

# Convention 2015: How the Willow West Was Fun

*Submitted by Brenda and Allen Nottingham, Kathy and Hugh Sykes*

Convention co-chairs Brenda & Allen Nottingham and Kathy & Hugh Sykes welcomed willow enthusiasts to Dallas, Texas, for the 30th Annual IWC Convention, July 9-12th, held at the Hilton Double Tree at the Galleria. A few pre-convention events on Wednesday, July 8th, included an early bird dinner at Luby's which was followed by tours of Bonnie Brown's house and Charles and Zeta Hollingsworth's house to see their wonderful willow collections.



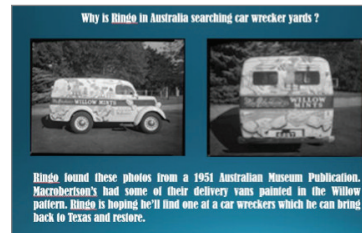
On Thursday, July 9th, 18 people enjoyed a tour of the Fort Worth/Dallas area with tour host, Alice, from Dallas. The tour included the beautiful Water Gardens at Fort Worth, the Arts District, the Stockyards and downtown, a Dallas Kennedy tour. Alice provided an amazing tour full of laughs and interesting facts.



During this time attendees were arriving at the hotel and collecting their convention package which was presented in a black tote with a white cowboy boot and willow pattern on the front.



This was followed by Show & Tell, during which time Sandra and Terry Leonard were presented with 30th convention plates featuring willow and a tractor to cover both their interests as they are the only members who have attended all 30 conventions. They were also made lifetime members of IWC! We even had an amazing cake made by the hotel to celebrate our anniversary milestone.



Friday, July 10th, started with Hugh Sykes' presentation which was themed on Pagodaville, home to the South West Texas Willow Collectors. This group, along with the South West Texas Yorkshire Relish Appreciation Society, shared information and pictures of their collections. Of particular interest was the discovery of a MacRobertson's delivery van from the early 1950's painted in the Willow Pattern. (cont'd)



This was followed by the flea market which provided everyone with some great bargains including greeting cards, books and past convention memorabilia, to name a few.

The afternoon was the auction set up and auction. Our auctioneers were Don LaFont and Angela Harland who did a great job. Don was dressed up like Willy



Nelson. Once again a lot of bargains were there for the bidding.

Jeff Siptak was slated to speak on Saturday, July 11th, but was unable to attend the convention because of unplanned kidney stone surgery, so Hugh stepped in with a quiz called "Who Wants to be a Willowaire."



This included 30 multiple choice questions about Texas and Willow. During the quiz a moving montage of willow pieces was shown accompanied by music from the Pagodaville Buskers. In the end, the winner was Daisy Eden, with Judy Prophet second and Brenda Hoffer third.

Kathy Sykes did a workshop on how to cover buttons with willow wattern fabric which also included things to do with buttons such as making jewelry, pictures, cards, etc. This was attended by about 20 people.



Connie Rogers presented a lecture titled "Beyond the Basics" which explored Willow and its ancestors and how early English manufacturers had either adopted a pattern with a "Chinese Ancestry" or one with an "English Ancestry." The presentation provided an interesting and informative discussion on how variations of the willow pattern could be interpreted as to where the ancestry of the pattern originated. Connie provided numerous examples of how the Chinese pattern had over the years been copied by English engravers either incorrectly or embellished with additional features.

The theme for the table setting competition was Willow and Western movies. The place setting was won by Brenda Hoffer, second was Michael



Curtner, and third was Dave Boering. Brenda's table setting featured a western movie theme.

There were nine entries in the art competition which ranged from embroidered pictures, quilting and decoupage shoes. The winner was Kathy Sykes with her Willow shoes and bracelet, second was Zeta Hollingsworth's framed, embroidered picture and third was Michael Curtner with a quilted piece of Willow. (cont'd)

Saturday's lunch featured a taco buffet and also included willow cupcakes made by the hotel. They featured edible toppers, Willow cupcake holders and were sitting on top of Willow cupcake stands. The holders and stands were provided by Sandra Bladen, who brought them with her from England. Also, Jeanne Smyers donated all of the beautiful Willow placemats that were used at the lunches and dinners.

The banquet was held Saturday night and included a band, "Patty & Pete Fisher," playing a variety of music including Country & Western which got people up dancing. The table decoration was a cowboy boot with bandana and native Texan flowers. Also included in the table decorations were two flashing willow lights.

We had a guessing competition which was a glass cowboy boot filled with "Skittles" and sealed with a Willow cover. People could guess how many Skittles were in the boot for \$1.00 a guess. The winner was announced at the banquet. Don LaFont won with a guess of 310 and the number was 312. He not only won the cowboy boot of Skittles but also a boxed Willow cake plate and server.

The convention concluded on Sunday morning, July 12th, with a church service held by Tom and Daisy Eden which included readings from James Cail, Brenda Nottingham and Bernie Crist.

