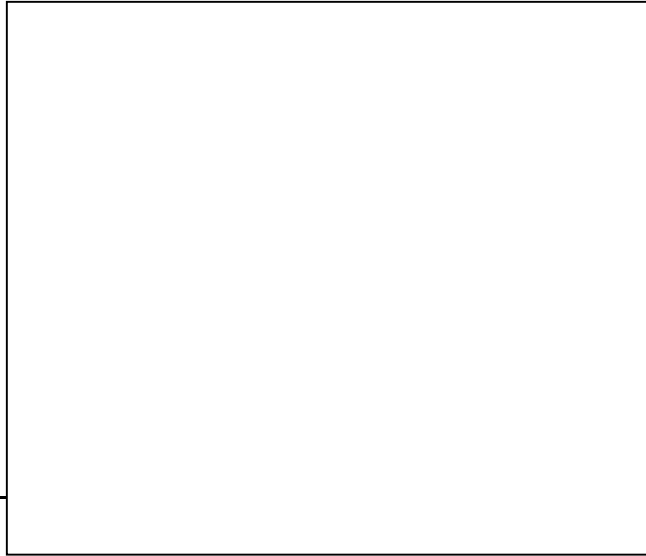


WILKINSON'S 'CROCUS'.

Readers will be very familiar with Miss Cliff's well-known pattern, 'Crocus' but perhaps less familiar with similar designs originating from the Wilkinson part of the Wilkinson-Newport conglomerate.



Crocuses were a subject that appeared in the Wilkinson output by about mid 1925. As can be seen in the illustration to the left, they were printed and enamelled in naturalistic colours. The prints dominated the ware. No attempt was made to confine them by banding.

RUBAÍYÁT WARE²



At about the same time, John Butler incorporated crocuses into his marvellous Rubaíyát ware. In this high quality studio ware, the crocuses were fully handpainted with great attention to detail and shading. The exquisite blossoms appear to float above a gloss black background covered by a gilded "broth" pattern.

The highly labour intensive Rubaíyát ware and the printed naturalistic version disappeared from the Wilkinson output by about 1927 to be replaced in 1928 by Miss

¹ Image courtesy Gales Antiques Dunedin New Zealand

² See [The Agora](#) Vol 5&6 page 85

Cliff's strikingly successful hand painted "folk art" version. This pattern, and its variations was to continue in production well into the 1950's.³

MARCH CROCUS (FACTORY NAME)



In about 1930, Wilkinson's introduced a new printed version applied over a roughly pencilled, underglaze colour and hand enamelled in tangerine, yellow and blue. The pattern depicts a loose arrangement of blossoms arranged

radially on flat ware. On hollowware, the flowers rise from the base to encircle the body. The roughly pencilled background was regularly used technique at Wilkinson's up until about 1933.

The haphazard and scattered arrangement, although striking, seems to lack the impact of Miss Cliff's "folksy" or naive version. Also the absence of unifying bands and a central focus (the "ground" in 'Crocus' flatware) of colour weakens the design.

8870 'CROCUS'⁴



This handpainted Wilkinson variation on Clarice Cliff's 'Crocus' dates from either late 1929 or very early 1930. Its pattern number is the one following Miss Cliff's lithographic

³ See [The Agora](#) Vol 1 No 2 page 5

⁴ Image courtesy Adelphi Antiques Melbourne.

pattern 'Woodland' and five before 'Nemesia' (8875) – both of which were decorated in the Wilkinson factory. The pattern book information is as follows:

8870 D'ware Honey glaze
Handpainted 'Crocus' (simple)
in Tangerine,
2707 Blue,
Plum 3137
Chrome Green
 $\frac{1}{4}$ " band of tangerine on rim to within $\frac{1}{4}$ " of spray

Although the flowers are painted in the same colours and arranged approximately in the same fashion as Miss Cliff's famous pattern, there are some differences.

- 1) The spray forms a dense group;
- 2) The spray is steeply angled rather than oriented vertically;
- 3) The individual flowers are executed with a much longer brush stroke, and
- 4) The spray hangs from the lip of the hollow ware rather than sitting on a wide band of colour. (the "ground")
- 5) The spray is framed by a rim band.

No authorship for this design is given in the pattern book. However, the approach to this pattern is uncharacteristic of Clarice Cliff. All versions of her crocus pattern (even allowing for the exotic 'Summer Crocus') are basically the same in style, execution and grouping. The pattern pictured above is significantly different. It is the opinion of the author that this pattern shows a different designing hand to that of Clarice Cliff.