

Fairy Lamp Club Newsletter

Issue XXIV August 2002

HARRACH FAIRY LAMP IDENTIFIED by Jim

In December 1979 I bought this fairy lamp for \$60 and brought it home tucked inside my motorcycle jacket. Needless to say, a lot has changed since then. (I no longer ride a motorcycle.) 😊



The dome is blue satin with embossed vertical ribs, cased in white, with finely detailed floral decoration outlined in gold. The dome rests on a standard Clarke ribbed and beaded lamp cup. The matching base, blue satin cased in white, is a typical central column design with matching decoration. In addition, this base has another very distinctive feature – a "green face."



Inside the central column is, what I have always referred to as, a "green face." It is a hand-stamped mark that I assumed was the maker's mark and the key to identifying the origin of this fairy lamp. But, until now, the mark has been a mystery.

Recently, I posted an inquiry to the on-line Art Glass Discussion Group. I thought this group of knowledgeable art glass collectors, dealers, and researchers would surely be able to identify this mark. They did not disappoint me.

The mark is not a face at all. Instead, it is a "propeller." Well, it is not a propeller either, but that is the "rest of the story."

The mark is considered by many to be the trademark of the Harrach Glass Company, a prestigious and very prolific Bohemian glass company during the Victorian era. The company, founded in the early 1700's, produced 700,000 pounds of finished glass in 1885 and a record 1.5 million pounds in 1900 employing over 500 people.¹ I think it is important to note that these amazing production records coincide exactly with the peak of fairy lamp popularity. Coincidence?

¹ Collectable Bohemian Glass – 1880-1940, Robert and Deborah Truitt.



The mark was once thought to be by Thomas Webb and referred to as the "propeller mark." However, Charles Hajdamach, in his "British Glass, 1800-1914", page 450, says that there is no proof that such a mark was ever used by Webb, and thinks it more likely that pieces marked in this way are Continental, probably Bohemian, in origin.

Many collectors now believe the mark actually represents the three feather plumes of the Harrach family crest. However, the mark on my fairy lamp still looks like a "face."

My good e-friends in the Art Glass Group (several are members of the Fairy Lamp Group as well) provided me with other examples that show how poorly the mark was applied and indicated they have seen many other examples as poor as mine.



Looking at the above examples it is easy to see how the "propeller mark" could easily be

so poorly applied as to look like the "face" on my fairy lamp.

So, as with so many other discoveries, there are more questions to be asked. Certainly, at the top of the list is, "What other fairy lamps did Harrach produce?" Perhaps, given the diversity of their products and the prolific production during the heyday of fairy lamps, many more than we realize. Perhaps, even some that have been attributed to English manufacturers. But, that's another research project for another time.

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Issue XXVII May 2003

HARRACH FAIRY LAMP by Jim

With the help of many others, I was able to identify the Harrach trademark on a fairy lamp and reported it in a previous issue of this newsletter.² To the best of my knowledge, this was the first example available showing the Harrach trademark. I am very happy to report that I have another example to show you.

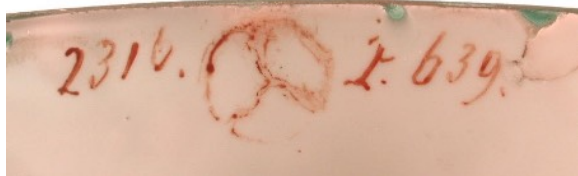
If you recall, the earlier example had a poorly defined trademark and, to some, it was debatable if it was in fact the Harrach "propeller" trademark. This example is much better and is clear evidence that Harrach was a contributor to fairy lamp production in Bohemia.

The trademark, incorrectly attributed to Thomas Webb, is a circular design with three "arms" that give it a "propeller" appearance. The "arms" are actually "feather plumes" derived from the Harrachov family crest.

² Fairy Lamp Newsletter, Issue XXIV, August 2002



As you can see, the marks are crudely formed and are applied by hand with an ink stamp, accounting for their crude and unpredictable appearance. My newly discovered Harrach mark is no exception.



This mark is a reddish brown ink and includes the hand-written annotations "2316" and "P. 63g" or "P.639." Unfortunately, I do not know the meaning of the annotations. They could be design numbers, artist signatures, plant locations, or even a date code. If anyone has any information of what these annotations mean, we all would like to hear from you.

Now, what you really want to know. What type of fairy lamp is it? Unfortunately, I can only show you the fairy lamp base. The shade is still waiting to be discovered. But, as you may know I am a very patient individual.



The base is very similar in design to the one that I previously reported. This one, however, is DQMOP satin glass with enameled flower and leaf decoration. This decoration is also trimmed in gold as before. The color is an aqua-marine blue and is thinly cased in white. It has an upturned ruffled edge with remnants of gold trim. It is approximately 6.75" in diameter and will accommodate a fairy-size lamp cup. Of course, it is unknown if Harrach was commissioned by Samuel Clarke to make these fairy lamps, but the Clarke lamp cup fits perfectly.

The overall quality of the glass is "fair" in that the crimping and central collar are not uniformly shaped. To me, an indication that it was destined for the "common market" and not the quality workmanship found in better satin glass examples.

Now that we have identified two signed Harrach products it is possible to extend what we know to other unmarked fairy lamps. If so, are R-568 and R-572 good candidates for consideration?



This fairy lamp (minus the lamp cup) appears to be another example of the Harrach line of fairy lamps. It was up for auction on eBay in October 2000. Unfortunately, I do not recall who bought it and cannot inquire if it had the Harrach trademark. If you are the fortunate owner, please let me know if it has the Harrach trademark.

Now, a challenge for you. The winner, of course, will receive a very handsome reward. Help me find the matching dome to my new Harrach base! 😊

As luck would have it, a member of the Art Glass Discussion Group, Brian S. just returned from visiting the Harrach Museum. Following are a few excerpts of his trip report:

I just returned from visiting Harrach Museum and glass factory located in Prague, Czech Republic. I hired an interrupter to take me there and it was well worth the visit. I doubt many glass collectors visit it as it is about a three hour drive north of Prague and only minutes away from Poland.



The museum (two stories) has so much glass that you would never attribute to Harrach it is amazing. Unfortunately, they have never published a catalog of their museum glass or have any other type of documentation. So, unless you go there, you are left to draw your own conclusions.

It is also interesting to note that they do have all of the original catalogs in their basement. The current owner of the glass works, however, does not want to let anyone see them until they get them organized. This could be a long time in coming.

The company is still alive and well as far as making glass and have a very nice glass factory. It is interesting to note that they still use the same cutting room that has been in operation for over a hundred years that is powered by a small creek.

I was also able to photograph/video tape a lot of Harrach glass in the Passau Museum in Germany.³ This is a fantastic museum for anyone interested in Bohemian glass!

A special thanks to Brian for sharing his trip with us. Dollars to donuts the catalogs in the

³ www.passau.de/alt/passau/Kultur/eglasemuse.htm

basement contain many examples of fairy lamps. Oh, my! 😊

Fairy Lamp Club Newsletter

Issue XLVI February 2008

HARRACH DESIGN BOOK by Jim

As some of you know, I participate in several on-line forums and discussion groups. These groups are an invaluable resource in learning about all types of glass, regardless of its form.

One of my favorite discussion groups is the "Rose Bowl Collectors."⁴ Not because I have a passion for rose bowls, but because I have a passion for learning about glass.

Brian, is but one of many experts in the Rose Bowl Collectors group. He has traveled extensively researching all types of glass including in-depth studies of Harrach glass. Much of his research – not all by any means – is available on his website under the heading "Project Harrach."⁵

The Harrach glass factory began operation in 1712 and is one of the oldest glass houses still in operation today. It is located in the small town of Harrachov in the Czech Republic.

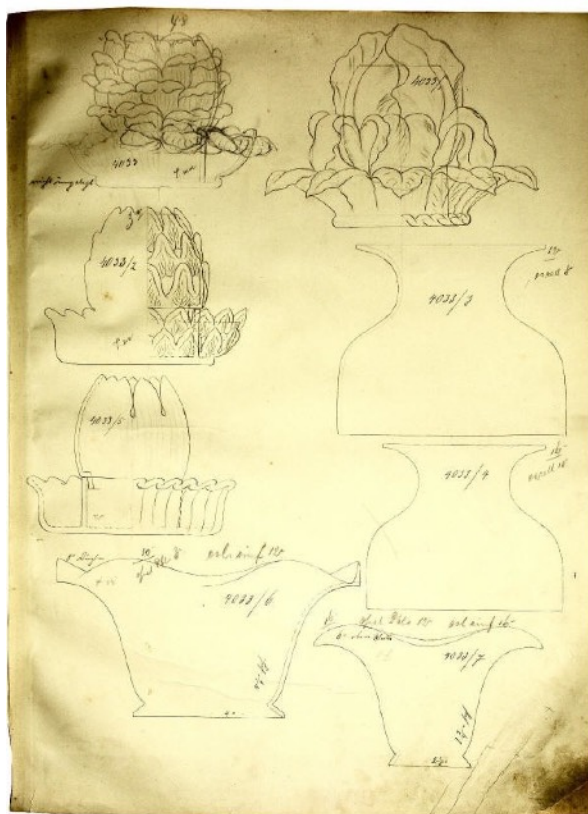
Brian had an opportunity to visit the Harrach Museum to further his research. He documented much of the Harrach glass, including many of the Harrach design books. That is where the "fairy lamp connection" was made.

Knowing of my interest in fairy lamps, Brian photographed each page of the design book that contained a fairy lamp design and

forwarded those pages to me for my files and research. I cannot begin to express my gratitude for his thoughtfulness.

The Harrach design books are similar to others we have seen which include those of Stevens & Williams.

Before I discuss individual fairy lamps found in the design book, I think it is important to understand the context that the designs were drawn and the design numbers associated with them.



This is an actual page from the Harrach design book. It includes several fairy lamps, a couple oil lamp shades, and two vases. It is interesting to note that all the designs on this page are number "4033" with extensions 0-7.

⁴ groups.yahoo.com/group/Rose_Bowl_Collectors

⁵ www.glasscollector.net/ProjectHarrach/ProjectHarrachIntroduction.html

Apparently, the design number has no significance related to shape other than a chronological record of the designs.

Each page of the design book is approximately fifteen inches wide. The drawings are done in pencil with many of the annotations, including the design numbers, in ink. There are no page numbers or dates.

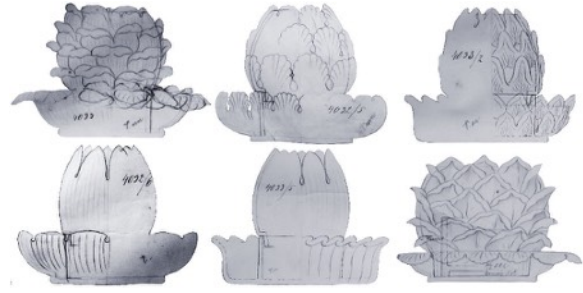
It is well known that Harrach produced fairy lamps and we have discussed several in previous articles in this newsletter.⁶ What is not clear is which of their designs, if any, were actually commissioned by Clarke. While many of the Harrach designs do not have characteristics of Clarke, some, for example U-039, have strong Clarke design characteristics.



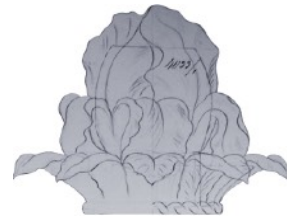
Twenty-four fairy lamp designs, in ascending design number order, found in the Harrach design book.

Currently, there are twenty-four designs shown in the Harrach design book pages provided by Brian. I am very confident, however, that many more designs will be uncovered when Brian returns to the Harrach Museum to continue his research.

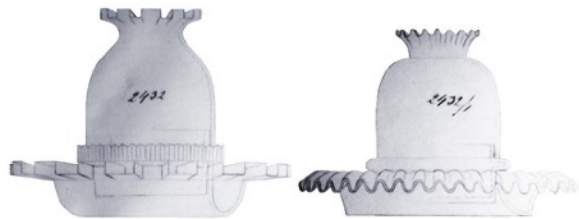
While I would like to discuss each design separately, space does not permit it. There are, however, some important characteristics worth noting.



Shown above are six of the seven floral designs. Several have characteristics we have seen before. All but one – shown in lower right – has an integral candle cup that supports the shade. The remaining design has a separate candle cup and the shade rests directly on the saucer base.



The seventh floral design has features similar to others with an integral candle cup to support the shade. It is probably made of glass; however, I have singled it out because it has features similar to other known designs made of porcelain – U-038, for example. I am not aware, however, that Harrach made any porcelain products. It is just something else to think about.



These two designs are very unique. Each base has a central column to support the lamp cup. Each lamp cup has a center ring that fits inside the shade. The lamp on the left has a

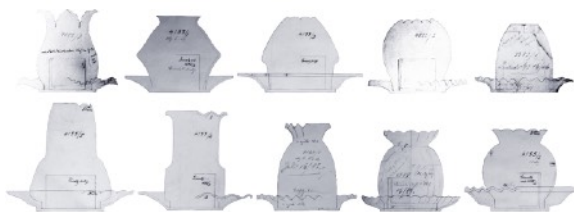
⁶ FL-XXVII-4, *Harrach Fairy Lamp* and FL-XXIV-8 *Harrach Fairy Lamp Identified*

corrugated surface for the shade to rest upon that precludes the need for air notches in the shade. The lamp cup on the right, however, is smooth which will require the shade to be notched. Unless, of course, the lamp cup has a hole in the bottom similar to those produced by Hobbs Brockunier.

The most unusual feature is the "box-like pleats" shown in the design on the left. I am not aware of any fairy lamp designs that have box pleats similar to these.

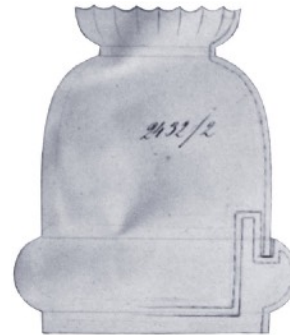


Each shade in these three examples has a flange on the bottom rim. You would think that it was designed to fit within a lamp cup or on a saucer base. Instead, the flange does not rest on anything. The shade simply rests on the sides of the base with no lamp cup or shoulder to support it. If you had one of these designs, you would surely think something was missing. Each of these designs has a separate simple candle cup.

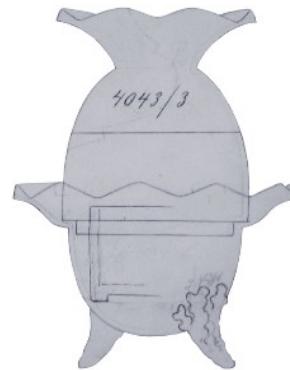


These designs, while distinctly different, have one thing in common. The shade rests directly on the saucer base with no apparent flange to hold them in place. Each of these designs has a separate simple candle cup, many with their own separate design number. In one case (the center design on the bottom row) the base itself has a different design

number from the shade. This implies that the base is multi-purpose – a feature common to many fairy lamps.



This unique and complex design is very unusual. The base has a channel for the shade to rest in. The interior portion of the channel forms an integral candle cup within the base. It also appears to be open on the bottom of the base.



This is the only design that has feet on the base. Based on the drawing, it has three applied feet. Care was taken to show the detail of the feet. This design of applied feet is typical of other Harrach designs.

It is also interesting that even though the shade has a flange on the lower rim, it does not rest on the flange. The candle cup also does not have a flat surface to rest on. It simply rests on the round surface of the base.

I have belabored the details of these designs long enough. Now, the rest is up to you. Go through your collections and send me photos

of lamps illustrated in these designs. While some may have never been manufactured, I suspect many were. We just have to find them.

Note: The lamp details described in this article can be seen much better in the on-line newsletter.⁷

⁷ www.fairy-lamp.com/Fairylamp/Adobe_Files/Issue46.pdf