PRUNUS OR HAWTHORN – WHAT'S IN A NAME? – REDUX by Jim

Some of you will recall this long-winded article[1] on the rationale I used to stop using the decoration name "Prunus" on Webb Burmese. Instead, I presented examples and evidence that caused me to adopt the name "Hawthorn" for the floral design.

For me the argument was convincing but I am sure some wanted more convincing evidence – a "smoking gun" as they say. With that in mind, let me present some newly discovered evidence.

THE SYDNEY MAIL
NEW SOUTH WALES ADVERTISER

Nº. 1408.—VOL. XLIV.—(New Series). SATURDAY, JULY 2, 1887. PRICE 6d. per Copy.

THE SYDNEY MAIL, SATURDAY, JULY 2, 1887.

Ladies

Friendship?

House and Table Decoration in Glass and China.

Decorative Glass

Fairy Lamps

A Lady's Letter from Berlin.

Household.

Buried within this page from *The Sydney Mail*, Saturday, July 2, 1887, is an article titled "*House and Table Decoration in Glass and China.*" The article includes a section on decorative glass and, of course, fairy lamps. The discussion on fairy lamps was very informative and provides what I consider the "smoking gun" in the "Prunus vs. Hawthorn" debate.

Before I zero in on specific passages within the article, I think you should read it in its entirety. Perhaps you will discover information that I missed.

FAIRY LAMPS

These charming arrangements, for shedding a soft light are now produced in great variety; and in a newly patented colour called the "Queen's Burmese glassware," the fairy lamps are particularly attractive. The Burmese is so named from having been first exhibited and specimens purchased by her Majesty on the date of the annexation of Burma. In colour, it is a primrose yellow shading to pink, the shade much deeper when the lamp is lighted, and globes of the lamps are generally figured with a spray of hawthorn blossoms accurately drawn, but coloured according to fancy rather than nature. The lamps are furnished with fluted saucers or stands, which are reversible and form very graceful flower holders. Centre-pieces of glass, with mirror-stands are shown. The highest portion is a flower vase and round this in crystal cups are fairy lamps, which can be removed, and flower-holders are left; four and six light stands are shown. Single fairy-lamps are now provided with stands, matching the globes in colour. These stands are apparently formed of a square, with the four corners turned over to the centre, space being left for inserting fern foliage or a few flowers; and thus the lamps make exceedingly pretty ornaments for the daytime, besides being so useful at night.

[1] FL-XLI-9, *Prunus or Hawthorn – What's in a Name?*, November 2006, pg. 9

In the Oriental red, a shaded brown in rose-pink and in blue, fluted globes are now provided for the fairy lamp. These, when lighted, have in miniature the same affect as the festooned blinds of silk in a strong sunlight, and they are certainly very attractive means of dispensing light. Quite an oriental effect was produced in the showroom by the soft glow of light sent forth from a large table covered with mirror glass. Dozens of these fairy lamps were of all colours, were lighted and dainty arrangements of flowers and foliage scattered amongst them.

On the opening day, Monday, it was notified that no business could be done, but that any visitor desiring to secure a special article could do so by placing a card containing the name and address upon the wished-for specimen. The favour with which the Burmese ware was received was shown by the number of cards placed in the vases, for the fairy lamps are only one of the pretty devices into which this glassware is manufactured. A crimped edge seems to be the favorite mode of bordering vases. Some were about the size of a large peach with an opening scalloped out in the centre. These had dainty little floral designs painted upon them and are very chaste and delicate in style. Sets of three vases, chiefly after Greek models in shape, so contrived that the handles and pedestal supports are in one set of colours, and the vases in another, are choice and graceful, like many of the combinations of colour in the toilettes of ladies this season. A written description falls far short of the real effect, because it is not possible to distinguish the shades clearly, far less to give names to them.[2]

[2] The spelling and grammar in this article is as it appeared in the article. It reflects the terminology of the time and common British spelling.

The following are noteworthy passages and the information I gleaned from them:

- *..newly patented colour called the "Queen's Burmese" glassware…*

This reference is to Thomas Webb's production of Burmese since it relates to "Queen's Burmese." Webb, however, did not hold the patent for Burmese glass. The patent was granted to Mount Washington on December 15, 1885, in the US and on June 16, 1886, in the UK. Mount Washington licensed production rights to Webb also in 1886.

- *"The Burmese is so named from having been first exhibited and specimens purchased by her Majesty on the date of the annexation of Burma."*

I am sure you have all heard the story that Burmese ware got its name from the Queen's description…."It reminds me of a Burmese sunrise." That may be true; however, the article's explanation is much more plausible since Burma was annexed by Britain on January 1, 1886, six months prior to the publication of this article.

- *"In colour, it is a primrose yellow shading to pink, the shade much deeper when the lamp is lighted, and globes of the lamps are generally figured with a spray of hawthorn blossoms accurately drawn, but coloured according to fancy rather than nature."*

The key expression in this sentence is, of course *"hawthorn blossoms."* This could only refer to the Jules Barbe[3] design number 2363, Hawthorn, which was first introduced in 1886.[4]

[3] Jules Barbe was a decorator of glass and headed an enameling and gilding department.

[4] *British Glass, 1800-1914* by Charles R. Hajdamach, pgs. 433-434.

Jules Barbe registered design 2363 - "Hawthorn"

Since this article was written at the time of introduction of Webb's Burmese fairy lamps, the identification has significant weight in identifying the design.

It is equally noteworthy that the design is described as "*accurately drawn, but coloured according to fancy rather than nature."* This could easily explain why the flowers in the Forget-Me-Not design are red instead of blue — something that has bothered the Webb Burmese Design Study Group for some time. But, that is a discussion for another time.

- *The lamps are furnished with fluted saucers or stands, which are reversible and form very graceful flower holders.*

This, of course, refers to Clarke's Model Number 138 "The Reversible."

Clarke Model 138 "The Reversible"
Pottery Gazette March 1, 1887

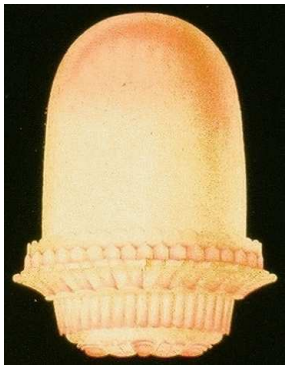
This design was first advertised in the *Pottery Gazette* on March 1, 1887, four months prior to this article,

- *Centre-pieces of glass, with mirror-stands are shown. The highest portion is a flower vase and round this in crystal cups are fairy lamps, which can be removed, and flower-holders are left; four and six light stands are shown.*

This refers to Clarke's Model Numbers 144, 145, and 146. These designs were first advertised in the *Pottery Gazette* on April 1, 1887, three months prior to this article.

Clarke Models 144, 145, and 146
Pottery Gazette April 1, 1887

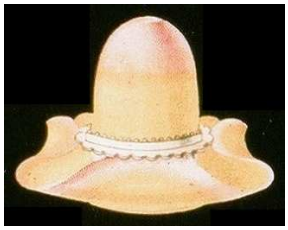
The reference to *"crystal cups"* is somewhat significant. It suggests that Burmese pressed lamp cups were not introduced at the same time Burmese fairy lamps were. This is supported by a close inspection of the first Burmese fairy lamp ads in the *Pottery Gazette*. Burmese lamp cups were, however, advertised in the October 1, 1887, issue of the *Pottery Gazette* with Clarke model number 192.



Clarke Model 192
Pottery Gazette October 1, 1887

- *These stands are apparently formed of a square, with the four corners turned over to the centre, space being left for inserting fern foliage or a few flowers; and thus the lamps make exceedingly pretty ornaments for the daytime, besides being so useful at night.*

This reference refers to Clarke's model number 140.

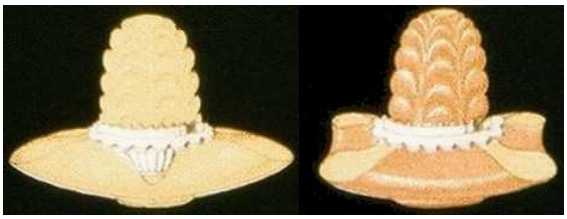


Clarke Model 140
Pottery Gazette March 1, 1887

This design was first advertised in the *Pottery Gazette* on March 1, 1887, four months prior to this article.

- *In the Oriental red, a shaded brown in rose-pink and in blue, fluted globes are now provided for the fairy lamp. These, when lighted, have in miniature the same affect as the festooned blinds of silk in a strong sunlight, and they are certainly very attractive means of dispensing light.*

This description, although not very clear, probably refers to Clarke's Model Number 150 "The Corolla."

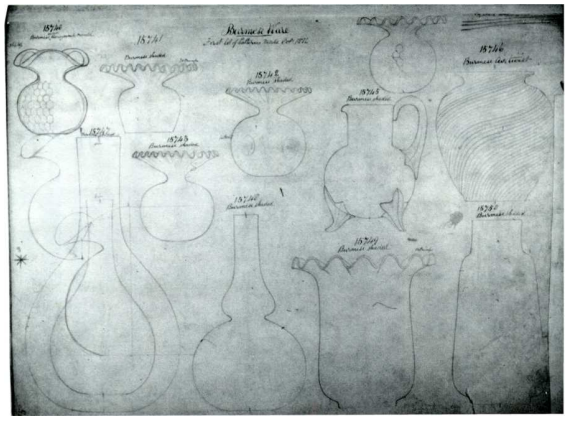


Clarke Model 150 "The Corolla"
Pottery Gazette April 1, 1887

The design of this lamp was registered by Thomas Webb on November 23, 1886.[5] The shade and quadrafold base, however, on this lamp is not Burmese ware. It is satin glass. This lamp was first advertised in the *Pottery Gazette* on April 1, 1887, three months prior to this article.

- *….. for the fairy lamps are only one of the pretty devices into which this glassware [Burmese] is manufactured.*

This is a very interesting statement and it is supported by Webb's own design book.

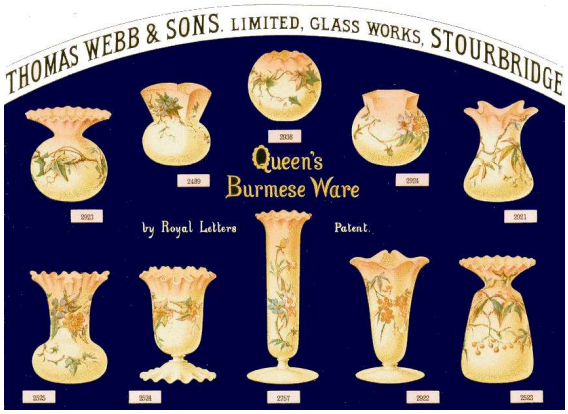


This is a page from a Webb's design book. It includes a notation *(top center)* that reads:

Burmese Ware

First Lot of Patterns made Oct. 1886.

If the caption can be accepted as accurate, Burmese ware was produced in a variety of shapes eight months prior to the writing of this article.



Pottery Gazette October 1, 1887

In addition, less than three months after the publication of this Australian article, Queen's Burmese Ware was advertised in the *Pottery Gazette* in a broad variety of shapes. Each of these shapes is decorated with one of the Jules Barbe designs.

Finally, the most unusual feature of this article — there was not a single reference to Clarke! I bet he was livid that Webb received all the credit for <u>his</u> fairy lamps.

[5] Registered Design Number 62029

There is probably more to be gleaned from this article. For now, however, this will be enough. I hope you found the details included within the article as interesting as I have.