

## **Our Ruby Anniversary – 40 Years of The Shelley Group: Annual Weekend at Telford 24<sup>th</sup> to 26th April 2026**

The Shelley Group in the UK is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we hope to see as many members as possible join us to mark the occasion.

The programme is still being finalised but talks already arranged include Slater's Garden Scenes, Special Patterns for Retailers, Miniatures, Powder Bowls, Frederick Rhead, History of the Shelley Pottery, with the usual enticing display of china exhibits related to the talks.

Additionally, we will set up an Exhibition showcasing The Shelley Group's history and achievements over the years with a looped slideshow, displays of photos, early newsletters and original Shelley documents owned by The Group, available to browse through. In addition, the Shelley Pattern Book, Ray Reynold's Scrapbook and the Shelley Inventory, which are lodged with the Stoke on Trent Archive, will be available.

The formal programme usually starts on the Friday evening, but this year we are planning an informal programme on Friday for early arrivals, as a number of us arrive on the Thursday (we may even put something together on Thursday if there is any interest) and do our own thing before having dinner together in the restaurant.

### **Optional Friday Outing: The Middleport Pottery**

This is at additional cost, not included in the annual weekend booking fee, on a shared transport basis, to visit the Burleigh (Burgess and Leigh) premises at The Middleport Pottery, a working Victorian pottery still producing popular domestic ware. Charlotte Rhead, daughter of Frederick, worked as a designer for the factory from 1926 to 1931.

The last pottery tour of the working area of the factory is at 10.30 a.m. on Fridays. We need to book the tour in advance (cost £12, over 65s £11), but there is a lot to see at Middleport even without the tour. The tour includes a number of stairs; is not wheelchair accessible and flat closed shoes are required. Retail therapy in the Burleigh factory shop would finish off the tour.

The workshop studio of Alex Allday, who received a bursary from The Shelley Group whilst a University student, and the Burslem Pottery producing bird grotesques with more than a nod of inspiration from the Martin brothers are both nearby.

A pleasant walk alongside the Trent & Mersey canal and lunch at The Packing House Café nearby, before returning to the hotel would finish off the outing.

<https://re-form.org/heritage-buildings/middleport-pottery/>

### **Our Guest Speaker: Mark Hill**



We are delighted to have secured Mark Hill, who will be well-known to viewers of the UK BBC's Antiques Roadshow and Antiques Road Trip, as our speaker on Saturday afternoon. Mark is not a Shelley expert but he is a delightful and engaging speaker, with huge expertise in 20<sup>th</sup> century art and design, specialising in glass, and is an accredited lecturer of The Arts Society. He was the co-author of the international *Miller's Collectables Price Guides* from 2002-17 and has written for *The Daily Mail* and *Homes & Antiques* magazine.

For more information about Mark see his website <https://markhillpublishing.com>

The formal programme usually finishes with Sunday lunch but a number of people stay until Monday morning, having dinner together on Sunday evening. We may be able to organise informal visits to nearby Ironbridge, again on a car sharing basis, or The Jackfield Tile Museum on Sunday afternoon, if there is sufficient time/interest (attractions close at 4 p.m. on a Sunday).

The Annual Weekend has been based for some years at The Holiday Inn Telford, which has a swimming pool and fitness centre for guests, and is conveniently near to the various pottery museums in the area and also to Stoke on Trent. It is accessible by both road and rail. Disabled accessible rooms are available but need to be booked.

Negotiated rates for Weekend delegates are also available on Thursday and Sunday nights before and after the Annual Weekend. Please DO NOT book directly as the special rates we have negotiated do not apply on the website, and it is very difficult to unscramble. The Shelley Group Conference Fee includes all meals at the Holiday Inn, as specified on the attached booking form, together with your conference pack and handout.

The hotel caters for various dietary requirements but if anyone requires certified Kosher or Halal meals, there will be an additional cost to the negotiated rates and we need to arrange this in advance.

The Programme includes a Gala Dinner on the Saturday evening when we are asking everyone to wear something red for our Ruby Anniversary. As this is a special anniversary, we have planned a surprise gift for delegates.

Further details are available from Ruth Jenkins [events@shelley.co.uk](mailto:events@shelley.co.uk) who will try her best to answer any queries.