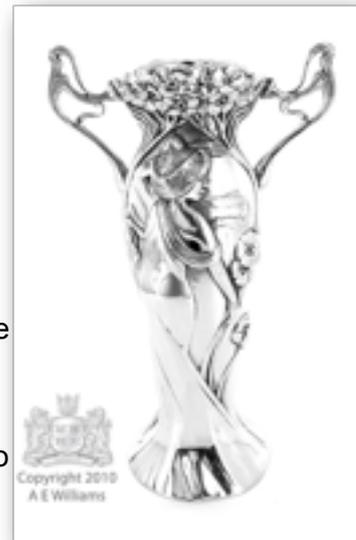


# Kirstie Allsop - and our Serenity Vase

9am: the fleet of three land Cruisers, all full to the brim with Lights, Microphones, TV screens and very large Cameras, pull up and with no more space left on the car park that's when we finally knew Channel 4 had arrived. It was Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> of April and Channel 4 had arranged to come to A E Williams to film an episode for a second series of Kirstie Allsop's Television Series "*Kirstie's Homemade Home*".

Within minutes the Factory had been converted into a "Camera Friendly" environment. Tables cleared, floors mopped, machines dusted, a task that I must say is much more daunting than it sounds; those who work in a factory will understand exactly what I mean. Lights had been set up in various places, noise had to be at a minimum and, most importantly, Kirstie herself was yet to arrive.

10..30am: Kirstie arrived. Our task was to teach her how to make one of our Serenity Vases using a variety of manufacturing techniques that a skilled Pewtersmith would have taken years of working in the trade to learn. Some people would say it sounds simple, others, including ourselves would strongly disagree. We were only allowed to offer Kirstie verbal advice; we could not intervene during production as she had to be able to complete the *Serenity Vase* by herself.



Kirstie's Serenity Vase

Like all manufacturing companies we had to brief Kirstie on Health and Safety, and the usual do's and don'ts. Then she had to change from her trademark flowing dress into one of our blue work overalls. Add safety goggles, safety gloves and safety boots, and we were finally ready to get Kirstie into action.

11am: we started by showing Kirstie our impressive mould store and I then took her into the casting shop where Michael showed her how to cast a vase using a centrifuge. As one would expect the first vase was not of sufficient quality to use. However after several attempts, and several reminders from the producer that "We haven't got all day", Kirstie managed to produce a vase good enough to use in the next process.



Kirstie Allsop pours her metal

12:30pm : our *Serenity Vase* is made up of two halves, a base and two handles, which have to be soldered together, using a micro flame and a strip of solder. It fell to John to show Kirstie how to solder her vase. As those who have soldered may know, starting off on an intricate vase such as this one is not ideal. However after an hour, Kirstie impressed us by successfully joining the two halves together and even adding the handles. After the base had been stamped with our touch marks and of course Kirstie's initials, Kirstie then also added the base to the vase.

1:15pm: Kirsty took a very lumpy-soldered vase through to Andy in the Linishing room. Here Kirstie was to remove the imperfections using a linishing wheel, a small wheel with a sandpaper-like surface. This was a very nervous moment for us. The power of our 5hp lathe was enough to wrap Kirstie around it if she was not careful. With a bit of help from Andy, though, Kirstie managed to finish her piece including polishing it to provide it with its beautiful lustre. Do we have a pewtersmith in the making?

It was an interesting day for us all at A E Williams, it is not often you have the chance to show someone like Channel 4 around the building. To me it is one step further to promoting British Pewter Manufacturing, something that should be more widely done in this country. For those that would like to watch, the episode will be aired on Channel 4 in October. The vase – but not Kirstie's - can be purchased directly from us at [www.pewtergiftware.com](http://www.pewtergiftware.com)

## Sam Williams

[Home](#)

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From left to right Front Row:

Mary Farrell, Kirstie Allsop, Kevin Watkins, Sam Williams

Second Row: Michael Wiles, Zena Jones, Richard Daly, Paul Fallon

Back Row: Pearl Morris, Andrew Gardner



**A E Williams are the oldest family run Pewtersmiths in the world, established in 1779. Passing down the craft from generation to generation. Over the 230 years of trading the company currently own the largest and oldest range of antique bronze moulds in the world. With the addition of a modern Pewter Gift range, collectors now have an unrivalled choice of Pewter – each piece made with care by craftsmen. Prestigious clients include Historic Royal Palaces, The PGA and various film studios.**