

**FAIRY LAMP CLUB NEWSLETTER – MAY 2001**

**RIBBON SATIN SWIRL, MOTHER OF PEARL**  
by F. J. Vyn



In the last newsletter we shared an image of a blue ribbed creamer that is similar to images in this article. If you look at

the following fairy lamp with a blue Mother of Pearl shade and a strange curled green base, its identity is a mystery, as is that of the blue creamer.



Our primary resource book *Fairy Lamps- Elegance in Candle Lighting* shows a similar lamp in Group 4. In R-219 we see the same shade in red with the green base. Unique to this chapter the colors of the shade and base are not the same, and the type of glass appears to be different. R-59 shows another red satin shade in a rare lamp cup described in detail in Ruf, Appendix D, Item 11.<sup>1</sup> This lamp cup, however, is not original to the shade.

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<sup>1</sup> This lamp cup is embossed Br. Clarke, SGDG, Portieux in interior, has slightly twisted ribbed sides on cup, wide petal horizontal flange with dimple impressed in each petal from below. This cup has

These two fairy lamps are described with accurate colorful words such as; pinched, puckered top rim; scalloped, flared bottom rim; and striped ribbon satin Mother of Pearl (MOP) surface. The unique bottom rim is also drawn in or waisted. The MOP glass has vertical air trap ribbons and colored glass over a white glass liner.



The R-55 fairy lamp has red ribbon satin swirl air traps that are very similar to the R-59 striped ribbon air traps. R-279 shows the same top rim as our blue shade, and the green and pumpkin color glass also has swirled air traps. The same colors and type of glass are shown on the handled creamer, and rose bowls that are associated with Thomas Webb on pages 36 and 37 of *Collectible Glass Rose Bowls* by Billings. On page 43, we find rose bowls with the same glass as R-55 & R-279 described as Pompeian Swirl attributed to Stevens and Williams. The source for R-59 and R-219 points without proof toward the dominant sources for Victorian glass, Thomas Webb and Stevens & Williams.

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flange with separated rounded bars holding a dome of 3.37" maximum diameter. It will also hold a 2.87" diameter dome with notched or scalloped bottom rim.



Now we will look at the green tri-fold pond lily base from R-219 and our example. To me, this base itself is a work of art when shown in the top and bottom view. There are many pieces of Tiffany and Steuben Art Glass that are not as appealing. Does it belong as the base for the ribbon striped MOP domes? There is a recessed foot with space available for the candle. The shape is not symmetrical but there is a functional reason for this.

Home base for the dome is centered on the recessed area. If all three curled sides were the same shape, raising and lowering the dome to service the candle would be difficult. A chip on the bottom rim of the dome or a fragile edge on the base would be a disaster. One curl is opened up to allow space for safe movement of the dome. The engineers may have helped the artist with this feature. The scalloped bottom rim of the dome may be an artistic way to provide input airflow for candle combustion.

Most remarkable is the overall beauty of the R-219 fairy lamps in red and blue. Beyond Victorian they may cross the boundary to French and American Art Nouveau glass, and may even compete with contemporary glass by Dale Chihuly.<sup>2</sup> Do we have a pond lily about to blossom with its floral base floating on a pond? Whatever you see in this lamp the appeal comes from just the glass, without any decoration.

With a candle inside we discover that the flame is bright where passing through the

semi-transparent striped ribbon air traps. The cased glass in between is more opaque and now the red flower looks like flickering fire. If only we had candles with the correct flame temperature, we could see these lamps as intended by their maker.



*Note that the "green side" is up on the rose bowl bases and down on the fairy lamps. The pontil mark is on the green side as well.*

Thinking about the green pond lily base in the same manner, when held up to a light source we see a bright and dark swirled pattern. From this we conclude that this green base is also a variation of satin swirl MOP glass. Now other than the different colors we see why R-219 is correctly placed in Group 4 of the Ruf book. The rose bowls are also paired with green (MOP) pond lily bases. With the help of the rose bowls we know more about the R-219 family of lamps.

As one thing leads to another we at least have enjoyed putting the spot light on one of many beautiful fairy lamps you may not have noticed before. We hope you enjoyed the tour presented by "Ribbon Satin Swirl, Mother of Pearl."

<sup>2</sup> Contemporary glass artist. Biography and examples of his work are located at [www.chihuly.com](http://www.chihuly.com)

**PYRAMID-SIZE POND LILY FAIRY LAMP** by Helen, Graham, and Jim

Helen and Graham live in the United Kingdom and enjoy access to fairy lamp markets that many of us can only dream about. They have contributed several articles to the Newsletter and have shared their "unusual finds" and undocumented fairy lamps with us countless times. It continually amazes me what rare examples they are able to find. This one is no exception.

Recently, Graham sent me a note with his latest finds – choice finds to say the least. However, one of his purchases was really unusual – a "pyramid size" Pond Lily shade.



You may recognize the shade on the right as being R-219. It is a ribbon satin MOP cased in white and is typically seen with a green satin Pond Lily base. This style of glass was discussed in detail in FL-XIX-7. The article "Ribbon Satin Swirl – Mother of Pearl" by Frank can also be found on our website.<sup>3</sup> The shade on the left, however, is a rare find!

As you can see, the shade is substantially smaller in size. While the two sizes are referred to as fairy and pyramid-size, neither was ever intended to be used with a Clarke

lamp cup. Instead, they used a Pond Lily base with a tri-corner folded rim and integral candle cup. In addition, the glass on the pyramid-size dome appears to be ribbon pearl overlaid with clear glass. The pattern appears to be similar and possibly from the same manufacturer, but as you know specific attribution is very difficult.

Graham, of course, has the same questions you or I have regarding this smaller shade. Has anyone seen another like it? Does anyone have or know where a "pyramid-size" Pond Lily base can be found? Anyone have opinions as to manufacturer or vintage? Are there other colors? I am sure you have questions of your own. If you have any information to share regarding this unusual shade, send it along. We are all anxious to hear from you.

<sup>3</sup> [www.fairy-lamp.com/Fairylamp/ArticleRibbonMOP.html](http://www.fairy-lamp.com/Fairylamp/ArticleRibbonMOP.html)