

# COLLECTABLES

Some pottery firms became famous because they produced great designs, some because of their outstanding product quality, and some perhaps more by pure luck. The Staffordshire firm of Keeling comes into this latter category.

The firm was founded in Burslem in the North Staffs Potteries in 1886 and it was one of hundreds

of similar companies seeking to sell ceramics in a booming late Victorian market place. Keeling produced a wide range of routine items including dinner and tea ware – plus ornamental vases and bowls. It also churned out plain pottery for use in hotels and hospitals.

## Innovative and eye-catching Unsung heroes of Losol ware design

These humble wares may not have been very attractive but they were manufactured to be very strong and durable, and this was where an element of luck came in. In 1912, the company decided to market a range of floral wares under the odd name of Losol. I have no idea why that name was chosen, but from around the time of World War I through to the

company's closure in 1936, Losol ware proved extremely popular. The firm employed a lot of innovative, though largely anonymous designers who created some extremely attractive vases, bowls and jardinières in unusual styles, – the vast majority delicately hand painted. But what

made the range very appealing was its highly-glazed and hardwearing quality, the expertise rooted in years of producing hotel wares. For 25 years Losol products put Keeling on the ceramic map, but reduced trade during the hard times of the 1930s saw the firm flounder. It closed in 1936. Today, while much of Keeling's output is forgotten or ignored, its Losol branded items are still popular with new generations of collectors, giving the brand a longevity it probably never anticipated.

Prices can be much higher than for comparable pieces by the firms' rivals in its heyday, and I have seen some of its larger items such as jardinières fetching as much as £300.

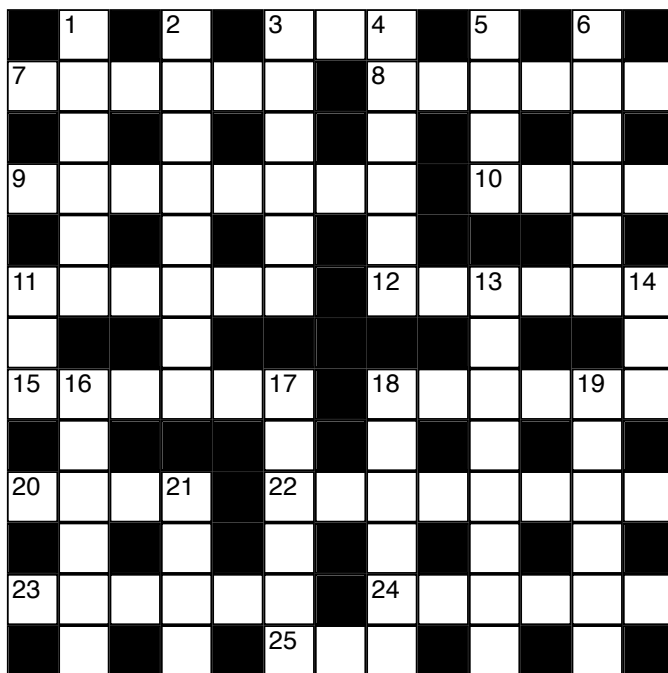
Smaller pieces are frequently in



Losol jardinière  
from about 1900

the £50 to £100 price category, and there are a fair amount of them still around if you look out. The firm's name is clearly marked on the base of the items, not only Keeling & Co – but also Losol ware in a scripted form.

## QUICK crossword



### Across

- 3 Regret (3)
- 7 Fruit (6)
- 8 State of semi-consciousness (6)
- 9 Actor (8)
- 10 Beige (4)
- 11 Profoundly unhappy or unfortunate person (6)
- 12 Nut (6)
- 15 Highest in excellence (6)
- 18 Head-dress worn by nuns (6)
- 20 Long narrative poem telling of a hero's deeds (4)
- 22 Scare (8)
- 23 Furrow (6)
- 24 Shelter for a dog (6)
- 25 Plaything (3)

### Down

- 1 Male relative (6)
- 2 Tape (8)
- 3 Salad vegetable (6)
- 4 Relating to classification of human groups based on racial characteristics (6)
- 5 Manufacture (4)
- 6 Rare (6)
- 11 Used to be (3)
- 13 Extended large-scale orchestral composition (8)
- 14 Small (Scottish) (3)
- 16 Referee (6)
- 17 Meal at which guests help themselves (6)
- 18 Spirit (6)
- 19 Gave a suggestive look (6)
- 21 Stock of a thonged whip (4)

For solutions see pages 12 & 13



## KIDS CORNER

### SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you find ten differences in the picture on the right?

