

Yorkshire Pottery

Introduction to Yorkshire Pottery

The making of pottery in Yorkshire has a long history, dating back to the Roman period. By the Middle Ages there was a specialised trade of pottery manufacture with its own regional distinctions in shapes and decorative techniques. These continued into the middle of the 20th century in country potteries producing domestic earthenwares for local kitchen and farm use. In the second half of the 18th century industrial potteries were set up to make table and decorative wares in the new fashions. These used imported materials and were produced for a much wider market. The industrial potteries reached their peak of activity during the first half of the 19th century.



Economic instability, disruption of world markets and foreign competition reduced demand for the Yorkshire Potteries and very few remain in production today. The industry in Yorkshire was once as important as the Staffordshire potteries.

Yorkshire Pots and Potteries

The gallery takes its name from the title of the book *Yorkshire Pots and Potteries* by Heather Lawrence, published in 1974. This is still the standard reference work on the subject.

The history and technical development of the pottery industry in Yorkshire, principally in the 18th and 19th centuries, was the lifetime interest of Heather Lawrence. Her study of historical sources, visits and examination of the products of many Yorkshire potteries was an outstanding achievement of lasting significance.

Heather Lawrence's research collection of Yorkshire pottery comprised many pieces illustrated and described in her book. They were carefully selected to illustrate the shapes, marks and decorative techniques of the various Yorkshire Potteries. She died in 1984.

Doncaster Museum & Art Gallery was able to acquire most of her research collection, associated information and excavated sherds in 1985. This was made possible by generous grants from the Purchase Grant Fund administered by the Museums & Galleries Commission and Victoria & Albert Museum (MGC/V&A) and the National Art Collections Fund (NACF).

The acquisition of this collection has made this gallery the most representative display of Yorkshire ceramics in the region.

The pots are displayed in six cases:

1. Regional pots
2. Leeds, Castleford and Ferrybridge
3. South Yorkshire potteries
4. Don Pottery
5. Swinton, Brameld and Rockingham
6. Art Pottery in Leeds

All our collections of Yorkshire ceramics are on show, except the research collections of excavated sherds from specific pottery sites. These may be consulted by appointment.