

The French Porcelain Society

Autumn 2002 Newsletter



**The Sèvres 'pot pourri gondole'
The Metropolitan Museum of Art**

A Message from our Chairman

You will see from the reports of our June activities that we have again been privileged to visit outstanding collections - this year Althorp and Boughton were our chosen destinations - and to examine and discuss pieces made available for us. We are, as always, enormously grateful both to our hosts as well as to our 'guides', whose specialised knowledge is generously shared with Society members. Our Annual Lecture on Orleans porcelain contained much new research and a series of fascinating objects shown on screen using Powerpoint - a first for us! We much look forward to reading M. Cyrille Froissart's paper in the second issue of our new Journal. Our summer programme is planned many months ahead and we are deeply indebted to our Events Organiser, Deborah Gage, and her assistant, Emily Haynes, for all the hard work they put in towards the enormous success of our activities.

Members are asked to submit any suggestions for future summer events to the Newsletter Editor or Events Organiser as soon as possible.

By the time you receive this Newsletter, the production of our first-ever Journal will be well advanced and we hope to have it with you before the end of the year. We must now begin collecting articles for the next issue, and if any of you have any new work which you would care to

publish with us, we urge you to submit it as soon as you can. There is no limit on length, but we would like material on disk if possible (with a hard copy), double-spaced, and with references given according to the Harvard system. We can give further guidance on this if needed. Submissions should be sent in the first instance to our Secretary, Ms Hannah Obee, Wallace Collection, Manchester Square, London W1M 6BN. All submissions will be read by the editorial committee.



Our President and Chairman, Rosalind Savill and Aileen Dawson

The French Porcelain Society invites applications for a research grant on any aspect of French porcelain. Candidates should apply to the secretary with an outline of the project, a C.V. and two references.

Anyone who would like to receive the email version of the newsletter (without pictures for ease of transfer) should send an email address to the editor.

From The Editor Of The Newsletter

Thanks again all those members whose contributions have made the Newsletter possible. Please do continue to send news of any events, acquisitions, discoveries, publications etc. that would be of interest for future editions. To: **Errol Manners**

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THE FRENCH PORCELAIN SOCIETY'S WEBSITE

Now has links to other societies - and SOON on your own member's page, you will be able to interact with your fellow F.P.S members all over the world - WITH PHOTOGRAPHS!

Details of how to enter the site and use this new facility are at:

www.frenchporcelainsociety.com.

If anyone has any difficulties with any aspect of the website, please contact Anne McNair at:
anne@mcnairconsulting.freeserve.co.uk.

INFORMATION URGENTLY REQUIRED CONCERNING:

Joseph Henry Fitzhenry, 1838 - 1913.

Habitué of Victoria and Albert Museum, friend of curators including A. B. Skinner, C. H. Wylde, and George Salting.

Dealer and "expert" in the service of J. P. Morgan; collector and generous donor of French soft-paste porcelain to the V&A, the Musée des Arts Decoratifs and the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, Glasgow. There was a sale of his collection in 1909 with introduction to the catalogue by the comte X de Chavagnac. There is a possible family connection with Vicomte de Brons of Sarlat. Fitzhenry was mentioned in the diaries of George Lucas, painted "at home" by William Orpen and referred to in various biographies of J. P. Morgan. He himself suggested a lifelong friendship with the Wallaces but so far I have found no evidence of this. He made frequent trips to the Continent, France and Italy. Whose paths did he cross? Who was he? He frequently used the notepaper of "The Conservative Club" even while living in Queen Anne's Gate or Thurloe Place, London. He may have had a loose association with the dealer Messrs. Durlacher. For the study I am recording Fitzhenry's extensive soft-paste porcelain donations to the V & A, the other museums, his own sale, and any other items. I wish to incorporate a short biographical sketch. So please let me have any information, anecdote or whatever.

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FORTHCOMING FRENCH PORCELAIN SOCIETY EVENTS

Wednesday November 13, 2002 4.40 pm.

The Victoria and Albert Museum London

A study session in the French porcelain gallery led by Rosalind Savill and Aileen Dawson, by kind permission of Hilary Young, Curator, Department of Ceramics.

Followed by a Lecture in the Seminar Room by **Jean-Gabriel Peyre: Villeroy-Mennecy:**
Hidden Treasures of a Forgotten Manufacture

Sunday December 1, 2002, at 12noon

Professor Alden Gordon at The Wallace Collection

In conjunction with the current exhibitions devoted to Madame de Pompadour at the National Gallery and at the Wallace Collection, Professor Alden Gordon has generously agreed to give a gallery talk especially for the FPS members in which he will share insights from his forthcoming publication of the inventory of the estate of the Marquis de Marigny (The Houses and Collections of the Marquis de Marigny, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute Press, due June 2003). Professor Gordon proposes to discuss the way in which the combination of portraits, pictures, ceramics, furniture, textiles, *objets de vertu* and sculpture were displayed in the various houses of Madame de Pompadour using related works of art in The Wallace Collection.

To book and for further information on both events please contact:

DEBORAH GAGE

EVENTS SECRETARY, FRENCH PORCELAIN SOCIETY

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REPORTS ON RECENT FRENCH PORCELAIN SOCIETY EVENTS

Tuesday 18th June 2002

The French Porcelain Society's 2002 Summer Excursion to Northamptonshire

Part I: Althorp

A report by **Howard Coutts**



The China Museum at Althorp

By the kind permission of Lord Spencer and with invaluable assistance of Selma Schwarz, the French Porcelain Society was able to make a private visit to Althorp. The house has the most wonderful treasures, assembled by the Spencer family over three centuries, and is particularly distinguished for its fine French porcelain and furniture. The porcelain has recently been redisplayed in cabinets in a room on the ground floor. Some was bought in the 18th century itself by the 2nd Earl, who made frequently trips to France and assembled a Sèvres '*bleu camaieu*' dessert service by adding to it every few years, as well as buying a still finer dessert service decorated with flowers and blue bands in 1786. The latter was originally accompanied by a service of silver-gilt cutlery by the goldsmith Auguste. The 3rd Earl was interested in books rather than porcelain, but the 4th Earl was an avid collector in the Victorian period, buying items every week. Some of this great collection had been brought out of the cases by Selma for us to examine. They included two small early (interlaced 'L's mark) Vincennes glass coolers modelled by Duplessis and painted with flowers; a fine pair of Vincennes *pot-pourri* vases, which could be compared with the copies made at Chelsea, and a quite remarkable 'Harlequin' Sèvres dessert service of sample plates made just before the Revolution, including one with black-painted enamel decoration in the manner of an engraving. Much discussion was spent on two cups and saucers, date letter 'bb' and 'cc', each painted with a oval panel of a figure in reserve in pink or blue. Some felt the painter's mark, 'LA' (for Léandre?) was untypical, but perhaps the consensus was that it would be necessary to check in the Sèvres archives. A more sombre note was struck by the redecorated blue-ground services, bought in the 1840s and immediately denounced in the press as fakes. These were just some of the treasures of a collection that includes the full range of fine ceramics from Germany, Holland, Denmark, Austria and Italy; these are not strictly the province of the French Porcelain Society, but it would be churlish not to mention the wonderful blue and white Delftware tulip holders with the monogram of Mary II and the mark LVE for Lambert van

Eenhorn, or the beautiful Meissen *écuelle* painted with Watteau scenes and bought for the enormous sum of 10 guineas from the London dealer P. Bertrand in 1745.

Our thanks to Selma and Lord Spencer for a most educational and entertaining morning.

Part II: Boughton House
The Porcelain
A report by **Letitia Roberts**

After a thrilling if leisurely morning at Althorp we re-boarded the coach for the short trip to Boughton House one of the country's richest repositories of the decorative arts of France, to visit the vaunted collections of the 9th Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, K.T.



As we lept from the coach in Boughton's Stable Yard, we were greeted by Lady Dalkeith (the present Duke's daughter-in-law), who invited us to proceed directly into the refurbished stables, where we were served a delicious lunch of salad and strawberries. Fortified we proceeded toward the majestic house.

In the Great Hall, where those of us with a more eclectic eye for ceramics made a detour to the southwest corner to gaze into a small cupboard displaying an interesting selection of late 17th- and early 18th-Century blanc-de-chine animals, figures and wares. These pieces were a gift from the Duchess of Marlborough to her daughter Mary Churchill, the 2nd Duchess of Montagu.

For most of us, the *pièce de résistance* was the Audit Room Gallery where a large selection of the Duke of Buccleuch's now famous and intriguing 'Baldock Sèvres' is displayed insouciantly amidst his equally famous and extraordinary Vincennes and Sèvres. There our President Ros Savill presented a short account of the collection, which was assembled by Walter Francis, 5th Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbury, and his wife Charlotte Anne Thynne. Their agent in this whirlwind collecting project was Edward Holmes Baldock (active between 1806 and 1843), who dealt in 'sensationally beautiful pieces,' which he made more fashionable by both redecoration and/or the addition of glamorous, but often wildly inappropriate gilt-metal mounts, as evidenced by a number of utterly self-sufficient pieces, including four ravishing Vincennes oval baskets (*corbeilles 'ovales élevées'*) of 1754, on which the *bleu céleste* ground color, sparingly but effectively applied in graduated tones, had been deepened by successive applications and firings from a pale sky-blue to a lusciously rich turquoise.



Among the major pieces that Garry Fitzpatrick, the collection's Curator, had specially provided for Ros to show us was the largest piece in the Louis XV Service: the *grand plateau* with, as described by Ros, its 'heart-stopping flower painting' and, as noted by John Whitehead, its border of 'the deepest *bleu céleste* you've ever seen,' enhanced by its distinct gilding of imbricated disks and rose thorns. But perhaps to prove that size doesn't always matter, Ros revealed that the present Duke's 'most cherished possession' from this service or any other is the *mortier*, which he loaned to the 1993 exhibition of *Versailles et les Tables Royales en Europe, XVIIème- XVIIIème siècles*.



The *Mortier* from the Louis XV service

Among the other treasures that brightened our visit were the mildly bizarre if versatile blue- and green-ground *pot-pourri* vase and bulb pot ('*pot-pourri fontaine ou à dauphins*') of 1759, painted by Dodin with Teniers scenes, and with gilt-metal dolphin mounts, which Ros suggested possibly were copied from George IV's example in the Royal Collection. Not to be outdone in provenance however, records indicate that this potpourri vase may have belonged originally to Madame de Pompadour, to whom a number of other pieces in the collection once belonged, including a pair of ormolu-mounted Meissen porcelain swans in the 'Rainbow Room,' and in the Drawing room a garniture of three green-ground '*vases Hollandois*' of 1758-69, painted by Buteux with trophies.

The Drawing room was refurbished in the 1920s in the early 19th-Century taste, and contains a rare Sèvres green and white covered chestnut basket-on-stand (*'marronnière ovale'*), circa 1760; a *bonheur du jour* by Martin Carlin, mounted with Sèvres green-ground plaques, which according again to John Whitehead, were ordered by the *marchand-mercier* Simon-Philippe Poirier from templates of various shapes; and no less than forty *grisaille* portrait sketches by Sir Anthony Van Dyck.

But among the breath-takers, there were also pieces to challenge our wits, including a Madame Du Barry plate of 1773 painted by Vandé and Le Guay, but with gilding supposedly later added; pink-ground plates from the late 1750s and 1770s - some right, some not, but John Whitehead cautioned us to look at the bird and flower painting against unquestionable pieces such as the *rose marbré* garniture of vases and a *bleu céleste* vase with beast-form handles with probably retouched gilding, but was it redecorated too?



We reluctantly shuffled out of the house and back to the stable, where much to our delight, tea was being served, and at the appropriate moment, Aileen Dawson rose to announce that we had another reason to celebrate the day: it was Tamara Préaud's birthday!

There are so many people to thank for this splendid day, but chiefly among them is Debo Gage, whose creative ideas, persuasive charm and tireless efforts on the Society's behalf produced an excursion that none of us shall ever forget.

Boughton House

A report by **Christina Nelson**.

The FPS summer outings usually give members an opportunity to see and study much more than porcelain. This was certainly true at Boughton. Home to the Montagu Douglas Scott family for nearly five hundred years, each generation has left its mark on the outstanding collection visitors see today.

As part of our group studied the French porcelain, other members feasted their eyes on the interesting architecture, excellent paintings, and fine decorative arts in other media. Especially strong in French furniture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Boughton collection contains work by a number of the best *ébénistes* including André-Charles Boulle, Pierre Gole, Gerreit Jensen, Jean Pellitier, Martin Carlin and Etienne Lasseur. We also enjoyed seeing and learning about an interesting array of English textiles, including Mortlake tapestries and chairs

with original upholstery. The collection also contains an especially fine set of three carpets of 1583-85, which bear the Montagu arms; they are thought to be the earliest carpets known to have been made in Britain. Understandably not all these carpets were not on view for reasons of conservation.

Although each generation influenced the collection, two members of the Montagu family were especially fond of French decorative arts. Ralph, 1st Duke of Montagu, was the first of his family to collect extensively in this area. During his tenure as British Ambassador to the court of Louis XIV during the years 1669 to 1678, the 1st Duke developed an appreciation for French architecture and decoration, and a writing table in the Boughton collection is thought to have been a gift to Montagu from the King himself. In 1674, in addition to carrying out his ambassadorial duties in France, the 1st Duke was attentive to the arts in Britain, for he rescued the Mortlake tapestry works from bankruptcy. The Marquis of Monthermer, only son of the 3rd Duke, was the second family member to take an interest in French decorative arts. He added significant paintings and pieces of French furniture to the family collection at Boughton before his untimely death in 1770 at the relatively young age of thirty-five.

Last, but certainly not least, several of our gardening members raved about the splendour of the famous and unforgettable "white garden" in one of Boughton's inner courtyards. This garden was even more beautiful than the last time we visited. By the end of the afternoon, members agreed our day at Boughton had been filled with beautiful objects and the companionship of like-minded friends.

Due to the success and the over subscription of the June outing another trip was organised for those who had been unable to attend.

Althorp and Boughton on September Wednesday 18th A report by **Pamela Roditi**

We were but a few who journeyed northwards on a sunny September morning to our first stop, Althorp, we went straight to the porcelain display room where it was refreshing to see such a diverse collection of eighteenth-century porcelain as well as the French porcelain; the highlight of these, were a very rare pair of Cozzi vases flanked by two heads, the centre decorated with golden sunbursts. Underneath, each was marked with a large red anchor. One subsequently discovered that all pieces in this collection had a factory mark and on learning more of how it was assembled, by way of marks, it thus created an interesting 'reference library' of porcelain.

The day we visited Althorp, the house was open to the public which gave us the opportunity to legitimately view the rest of the house as well, which I believe was not an option for the summer group, who were visiting on a closed day. Conversely they were allowed to unlock the porcelain cabinets and examine the pieces more closely - ah well, you can't win them all.



The September group at Boughton

An additional bonus to our day was to have paid our respects to the extraordinary Montagu tombs by Roubiliac and Adam at St. Edmund's Church at Warkton. Sadly we could not raise the warden, but we just managed to peek through the wonderfully large rear window to see something of the splendid monuments and we vowed to visit another day.

At Boughton we all enjoyed an excellent meal in the stables. Ros cut short her coffee and rushed ahead to arrange for us to see a selection of pieces.

Before this however, we all enjoyed the interesting and informative introduction from our guide, giving us some fascinating facts. We discovered the origin of the expression 'pin money'; while enjoying an Elizabethan painting of the Countess of Southampton, lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth I, we were told that the pins in the cushion were for fastening the pearls, jewels and lace (which in the painting were placed close to the pincushion) to the queens resplendent gown and subsequently, the Countess would have been paid a small amount of money for this task, thus 'pin money'.

And then, how very privileged we were to examine the many wonderful and important pieces put out by Ros for us to enjoy; we all marvelled at the amazing potting and beauty of the huge Vincennes platter from the Louis XV service specially brought down from the attic for us, (which we were informed was recently used as part of a coffee table!). There are 99 pieces from this service at Boughton. Another piece that we enjoyed and discussed was a *pot-pourri* vase painted by Dodin with later embellishments by Baldock.

We would like to thank Ros, for once again accompanying us and for making it possible to view first-hand the wonderful pieces at Boughton, and a thank you too to Deborah, for organising this most enjoyable day.

REPORTS ON OTHER EVENTS

Madame de Pompadour - L'Art et L'Amour - Exhibition Munich

14 June to 15 September 2002

A Report by **Josef Sellmair**

The Pompadour exhibition came to Munich, home of the most glorious portrait of Madame de Pompadour by Boucher.



**Madame de Pompadour by Boucher,
The Alte Pinakothek, Munich**

First of all - the choice of exhibits is absolutely beautiful, though on the furniture side the most stunning pieces i.e. the lacquer furniture of the type owned by Madame de Pompadour were not on show.

The porcelain side of the exhibition is quite daring for Germany, as colourful Sèvres wares are abhorred by most German collectors. But since there is a close link between Madame de Pompadour and some of the Sèvres today in the Residenz and the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich, it was very important to show Sèvres here. The Duc de Deux-Ponts was a good friend of Madame de Pompadour. She gave him a costly *bleu céleste pot à oille rond* with silver liner that she bought from Lazare Duvaux on 23 June 1754. Is this the magnificent *bleu céleste* tureen today at Hillwood, Washington?

Now the Duc de Deux-Ponts (himself a regular buyer from the dealer Lazare Duvaux, particularly of Vincennes and Sèvres) was a member of the extensive Wittelsbach family. According to Wittelsbach family treaties, each branch of the family would inherit the possessions of the other if either branch died out without male descendants. The main Bavarian branch died out in 1777 with the death of Maximilian III Joseph. As Frederick the Great put it: the "lucky pig of the century", Karl Theodor, elector of the Palatinate inherited Bavaria. With him the Sèvres service that had been given to him by Louis XV in 1760 moved to Munich. He himself died without children in 1799 and the Ducs de Deux-Ponts inherited Bavaria. When their native lands were invaded and devastated by French revolutionary troops, they moved as many of their possessions to Munich as possible, including rich holdings of French decorative arts. Among them, presumably, were Duplessis' magnificent writing set and an early *bleu céleste* part tea service with gilt birds. Unfortunately the cataloguing of the Sèvres porcelains from the Munich collections lacks the necessary scientific exactitude: how could an art historian call a *fromager* a coaster? This is only one of the many inaccuracies. Nevertheless the catalogue is worth having for anybody who can read German as it shows pieces that have never been published before and also can lead to and encourage further research into how the Munich Sèvres actually came to Munich.

Royal Sugar Sculpture: Six Hundred Years of Splendour
The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Co.Durham, DL12 8NP
1 June-22 September 2002

The Bowes Museum held the first exhibition ever devoted to the theme of sugar sculpture through the ages. Table-decoration in the form of sculpture made out of sugar paste was an essential component of royal dining from medieval times into the nineteenth century. Naturally no contemporary examples survive, but it has been possible to reconstruct their appearance through contemporary descriptions and historic techniques of sugar craft as revealed in old cookery books.



A Triumphal Arch made of sugar paste

The main focus of the exhibition is a complete reconstruction of a table of the early 19th century, using authentic French wooden moulds featuring an eighteen inch high triumphal arch, vases of artificial flowers made entirely out of sugar paste, and numerous sugar sculptures including a poodle drawing a triumphal chariot! These moulds form part of a unique collection of 18th and early 19th century French moulds with related drawings and tools recently acquired by The Bowes Museum with the help of the National Art Collections Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Study Days At The Wallace Collection

For further details ring 020 7563 9551

Wednesday 6 November **The Bedroom in 18th-Century France**

Thursday 21 November **The Wernher Collection**

Wednesday 4 December **Madame de Pompadour and the Decorative Arts**

Saturday 2, 9, 16 November **Short Course On The French Rococo**

To book telephone 020 7563 9551

National Gallery Study Day

Saturday 30 November **Madame the Pompadour: Images of a Mistress**

Telephone no. 020 7747 2888

The American Ceramic Circle will meet in Los Angeles on November 7-10, 2002 for their annual symposium. They will be headquartered at the J. Paul Getty Museum and will visit the Los Angeles County Museum and the Huntington Library.

There will be pre- and post-symposium tours of the collection of Roy Byrnes of Meissen and Vienna porcelain and The Marylou Boone Collection of French faience and soft-paste porcelain.

EXHIBITIONS

THE NATIONAL GALLERY, London
Madame de Pompadour, Images of a Mistress
16 October 2002 - 12 January 2003

Timed ticket entry. To book: 0870 906 3891



Madame de Pompadour as a Vestal
François-Hubert Drouais and Studio, Stewart Museum, Montreal

Among the exhibits are Boucher's stunning portrait of Madame de Pompadour painted in 1756 on loan from the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Carle Vanloo's portrait of her in oriental dress from the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Greuze's 'Simplicity' from the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, and one of her writing-desks from Versailles complete with a secret compartment. The exhibition has been organised in collaboration with the Réunion des Musées Nationaux, the Musée des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon and the Kunsthalle, Munich.

THE WALLACE COLLECTION, London
The Art of Love: Madame de Pompadour and the Wallace Collection
10 October 2002- 5 January 2003



Madame de Pompadour in 1759
François Boucher

This exhibition assembles works of art which once belonged to Madame de Pompadour and are now in the Wallace Collection and looks at her private life, how she used and displayed objects and how her legend grew in the 19th Century.

MEMBERS NEWS

Meredith Chilton, curator at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art, Toronto, has received two awards for her book "Harlequin Unmasked: The Commedia dell'Arte and Porcelain Sculpture", the George Freedley Memorial Award for the best book published on theatre in 2001, from the Theatre Library Association and The Barnard Hewitt Award for outstanding research in Theatre History, the American Society for Theatre Research. Only one book previously has won both awards.

MUSEUM GALLERY CLOSURES

French galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum

The Heritage Lottery Fund have given a 'stage one' pass to the 'Architecture for All' project which includes incorporating the Royal Institute of British Architects collections with those of the V & A and installing them in gallery 128, the current French ceramics gallery.

It is now known that gallery 128 is likely to close from January 2003, or perhaps even before, in preparation for the removal of all the French ceramics. Their future fate is not yet known but it is very probable that they will be inaccessible for a long time and that they will never again be displayed in conditions allowing so much natural light.

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

The ceramics (other than Antiquities) are in store for the duration of a major building project, probably until the autumn of 2003 or early 2004, depending on whether the building is completed on schedule.

The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Will close for four years from January 2004 for a major redevelopment, during this time some of the most important paintings will be displayed in the Philips Wing.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts

The MFA is beginning its multi-phase Master Plan project, designed by Norman Foster and Partners. Phase I entails the closure of the European decorative arts galleries, which will be closed entirely by next summer. Selections of French porcelain will be featured elsewhere in temporary displays. The European decorative arts galleries are tentatively scheduled to reopen in 2007.

MUSEUM NEWS

Preussische Schloesser und Garten, Berlin-Brandenburg

In February 2003 the Berlin KPM-porcelain collection will be re-opened in the Belvedere at Charlottenburg, Berlin. The Pavilion will have been restored and the long-term exhibition will also be remodelled.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts

On October 9, the MFA will open a newly installed gallery featuring the **Swan Collection**. James Swan, a Boston patriot and financier, acted as the French Revolutionary government's sole American agent in 1794 and 1795, providing the cash-poor government with essential supplies, such as wheat, rice, leather, naval munitions, in exchange for works of art seized from the former royal and aristocratic residences. Most of the French works of art he brought back to the United States through this arrangement were auctioned off in New York, Philadelphia and Boston in order for Swan to recoup his expenses. However, Swan also retained important objects for his own French-style house, constructed near Boston in 1796. In addition, he purchased works of art directly or through intermediaries from the châteaux sales held in the 1790s.



Sèvres vases *Bachelier*, dated 1779 from the Swan Collection

French porcelain will play a prominent role. Among the masterworks of the Swan Collection is the pair of *vases Bachelier*, dated 1779, which stood on the mantelshelf in the *Cabinet de Conseil* of Louis XVI at Versailles until the Revolution. The soft-paste vases, measuring 28 inches in height, were painted by Antoine Caton with scenes from the life of Belisarius. The reserves on the backs are painted with floral sprays by Charles Buteux. These vases, given individually to the MFA by descendants of James Swan in 1927 and 1936, have been off-view for several years. Other French porcelains will also be installed in the gallery, including the pair of Dihl et Guérhard biscuit figures, *Child Reading* and *Child Sketching*, ca. 1795, from the Forsyth Wickes Collection, and a Sèvres potpourri vase with gilt-bronze mounts by Thomire, ca. 1786-90.

OTHER REPORTS

Vincennes & Sèvres in the Belvedere, Weimar, Germany

A report by **Josef Sellmair**

On a short excursion to Thuringian castles together with Malcolm Gutter we stopped at Schloss Belvedere in Weimar. This little beautiful group of pavilions in the middle of a park outside the old centre of Weimar houses the museum of decorative arts. Almost all major European porcelain factories are represented there with some quite important pieces and much to my surprise there was also a tiny, but very fine selection of Vincennes and Sèvres.

Among them a miniature *déjeuner* with a *bleu lapis* ground with coloured children after Boucher bearing underglaze-blue marks with dateletter B and Vieilliard's mark painted overglaze. Furthermore a *déjeuner Hebert*, lacking the milkpot with *frise riche* decoration bearing the dateletter J for 1762 and painters mark of a comma for Méreaud *jeune*.



Sèvres vases *cannellés* in the Belvedere, Weimar

And last, but certainly not least two massive *vases cannellés* (33 cms tall, inv. No. A 1556) with *bleu céleste* grounds and beautifully painted flower garlands. The mark (hardly visible) consisted of the interlaced L's and date letter B. I don't think these vases are known to the Sèvres world, as I could not find them mentioned in any of the literature that I have. How did these vases come to Weimar? Were they a diplomatic gift, were they bought in the 19th century by a duke-collector? One wonders how much more Sèvres there might be to be found in the parts of Europe that were once behind the Iron Curtain.

I wish to thank Dr. Gert-Dieter Ulferts for his kind help in sending a photo of the vases.

AN EAST COAST DIARY

FPS members Steve Spiegel, Richard Deacon and Josef Sellmair embarked on a tour of east coast American museums in search of Sèvres. Josef Sellmair shares some of the highlights (regretfully much abridged. Ed.) of that trip.

2 May 2002

Tracey Albainy is already waiting for us at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and guides us around the galleries. The pieces of the Markus collection attract a lot of interest. The stunning huge *bleu céleste ecuelle turque* with beautiful flower painting and the rich gilding possibly made for the Turkish market leads us to the tempting thought what there might still be to be found in Turkey...

On we go to the Forsyth Wickes Collection. Perhaps my favourite piece is the *pot à oille* probably given to the King of Denmark, but with so many highlights how can you really pick a favourite piece?



Josef Sellmair adopts a respectful attitude before one of the treasures of Boston

In the reserves Tracey has already brought out several pieces to be looked at in detail: first the magnificent pair of bulb pots from the Forsyth Wickes collection, that once belonged to Queen Charlotte. Were they display pieces for the factory showroom or were they just another rococo craziness?



Sèvres *piédestal à oignon*, 1760

Then we look at the pair of pink-ground *comptiers* with flower painting and rich gilding. We are to find pieces from the same service in almost all the museums we visit. It must have been a truly magnificent pink-ground service with very rich rococo gilding with certain common features. The reason why we pay so much attention to it is, that one member of the group had the chance to acquire a beautiful *plateau Bouret* from the same service. Is this the Duc de Richelieu's pink-ground service?



Another of the treasures of Boston

We said goodbye to Tracey and thanked her for her warm invitation to come again.

We drive on to the Wadsworth Atheneum at Hartford, Connecticut. Unfortunately Linda Roth has a meeting this day, so she can only give us a short welcome and then her assistant shows us into the reserves. In the reserves we see many of the items that we knew already from Linda's magnificent catalogue of the collection. On we go to the Gallery, in which we spend a long time. We also spend time with the fantastic collection of Meissen porcelain.

On we drive to New York City.

3 May 2002

After a morning walk through the southern part of Central Park we make our way to Christie's where we have the chance to preview the Pompey sale and handle some extraordinary and beautiful pieces.

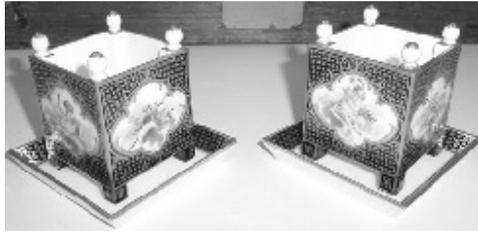
We take a cab to The Metropolitan Museum of Art to meet Jeffrey Munger. Having deposited our luggage in his office we went straight into the treasure vaults of the Met. God Almighty! If all this would come up for auction, the collectors of this world would all expire!



Of all the incredible objects in the reserves we find one particularly interesting; a small square tray with a charming cherub reserved on a *fond rose* and with very rich gilding. If this came up for auction, I am sure the most experienced experts and collectors would wonder if this was a fake, but according to Jeffrey, "Sèvres popes" consider it to be right and we, too, agreed.

The wonderful objects in the reserves are only rivalled by the objects in the galleries. Has anybody ever noticed the cleverly painted *vase Duplessis* with the painted flowers "growing" out of the modelled flower branches? Just a little detail on a 'minor' object between all these incredible vases.

Because of an unforeseen change in our plans, we take the train to Philadelphia on Friday to visit Donna Corbin at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. What a beautiful museum, particularly in the sunset! And what a marvellous collection again! An American lady living in Paris, Mrs. Morris Hawkes, compiled a superb collection of French 18th century porcelains, particularly early Vincennes at the beginning of the 20th century. She bought pieces without any marks, just because of their wonderful appearance. What an eye she must have had to assemble a collection without the reference books that help the collectors to identify and compare today.



What we find very interesting are a pair of *caisses carrées* with *bleu lapis* ground and cherub/trophy decoration. They stand on square trays with identical *bleu lapis* ground and *mosaïque* gilding; although these have different date-letters we consider them to be made to match the flowerpots. Interesting, as apparently most of these flowerpots had square stands, but apparently most of them are lost.

4 May 2002

On to Baltimore! Glorious pieces galore again. I counted the vases in the gallery, but please forgive me, I forgot the number! We are stunned by their richness and variety. And between all this a beautifully preserved tapestry portrait of Louis XVI, gift of the king along with a green-ground Sèvres service to Prince Heinrich von Preussen, talented brother of Frederick the Great. What we find interesting is the number of Sèvres items related to Mercury in this collection. A beautiful *bleu céleste* cup and saucer with a gorgeous *rose camaïeu* cherub Mercury, a vase with a biscuit medallion of Mercury and last but not least a biscuit figure of Mercury (after the model by Pigalle?).

We take the train again and move on to Washington D.C.

The generosity of a friend enables me to join him on the garden party in Hillwood. Thank you Liliana Paredes Arend for showing me around even though you were busy and had to entertain the other guests as well.



Our favourite piece was the **bleu céleste** tureen. Could this be the one given by Madame de Pompadour to the Duc de Deux-Ponts (cf. my short report on the Pompadour exhibition in Munich?) Possible!

RECENT ACQUISITIONS



The Detroit Institute of Arts

A **Sèvres** covered chestnut bowl and stand (*marronnière à quatre pans*), 1757-58, with a rose pink ground and painted floral decorations in the reserves. The four-lobed bowl, lid, and stand are pierced with a delicate pattern of foliate scrolls whose edges are highlighted with gilding. There are only a few extant examples of this model. The form was adapted from the sugar bowl (*pot à sucre ovale à compartiments*), which had been made at Vincennes from 1753. In 1759, Sèvres discontinued making this version of a chestnut bowl and produced instead the *marronnière à ozier*, which was shaped like a basket.

Marks: The bowl and stand are incised with the initials BP and with a square *répateur's* mark. The bowl is marked in blue with the factory mark of interlaced L's enclosing the date letter E for 1757-58; the stand also has the interlaced L's mark. There are traces of red inventory numbers.

Provenance: Baron Gustave de Rothschild (1829-1911), Paris, France (the Medici ewer now in the DIA was once part of his collection as well). The Rothschild family by descent.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

A Sèvres plate of 1827 from the *service des Départements*. This example represents the *Département* of the Loiret and is painted in the centre with a view of the cathedral of Orléans, and on the border with cameo portraits of famous figures from the region as well as attributes symbolizing the major industries and products of the Loiret (acc. no. 2002.57).

BOOK REVIEWS



**Samson, génie de l'imitation by Florence Slitine
Published by Editions Massin, Paris, 2002, ISBN 2-7072-0424-2**

Between 1845 and 1964 four generations of the Samson family manufactured a huge range of porcelain (including Oriental), tin-glazed earthenware and enamel reproductions, as well as sculpture and metal objects. At the end of the 19th century the firm had no fewer than 125 employees. In the 1970s after it had been taken over by Christian Richardière, before its eventual closure between 1979-82, it still had a workforce of twenty-five people. Although the firm's output was enormous, its pieces were highly prized, particularly in its heyday in the second half of the 19th century. From 1849 Samson showed at many exhibitions in Paris. In 1889 the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A) purchased examples for its collections. Models were inspired by the accumulations of such luminaries of the art world as Richard Wallace, Siegfried Bing, Frederic Spitzer and Gustave Dreyfus. Moulds were taken from Sèvres pieces with the full permission of the factory during the period 1880-1905. A 'museum' of genuine examples was built up by Samson, but items were not infrequently sold to fund new purchases as models for reproduction.

Only a few traces of the firm's activity now remain, apart from its products which are ubiquitous. The documents include several sale catalogues: of sales at Christie's, London, in May 1971 (English porcelain reproductions), of Couturier-Nicolay, Paris, in December 1978 (faïences), and of sales held at Christie's, London, in 1979-80. The highly important photographic archive of the enterprise was acquired for the archives of the Sèvres factory when the Samson factory site was torn down in 1988. In addition three kilns were listed by the French state in 1989, there are two large containers of models in the Louvre Museum, and the Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires owns a Samson shop sign and equipment used in the slip-moulding process. Around 100 pieces were presented to the Sèvres Museum by M. Christian Richardière, owner of the Samson concern from 1964 until its dissolution. Further material from the firm is still in private possession.

This study, the first to be made of this important enterprise, was undertaken at the behest of our member M. Georges Touzenis, director of the Sèvres factory, under the auspices and direction of our member Mme Tamara Préaud. It is an invaluable record of over a century of activity in a field which has been completely neglected. Basing her work on the photographic prints taken from the glass negatives now in the Sèvres archives, Mme Slitine presents a fascinating picture which is both wide-ranging and detailed. Marks used by the factory, which was quite open about the

sources of its inspiration, and indeed boasted of them, are fully listed. These, like the numerous photographs of existing examples illustrated by the author, and the text itself, should be carefully studied by all collectors, dealers and Museum curators, as there is much to learn about the extraordinary scope of Samson's activity. This book is indispensable and deserves the widest circulation as it opens up a fruitful area for study and provides essential information on many troubling objects.

Aileen Dawson October 2002

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Madame de Pompadour, Images of a Mistress

By Colin Jones, Professor of History at Warwick University to accompany the exhibition at The National Gallery, London

Un Cabinet de Porcelaines, Porcelaines de Saxe dans les collections publiques Parisiennes.

A catalogue to accompany the exhibition at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon

16th June- 1st October 2001. It includes an article by Maureen Cassidy-Geiger on 'Des porcelains des Meissen pour le Musée de la Céramique de Sèvres, 1808-1875.'

Matières de Rêves, Stuff Of Dreams

The Catalogue to accompany the loan exhibition from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, June 1 - August 11, 2002. Co-authored by Penelope Hunter-Stiebel and Odile Nouvel-Kammerer and published by the Portland Museum of Art.

ARTICLES

Eighteenth Century Sèvres Biscuit sculpture, Tamara Préaud, The International Ceramics Fair & Seminar Handbook, 2002.

Apollo, May 2002. A special issue that focuses on works of art from the Wernher Collection on long term loan to the Ranger's House, Blackheath. It includes an article by **Rosalind Savill** on 'Sèvres porcelain in the Wernher Collection'.

Apollo, August 2002, celebrating the Queen's Golden Jubilee with articles on the Royal Collection including **Sir Geoffrey de Bellaigue** on 'Paintings in Porcelain' 17 Dutch and French Landscapes seen through Sèvres eyes which discusses landscape paintings on Sèvres Porcelain in The Royal Collection.

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

'**The Metropolitan Museum Journal**' (no.37) will be devoted to essays in honour of **Clare Le Corbeiller**. The articles cover a very wide range of topics, but most focus on ceramics and a number of FPS members have participated as authors. While the first copies of the Journal will be published in October, it will not be readily available until December. The Journal can be ordered from the Museum Shop at The Metropolitan Museum.

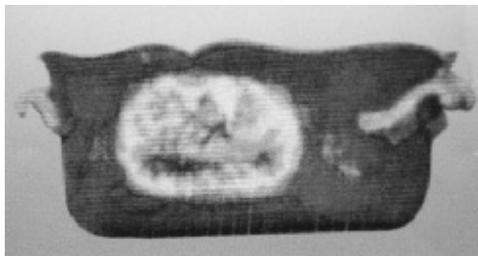
'**Traité de la porcelaine de Sèvres**' by **Antoine d'Albis** will be published by Faton in around January 2003. This book of 400 pages, illustrated with 150 pieces created over the last 30 years, will discuss all the processes used in the production of porcelain at Sèvres; these are identical to those used in the 18th Century.

It will encapsulate Antoine d'Albis's unique experience of 37 years at the factory.

'**Marie-Victoire Jaquotot, 1772-1855, peintre sur porcelaine**' by **Anne Lajoix**, will be published by the Société de l'histoire de l'art Français,

A study of one of the greatest Sèvres painters of the first half of the 19th century whose consummate technique was employed to make large-scale copies of the paintings of Raphael and other Old Masters.

STOLEN



A group of *bleu céleste* Sèvres porcelains were amongst items from the Langley and Bradshaw collections stolen from a private house in West Sussex on the 7 May 2003.

They include three *seau à liquer ovale*, two *seau à bouteille*, an *ecuelle* stand and a small jug. It is possible that some pieces are later decorated.

For details, images and further information contact: Natasha Hess at Trace, tel. 0800 0180208