



Irresistible Irises A GOLDEN YEAR

The world of irises is like no other with iris varieties range in height from 6 inches to a phenomenal, 4 feet! These perfect perennial blooms often come in complex combinations as well as varied colours, with white, purple and yellow, being the most common – the latter causing names to emanate from a strange variety of sources due to the sheer multitude of yellow hues, with the design *Canary Girls* being testament to this fact. Some irises bloom in colours so dark that the flowers appear jet-black. In the world of Moorcroft, as we say good bye to our spring flowers, these early summer blooms fill the gap brilliantly with their rigid, upright habit and ruffly, complex blooms, just as they do in your gardens – unfolding and erupting in unimaginable colours and forms from the demure to jaw-dropping prestige vases.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of The West and Midlands Iris Group, the Moorcroft design team have created a collection of iris designs featuring varieties that have never been visited by Moorcroft underglaze before – some, like Rachel's deeply spiritual *Orinoco Flow* holds an avalanche of colour and form, whilst all hold a palette that is utterly mesmerizing. Most designs are named after the plants themselves which are in turn named after pivotal people in the Group's fifty golden years. This is as it should be. **For each iris design sold, Moorcroft will make a donation to the West & Midlands Iris Group to help support them in their anniversary year.**

West & Midlands



Iris Group
1974-2024



Cotsgold

Shape: CL6

Senior Designer: Rachel Bishop

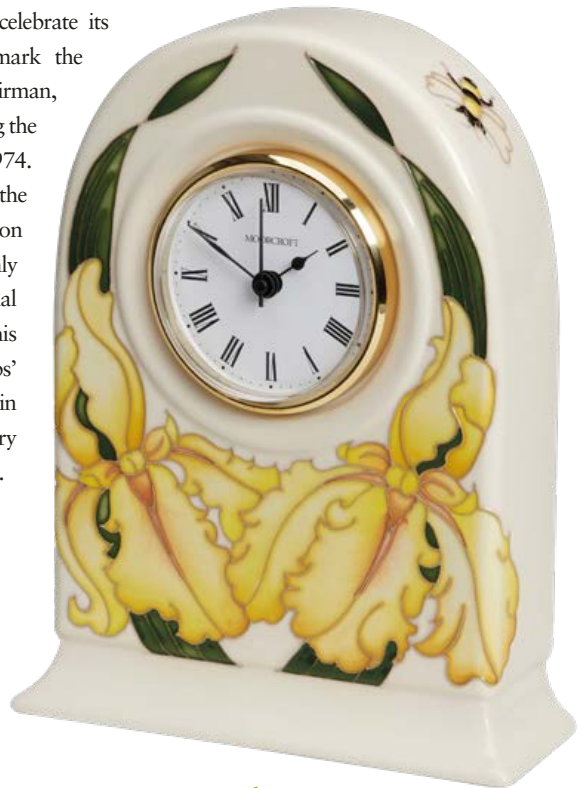
Numbered Edition



Copyright: Anne Milner

Cotsgold with a tantalizing bright gold self, including the beard, tinged orange, with narrow leaves and erect stems rising over the clock face in a timely symmetry, has been designed by Moorcroft's senior designer to give you a golden hour every day. Bearing flowers with three large pendent fall petals, oozing a marmalade glow as they spread down to the foot of the clock, alternate with three erect, smaller, standard petals, neatly tucked into the side of the clock face.

The West and Midlands Iris Group, celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024, and to mark the occasion, wished to honour its first Chairman, John Taylor, by creating a design holding the name of the first iris he registered in 1974. John is one of the great names within the iris world, with his hybridising centred on bearded irises like *Cotsgold*. A highly respected judge, John won a Dykes Medal for 'Cotsgold' (IB, 1978). John and his wife, Mary, were the hosts for the Groups' first garden visit at their Cotswold home in Moreton-in-Marsh in 1975, where Mary became known for her scrumptious teas.



Height: 18cm



Godfrey Owen

Shape: 42/12

Designer: Emma Bossons FRSA

Limited Edition: 10



Copyright: Claire Austin

Bred by Margaret Owen, and named after her late husband, Godfrey Owen, this ruffled iris has been stylised to extenuate its audacious persona. Margaret was the instigator of the successful 'Acton Pigott' (the name of their home) Open Days, holding the first one in 1980. It is said, that this iris had a sweet lemon aroma, and the frilly flower with pale lemon standards and white falls, edged with zesty lemon, has been delicately transformed under glaze.

Framed under the ridge of the vase with entwined sword-shaped leaves, the beards, tufts of hairs on the lower petals that give these Irises their name, allow rays of bright yellow to dart from the rimmed central bloom to the foot of the vase itself amid a cluster of smaller blooms.



Height: 30cm



Meleri

Shape: 75/8

Designer: Emma Bossons FRSA

Limited Edition: 15



*Copyright: Maureen Foster
(BIS Image Library)*

Bred by Maureen Foster, the Meleri iris simply glides down this Moorcroft edition as if the white standards, are the billowing sails of an ancient galleon, with its streaming pennants mimicking the bloom's loganberry centreline as it sets sail across the Irish Sea. The falls hold a rich, mulberry border which washes over the standards above like waves dazzled by a setting sun in dreamy hot summer days. Maureen lived in Crick Howell and often chose names with a Welsh connection for her irises. She and her husband Harry were instigators of the extensive use of irises in the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival, one of the National Garden Festivals in 1992. One of her irises 'Festival Crown' was chosen as the logo.



Height: 20cm



Sugar Candy

Shape: PLQ7

Designer: Nicola Slaney

Numbered Edition



Copyright: A&J Whitehead

A Pacific Coast Iris (PCI) bred by Marjorie Brummitt and named after her dog 'Candy'. Jennifer Hewitt who founded the West and Midlands Iris Group in 1974, obtained her first irises from Marjorie and the friendship continued for many years. Moorcroft are glad as this Sugar Candy plaque is as elegant as it is sweet and holds diagonally mirrored blooms which are cooled by basal fans woven among the three standards, and three large, spreading falls. Pacific Coast group irises lack the “beard” of coloured hairs at the base of each fall that other iris groups have but hold unique colourways like ‘Sugar Candy’ with her short, fawn and maroon flowers.



Height: 19cm



Orinoco Flow

Shape: 120/16

Senior Designer: Rachel Bishop

Limited Edition: 15



Without doubt, this design could be said to be Rachel Bishop's finest floral design of all time. In much the same way as Enya's Orinoco Flow, released in 1988, created an utterly new music style, which is characterized by slow rhythm, layering of harmonies, and simple lyrics with an ethereal quality, *Orinoco Flow* holds an avalanche of soft colours, layered in part to add depth, and holds you utterly beguiled. The prestigious ceramic vase is, however, named after the Orinoco Flow iris which was exhibited at the International Iris Competition in Florence, winning the Giardino di Collodi cup in 1992.

Iris 'Orinoco Flow' bursts into centre stage, erupting with glaucous green leaves and stems stylised in Art Nouveau ribbons and curves as a tidal wave of no less than six white flowers, showcasing standards and falls finely speckled with violet, a beard white, tipped zany-orange, and bordered with violet. In terms of colour and form choreography, the design is flawless.

Bred by Cy Bartlett, one of The West and Midlands Iris Group's outstanding iris growers with three Dykes Medals to his credit, Cy also received numerous awards in the UK, USA and Florence. President of the BIS 1997 to 2000.



Height: 42.5cms



Margaret Gillian

Shape: 92/9

Designer: Vicky Lovatt

Limited Edition: 15



Utilising a sage body, Kerry was able to re-create in ceramic form the hidden depths of colour found in the dark red violet standards and even darker velvety red purple falls, which hold near black centres, in contrast to their fine cream rim. The artistry required to paint this design, which holds no less than six framed irises woven into the lower and upper sections of this double-bulb shaped vase, is phenomenal, and Kerry knew this as she detailed the design with dark veins on green signals, requiring a careful finger-tip to blend into cream at the outer edge.

One of two Siberian irises in this Moorcroft Collection, Iris 'Margaret Gillian' was bred by Jennifer Hewitt who founded the West and Midlands Iris Group in 1974. Jennifer held almost every role in the group and was still involved until her death in 2023. The deeply-colourful iris is named after 'Margaret Gillian' to mark the depth of their friendship. Gilliam was also the Group's Secretary.



Height: 23.5cm



Perfect Vision

Shape: 65/6

Designer: Kerry Goodwin

Limited Edition: 15



Copyright: Jennifer Hewitt

Bred by Cy Bartlett, a man with a career in horticultural education ending as Vice-Principal of Cannington College of Horticulture in Somerset, Perfect Vision is just as its name suggests. With sheer organic tenacity, irises circle the vase with stems bearing three flowers holding almost iridescent, light violet-blue standards as rich, velvety-violet-blue falls beg to be noticed amid clumps of narrow green foliage which shoot up and down. The result: a fountain of irises with vibrant green leaves cascading downwards in contrast to the cool tones of the bloom, itself displaying an exquisite colour palette, where shades range from pristine white, light blue, to violet.

One of the West and Midlands Iris Group's outstanding iris growers with three Dykes Medals to his credit, Cy Bartlett also received numerous awards in the UK, USA and Florence. President of the BIS 1997 to 2000 Cy has been active member of the group. He donated all sales from 'Perfect Vision' to a charity which helped visually impaired people, they also used the iris as their motif.



Height: 16cm



Peter Hewitt

Shape: RM2/4

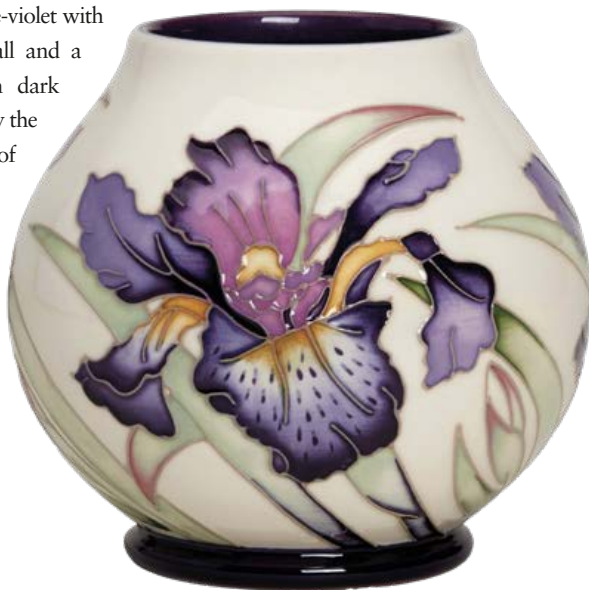
Designer: Nicola Slaney

Numbered Edition



Nicola has harnessed a Siberian iris bred by Jennifer Hewitt who founded the West and Midland Iris Group in 1974. Jennifer has held almost every role in the Group and was still an active member until her death in 2023. 'Peter Hewitt' was her late husband and, in truth, if ever a flower could pay worthy honour to an iris enthusiasts it is this one.

Cleverly, the Moorcroft designer takes the bloom from the lax-green foliage and places it, just as a botanical illustrator would seek to do, against a brilliant-white ground to extenuate its unusual, almost regal, colour variants. Standards and falls blend gently in a rich blue-violet with a very thin gold edge to each fall and a striking gold central signal with dark veining at each base; all captured by the extraordinary heritage skills of Moorcroft painters.



Height: 10cm



Canary Girls

Shape: 393/12

Designer: Kerry Goodwin

Limited Edition: 10



Copyright: Fred Raines

Against a honey-colour mist, Iris 'Canary Girls' grow organically from the base of the vase with primrose standards and falls. It is the beard on this bloom that provides added interest as the ruffled petals hold tips of gold against their fluffy-white petticoats. The design holds a remarkable flow, with every part of the flower pummelled and pulled into place around this challenging shape.

Bred by Fred Raines, one of the longest standing members of the West and Midlands Iris Group, joining in 1983, the Iris 'Canary Girls' honours the women who made the UK's TNT shells of World War I, where, sadly, their skin turned yellow-orange after repeated exposure to TNT.



Height: 30cm



Fern Harden

Shape: 101/14

Designer: Kerry Goodwin

Limited Edition: 10

On the elegant 101/14 shape, the ink-blue ground which, when twinned with soaring spear shaped leaves, brings to mind a summer day. Cleverly, soft, honeysuckle-coloured standards infuse with lilac at its midribs as they rise to the upper ridge of the vase, where the Moorcroft designer diffuses the blue backdrop into soft, moon-yellow, so as not to disturb her delicate palette. The falls are also shaded lilac but Moorcroft artistry comes alive when called to replicate the dazzling orange beards.

Bred by Fred Raines, one of the longest standing members of the West and Midlands Iris Group, joining in 1983, the Iris 'Fern Harden' was named in honour of one of the Group's members.



*Fern Harden with
Fern Harden!*



Copyright: Fern Harden



Height: 35cm



About The West and Midlands Iris Group

The West and Midlands Iris Group is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2024. Over that time, they have welcomed members from a wide geographical area and can boast of some internationally known authorities on irises and some of the UK's finest hybridizers in their membership. The West and Midlands Iris Group are an affiliated group of the British Iris Society (BIS), which in turn has recently celebrated its centenary. Moorcroft celebrated the BIS centenary with a special collection of designs and now Moorcroft working with the West and Midlands Iris Group to celebrate their own landmark year.



The aim of the West and Midlands Iris Group is to share and promote interest in the iris family through a varied programme of events. Social occasions, talks and competitive shows are all part of their activities, and they regularly exhibit at the RHS Malvern Spring Festival. Although a specialist plant group, their success comes from being a warm and friendly mix of people who come together to share a mutual love of irises and the wider Iridaceae family both in their own gardens and at renowned horticultural events throughout the West of England and the Midlands, and, indeed, the globe.

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FIND OUT MORE

The West and Midlands Iris Group
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(British Iris Society www.britisshirissociety.org.uk)



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