

KANGAROO UMBRELLA STAND FROM THE TERENCE LANE COLLECTION



Photo: George Serras

As you wander through the *Nation* Gallery in the Museum, your attention is likely to be captured by a large object in the 'Hopping Mad' display that features objects from the Terence Lane collection.

This object is truly a show-stopper – a large ochre-glazed stoneware kangaroo on a tuft of grass that forms a tray for umbrellas, while its outstretched paws clasp a brown ring to support their handles. It would have been a striking feature of any hallway or entrance. Standing almost a metre high, it exaggerates the kangaroo's exotic appearance. It was purchased by Terence Lane in 1975 from a London antique dealer.

The umbrella stand was made in 1885 by George Tinworth for the British pottery company, Doulton. Tinworth was one of Doulton's most celebrated ceramic artists, and was known as the 'Rembrandt of Clay'. His kangaroo umbrella stand created intense interest when it was displayed at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

George Tinworth was born in Walworth, London, in 1843. While working as a boy in his father's small wheelwright's business, the young George began carving figures in wood and stone. He was accepted at the age of around nineteen as a student at the Lambeth School of Art, mainly because of the quality of the carving of a small head he had made and brought along to the interview. Studying after hours, Tinworth was proficient enough to be admitted to the Schools of the Royal Academy in 1864. Two years later he drew on his daily experiences as a working wheelwright in Walworth to create a sculptural piece called 'Peace and Wrath in Low Life'.

In 1866 his art teacher persuaded him to abandon his trade entirely in favour of becoming a full-time pottery modeller with Doulton's Lambeth Pottery. His early time there was not easy, as Tinworth, a teetotaler and non-smoker who did not swear and spent his rest times at work reading the Bible, did not fit in readily to the work environment. Nevertheless, his skill in modelling was recognised by the celebrated art critic, John Ruskin, who played a considerable part in making Tinworth's work known outside the Pottery's walls.

In addition to modelling medallions depicting the heroes of classical Greece, Tinworth began to design and decorate stoneware vessels embellished with beaded runners, raised bosses and incised lines, which became very popular.

Doulton's display at Chicago in 1893 was one of the triumphs of Britain's contribution to the World's Columbian Exposition. Twin-arcaded pavilions made of terracotta and linked by a central dome housed a huge variety of ceramic items and ornamentation. One of the highlights of the display was the 'History of England' vase made by George Tinworth. Well over a metre tall, the vase depicted twenty incidents in English history and twenty English monarchs.

Another of Tinworth's exhibits for Doulton at Chicago was the Museum's kangaroo umbrella stand. In common with his fellow ceramic artist at Doulton Lambeth, Hannah Barlow (decorator of the kangaroo jug described in the March issue of *FRIENDS*), Tinworth based his depiction of the kangaroo on 'close observation and field study', according to Terence Lane who collected the work.

Australian motifs, such as the kangaroo umbrella stand and other Australiana, were prominent features of Doulton's large display, which garnered seven of the highest awards at the Exposition, the most for any pottery maker. A number of Doulton vases, exhibited at Chicago, and decorated with colourful paintings of Australian wildflowers, are in the collections of the Powerhouse Museum and the Art Gallery of South Australia. And the kangaroo umbrella stand in 'Hopping Mad' is now a firm favourite with visitors to the National Museum of Australia. 🇦🇺

Roslyn Russell