

# Convention 2008: A 'Full House' of Willowers



Lucky Willow and Elvis – all in one weekend! What a delight! Instead of me telling you my version of the convention, I had various members pick one event to report on for the newsletter. Let's get started! – *Nancee Rogers*

Those arriving early could participate in a pre-convention tour of Memphis. Our current president, Jennifer Cather, reports:

On Thursday morning, July 10th, about 38 IWC folks got **all shook up** to board a bus for a tour of Memphis, TN! Our tour guide related many sights and facts about the city on the way, like the Pyramid, Victorian Village, Main St. and the Lorraine Hotel where M.L. King Jr. was shot. Our first stop was Sun Records where famous performers like Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash recorded hit songs and achieved **fame and fortune**. We next arrived at the Peabody Hotel to watch the parade of ducks. Watching these cute birds waddle down the red carpet to the marble fountain one just **can't help falling in love** with them. Boarding the bus again, some of us started asking, **doncha think its time** for lunch? Before we could eat at the Neely's Bar-B-Que restaurant, we passed Beale Street where B.B. King and others made a **mess of blues**. We enjoyed big piles of pork/beef ribs and ear-to-ear mess for lunch! The tour traveled next to Elvis Presley Blvd, **Heartbreak Hotel**, and Graceland. After a group photo, we all went our **separate ways**. We walked the **green, green grass of the home** where Elvis lived and worked. The tour group boarded the bus and returned to the Veranda Hotel with many Memphis **memories** and looked ahead **for the good times** of Convention '08. {FYI – All bold words are Elvis song titles.}



Next Suzie Crist gives an account of Show and Tell, the first major event, held Thursday evening...

Convention 2008 began with Show and Tell - Luckiest Willow Finds". We all know that finding willow is always lucky but sharing and showing it to others adds to our fun!

I chose to list "Lucky 7" items and added some special comments I heard:

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#1 - Fostoria variant etched willow pieces (especially the cup and saucer)

"LEARNING ALL YOU CAN ABOUT YOUR WILLOW"

#2 - A Goodall relish bottle with the BW plate design in the bottom

"MEETING OLD FRIENDS AGAIN AND MAKING NEW ONES"

#3 - Willow pieces from Vietnam

"KNOWING PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD"

#4 - A 1928 piece from a favorite grandmother

"SHARING WILLOW CONVENTIONS WITH FAMILY & RELATIVES"

#5 - 1880s Wooster jugs

"FRIENDS WHO INTRODUCED US TO WILLOW"

#6 - A Burleigh condiment set featuring the bridge with three people on it

"FINDING A WILLOW WIDOW OR FUTURE WIFE..AND MARRYING THEM"

#7 - Willow fabric and willow purses

" JUST COMING HERE FOR THE HUGS!"



Friday morning started with another 'tour' lecture by Jeff Siptak. Brenda Hoffer describes it for us...

Who knew when we attended the IWC 2008 Convention we would be privileged to travel to the Blue Willow Mother Land, the place where it all began, England?

Of course it meant traveling over all that water to get there, but it would certainly be worth the trip. Again, Agnes was there to greet us. With Jeff Siptak making all the necessary arrangements and personally guiding us, we went to Stoke-on-Trent to tour the factory and an "imaginative" willow museum filled with Doulton, one of the oldest and best recognized chinaware companies in the world.

From its very practical beginnings in sanitary wares and other industrial ceramics to everyday tableware, the Doulton factories have produced generations of that universal favorite among collectors, the Blue Willow pattern, easily recognizable with its rich, royal, flow blue transfer on the pure white background. Jeff directed our attention to the excellent examples of Blue Willow china as only Doulton could produce. When we returned from our tour we were welcomed by pieces of Doulton china from Jeff's personal collection.

I recommend travel by PowerPoint presentation to everyone and hope that someday we will have another opportunity for a return visit.

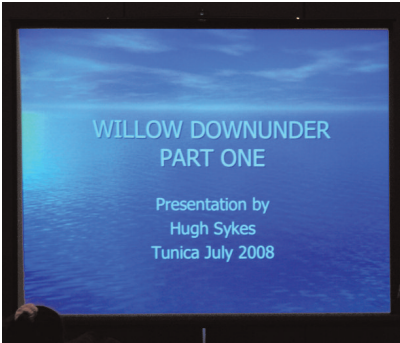


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**Next, Charles Hollingsworth gives us the details about Hugh Sykes' lecture...**

Perhaps there is no one, currently, more responsible for enabling us to call ourselves "International Willow Collectors", than Hugh and Kathy Sykes from Hamilton, New Zealand. Hugh, our 2007 President, more than did himself proud, when he spoke to us on Friday morning of the convention, about the history of "Willow Down Under". He first gave us an overview of the history of Willow manufacturers in Australia and New Zealand with photos of the wares and the places of manufacture. We were then treated to a short tour of some of the delightful towns around New Zealand where Kathy and Hugh go to find their Willow and a few pictures of their own collection. It was truly an eye opening experience to find out just how much Willow has been manufactured and is to be found, "Down Under".

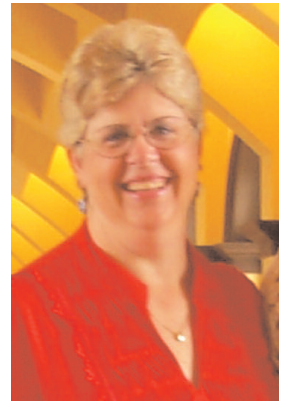


Perhaps the highlight of the convention, at least in my book, came next, when Hugh treated us to, what very well may be, the first U.S. showing of the animated short film, "Blue Willow - The Movie". A product of the New Zealand Film Commission, this unusual little movie was just the best telling of our Willow story I have seen and compares only to the presentation by the Nancee & Scot Rogers

Hand Puppet Company, at the Cincinnati Convention in 2005. Both of these telling of the tale deserve another showing when we do our "Best of the Willow Conventions" sometime in the future.

**After lunch, a craft workshop took place. Cheryl Schattall tells us all about it..**

"Fun, fun, fun!" That was the consensus when I asked participants what they thought about Judy Prophet's Craft Workshop for transfer wear. We chose patterns from cloth material that had been fused with Wonder Under, a fusible double-sided adhesive paper. We had a good variety of pattern choices which included hot air balloons, tropical fish, airplanes, motorcycles, and, of course, everybody's favorite...blue and white porcelain. After cutting out our pictures, we ironed them on to canvas bags and then outlined the picture edges with glitter fabric paints.



Judy was a wonderful instructor and very patient with her group of 20 crafters. Making the bags was very easy and Judy said Wonder Under can be used for apparel, home decor and craft projects because it bonds fabric-to-fabric, or any porous surface, including wood and cardboard. It was amazing how beautiful each bag turned out. We have some very creative and crafty Willowers. Thank you, Judy, for a wonderful time!

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**Friday finished with our auction. Joette Hightower recounts for us...**

Place - Tunica, MS

Time - Friday evening, approximately 5 pm

The lights were dimmed. The music came on. The drum rolls began.

Elvis has entered the building!

The fans went wild as The King and his bride, Priscilla, came down the aisle.

And then the biggest event began - The IWC Friday Night Auction!



Well, at least we think it was Elvis. Not sure. Elvis was our auctioneer that night, and the audience was there to spend their money.

Here are some highlights:

Goodall Breck House Yorkshire Relish Bottle - \$205.

Doulton Lambeth Jug/Pitcher - \$255.

Royal Pekin Black Cozy Teapot - \$205.

6 piece English Wash Set - \$115.

Perfume Bottle - \$175.

English Cutlery Box set of 12 - \$150.

Red lacquered Pipe Stand - \$10.

6 Ridgways Punch Cups - \$35.



There was probably a record setting amount of miscellaneous box lots - 15. People got great deals all night.

**Saturday morning found us at the flea market. Here are the details from Brenda Nottingham...**

Incredible bargains! One-of-a-kind treasures! Willowers had a treat on Saturday when the flea market doors opened. The variety was good and there was a lot of browsing and haggling over prices as some Willowers sought to "thin" their collections will still others (like me) were looking to add to their collections.



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Special bargains were there to be found whether you were looking for a marriage piece, “widow or orphan” item or just something that just caught your eye. You could even find pieces from conventions past (souvenir soap dish) as well as one of a kind items such as a popcorn seed keeper with a scoop commissioned by Louise’s Old Things but never produced (as told to me by Irene Black). There were many treasures to be found. I’ve been on the hunt for green and brown willow lately and picked up some really good pieces of green willow from Belgium and the cutest little brown willow creamer. I hope others had as good a time at the flea market as I did.



**The Place Setting event was held at the same time as the Flea Market. Judy Prophet reports...**

The place settings event has become a regular favorite of our annual conventions and this year’s was just good old fashion fun. Imagine how much fun “Dinner with Elvis” would be and yes in Elvis’ backyard, it was a lot of fun! Folks were supplied with a list of all the movies Elvis was in and the theme was to be Dinner with Elvis. Five tables were displayed and each one represented a different movie.

By majority vote, in first place was “A Change of Habit” displayed by Scot & Nancee Rogers and won the Grand Prize, which, by the way, was supplied by Michael Curtner. A huge ‘thank you’ to you Michael for your shortbread

cookies, presented in an Elvis chocolate tin!

The other settings on display were: “Viva Las Vegas” displayed by Judy Prophet & Jean Hull, “Pair-a-dice Hawaiian Style” by Jennifer Cather & Suzie Crist and “Speedway” by Marianne Evans. The last table was displayed by Tom & Daisy Eden and displayed a cookbook by Elvis entitled “Are you Hungry Tonight?”

A huge ‘thank you’ to everyone that participated in the place settings this year. It truly was an exciting dinner with Elvis and a lot of fun! For those of you that missed the convention, below are photographs of the table displays:

**Saturday’s luncheon was followed by Connie Roger’s lecture. Here to tell us about it is Rose Gray...**

International Willow Collectors is fortunate to have Connie Rogers as a lifetime member. She is a renowned researcher and publisher on the willow pattern as well as a personable, compassionate person, who is always willing to share her knowledge of willow with everyone. As an example, when registering for this convention, Connie presented a plate to each attendee from her personal collection. Each plate was labeled with the information about the plate, where it could be found in her book, and a notation that it was from Connie Roger’s collection. This is a keepsake, indeed.



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Her speech at the convention, entitled “Beyond The Basics”, involved the tracing of the main willow variant patterns and their Chinese ancestry. Her presentation covered the Standard willow pattern, Two-temples I pattern, Two-temples II pattern, Mandarin pattern, John Turner pattern, and Canton pattern. At the end of the presentation, she touched lightly on the Willow variants with no Chinese ancestry: Booths, Worcester and Burleigh.

The differences between Two-Temples I and Two Temples II patterns were presented. Two of the main differences are:

**Two Temples I**

Willow tree is below the bridge.  
Narrow windows with shutters  
on zigzag wall

**Two Temples II**

Willow tree above the bridge  
No shutters on the square windows  
on zigzag wall

In comparing the Chinese Two birds pattern with the Standard pattern, the borders are different. In comparing the Chinese Landscape pattern with the Standard pattern, the borders are the same. This is believed to be where the borders for Standard willow came from.

In a future article in the IWC newsletter, Connie will share some of the slides from her Power Point presentation. If you would like to find more information on the different willow patterns, her book, The Illustrated Encyclopedia of British Willow Ware, is an excellent source.

**Helen Daniels writes of the banquet held on Saturday evening...**



The thoughtfulness of our Convention Hosts was never more clear than on Saturday, July 12, 2008: a rest period for many of us from 1:30 to 7:00 p.m. Time to gird up one’s loins (metaphorically and, in some cases, otherwise) for the banquet. And it was needed.

The buffet was bounty itself: Breast of Chicken, Roast Beef, Grilled Salmon; Garden Greens, Black-eyed Pea Salad; Broccoli, Stir-fried Veggies. And Desserts with a Capital “S”.

Then, as we sank back, replete, a Presence showed itself among us. None other than Elvis himself whose repertoire of songs took us back to the good old days. We became aware of a special bond between Elvis and Joyce LaFont! We were further entertained by the magic steps of Joette Hightower and Franklin Ladner in the center of the room. We discovered a tuneful female chorus backing our crooner. Who knew we had all this talent? *cont’d*

Other talents came to light. Scot and Nancee Rogers were revealed as the winners of this year's place-setting competition.

The officers and standing committee members for the coming year were presented. It is their talents that make IWC tick.

A final raffle reminded us that we all bring special talents: generosity, friendship, and laughter. Which is how the evening ended.

A firm footing for Sunday's sale.

The convention closed on Sunday with the sale. Tables of willow – lots of opportunities for shopping – and many fond farewells as everyone headed back to return to their respective parts of the "real world". May Lucky Willow and Elvis stay with us throughout the year!

