

POSTSCRIPT TO THE LARGEST BLUE JOHN VASES EVER MADE

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Further to my article in the last *Bulletin* (Volume 11, No.5, 1992) my attention has been drawn to another giant Blue John vase by Sir Reresby Sitwell of Renishaw Hall, near Sheffield. He has a large urn-style Blue John vase comparable in design to those illustrated in Fig. 2 (p265) of my article. In fact it is close to the engraving of the 1848 version of a giant vase in the 4th edition of William Adam's *Gem of the Peak*. The Renishaw vase measures 22 inches from base (excluding the black marble plinth 7½ inches high with Blue John bosses stuck to each face) to the top of the handles i.e. one inch taller than the similar style Blue John urn in the private dining room at Chatsworth House. The Renishaw vase is 14½ inches wide at the handles against 12½ for the Chatsworth vase; that at Renishaw has Blue John single scroll handles whereas the Chatsworth urn has engraved (chased) black marble handles. The Renishaw vase is thus the largest known of the "Grecian urn" design. Sir Reresby Sitwell bought his vase from a London antique dealer a few years ago and nothing is known of its history, which leaves us with a problem: the vase at Chatsworth appears from historical evidence to be the one purchased by Mr Jepson of the Edensor Inn, which later was moved to Chatsworth, but from the existence (undocumented) of the slightly larger Renishaw vase it seems possible that there were two such vases in the sale of William Adam's shop contents in 1849. There are also the vague reports of large Blue John vases displayed by Vallance at the Great Exhibition of 1851 (of which no details are known) and the unsubstantiated newspaper report of a giant vase made by R. Lomas in Derby in 1887 which was 16¾ inches in diameter, which does not fit either of the vases discussed above.

Unless further documentary evidence can be found, we may never know the history of these vases.

The Renishaw vase is illustrated in the magazine *House and Garden* for December 1992, page 82.