

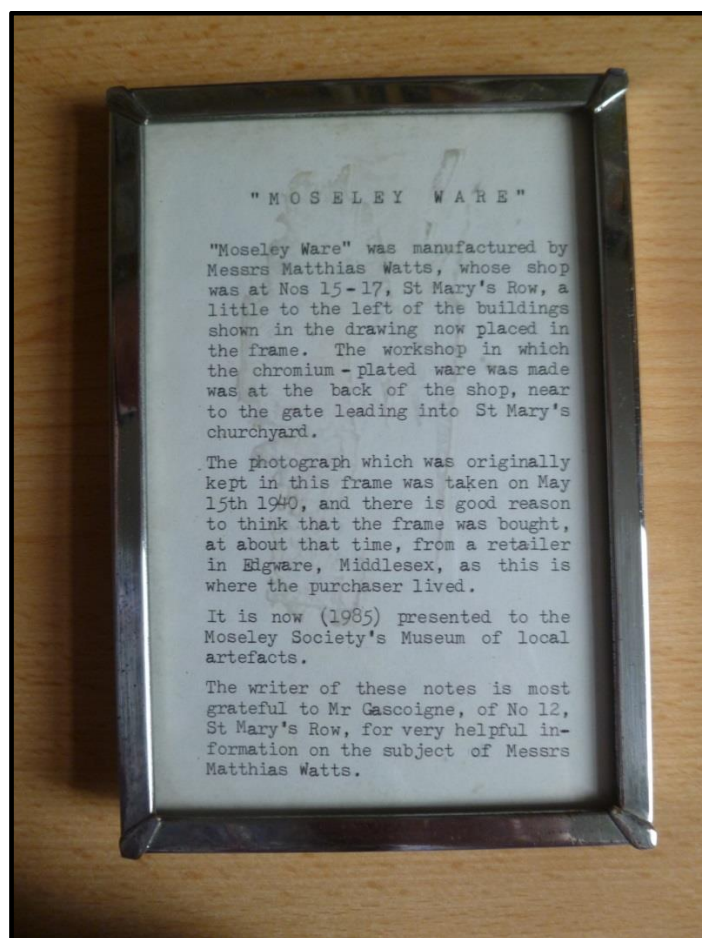
'Moseley Ware'

'Moseley Ware' was chromium plated-ware picture frames. They were manufactured by Messrs Matthias Watts, an Art Dealer and framer who had a shop at 15-17 St Mary's Row, a little to the left of the Bull's Head. The workshop in which the chromium plated-ware was made was at the back of the shop, near to the gate leading up to the churchyard. Chrome plating, often referred to simply as chrome, is a technique of electroplating a thin layer of chromium onto a metal object. The chromed layer can be decorative, provide corrosion resistance, ease cleaning procedures, or increase surface hardness.

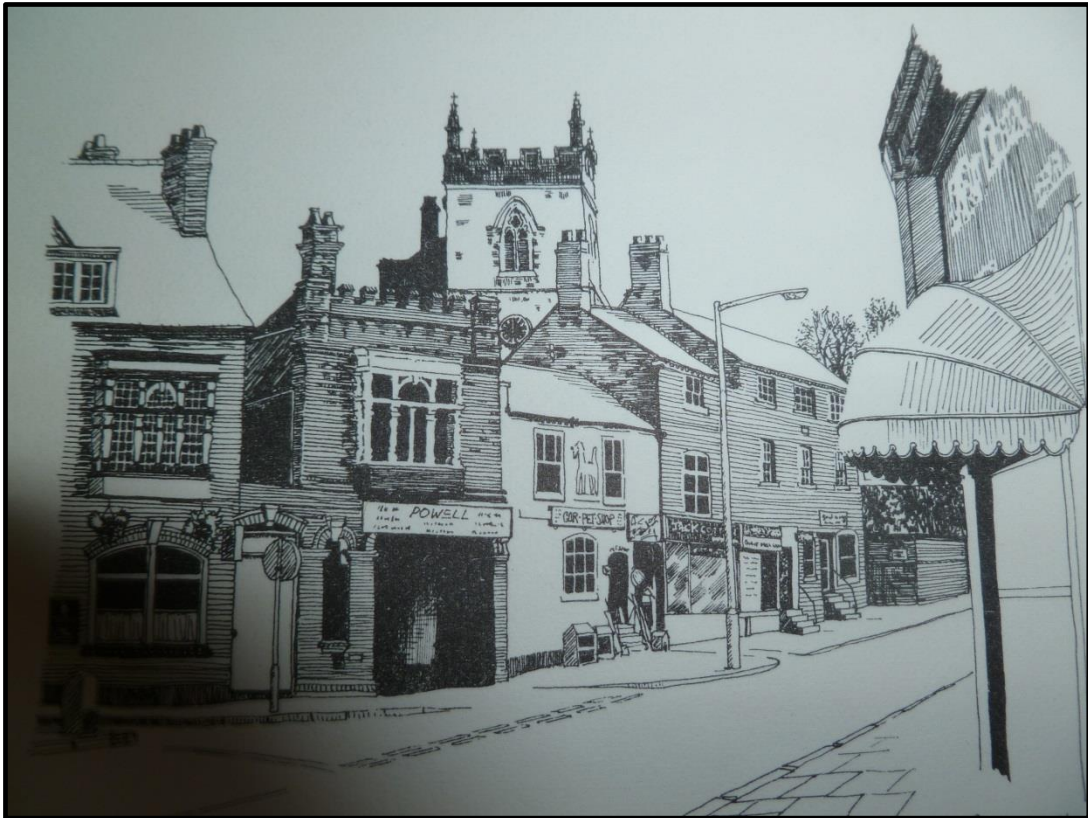
The Moseley Society History Group has Matthias Watts frames in its 'Collection'.

1 - One frame is thought to have been bought in 1940 from a retailer in Edgware, Middlesex and was presented to us in 1985. Two other frames have been donated to us. They belonged to the donor's grandfather, a brush manufacturer who lived in Balsall Heath and Kings Heath from 1891. The ornate label on the back shows that Matthias Watts was a Photo Frame Manufacturer at The Art Works, Moseley Village and that they had showrooms in Moseley, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

An example of Moseley Ware held by the Moseley Society History Group



An Image included with one of our Matthias Watts' Frames



On the back of the Frame





2 - In Autumn 2019 Jenny Owen contacted us. She found the frames when she was clearing out a relative's home and was writing a family history. She kindly donated the frames to the Moseley Society History Group.

Jenny Owen and her husband kindly donated two other frames





3 - In October 2020 we were contacted by Krsitine Lidaka who lives in a village called Pilsrundale, in the Rundale region of **LATVIA**. It is near Rundale Palace (<https://rundale.net>) and is the second largest tourist attraction in Latvia. Her husband is a restorer as well as both his parents; they work at Rundale Palace. She found a mirror with the mark 'Moseley Ware' in her local second hand shop.

Krsitine Lidaka



Krsitine Lidaka's 'Moseley Ware' Mirror



4 - In 2024 we were given another Matthias Watts picture frame by Chris Smith who currently lives in Shoreham on the coast near Brighton. He got in touch via the website and told us about the frame and asked if we'd like it. It's a welcome contribution to our collection and brings new perspectives.



The frame donated by Chris Smith

The fame belonged to his grandmother, Beryl Smith. She was born in 1917 and grew up in Birmingham. Her father, Haydon, worked for General Electric as a senior manager. After World War II, she moved to Worthing. She married a Royal Navy officer, Chris's grandfather, who went to sea just a week after their wedding. Beryl lived a long and fulfilling life, passing away at the age of 94. Chris's grandfather had a deep love for the sea, which he passed on to the family. Beryl and her husband had two sons, one of whom is Chris' father, and two grandsons. The entire family shares his passion for sailing and living by the coast. The family do not know where in Birmingham Beryl lived, but having the Moseley frame suggests she might have lived locally.



The label describes Matthias Watts and Co, Ltd., as 'The Art Works' as in another of the originals (see above), but not as 'Moseley Ware'. The stamp, Fine Art Trade Guild, did not appear on the previous originals. The Fine Art Trade Guild still exists to promote the best in art and framing (see their website). Although the company were still exporting to Australia and New Zealand, Matthias Watts had now become an agent for Royal Arita Porcelain.



Above right - Arita porcelain dish with underglaze blue, with design of river, weirs, and maple leaves, c. 1650–1670s

Arita ware is a broad term for Japanese porcelain made in the area around the town of Arita in the former Hizen Province, northwestern Kyushu Island (See Wikipedia). It is also known as Hizen ware after the wider area of the province. The great majority of early Japanese porcelain, especially Japanese export porcelain, was made here. "Arita ware" was traditionally used for the export wares in blue and white porcelain, mostly copying Chinese styles.

British Industries Fair Catalogue of the Art Works, Moseley Village, Birmingham. Also at Oxford Street, London, W1, 1922¹

PHOTO FRAMES "Moseley Ware."



5%
Special
Discount on
all orders
received
during Fair
Festival.

Delivered
c.i.f.
any Port
15% to 20%
extra
charge.

LA CORRESPONDANCE PEUT SE FAIRE EN FRANÇAIS.
ALL QUALITIES—METAL AND WOOD.
Send for Illustrated Catalogue, or ask for the address of our Agent in your country.

MATTHIAS WATTS & Co., Ltd.
BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND.
TEL: Repousse, Birmingham.
London: 36, Oxford Street, W.1.
Telephone: Museum 371.

**STAND No.
K. 21.**

PHOTOGRAPH FRAMES
Metal and Wood - All qualities

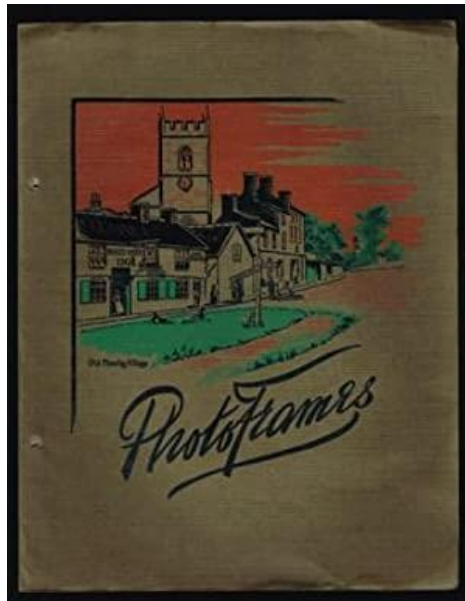


"MOSELEY WARE"
Strong Wood backs strutted, for all climates.
Catalogue free or may be seen at nearest British Consulate.

MATTHIAS WATTS & CO., LTD.
Moseley Village - - - Birmingham.

¹ http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Matthias_Watts_and_Co

Photoframes: Trade Catalogue, 1933, MATTHIAS WATTS & CO.



We understand that one of the items the business produced was blank postcards made from thick card suitable for watercolours. People would take the blank card with them when they went on holiday, paint a scene and post it home to tell their friends 'I wish you were here'.

Before it closed the shop had a window display of items made by a woodworking business that had a workshop at the rear making brightly coloured children's toys. One memory is of two such items for sale in the window – **cut-out Charles and Di heads and shoulders**, each with an arm that was pivoted so as to wave. The idea was to stick them in the back passenger windows of your car, one on each side, so they'd wave as you went along. *Did anyone out there buy one of these?* Their wedding was in August 1981.

We think the original Matthias Watts must have occupied the whole of the rear premises which stretches alongside the way to the north gate of St Mary's churchyard. We believe the shop closed in 1982, because they were open when we did our Moseley Directory in 1981 but closed by the time a new list of shops was completed in 1982.

Do send us any memories you have of Moseley.

Jan Berry

Latest revision January 2025

An example of an Oil Tablet painting.³



Does anyone know when the shop closed?
Does anyone have any memories of the shop?

Janet Berry

³ Courtesy of Damien Parker.