



GP&JBAKER

AUTHENTIC. CREATIVE. INNOVATIVE.
SINCE 1854

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CRAYFORD COLLECTION



Crayford, once a small market town in Kent situated amongst plentiful waterways, traces its connection with textile printing to the 1730s. The earliest print works site, developed by Charles Swaisland in the

1800s, was acquired by GP&J Baker in 1893. This allowed George Percival Baker to expand the import-export business founded in 1884, and realise his passion for printed furnishings.

All GP & J Baker's production was from the Crayford site at this time, sourcing designs from Voysey and other important Arts and Crafts designers. Initially the company printed by hand block, producing many of the classic designs with which it is still associated today, including 'Nymphes' (1915), 'Heron' (1917), 'Imperial Pheasant' (1915), 'Bamboo Bird' (1915) and 'Tree Peony' (1917).

The wonderfully diverse treasures of the GP & J Baker archive have provided inspiration for this exceptional collection. These unique historical documents have been given a fresh interpretation resulting in a dazzling array of papers.

The new palette continues to add to its rich narrative with the introduction of a strong yellow and handsome

mid-indigo, whilst patinated tones and raised textures suggest the charm of antique hand blocking. The

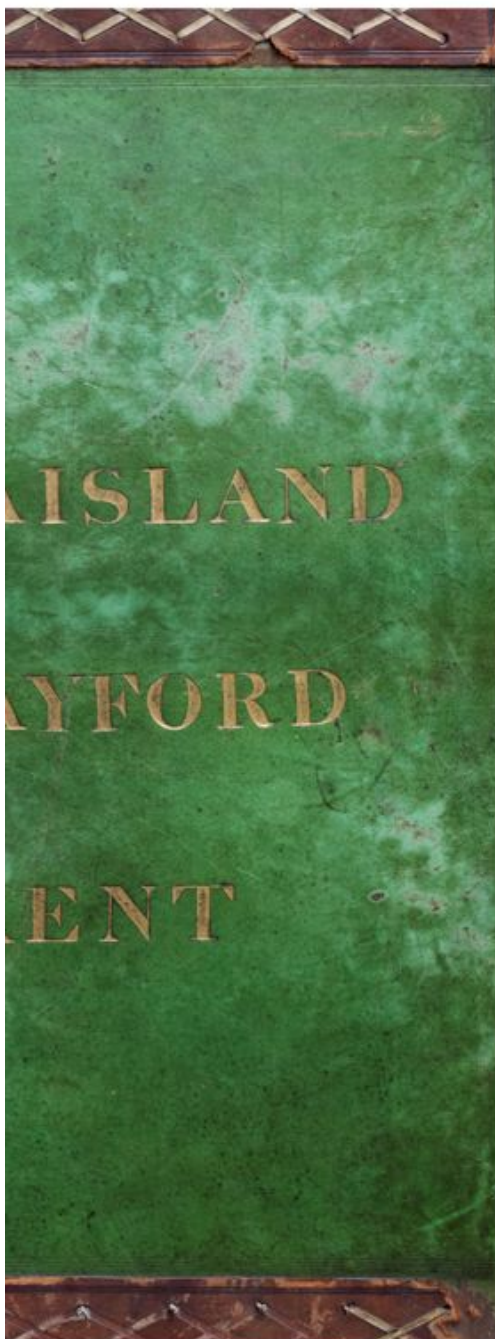


most popular designs printed by G P & J Baker in the early 1900s showed naturalistically drawn English garden flowers, and this became part of the enduring Baker style. George Percival Baker



was an avid horticulturalist himself, becoming a well known figure in the

Royal Horticultural Society, particularly specialising in rare iris varieties. The printed flowers followed the fashions in gardening from herbaceous border plants to glasshouse orchids, but always finely drawn in pleasing repeats. Designs based on eighteenth century block prints and golden-age English chintzes became another Baker mainstay. These patterns are archetypal, able to adapt to new printing techniques and changing colourings that suit the continuing evolution of decorating styles. More recently, G P & J Baker designs have been translated into woven fabrics, embroidery and wallpaper. A number of Baker designs have been in production for 50 to 100 years, with each re-issue adding another layer of history to their considerable charm. Remaining ever modern, but maintaining strong links with its past, G P & J Baker will long continue to decorate the future.



Left: 1840s pattern book from the Swaisland set containing over 25,000 hand-painted designs.

Above: The Swaisland Printing Works on the River Cray operated by G P & J Baker 1893 to 1961.

Far left: Block printing on the long tables at the Swaisland Printworks, around 1959.

Photographer P. Wilmot

With thanks to the G P & J Baker archivists Dr Philip A Sykas and Sue Kerry.

NYMPHEUS



Colourings book showing four colourways of the pattern (1915)

William Turner's designs for G P & J Baker in 1915 adopted a Chinese theme as the artist increasingly spent time studying collections at the British Museum. "Nympheus" is based upon a Ming dynasty painted silk scroll that had been acquired by the museum a couple of years earlier. It is a genre picture of the Pi-ling school that depicts a pair of kingfishers flying above an egret who shelters beneath drooping lotus leaves. From its first issue, "Nympheus" has remained available as a hand-block print, but since 1977, a screen print version has also been offered; the design remains an all-time favourite.



Left: Wall: Crayford Stripe.
Roll: Nympheus.
Right: Chair: Paxton Stripe.
Cushion: Nympheus.





Curtains: Nympheus. Sofas: Lea. Cushions: Nympheus and Lea. Trim: Beaded Braid.

PERTELOTE



Originally known as "Chanticleer", this pattern was designed by the Haward studio in 1917. The process of cutting and coppering the 160 blocks needed for printing this nineteen-colour pattern took nearly a year to complete at a cost of £230 (over £6000 in today's money). The pattern was first printed for W. & J. Sloane of New York. Founded by Scottish emigrants in the mid-1900s, by the end of the century Sloane's was setting the taste for the U.S., with such decorating commissions as Vanderbilt's Newport mansion "The Breakers", and the White House in Washington D.C. G P & J Baker revived the pattern in 1971, updating it by leaving out the strong outline block to give a fresher appearance emphasising the jewel-like colours.



Curtains: Swaisland Stripe.
Sofa: Perelope. Cushion: Lea.



Wallpaper: Pertelote. Sofa: Lea. Cushions: Paxton Stripe.

ROYAL FERNS



The original artwork from
La Guide du Dessin, Paris (1954)

This design was the first purchased by G P & J Baker from *La Guilde du Dessin*, a new Parisian design atelier, in 1954. It was produced as a nine-colour screen-print on glazed chintz the following year. The company was probably initially drawn to this work for its similarity, amounting almost to an *homage* to Baker's popular "Ferns" design. G P & J Baker continued to patronise *La Guilde du Dessin* for floral designs, averaging two per year until 1961.



Chair Back: Crayford Weave.
Fabric: Royal Ferns.



Blind: Royal Ferns. Chair: Crayford Weave. Cushions: Leaf Cascade and Shadow Fern. Trim: Beaded Bra

LEAF CASCADE



Proof on paper from
block-making records

This pattern is from an original watercolour by George C. Haité, first produced by G P & J Baker as a hand-block print in 1903. Haité (1855-1924) was a leading designer of the Arts & Crafts movement, known for his accomplished use of plant studies in design, and the grace and ease with which he executed all-over patterns. "Leaf Cascade" shows Haité at the height of his powers, presenting freely-brushed clusters of willow-like foliage that pleasingly intermingle, while never losing fidelity to nature. Haité's design career began at aged sixteen out of necessity to support his family when his father, also a textile designer, died. He quickly excelled, and was later said to 'grow gardens with the brush, real gardens worthy of scents and of character.'



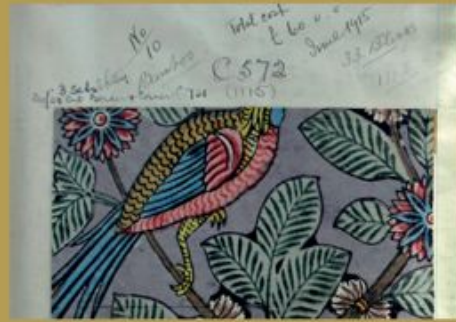
Left: Original design
by G.C. Haité (1903)
Right: Chair: Crayford Weave.
Cushion: Leaf Cascade.
Trim: Beaded Braid.





Table Cloth: Leaf Cascade. Chair: Forbes.

BAMBOO BIRD



The idea for this pattern derives from an eighteenth-century hand-painted Indian *palampore* (cotton hanging) in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This was reproduced as Plate 11 in George Percival Baker's lavish 1921 publication *Calico Painting and Printing in the East Indies*. It must have been a particular favourite with George Percival, as his own extensive collection did not contain a "transitional" pattern of this nature. Thus it is not surprising that the designer Burn was asked in 1915 to adapt the main motifs and arrangement of the palampore into a block print which was called "Indian Bamboo". Burn was faced with the task of reducing a large painterly panel composition into a repeating pattern, and he chose to give the design more symmetry in keeping with the repeat size. Amazingly, it preserves all the flavour of the Indian original.



Left: Block-making record book including a paper proof
Right: Original hand-painted *palampore* from Baker's 1921 book





Curtains: Bamboo Bird. Trim: Corded Braid. Chair: Wimborne Stripe. Cushion: Lea.

PERSIAN POMEGRANATE



Sample on linen from the 1930s surface roller book

This pattern is taken from a design by the Haward Studio purchased for 24 guineas in March 1931. Sidney Haward trained at the Silver Studio and later set up on his own in Kensington, becoming one of the leading London design studios serving clients such as Liberty, Story's, Hamptons and other top furnishing emporiums. Taking as its principal theme the flowering branch and butterfly of Chinese hand-painted wallpaper, Persian elements have been added such as the erstwhile nightingale, pomegranate, and banded stems. Originally designed for printing by surface roller in twelve colours, the separation of colour is kept simple and well-defined. Surface roller printing, widely used in the 1920s and 30s, required complex machines with wooden rollers to give an effect of hand-block printing. The pattern was fashioned in copper strip and felt, requiring months of labour to complete. The rollers for this design cost £117 in 1931 (equivalent to about £3000 today). It was a best-seller, outlasting other designs of the same year, and remaining in print until the end of the decade.



Colourings book showing 5 colourways of the pattern (1931)



Chair: Persian Pomegranate, Wallpaper: Burnish, Curtain: Layton Velvet, Cushion: Lea.

TREE PEONY



A portion of Colouring No. 1
(1917)

This pattern traces its origin to a block print design of 1917 by William Turner that featured crows. Painted in wartime, this probably referred to the ravens in the Tower of London said to have the power to protect the fortunes of Britain. Later on, however, the crows were felt to be too dark a subject, and the print was revived in 1957 in a version without the black-feathered birds. This later version continues to be a favourite with designers for its adaptability to colouring.



Left: Colourings book showing
four colourways of the pattern
(1957)

Right: Printer's proof on
paper from the original
pattern (1917)





Curtains: Tree Peony. Table Cloth: Melora Stripe.

IMPERIAL PHEASANT



Detail of original colouring
(1915)

This pattern is from a design by Sidney G. Mawson for a G P & J Baker hand-block print first produced in 1915. Mawson (1849-1941) was an important Arts and Crafts designer known for his dense compositions of naturalistic flowers in bright colours. Here the designer has selected birds and flowers to portray the contrasting aspects of love and nature. From the proud strutting love of the pheasant to the devotion of the turtle dove; and from the love of nature symbolised by the magnolia to the dark side of nature represented by the poisonous oleander. It originally required 72 blocks to print. Demand eventually led to eight different colourings being developed, including the purple and black grounds of the era.



Left: Colourings book
showing six colourways
of the pattern (1915)
Right: Proof on paper of the
outline block (1915)



Blind and Chair on Front Cover: Imperial Pheasant.



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