



The Green Vase

My mother's green glass vase has always been one of my favourites amongst her many ornaments, but I only recently learned something of its history. It sits high on top of her dresser but isn't allowed to accumulate dust, and the gold encircling the top inch of the glass is as bright as it must have been a century ago. It's a small delicate piece, with porcelain violets illustrating its purpose sitting like a necklace below the gold collar, although it's sufficiently striking in its own right not to need the addition of the real thing.

In any case, Mum only needs to look through her French window for flowers galore. Her love of horticulture must have been planted in her childhood. My grandparents' cottage aptly stood in a tucked-away street called Paradise Gardens in the Liverpool suburb of Wavertree, and although the house was modest it was as full of love as the garden was with colour.

It was from here that Mum as a teenager and then young woman went around the neighbourhood collecting 'a penny a week' for the Red Cross, towards the end of the War and for around five years afterwards. Marriage and a move out of the district brought this early charitable chapter to a close. Her wedding present from the lady who organised the Red Cross collections was the green vase. Even back in 1951 it was already an antique, as Mum recalls being told it was a souvenir from the Great Exhibition of a hundred years earlier. There are no marks to give a hint of its provenance or value, but it's inherently an object of style and beauty, and just three imperial inches of priceless family history.

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