THE JOHN SCOTT COLLECTION

JAMES POWELL & SONS
WHITEFRIARS GLASS 1860–1960

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I have always admired artist’s use of history as inspiration. Harry Powell was highly inspired by historic glass, ‘borrowing’ from Roman glass flat cutting in the round, ovalls, hexagons, etc. The effect is magic, sparkling and bright (I am against William Morris who derided the ‘cutting’ of glass). I have become entranced at the sight of a bowl with perhaps twelve rows of flat cut ‘ovals’. To do this one must hold the glass directly on the grinding wheel! One slip and it’s ruined. I do not believe people appreciate this magical operation. I feel an enormous urge to explain and honour the men who achieved these miraculous feats of wizardry for the delight of all.

A sad word on the demise of a great firm: after the war Powells lost their way. They were directed by William Wilson and Geoffrey Baxter, the former would take commemorative goblets home, of the same shape as the eighteenth-century examples, and wheel engrave the commemorative Royal Weddings and other Regal events, of which there are a number here (cats 75–81). Post war, stave, tall, and sexy Scandinavian clear glass was all the rage but Whitefriars trod a different path. However now their eccentric ’Drunken Bricklayers’ sell for £10,000 – it has become the new ‘historical glass’? C’est la vie.

I love intricate engraving. Almost above all I desire to extol and applaud the glass workers. The ‘Roman’ flat cutting and engraving is a wonder of the world. The designs of tableware by Harry Powell and others leave me short of vocabulary to express the regal, but plain, dignity that the firm consistently produced. I have found much of Powell Glass is for the dining table and thus the drinking glasses are of amazing lightness and beauty. The eye is ever delighted.

In my quest for fine engraving on Powell glass, I wish particularly to express my eternal thanks to Chris Morley and Brian Cargin. They travel widely and happily – our tastes often coincide. Powell glass or Christopher Dresser, almost everything in this field is their speciality. May I stress the joy of camaraderie that you can get as a collector. Art and antique dealers are a jolly lot and they love to talk. They seek to sell and you to buy. The right pairing should benefit both parties!

As I am now selling my whole collection, I claim the right to allow a few autobiographical points to enrich the slightly dry historical references. Firstly, one needs to find and make good friends with the best dealers, and encourage them by buying through them. I confess I make a fool of myself by sometimes paying too much – most objects I have bought at the full market price. Luckily I have sometimes bought wisely, with my dealer friends advice. ‘Never a dealer and collector be,’ thus I chide my dealer friends, when trying to extract from them a vase in their private collection. There is the spirit of both in all of us. So I raise my glass now to the health and success of my dealer friends.

Glass collecting has the great bonus of not being date marked. Knowledge, wisdom and experience are particularly valuable here … so good hunting.

JOHN SCOTT

May 2014
Philip Webb 1831–1915

1  **Claret glass, c.1860**
    Flint glass, with eight applied, Sea Green prunts
    Height 4 ¾ in · 12 cm

2  **Wine glass, c.1859 (designed)**
    Flint glass, with bulging bowl and quatrefoil twisted stem
    Height 5 ½ in · 14 cm
    Part of the suite of table glass, with bulging bowls and twisted stems, originally designed by Phillip Webb for Morris’s Red House, 1859. The bowl shape appears to have varied slightly over time and this glass is a combination of Webb’s designs in the V&A Museum [E.328–1944 and E.326–1944] illustrated by Rusoe and Coutts.

3  **Footed goblet, c.1860 (designed)**
    Flint glass, with bulging bowl and applied spiral decoration, pattern no. 2388
    Height 4 ¾ in · 12 cm
    Two available

4  **Tumbler, c.1860 (designed)**
    Sea Green glass, with bulging bowl and applied spiral decoration, pattern no. 2387
    Height 3 ¾ in · 8.3 cm
    This tumbler is one of a number of designs by Webb for William Morris’s Red House, 1859. It is included in a drawing now in the V&A [E.328–1944 and E.326–1944] illustrated by Rusoe and Coutts.

The design for this glass is in the V&A Museum [E.330–1944] bequeathed by May Morris, William Morris’s daughter, in 1939. According to Rusoe and Coutts the design was part of a range of table glass designed by Webb and made by Powell’s for the newly founded Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company. The City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, has a similar glass with clear glass prunts, bequeathed by May Morris. Webb’s own pass-book (1852–78) lists three entries for these claret glasses ‘with green spots’ between October and November 1862.
Attributed to Philip Webb 1831–1915

5 Table glass, c.1860 (designed)
Flint glass, with bulging bowl on quatrefoil twisted stem, pattern no. 2386
Height 5 in · 12.7 cm

EXHIBITED: Manchester, Arts & Crafts Exhibition, 1891, the same design


Attributed to Philip Webb 1831–1915

6 A pair of wine glasses, 1860s (designed)
Flint glass, with bulging bowl, two-strand twisted stem
Height 6¼ in · 17 cm


Jackson suggests this stem design may be by Harry Powell, c.1880s, but Rudoe & Coutts identify a glass of this design given by May Morris to the V&A Museum in 1939 [C.81–1939] as attributed to Webb

Attributed to Philip Webb 1831–1915

7 Sherry glass, 1860s (designed)
Flint glass, with bulging bowl and twisted stem
Height 4¾ in · 12 cm


Attributed to Philip Webb 1831–1915

8 Custard cup, 1860s (designed)
Flint glass, with bulging bowl, twisted stem and applied handle
Height 3¾ in · 9.5 cm


Attributed to Philip Webb 1831–1915

9 Goblet, 1860s (designed)
Flint glass, with bulging bowl and twisted stem
Height 5 in · 12.7 cm


Attributed to Philip Webb 1831–1915

10 Pair of champagne glasses, c.1890
Flint glass, two-strand twisted stem
Height 5 in · 12.7 cm


Rudoe and Coutts illustrate a variation of this glass with the same stem and a single bulge bowl from the May Morris bequest to the V&A Museum in 1939 [C.81–1939] which the museum have attributed to Webb.
11 A set of five champagne glasses, 1870
Flint glass, pattern no. 2002
Height 4¾ in · 12 cm each
Two of the five illustrated


A drawing by T. G. Jackson for this design with a longer stem, dated 1870, appeared in Apollo 1930 and a photograph of the same pieces was illustrated by Harry Powell in Architectural Review, 1899. However, according to Rudoe and Coutts, known examples in the British Museum and Zurich, have the shorter stems seen here and, like this pair, are closer to the glass illustrated in a photograph in the Powell archive (Museum of London, c.1880–1900) that is annotated 'designed by Thomas Jackson for William Morris.'

12 A near pair of wine glasses, 1870
Amber glass, with single bulge to bowl
Height 5¾ in · 14.5 cm

Amber glass was introduced between 1877 and 1879 and produced until 1914.

13 Wine glass, 1870
Flint glass, pattern no. 2094
Height 5¼ in · 13.5 cm

Like the champagne glasses (cat. 11, opposite) this glass also appears in a photograph of Jackson's glass that is annotated 'designed by Thomas Jackson for William Morris', in the Powell archive (Museum of London, c.1880–1900).

14 Champagne flute, c.1870
Flint glass, with ribbed and spiralled bowl
Height 6¼ in · 16 cm

Attributed to Thomas G. Jackson 1835–1924
Attributed to Joseph Leicester 1825–1903

15  **Goblet, c.1870**
Glass, with fine white threading melted-in, with baluster stem
Height 8 in · 20 cm

Joseph Leicester was the company’s chief glass blower and is thought to have been responsible for the earliest pieces of Whitefriars glass made in the Venetian style. An example of Leicester’s glass is in the V&A Museum [015–1870] dated 1869.

“This goblet has heavy Venetian inspiration allied with wondrous English form.” JS

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16  **Champagne Bowl, c.1870**
Flint glass, with fine melted threads in parallel lines spiralling around bowl, the stem cut and engraved with stripes and floral motifs
Height 4 1/8 in · 10.5 cm

Thomas G. Jackson 1835–1924

17  **Wine glass, 1870s (designed)**
Straw opal glass, pattern no.2094
Height 5 in · 12.7 cm


This glass must have been made after 1877 when straw opal was introduced; the *Studio* (p.247, vol.18) noted that “the so-called “soda glass” has very artistic properties.”

“I bought this glass from Jeanette Hayhurst in 1994.” JS
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

18  Amphora on stand, c.1880
Straw opal glass, with wrought iron stand
Height 14 1/2 x 9 3/4 in · 37 x 25 cm
LITERATURE: ed. Jackson, Whitefriars Glass, The Art of James Powell & Sons, Shepton Beauchamp, 1996, p.155, fig.249, see also p.101, pl.21 (iii) for a related example
Jackson illustrates a number of photographs from James Powell & Sons 1880s photograph album, now in the Corning Museum of Glass, including a variety of vessels of different glass types in wrought iron stands (see p.8). According to Clegg in his introduction to the exhibition Glass Act IV, the stands were probably made in-house by Powell’s blacksmith, Edminstone, who worked at the factory from 1875, or his assistant Edmund Francis.

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

19  Water glass, c.1880
Dark green glass, with dented body, based on Roman vessels found in Naples and Cologne
Height 4 in · 10 cm
20  **Venetian inspired vase, c.1880**
Straw opal glass, with thrown rim and knop stem, pattern no. 828
Height 9½ in · 24 cm


“This is a very accomplished glass I bought from Chris Musley and Brian Cargin in 1986.” JS

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21  **Champagne glass, c.1880**
Dark green glass, with ribbed bowl, flattened twisted stem and ribbed foot
Height 5½ in · 14 cm


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22  **Champagne glass, c.1880**
Flint glass, spiral ribbed bowl on hollow blown stem, with applied prunts with gold inclusions
Height 5¼ in · 13.5 cm

“This is Venetian, but demonstrates how they attracted competitors. It is a favourite for engagement parties.” JS
23  
**Goblet, c.1880**
Straw opal glass, spiral ribbed bowl and hollow baluster stem with moulded decoration on ribbed foot
Height 7 in · 18 cm

'8 glorious vessel' J.S.

24  
**‘Poppy head’ wine glass, c.1890**
Flint glass, ribbed and dented
Height 5⅜ in · 13.4 cm


25  
**Wavy rim stem vase, c.1890**
Straw opal glass, with tall stem and ‘thrown’ wavy rim
Height 12 in · 30 cm

'Fabulous vase' J.S.

26  
**Fan-shaped vase, c.1890**
Straw opal glass, with stem and ‘thrown’ rim
Height 8 in · 20.5 cm

'Exquisite vase' J.S.
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

27  **Tall-stemmed vase, c.1890**
Dark green glass, with tall stem and ‘thrown’ wavy rim
Height 10 in · 25.5 cm

‘This vase is very fine – an example of wondrous dexterity.’ JS

Philip Webb 1831–1915

28  **Sherry glass, c.1900**
Sea Green glass, factory pattern no. 2386
Height 4 in · 10 cm

**EXHIBITED:** Paris, Exposition des Arts Décoratifs de Grande Bretagne et d’Irlande, 1914


Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

29  **Trumpet wine glass, c.1890**
Sea Green glass
Height 7 ¾ in · 18.5 cm

**EXHIBITED:** St Louis, International Exhibition, 1904, the same design exhibited

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

30 Pair of wine glasses, c.1890
Sea Green glass, the bowls with a single bulge
Height 6 in · 15 cm
_LITERATuRE_: ‘Table Glass Designed and Executed by James Powell & Sons’, Studio Yearbook, 1906, same design illustrated

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

31 Flute vase, c.1890
Straw opal glass, pattern no. 859
Height 8 1/2 in · 21.5 cm

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

32 Pair of wine glasses, c.1890
Flint glass, the bowls with a single bulge, engraved decoration around rim
Height 6 1/4 in · 16 cm
_LITERATuRE_: ‘Table Glass Designed and Executed by James Powell & Sons’, Studio Yearbook, 1906, for a plain example of the same design

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

33 Venetian–inspired vase, c.1890
Straw opal glass, with wavy rim, pattern no. 893
12 x 7 1/4 in · 30 x 18.5 cm
‘I bought this vase from Chris Morley and Brian Cargin in 1987.’
Harry Powell 1853–1922

Sherry glass, c.1890
Sea Green glass, ribbed and spiral with four dents to bowl
Height 4¾ in · 12 cm

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

Wine glass, c.1890
Flint glass, ribbed and dented tulip-shaped bowl
Height 4½ in · 11.5 cm
‘I bought this from Jeanette Hayhurst in 1994.’ JS

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

Sherry glass, c.1890
Flint glass, spiral ribbed with dented bowl
Height 4¾ in · 10.5 cm
‘Beautiful simplicity.’ JS

Harry Powell 1853–1922

‘Byzantine’ water glass, c.1894
Flint glass, with shallow Roman-style cutting, factory pattern no.2425
Height 5¾ in · 14.5 cm


Harry Powell studied Roman glass in depth and used many of the ancient techniques, shapes, designs and colours for inspiration as well as manufacturing replicas. Powell’s cut glass in the Roman style was unlike anything else being produced in Europe at the time and was based on examples he studied in the V&A and British Museums, London, and which he saw on his trips to Cologne and Zurich. In 1906, at the Society of Arts, he used these precedents to challenge the view widely held by those with ‘artistic taste’, including John Ruskin, that cut glass was ‘a thing accursed’, and show that it was possible to use cutting as a form of decoration that did not compromise the shape of the vessel or the materials natural beauty.
Harry Powell 1853–1922

38  ‘Byzantine’ finger bowl and saucer, c.1894
Flint glass, with shallow Roman-style cutting,
Bowl 2½ x 4 in · 6 x 10 cm, saucer diameter xxx

The shape of the bowl is based on a Roman cut glass bowl from Leuna, Saxony, bequeathed by Felix Slade (1790–1868) to the British Museum. Rudoe (in Jackson, 1996) notes that the bowl was copied at Whitefriars in January 1894 and suggests that the entire range was adapted from this design. Jackson also points out the misnomer ‘Byzantine’ was probably due to a mis-cataloguing of Slade’s collection in 1871, when the Leuna bowl was described as Byzantine rather than Roman.

Harry Powell 1853–1922

39  ‘Byzantine’ wine glass, c.1894
Flint glass, with shallow Roman-style cutting
Height 4½ in · 12 cm

40  Vase, 1903–10
Flint glass, with shallow Roman-style cutting, later silver mounts, factory pattern no. 1146
Height 5½ in · 14 cm
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

41 Fan-shaped Vase, c.1896
Straw opal glass, with wavy rim and twisted tapering stem, inspired by Venetian glass shapes
Height 10 in. · 25.5 cm

LITERATURE: Variations of this design were illustrated by Harry Powell in his article ‘Table Glass’, The Architectural Review, 1899, see ed. Jackson, Whitefriars Glass, The Art of James Powell & Sons, Shepton Beauchamp, 1996, pp.24–25

‘Bought from Chris Morley and Brian Cargin in 1986.’ JS

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

42 Wine glass, c.1898
Flint glass, from the standard plain table glass range, factory pattern no. 2443
Height 5½ in. · 14 cm


Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

43 Wine glass, c.1900
Alsation blue soda glass, with white melted in drawn threads
Height 5¾ in. · 13.5 cm

‘This glass has extensive feathering of magic dexterity. I bought it from Jeanette Hayhurst in 1996. Design and work of exceptional mastery.’ JS
Harry Powell 1853–1922

44 Goblet, 1899
Blue glass, tulip-shaped bowl with pulled, melted-in threads on a Sea Green, twisted stem
Height 9 ½ in · 24 cm

EXHIBITED: London, Arts & Crafts Exhibition, 1899, a similar design exhibited

LITERATURE: Studio, January 1900, vol. 18, p. 252, similar design illustrated; ed. Jackson, Whitefriars Glass, The Art of James Powell & Sons, Shepton Beauchamp, 1996, fig. 151, p. 59 and fig. 34, p. 77

‘These pieces were inspired by Austrian Secessionist vessels and were Harry Powell’s assay into the new field of Art Nouveau.’

Harry Powell 1853–1922

45 Goblet, 1899
Sea Green glass, with twisted stem, the bowl decorated with gold foil in body and amethyst trailed decoration on exterior
Height 9 in · 23 cm

EXHIBITED: London, Arts & Crafts Exhibition, 1899, the same design exhibited


‘These pieces were inspired by Austrian Secessionist vessels and were Harry Powell’s assay into the new field of Art Nouveau.’
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

46  Decanter, 1899
Flint glass, with Sea Green applied tears, collar and two handles; silver mounted cork stopper, hallmark for James Powell & Sons, London, 1906
Height 12 in · 30 cm

Attributed to Thomas G. Jackson 1835–1924

47  Venetian-style tazza, c.1899
Flint glass, with wavy rim to bowl and blown spiral-ribbed baluster stem, ribbed foot
Height 7 in · 18 cm
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

48 ‘Tear’ wine glass, 1899
Flint glass, with eight Sea Green vertical tears applied.
Height 8 1/4 in · 21 cm

EXHIBITED: London, Arts & Crafts Exhibition, 1899, same design exhibited.


‘I bought this ‘Tear’ goblet from Chris and Brian Cargin in 2002.’ JS

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

49 ‘Tear’ wine glass, 1899
Flint glass, with four Sea Green vertical tears applied.
Height 8 in · 20 cm

EXHIBITED: London, Arts & Crafts Exhibition, 1899, same design exhibited.


The Museum of London book notes that ‘the original [design] had six sea-green tears on clear glass; in 1901, this was reduced to four tears; afterwards a variety of combinations and colours were used.’

‘I bought this goblet from Pete Gooday in 1992.’ JS

50 Decanter, c. 1900
Sea Green diamond-ribbed glass, with small lugs to shoulders, rigaree collar and a silver mount, chains and stopper, hallmark for James Powell & Sons and an illegible date mark.
Height 10 in · 25.5 cm

‘A delicious, delicate feast for the eye with an “Oriental” touch.’ JS
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922  
(after Philip Webb)

51  Champagne bowl, c.1900
Flint glass, with four applied, green, raspberry prunts to bowl and a green, twisted stem  
Height 6 3/4 in · 17 cm


Rudoe and Coutts refer to Barbara Morris’s note that this design and that of cat 54 are related to the Philip Webb glasses but are later in date and more influenced by Art Nouveau.

"This is a very, very elegant glass. Powells desperately needed more daringly slender shapes of this ilk to extol Art Nouveau and the new spirit of twentieth-century Britain."  

36  JAMES POWELL & SONS

Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922  
(after Philip Webb)

52  Tulip shaped wine glass, c.1900
Flint glass, with four applied, green, raspberry prunts to bowl and a green, twisted stem  
Height 6 3/4 in · 17 cm

EXHIBITED: London, Arts & Crafts Exhibition, 1906


"This is a very, very elegant glass. Powells desperately needed more daringly slender shapes of this ilk to extol Art Nouveau and the new spirit of twentieth-century Britain."
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

53 Vase, c.1900
Flint glass, with dented body
Height 6 in · 15 cm

54 Vase, c.1900
Flint glass, spiral ribbed and dented · Height 6 in · 15 cm

Harry Powell 1853–1922

55 Vase, 1901
Sea green glass, with applied vertical blue tears and rigaree foot, pattern no. 1099 · Height 6 1/2 in · 16.5 cm


This design is based on a vase in the Portinari altarpiece by Hugo van der Goes, c.1475, in the Uffizi Gallery.
Harry Powell 1853–1922

56 Cobweb and Dewdrop goblet, 1901

Flint glass, engraved with cobweb and dewdrop pattern, air twist stem with gold foil, factory pattern number 1095

Height 9 in · 23 cm

Exhibited: St Louis, International Exhibition, 1904, same design exhibited


“This is a very striking goblet with gold spiral inclusions and engraved design of spider’s web. I bought it from Jeanette Hayhurst in 1995.” JS
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

57 **Scent bottle, c.1901**
Ruby red glass, dented body with silver collar and stopper, hallmark for William Hutton & Sons, 1901
Height 9¾ in · 24.5 cm

**EXHIBITED:** London, Arts & Crafts Exhibition, 1916 (C5), same shape exhibited

58 **Decanter, 1901–2**
Sea Green glass, with white melted-in and pulled up threads, spiral threading on neck, silver-coloured metal and cork stopper
Height 12 in · 30 cm

**LITERATURE:** ed. Jackson, Whitefriars Glass, The Art of James Powell & Sons, Shepton Beauchamp, 1996, pl.43 (iii), p.107, same design illustrated

‘This is a charmingly delicate decanter’ JS

59 **Goblet, 1905–1910 (designed)**
Flint glass, with gold embedded, double knop stem, pattern no. 1170, diamond engraved: Given to Sir Jeremiah Colman Bt. on his 80th Birthday / 24 Apr 1939
Height 9 in · 22 cm

**LITERATURE:** ed. Jackson, Whitefriars Glass, The Art of James Powell & Sons, Shepton Beauchamp, 1996, p.113, pl.76

‘I bought this Azurian glass because it is so beautiful, with hollow gilt knops. It came from Jeanette Hayhurst, Kensington Church Street.’ JS

60 **Goblet, 1905–1911 (designed)**
Blue glass, double knop stem with embedded gold
Height 7¾ in · 19 cm

**LITERATURE:** ed. Jackson, Whitefriars Glass, The Art of James Powell & Sons, Shepton Beauchamp, 1996, p.113, pl.76, same design illustrated in flint glass

‘I bought this Azurian glass because it is so beautiful, with hollow gilt knops. It came from Jeanette Hayhurst, Kensington Church Street.’ JS
Harry Powell 1853–1922

61 Silver-mounted glass centrepiece, 1906

Glass, with blown trailed and pulled decoration mounted in silver with and enamel heraldic shields, on a wooden stand, hallmark to base, JP & Sons and date mark 1906.

15 x 10 in · 38 x 26 cm


This spectacular vase is one of a pair of centrepieces made by Powell & Sons for Count Lionel Hirschel de Minerbi for his newly acquired Ca’Rezzonico palace in Venice. Each handle is decorated with a pair of enamelled shields depicting the arms of the Minerbi family. The partner to it is now in the Corning Museum of Glass in the United States of America [accession no.90.2.3].

The well-documented commission – of around four hundred pieces – was reported in an unidentified newspaper cutting, which stated that, as Minerbi ‘wished to have the best glass he could procure he had come to the makers of the specimen he had bought at Turin.’ The 1902 Turin International Exhibition was the first to be devoted entirely to the decorative arts, Harry Powell created many remarkable new pieces for the British Pavilion, which had been organised by Walter Crane from his acquaintances at the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society.

‘I bought this in 1982 from Andy Tilbrook.’ JS

* ‘Foreigners beaten by British. Venetian Glass to be sent to Venice’, unidentified newspaper cutting, c. 1906, Whitefriars Archive, Museum of London (the drawings for the commission are also part of the archive)
Harry Powell 1853–1922

62 Table glass for the Minerbi Service, 1906
Flint glass with pulled down, melted-in, green threads and open three-strand stem, designed c. 1899. Height 8 ¾ in · 22 cm


Harry Powell 1853–1922

63 Table glass for the Minerbi Service, 1906
Flint glass with pulled down, melted-in, green threads and blown stem - Height 6 ¾ in · 17 cm

Harry Powell 1853–1922

64 Decanter, 1906
Blue glass, with white melted-in threads, applied collar, silver and cork stopper, hallmark for James Powell & Sons, London, 1906
Height 12 in · 30 cm

Harry Powell 1853–1922

65 Table Glass c.1906
Flint glass, with pulled down, melted-in, green threads and twisted stem
Height 6½ in · 17 cm

Harry Powell 1853–1922

66 Tumbler, c.1906 (designed)
Amber glass with applied raspberry prunts, trailing spiralled decoration and rigaree foot
Height 4½ in · 10.8 cm
According to Jackson the design of this glass is thought to be inspired by Lucas Cranach’s painting Melancholia (1528), exhibited at Burlington House in 1906. Powell later made a sketchbook of ‘Glasses with Histories’ taken from various sources, c.1918–1922, featuring many of the firm’s existing historical designs as well as other glasses from museums, and several taken from paintings.
67 Decanter, 1907
Sea Green glass, with white melted-in threads, applied collar, silver mounted cork stopper hallmark for James Powell & Sons, London, 1907
Height 12 in · 30 cm
Exhibited: Turin, International Exhibition, 1902, the same design

68 Lotus vase, 1910
Engraved glass vase, inspired by an Egyptian pottery vase in the British Museum, factory pattern number 1187
Height 5½ in · 14 cm
'I bought this Egyptian-inspired vase from Jeanette Hayhurst.' JS

Harry Powell 1853–1922
Harry Powell 1853–1922
Dragon vase, c.1910

Ruby red glass, with gold inclusions, overlaid with opaque red glass, acid-etched with a dragon design
Height 7¼ in · 18.5 cm


Harry Powell’s interest in ancient glass manufacture and in particular Roman glass lead to a number of experiments to test what was possible for production. Shapes, patterns and techniques were borrowed from Roman and other ‘glasses with histories’, but one technique that proved very difficult for the company to replicate was the Roman cameo cutting, of which very few examples had survived. Powell did try replicating the Roman blue but found more success with a ruby red glass, into which he mixed gold inclusions, for the body, overlaid with an opaque red glass which was acid-etched with floral, heraldic and dragon designs. These pieces, which were exhibited at the Arts & Crafts Exhibition in 1910, appear to be specially produced exhibition pieces and their rarity would suggest they were never put into general production. Two examples, with similar dragon motifs are illustrated by Jackson (fig. 28, p. 15 and fig. 42, p. 18) albeit on different shaped bodies.

According to Brian Cargin and Chris Morley, this ruby example must be one of the very few cameos outside of Museum collections.
Harry Powell 1853–1922

70 Goblet vase, 1919
Sea Green glass, with gold inclusions in tapering twisted stem, factory pattern number 1168
Height 9\(\frac{3}{4}\) in · 23.5 cm


Inspired by a finely blown Venetian vessel, seen during Powell’s studies of historical glass, and produced in Alsatian Blue and Sea Green, Jackson suggests this design dates from before 1919 although the pieces were in production until the mid-1930s.

71 Commemorative goblet, 1918
Flint glass, with air bubble in stem, wheel engraved around the rim Dominus loquitur. Arma Silent. 11.11.1918, to commemorate the end of the First World War
Height 9 in · 23 cm


‘From Chris Morley and Brian Cargin in 2002.’ JS

William Butler

72 Footed bowl, c.1935
Blue tinted glass, with threaded on Sea Green glass, bowl shape pattern number 7170 (from 1920s)
6 x 9 in · 15.2 x 23 cm


‘This footed bowl is in the Venetian style with a honeycombed moulded bowl. It is ‘majestic’.’ JS
Coronation goblet, 1953
Clear glass, with red, blue and white enamel twist stem, diamond engraved
2nd EIIR June / 1953 · Height 8 in · 20 cm

LITERATURE:
ed. Jackson, Whitefriars Glass, The Art of James Powell & Sons, Shepton Beauchamp, 1996, p.144, pl.176(i), same design illustrated – Jackson notes that this shape was designed c.1936; G. M. Heddle, Manuel on Etching and Engraving Glass, London 1962, same design illustrates cover; Morley ‘The Whitefriars Glassworks (James Powell & Sons Ltd): The final chapter on the post-war years’, Decorative Arts Society Journal, vol.15, 1991, illustrated ‘Reputed by Chris Morley to have been diamond point etched by William Wilson (one or two per evening?) from Chipping Norton Antiques Centre in 2010.’ JS

Coronation goblet, 1953
Flint glass, with blue knop, diamond-engraved 12th G&E May / 1937, to commemorate King George vi and Queen Elizabeth’s coronation
Height 7¾ in · 19 cm

William J. Wilson b.1914 (engraver)

79 Coronation goblet, 1953
Flint glass, diamond engraved 2nd November, 1953, to commemorate Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation
Height 8 in · 20 cm


William Wilson b.1914 and Harry Dyer

80 Knobbly vase, 1963
Willow soda glass, cased in clear crystal
Height 8 ¾ in · 22 cm


William Wilson b.1914 and Harry Dyer

81 Knobbly vase, 1963
Indigo soda glass, cased in clear crystal
Height 8 ¾ in · 22 cm


The ‘Knobbly’ range was launched at the Blackpool Fair in 1964. These free-blown pieces were heavy and thick-walled. The shapes were created using a special s-shaped tool to manipulate the molten glass before blowing. Geoffrey Baxter later refined and standardised the shapes and created two colour ranges: one of single colours encased in clear crystal, as here, and the other lead crystal with streaks of different colours through the body.

One man’s meat is another man’s poison. After all this is Britain’s greatest glass business and the designer is known!”
Attributed to Charles Hardgrave 1848–c.1920

82 Angel and Rose opus sectile tablet, c.1885
Opaque and painted glass mosaic
7 ¼ x 16 ½ in · 18.5 x 42 cm

‘I call this material pâte de verre, as it is powdered glass reheated to a lower temperature than for glass proper.’

83 Lily opus sectile tablet, c.1885
Opaque and painted glass mosaic
28 ¾ x 12 ½ in · 73 x 32 cm


Opus sectile was a revival of an ancient Roman technique where specially cut materials usually marble, stone or mother of pearl, were inlaid into walls and floors to create pictures. Using Powell’s innovative colours and finishes in glass in this way was a natural extension of the work of the firm, whose clients were often ecclesiastical decorators to whom they supplied stained glass either as a mix, as quarries or as ‘off the shelf’ or commissioned glass panels. Documentary evidence in the Powell’s Cash Window Books, analysed by Dr Dennis Hardley, suggests that Powell & Sons were making reredoses, altar and wall panels with opus sectile certainly from 1873. By the 1890s they were exporting them across the world including to India, USA, France, Ireland and Denmark and making panels for commercial as well as religious purposes.

This lily panel is similar to that used in The Church of the Holy Cross, Owlpen, 1887, and may be attributed to Charles Hardgrave.

‘These pâte de verre panels were frequently used in church interiors, many depict religious subjects.’

60 JAMES POWELL & SONS
Attributed to Harry Powell 1853–1922

84 Five-branch electric ceiling light, c.1900

Wrought iron and opalescent glass

57 x 23 in · 145 x 59 cm

An 1866 catalogue of Whitefriars’ products shows that the company were making and retailing glass lighting in the form of gasoliers and chandeliers from at least that time. From about 1875, shortly after the arrival of Harry Powell, the firm employed a blacksmith, Edminstone, and an apprentice, Edmund Francis, who are thought to have made wrought iron fittings for the firm’s glass shades, vases and bowls as well as looking after the workmen’s tools and equipment. They were probably responsible for the manufacture of this piece.
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