

The project was to set out to establish the designer's name and the manufacturer of this item and to establish which plastic material was used and the process employed.

I tackled this project with my usual enthusiasm, hopeful for at least a 90% outcome. My first telephone call was to Des Barrett, a curator at the Powerhouse Museum. The museum has a large plastic collection but is of an industrial nature and virtually no items of domestic ware.ⁱ

Searches on eBay indicated this bucket had been produced in other colours, which would imply this item was in production for some time judging by the selection of colours. I attach photographs from eBay offers for your records.

After tackling the only museum likely to be of help I approached friends who had grown up here who remembered this object very well but could not recall the maker; and the most likely course for find information was to try to then contact dealers and collectors in 'retro' objects. Julie and Christine Carter (publishers of *Collecting for Profit & Pleasure*) were able to pass on names of the few dealers in Art Deco and early plastic objects. My phone calls to most on the list were not returned but Kaye Rolls of Deco Heaven was encouraging but was unable to come back to me with any positive answers on the maker or indeed the designer. I also contacted Professor Adrian Franklin at the UTAS, a well-known authority and collector on plastic items and his reply was:

'Very nice piece. No idea. The trail to unmarked plastic is a long and winding one, usually leading nowhere. But, best of luck.'

The thought of finding out the designer was abandoned in the early stages of my enquiries.

I contacted the Plastics and Chemicals Industries Association and someone very kindly passed on the name of Dr. John Schiers of Excelplas Testing Services. I contacted Dr Schiers and during an exchange of emails and his offer to test a small section of a bucket I had bought through eBayⁱⁱ, the cost of this test was beyond either my or the MoIP budget. He then offered to test a sample as he put it 'in the interests of science' which was an extremely generous gesture. In exchange I decided to send him a copy of my book *Horn: Its History and Its Uses*.

If the Museum would also like to express their thanks his address is

Dr John Scheirs, ExcelPlas Testing Services, 473 Warrigal Road (Rear Factory), Moorabbin 3189, Australia.

It is disappointing that the most of questions set out were not answered but perhaps knowing the type of polymer may indicate the method of manufacture.

ⁱ There is information on Nally Ware which is widely known on the Powerhouse Museum website, although there were many colours available they were produced in moulded phenol formaldehyde. In the absence of any further material from the Museum a Google search brought up the following names: Marquis (Australian) and Sellex. Another was a US Company Acme Engineering that also produced a similar ice bucket but not as nice in design. See images.

ⁱⁱ A sad end to this purchase, which I thought I could have passed on to the MoDiP. Unfortunately it was left on a shelf beneath an anti-insect spray and the droplets that settled on the shelf caused a blistering on the base and lid of the bucket which could not be restored.