

JAMES HADLEY & SONS LTD.

1896 - 1905



James Hadley (1837 - 1903) was apprenticed in the 1850's to Kerr & Binns of Worcester. He worked in the modelling department with Edward Locke and the young Thomas Brock. By 1870 he became principal modeller for Royal Worcester and in 1875 decided to leave and set up his own modelling studio at no.95 Worcester High Street. He sold almost his complete output of ornamental vases and figures to Royal Worcester, often inscribing his name on the base of his master models.

In November 1895 Hadley's contract to supply models to Royal Worcester was terminated due to a dwindling demand for elaborate luxury goods. For over a year Hadley rented some factory space from his old friend Edward Locke, who had set up his own works at Shrub Hill, Worcester.

In 1897 with the support of partner Frank Littledale Hadley started to build himself a factory in Diglis Road Worcester on land owned by his family.

Early production concentrated on decorative '**Art Pottery**' with mainly monochrome decoration and terracotta plaques modelled in high relief. Hadley wares were made using coloured clay mouldings in dark blue, green and brown which distinguish them from similar objects made by the Royal Worcester factory.

Hadley employed a group of young artists including William Jarman, Walter Powell, Arthur Lewis, Walter Sedgley, Albert Shuck, Kitty Blake and Mary Eaton to paint peacocks, game birds and flowers in a subdued palette. Softly painted roses in full bloom, painted in the Hadley style, later came to be known as Hadley Roses by collectors of Royal Worcester wares.

In 1900 Hadley & Sons became a limited company with shares held by James and his four sons, Louis, Howard, Harry & Frank, and Frank Littledale (gentlemen). In 1901 Royal Worcester tried to prevent Locke & Co. and **Hadley and Sons Ltd.** using the title 'Worcester' on their wares. The case against Locke was taken to the High Court, with the agreement that the finding would also apply to Hadley. In July 1902 the court ruled that Locke and hence Hadley "*be perpetually restrained from selling.....any goods made of china or porcelain.....in connection with the word 'Worcester' without clearly distinguishing such goods from the goods of the plaintiffs*" Hadley agreed with Royal Worcester to use a new mark with a ribbon enclosing the words '*Worcester, England*'.

In June 1905, after James Hadley's death, Royal Worcester purchased the Hadley factory for £7500. The factory continued to produce wares at Diglis Road using the Royal Worcester mark with the additional word Hadleyware until March 1906. All the workforce, moulds and designs were then moved to the main site in Severn Street, Worcester. Production of some of Hadley's designs continued, with a letter H being added to the shape design number on the underside of the pieces.

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