

## The Beauty of Brass Bed Porcelains



In the early 1800's the first iron beds were created, as time passed the bed artisans introduced brass to their original iron designs gradually their designs became grander by adding porcelain, mirror and mother of pearl decorative features. Almost 200 years later they still capture the heart and imagination of many. In the years since they have been recreated and reproduced but whilst there have been good quality reproductions, they will never meet the quality of hand workmanship of the original brass and iron beds from pre 1930's.

The invention of the internet has opened the doors to a vast amount of information to help us research almost anything, including brass beds. However, we are always concerned of claims to being "antique" against modern reproductions. To earn the title of antique, technically the item needs to be over 100years old. However items from 1930's/1940's appear as such.

Our particular concern is the resale of the decorative brass bed porcelains. Many a time we have seen cheap reproductions being described as beautiful antique brass bed china pieces or porcelains and many unsuspecting buyers has purchased under the belief this is true. On several occasions we have contacted the seller advising them of their mistake and they have amended, advising us they were also of the belief there were original porcelains. Whilst there are many convincing reproductions of almost everything these days, there is a vast and obvious difference when comparing original porcelains to reproductions. The main difference is the weight of the porcelain, original porcelains were solid with only a round hole approx. 16mm hole through the centre for the threaded rod to be fed through and then brass/nickel porcelain holders were placed on either end before being fitted into the brass bed. In comparison cheaper reproductions are lightweight and have a very thin ceramic frame with a very large centre cavity hole.

Next is the way they are decorated, original porcelains were hand-painted and often you are able to feel the raised surface where colour areas have been highlighted by accentuating the paint colour and one of the best signs is that each porcelain had a serial number painted on the bottom of each one. Whereas reproduction usually have a mass produced decal style picture.

Our knowledge has been gained over 30 years of specialising in antique brass beds and our exposure to all types of brass beds in all types of conditions. We have seen dozens of original porcelains in all shapes, and sizes. From odd singles to complete sets; the variety of colours and patterns. They are part of what makes an original antique porcelain bed – a beautiful family heirloom.

We would like to be able to catalogue as many of these porcelain bed features as we can, but a picture paints a thousand words, so we will let the accompanying photo images tell their own story, however we would love to have Antique and Art readers email us with photos of their own porcelain or medallion centre, together with a photograph of the top or bottom with the number this will then help us be able to collate and write you another article based on what we receive.

We look forward to making this article interactive and receiving your emails soon.

Mark and Lynne Bennett

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