow Publishing from sales of the *PV Project* book and will henceforth be included in all future sales free of charge.

Similarly, if any of you out there have a copy of *The 2012 Portland Vase Project; Replication of a Masterpiece* and would like to bring it bang up to date with the *Postscript*, then contact us at BGF bgf@britishglassfoundation.org.uk or Sparrow Publishing sparrowpublishing@mac.com and we will be pleased to supply you with a copy, again free of charge other than a modest contribution towards p&p if you wish to do it by post.

There were, of course, the obligatory speeches and presentations, and in a flash of brilliance that I think surprised even him, Ian decided that he wanted to emphasize the cooperative nature of the project, which had been more of a marathon than a sprint. So, in introducing all of the team to the audience individually, he invited them to stand behind him; by the time he had finished, they were assembled as a group. A ribbon was then tied, such that when I declared the project to be officially completed and broke the tape, the participants returned to their seats by crossing a symbolic finishing line. Clever stuff, which should help cement the notion in people's minds that this was the prerogative of no one individual, but was very much a team relay right from the start.



For the record, my own contribution was to salute the achievements of the 2012 Portland Vase Team - formally thanking Ian for donating it on permanent loan for the proposed new museum - and to emphasize how the talents of today, borne from the skills of yesterday, will provide the inspiration for glassmakers of the future.

I concluded by suggesting how events would inevitably return full circle inasmuch that our contemporary heroes will, in a century's time, be remembered by our descendants in the same way that we had earlier that very day recognized George Woodall. Linking today with yesterday and tomorrow - it is difficult to get much more comprehensively inclusive than that, and all via the medium of glass. Blimey, was I on form with that one or what; honestly, it would have brought tears to a glass eye.



And that's about it from the 2012 Portland Vase Project for now. On behalf of BGF, thanks to everyone who has supported, sponsored or assisted the venture in whatever capacity. My personal acknowledgements go to Ian Dury and his team for taking me to their hearts so graciously and affording me the undeniable privilege of being 'the man with the pen' - it has been an unforgettable ride.



My final thoughts are guided by the words of Dr Samuel Johnson, who notably observed: *'If a man does not make new acquaintances as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, sir, should keep his friendship in a constant repair.'* May the friendships forged through this quite extraordinary journey enjoy the constancy of such repair, for here is indeed an assemblage of talents that is not likely to be seen again.

Extraordinary; truly extraordinary.

Graham Fisher
Press & Publicity,
pp British Glass Foundation
www.britishglassfoundation.org.uk



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Disclaimers 'n stuff

As per *GC41*, usual caveats apply etc etc. But I'm struggling to see anything here that could possibly upset anybody; this is all me own werk,