

# What Was Available



By William H. VanBuskirk

One of my most asked questions deals with what was available; what should I be looking for while out on the "hunt" in search of my pattern? There really is nothing like the "hunt" in search of

new discoveries, and the thrill of what one might find. The many surprises that we stumble on are what makes collecting so exciting, and gives us the drive to continue.

This article, as with all my articles, will deal with Late Victorian dishes. We will include, on a very small scale, a comparison between Early/Middle Victorian and Late Victorian dishes. There are two thoughts we need to remember as we progress through this article. One, when considering what was/is available; there are significant differences between Early/Middle Victorian and Late Victorian dishes. This is to say that someone who collects Early Victorian Flow Blue should not expect to find the exact same variety of items that a Late Victorian collector will, and vice versa. Secondly, the Flow Blue potteries did not invent new dishes for public use, but rather, they created new pieces per their customers' wants and needs. The requirements for these new pieces were created as a result of cultural and dining habits that naturally occur as time passes. Some examples of these newly developed items are

butter pats, bone dishes, coupe soup bowls, consistently manufactured handled cups and individual pedestal oyster bowls. The items just mentioned were strictly for the Late Victorian diner and will not be found by an

Early or Middle Victorian collector (an \* by an item listed below will denote a strictly Late Victorian dish).

The Late Victorian English potteries, as any other business, would only exist as a result of their ability to make a profit. With this profit goal in mind, their sole mission, besides their efforts to provide a superior product, was to give their customers complete satisfaction by fulfilling their needs. They advertised in trade magazines, distributed trade cards that displayed their products, and in general did what they could to make their wares known to wholesalers, retailers, and the general public. The potteries marketing ploy was not to sell their dishes as sets, but rather, all their products could be bought one item at a time. The concept of selling dishes as sets was up to the retailers, such as Sears Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward & Co. The medium these retailers commonly used was the infamous catalog. Through these catalogs, that were easily obtainable, every ordinary family could look through hundreds of pages that displayed thousands of items including Late Victorian Flow Blue dishes. These catalogs for the first time, gave consumers a real opportunity to view a large array of merchandise simultaneously, which had not been available to them at any time before. One of the results and goals of their catalog marketing of china "sets", as opposed to selling every item one at a time, was to allow themselves a larger volume of sales. So the question remains, what

**\$11.28** "WOODLAND" DINNER SET. MADE BY ALFRED MEAKIN, TUNSTALL, ENGLAND.

**THE WOODLAND DINNER SET** is the latest and best production of this celebrated pottery. The ware is light in weight and elegantly finished with an embossed design. The decoration is a beautiful "Dessalmanian" design, consisting of sprays of violets and green leaves in natural colorings on a silvery gray background. The decoration is so finely executed that it is impossible for an ordinary critic to distinguish this set from a Haviland china set costing three times as much; and while this set combines all the beauty and elegance of fine French china it has the advantage of being very much stronger. Gold trimmings enliven the decorations and add much to its beauty.

**SET CONSISTS OF 100 PIECES, AS FOLLOWS:**

12 Dinner Plates	12 Tea Plates	12 Individual Butter Plates	1 Covered Vegetable Dish (2 pieces)	1 Covered Sugar Bowl (2 pieces)	1 Sauce Boat
12 Breakfast Plates	12 Tea Cups	1 Platter, 10-inch	1 Oval open Vegetable Dish	1 Covered Butter Dish (2 pieces)	1 Picnic Dish
12 Sauce Plates	12 Tea Saucers	1 Platter, 12-inch	1 Round open Vegetable Dish	1 Stop Bowl	1 Quart Pitcher
					1 Cream Pitcher

No. 2R348 Complete 100-piece set, packed in a barrel; shipping weight, 80 pounds. Our special price..... **\$11.28**

In addition to the regular set quoted above we can furnish the following pieces:

Coffee Cups and Saucers. Per dozen..... \$2.00	Soup Plates, regular deep shape. Per dozen \$1.43	Soup Plates, new coupe shape. Per dozen..... \$1.00
--	---	---

Plate 1

(Continued on page 5)

## What Was Available



items were included in a set? To help us with that see [Plate: 1]. The 100 piece set shown, "WOODLAND", is by Alfred Meakin and listed in the 1902 Sears Roebuck & Co. catalog. For those interested, this same shape was used for Alfred Meakin's Flow Blue patterns of CAMBRIDGE and OVANDO. There are slight variations to the 100 piece set that catalogs listed, but this will give you a very good idea of what may have been included.

As a result of the vast majority of Late Victorian Flow Blue being sold as sets, there is a down side for today's collectors. The down side is whatever items were sold in sets were obviously made more readily available, but those items that were sold as an option become less available for today's collector. Please note the three optional items available for an extra charge listed on the bottom line of the ad in [Plate: 1]. Could this be why coffee cups, soup plates (flanged soup) and coupe soup bowls (no flange) are always harder to find? The reader is encouraged to compare the list of dishes given in the ad with the list of dishes that were available listed below. It will be interesting for the collector to see if some of those "available" pieces, as opposed to the "set" pieces, aren't in fact the very same ones they are currently searching for.

To list for you what really was available for an absolute complete set of dishes, we will divide them into two sections. First, those used for individual use, and secondly those used for common or table use. One of the distinguishing differences between individual and table use items is handles. Generally speaking, with cups being the exception, if the dish has a loop or tab handle, it was designed for table, or common use.

Please consider that Victorian's never owned or even considered owning as thoroughly a complete set of dishes as we will show you here. It is today's collectors who demonstrate this eagerness for owning everything available. For several reasons all sizes listed for table and individual use are approximate. These reasons are variation of shapes for each body style produced by a pottery, new moulds being made after the older ones wear out, downsizing of each piece to conserve clay and costs, and either more or less

shrinkage of the clay used. All sizes listed are in inches.

### Individual use:

Plates: 3 (butter pat\*), 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10 inches. See [Plate: 2]

Cups: Tea (two sizes), coffee (two sizes), demitasse (can be either tea or coffee shaped), chocolate (sized between the tea and coffee and larger than the demitasse) and pedestal punch (in many cases there may be only one common shape used for all body styles) See [Plates: 3 & 4]

Bone dish\*: Generally one size available (rarely if ever sold with a set).

Round (nappy) bowls: 5 (berry/sauce), 6, 8 inches (coupe\*).

Note: In Late Victorian we have the five inch berry or sauce bowl. An item very close to this for Early Victorian is what most collectors call a honey dish. They are very similar in size and shape, and may have been used for the same purpose. See [Plates: 5 & 6]

Flanged bowls: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10 inches (5, 6 & 7 inches are very rare and not always available for every shape, or even by every pottery.)

Oval (baker) bowls: 6 inches

Oval platter: 6 inches

Pedestal oyster bowl\*: 6 inches diameter by 3 inches high. See [Plate: 7]

### Table or common use:

Covered round bowl: Two sizes (The smaller of the two is very rare and not always available for every shape or even by every pottery.) See [Plate: 8]

Covered oval bowl: one size See [Plate: 8]

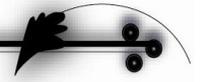
Oval platter: 8 (relish/pickle), 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 & 22 inches (can also be found in 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19 & 21 inches) See [Plate: 9]

Well & tree platter: 20 inches (They can be found even though it may take a life time to find. Every well & tree seen has been in the correct body style for that pattern.) See [Plate: 10]

Round platter (charger): 9 (cake/cookie), 13 & 15 inches

(Continued on page 6)

## What Was Available



- Oval (baker) open bowl: 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11 inches
- Round (nappy) open bowl: 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 inches
- Round open salad bowl\*: 12 inches diameter by 5 inches high (generally a common shape and has a foot rim)
- Square open bowl: 10 inches (extremely rare and not always available for every shape, or even by every pottery)
- Covered butter: Three pieces (lid, bottom tray & drainer) See [Plate: 11]
- Covered tub butter: Rarely ever seen. SHANGHAI by Grindley and NORMANDY by Johnson Bros. are the only two known. (1920s + and on more of a modern shape) See [Plate: 11]
- Gravy boat/Under tray: A variety of displays are possible: boat/under tray, boat/attached under tray, boat with two side handles & two spouts/attached under tray and boat with two spouts (no handles)/attached under tray. See [Plate: 12]
- Four part covered soup tureens: Oval & round (each with slotted lid, bowl, under tray & 10 inch ladle) See [Plate: 13]
- Four part oval covered sauce tureen: Slotted lid, bowl, under tray & 6 inch ladle See soup & sauce ladles [Plate: 14]
- Pedestal compote: 2 sizes – 10 inches diameter by 4 ½ inches high & 10 inches diameter by 2 ½ inches high See [Plate: 15]
- Pedestal cake plate: 9 inches diameter by 2 inches high
- Pedestal fruit bowl: Oval or round (designed very similarly to covered tureens but with no lid and generally seen with tab handles)
- Teapot: Most, if not always, one size available
- Demitasse pot: One size (Only available most of, if not all the time as we entered the 1910s & 1920s. Even then they generally were a common shape used for all currently produced patterns.)
- Covered sugar: One size available (in rare cases, some potteries for some of their shapes produced, did make two sizes of covered sugar bowls)
- Pitchers: 3 ½, 4 ½, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 inches (the first two sizes were used as creamers) See [Plate: 16]
- Spoon Holder\*: One size available and generally about 5 inches tall. (Most shapes and patterns will have a spooner, but quite possibly not all. Most definitely is a Late Victorian item.)
- Tea waste/slop bowl: Two sizes available, 6 inches diameter by 3 inches high (common) & 5 inches diameter by 2 ½ inches high.
- Covered mustard jar: Two or three pieces (Slotted lid & jar with bottom tray loose or attached. Not always available for every shape, or even by every pottery.)
- Covered cheese: Rarely if ever were covered cheeses produced for a specific pattern. They seem to be a specialty item with their own design and shape. Although as we entered the 1920s newer shapes were produced that included a covered cheese. As a result, any Flow Blue patterns that were still being manufactured, were applied to one of those current shapes. MELBOURNE by Grindley comes to mind. That pattern was applied to a very modern shaped covered cheese dish.
- Toast rack: There is an extremely rare chance that you may find one in your pattern. They seemed to have been neglected by the Late Victorian potteries until the modern shapes of the 1920s, and even then none are known with a Flow Blue pattern (see covered cheese).

Are there other items not mentioned? This question can only be answered by viewing all pottery records, or by a collector lucky enough to find one. For all of you enthusiastic collectors, consider the following. If the Late Victorian Flow Blue pattern you are collecting was as complete as this list of available pieces, your collection would contain about 490 pieces. I'm not even sure if that is possible by one of today's collectors, but if it were, that would be an astounding collection. The array of pieces produced was done in an effort to fit the needs of all their customers. Not all pieces were required by all families, and in most cases, the 100 piece set suited them just fine.

# What Was Available



Plate 2-SHANGHAI (Grindley)  
5 sizes of plates, 6,7,8,9,10 inches  
Bob & Bonne Hohl



Plate 3-MARGUERITE (Grindley) cups, demi-tea-coffee—Ellen King



Plate 5-ARGYLE-Grindley-5.25 inch  
berry bowl - Kim & Judy Boyer



Plate 4-MARECHAL NEIL-  
(Grindley) punch cup  
John & Laurel Provine



Plate 6-AMOY (Davenport) c.1844  
honey dish  
Bob & Nancy Ferriani



Plate 7-MARECHAL NEIL (Grindley) oyster bowls  
John & Laurel Provine



Plate 8-MARECHAL NEIL (Grindley) oval & round covered  
vegetables - John & Laurel Provine



Plate 9 - NON PAREIL (Burgess & Leigh) stack  
of 9 platters-22, 29.5, 17.5, 15.5, 13.75, 12, 9.5,  
8, 7.25 inches - Judy Mead

# What Was Available

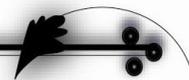


Plate 10a - NON PAREIL (Burgess & Leigh) well & tree platter 22 inches long  
Judy Mead



Plate 10b - NON PAREIL (Burgess & Leigh) well & tree platter, side view, 3.5 inches high, 22 inches long - Judy Mead



Plate 11 - SHANGHAI (Grindley) 2 types of butter dishes  
Bob & Bonne Hohl



Plate 12 - SHANGHAI (Grindley) 4 types of sauces  
Bob & Bonne Hohl



Plate 13 - MARGUERITE (Grindley) oval & round soup tureens 12 inches wide - Ellen King



Plate 14 - ARGYLE (Grindley) top, soup ladle - bottom, sauce ladle - Kim & Judy Boyer

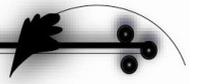


Plate 15 - SHANGHAI (Grindley) short, 4 inches high 10 inches diameter & tall, 5 inches high 10 inches diameter Compotes Bob & Bonne Hohl



Plate 16 - ARGYLE (Grindley) 7 Pitchers  
Jean Ann Jones

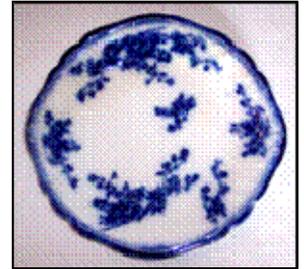
# What Was Available



ARGYLE (Grindley) six different styles of cups and saucers  
Kim & Judy Boyer



GIRONDE (Grindley) - footed  
fruit bowl - Bill Leach



MARECHAL NEIL  
(Grindley) tab handled  
cake plate  
John & Laurel Provine



MARECHAL NEIL (Grindley) - sauce and  
soup ladles - John & Laurel Provine



MILTON (Poutney) - 4 pc. soup  
tureen - Bob & Nancy Ferriani



NON PAREIL (Burgess & Leigh) - 4 pc. sauce tureen  
Bill & Pat Wetherington



MARGUERITE (Grindley) - oval and round open  
vegetable bowls - Ellen King



NON PAREIL (Burgess & Leigh) - 4 pieces of a  
sauce tureen - Bill & Pat Wetherington



NON PAREIL (Burgess & Leigh) - flat and  
pedestal cake plates  
Bill & Pat Wetherington



SHANGHAI (Grindley) - six different types of  
cups - Bob & Bonne Hoh

## Notes