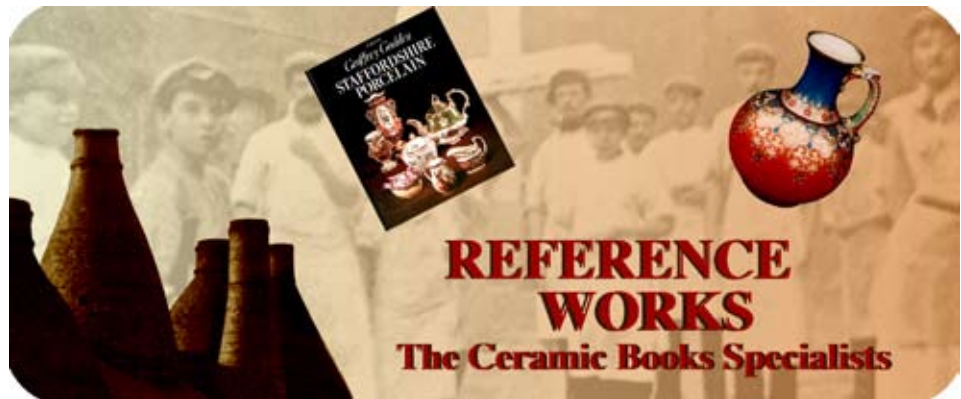


REFERENCE WORKS The Ceramic Book Specialists FOR SALE

An opportunity to acquire a respected business at an affordable price.



REFERENCE WORKS Ltd. Tel. 01929 424423

Email barrylamb@referenceworks.co.uk

- * **Over 30 Years of trading in ceramic books.**
- * **The name Reference Works no.1 on Google search.**
- * **Database of over 3,500 U.K. & Overseas buying customers.**

Having recently reached retirement age, and with over thirty years dealing in ceramic reference books, I had already decided that 2015 would be the year in which I would relinquish control of Reference Works. Plans were in hand to start offering the business for sale in the autumn of this year, sadly the unexpected and unwelcome events of the last 2 months have meant that these plans have had to be brought forward. The reason for this is that in mid February I suffered a heart attack, which resulted in a stay in hospital under the care of our excellent National Health Service. Whilst I am continuing to make a slow recovery it is becoming increasingly clear that, with my existing health problems, (Chronic Sarcoidosis of the lungs) the time has come for major changes in my work/life balance.

A brief business history.

Reference Works was established in the early 1980s after I took voluntary redundancy from my job in the industrial electronics industry.

The business came into being as a result of my burgeoning interest in ceramics and the difficulties I experienced sourcing the ceramic reference material I saw listed in the bibliographies of the few books available from general booksellers at that time. Within a very short period of time, in addition to exhibiting at the leading ceramic fairs around the country and renting a permanent space in an arcade in Portobello Road, we (my wife and I) were publishing a large and comprehensive annual catalogue, supported by smaller half yearly addenda and these were produced for over ten years.

By the mid 90s with the many changes in the nature of book selling, not least the emergence of the large internet retailers, we decided to start sending out monthly newsletters giving customers details of not only our regularly changing out of print stock but also advance information of the many new in print titles which were appearing at that time.

Our own internet site was established in 2000, but as a percentage of our customers, including many who have remained loyal for over twenty years, still prefer to receive information by normal mail, the monthly newsletters have continued to date.

To date we have sold and mailed out over 45,000 books on pottery and porcelain subjects worldwide and been part of a driving force behind ceramic collecting and study here and overseas. We are now the only specialist business dealing solely in ceramic books in the U.K. and books bearing a Reference Works name & address label can be found in public and museum libraries around the world as well as on the bookshelves of collectors and dealers.

Over the past few years the number of larger publishing houses wishing to publish ceramic reference has reduced dramatically, and these days the majority of new books coming on to the market have been privately published, in most cases by their authors. Since the late 1980s we have worked closely with a number of authors to promote their books and we try to ensure that their titles are always available from stock. Access to these titles, not generally stocked by other booksellers, has remained an expanding and important part of our business.

Business Assets offered for sale:-

*** Business name, web site, BT E-shop and E Bay presence.**

Our original web site was created and maintained by Barry from January 2000. With very little expense it could be fully modernised or linked to an existing web site. The BT shop linked to the web site can be amended to any current or new credit card system and or to Pay Pal. We do not have a presence on face book or twitter at this time, but we are listed as a top rated seller on E bay as uknologo. Obviously the name and influence of Reference Works can be used to expand into similar areas of antique or other publications.

We are listed as between no.1 and no.2 on any Google search using these text entries :-

Reference Works No. 1 of 851,000,000 results

Ceramic Books No. 2 of 28,600,000 results Ignoring the first 3 results which are known paid for listings we are 2nd behind Amazon. We do not pay to have our internet presence promoted.

*** Ceramic Books & Catalogues database**

A full listing of almost every book and catalogue we have listed in our book lists from 1997 to 2015, giving title, page and illustration details together with comments on each entry including the price and condition at the time. These listings can be cut and pasted into future book lists as required. Currently held in Adobe InDesign format but can be supplied to suit your computer system.

***Customer database**

Our current database contains some 3,000 U.K. based customers and a further 450 worldwide. Plus further database of previous buyers. In 2014 we gained 140 new buying customers with an average first spend of £40.00

We have customers who joined us in 1987 and are still buying. We have several customers who have spent in excess of £20,000, a number who have spent over £10,000 and hundreds who have spent over £1,500 just on books and catalogues.

The database gives details of customers who have purchased from us in the recent past together with information on their most recent purchases. We also know that many of the customers on our database have wide ranging interests in other areas of collecting and for this reason we feel that the database would be invaluable to those currently selling, or wishing to sell a wider range of titles than just ceramics. Currently held in Apple Works database but exportable to PC data programmes.

*** Books sold on behalf of author.**

In many cases we have sole rights or at least joint rights in the retailing of these privately published books and we have the permission of the authors or owners to offer these rights and current stock to a new buyer. This includes the rights to some high profile forthcoming titles. In most cases the bulk of the stock is held by each author and supplied to us on a sale or return basis, with payments made to them on a 30 or 60 day agreed period. **The profit on annual sales of these titles alone could potentially give the buyer of our business a 30% to 40% return on their investment in the first year. These rights and those of future publications by authors will be offered to the new owners.**

*** Support**

Full telephone and E-mail support as required from Barry for the first 60 days with a longer period if needed (pending negotiation). Plus if required other assets such as exhibition book cases, data & image files, transfer of low cost worldwide mailing accounts etc.

Asking price excluding Book & Catalogue stock is £ 9,500

Average Annual Turnover from last five year's accounts £47,227

Average Annual Gross Profit (After stock and postage/carriage costs) £21,657 (margin 45.93%)

*** Book & Catalogue stock**

We can offer all or part of the remaining stock at a **very advantageous price** to the eventual buyer. Much of our stock buying is from our own customer base or by word of mouth. We have a number of customers waiting for us to sell their collections and whose details will be provided. This pre-arranged purchasing of collections enables us to maintain a higher stock turnover of out of print titles and allows us to keep our stock levels low. With knowledge based on our book list database and our existing customers' requirements, we are also able to buy selected titles for our book lists from Abe, Ebay and other similar sources.

Over the years we have been able to acquire the remaining stock of a number of important titles which, whilst mostly no longer in print, are in as new condition. These books are still in demand and continue to provide a regular high profit income. These number around 500 books and are offered at original cost within the stock price. Also as an option there are some 2,000 ceramic sale catalogues dating mostly from 1970 to 2005 available.

Price for book and catalogue stock to be negotiated.

For further information please contact Barry on 01929 424423 or barrylamb@referenceworks.co.uk

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