

*Spring 2017*



*Dame Rosalind Savill and Tamara Préaud at Sèvres – Cité de la Céramique*

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In our final newsletter in this format, we have updates on various aspects of the Society's recent and future activities.

### *Needed: A Membership Secretary and some Administrative Support*

2016 saw the resignation of Anne Leeper as membership secretary. As well as for all her past work, we are deeply grateful to Anne for agreeing to stay on for a few more months to handle the 2017 subscription renewals and to ensure that the membership database is double-checked and up-to-date. The search is therefore on for her replacement, and the Society's Council would be very grateful to any member who would be willing to volunteer for this post. The membership secretary is a member of the Society's Council, which meets four to six times a year in London, and the role, working with the overseas representatives, is to look after the interests of members, as well as to ensure that you pay your subscriptions! If you might be willing to undertake this vital and rewarding task, do please contact me in the first instance on [oliverfairclough@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oliverfairclough@yahoo.co.uk)

To support this voluntary role, and that of Treasurer, the Council has agreed to fund some administrative help. We are therefore looking for somebody who will maintain the membership database, and keep financial records. This is likely to entail up to ten hours of freelance work a month.

It would suit a postgraduate student, or somebody semi-retired, and they need not be London-based. If you know of anyone who might be interested – not necessarily a member of the society – do please ask them to contact me on the email above as soon as possible. We hope to fill the role by the middle of March. We are very grateful to Georgina Le Sellier de Chezelles for her continued help in the interim.

### *Digital and Social media*

We have commissioned a complete redesign of the Society's website and the new site which will keep the current address – [www.thefrenchporcelainsociety.com](http://www.thefrenchporcelainsociety.com) – will be live shortly. Patricia Ferguson has also renewed our social media presence. You can find and follow us on **Facebook** (<https://www.facebook.com/TheFrenchPorcelainSociety/posts/>), **Instagram** (<https://www.instagram.com/frenchporcelainsociety/?hl=en>), and **Twitter** ([https://twitter.com/The\\_FPSLondon?lang=en](https://twitter.com/The_FPSLondon?lang=en)). These posts alert you to forthcoming events and other developments in the European ceramic world. If you have posts that they would like the Social Media Administrator to consider, please send updates to [FPSmailings@gmail.com](mailto:FPSmailings@gmail.com). We would really like to know about relevant exhibitions, publications, articles, discoveries, and forthcoming auctions, though we can't promote specific items for sale.

*Oliver Fairclough, January 2017*

## COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH PORCELAIN SOCIETY 2017

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President	Dame Rosalind Savill DBE, FSA, FBA, <i>London</i>
Chairman	Oliver Fairclough FSA, <i>Wales</i>
Secretary	Patricia Ferguson, <i>London</i>
Treasurer	Sophie von der Goltz, <i>London</i>
Journal Editor	Diana Davis, <i>U.K.</i>
Membership Secretary	Anne Leeper, <i>U.K.</i>
Events Organiser	Nette Megens, <i>London</i>
Newsletter Editor	Catrin Jones, <i>U.K.</i>
North American Representative	Letitia Roberts, <i>New York</i>
French Representative	Manuela Finaz de Villaine, <i>Paris</i>
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Journal Co-Editor	John Whitehead, <i>France</i>
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Ordinary Member	Caroline McCaffrey-Howarth, <i>London</i>
Ordinary Member	Sebastian Kuhn, <i>London</i>
Founder	Lady Davson, <i>U.K.</i>

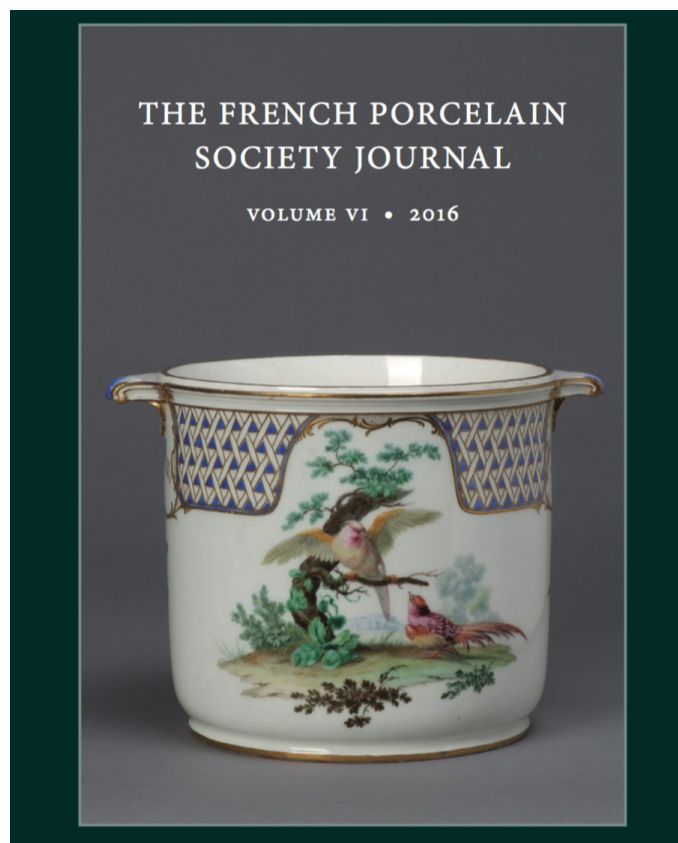
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## JOURNALS

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The Society has published its sixth two-yearly Journal. This was the first to be edited by Diana Davis, with some help from John Whitehead and myself, and is titled '*Céramiques sans Frontières: The Transfer of Ceramic Designs and Technologies across Europe.*' Based on the society's 2015 symposium, fourteen articles investigate the impact of French ceramic design on makers elsewhere in Europe and in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These range from an analysis of the transfer of the Istoriatto maiolica tradition from Italy to France in the late sixteenth century and an account by J.V.G. Mallet of the travels of Walther Ehrenfried von Tschirnhaus to an investigation of the links between Sèvres and Minton porcelain in the nineteenth century. Impeccably edited by Diana, and beautifully designed by Derek Brown, this is easily our best yet, and we owe both a huge thank you. If you have not received your copy, please let us know on the membership email.

The next journal, titled *Makers, Markets, and Museums: French Porcelain in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1789-1918*, will be published in 2018. This will examine our subject during the long nineteenth century. From the dispersal of Sèvres porcelain from royal palaces and aristocratic collections after the French Revolution to the founding of outstanding collections of French porcelain in Britain and the United States and the establishment of new museums for the decorative arts, the nineteenth century was undoubtedly one of seismic change. It witnessed the growth of a flourishing London art market and new departures in collecting French eighteenth-century decorative art, all encouraged by the rise of the dealer. Innovation in design and manufacture was documented in a plethora of printed specialist publications, pattern books and popular journals. It is hoped that this volume will enlarge our understanding of this under-researched but important aspect of ceramic history.



If you would like to offer a contribution to this journal, could you please send an abstract as an e-mail attachment to: [diana\\_davis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:diana_davis@hotmail.co.uk) by 7 April 2017. If your abstract is accepted, articles and images will be due by 29 September 2017. Submissions in the first instance should be a summary of no more than 750 words, with a brief description of the argument, a historiography and a note of the research tools and sources used. Please include a brief C.V.. The journal accepts articles in French as well as in English. The volume will comprise about 15 articles which will be peer-reviewed by the editorial board and the FPS Council.

*Oliver Fairclough, January 2017*



# OUR DAME IS ALSO AN OFFICER

*Dame Rosalind Savill and Tamara Préaud were honoured with the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in a ceremony in Paris in January*



A couple of dozen members of the Society were in Paris on 6 and 7 December 2016 to see our heroines Rosalind Savill, our President, and Tamara Préaud, invested with the *ordre des arts et des lettres* for their transformative lifetime research on Sèvres porcelain. Many of those who came to see the fun (including three former chairs of the society: Ros, Aileen and Errol) were veterans of similar study trips, but we were delighted to be joined by Mia Jackson, who leaves English Heritage shortly for a curatorial post at Waddesdon Manor and by Rebecca Wallis, curator, ceramics and glass, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, both assisted by bursaries from our Mavis Watney fund (tell your friends that any member who is a junior or mid-career professional is eligible to apply). In addition to attending the investiture and a lecture at the manufacture de Sèvres on the evening of Tuesday 6 December, we visited the exhibition '*Les Services aux oiseaux Buffon du comte Moïse de Camondo*' at the Musée Nissim de

Camondo that morning. During the afternoon we were at the Sèvres – Cité de la Céramique for a handling session which brought many of their greatest treasures out of their showcases. The final item in our programme on Wednesday morning was a visit to the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in the rue de Rivoli to see the recently completed new collection displays of 18th- and 19th-century French art and design. This was followed by an excellent lunch in the Paris offices of Bonham's a short walk away, with the opportunity to see some key pieces from a forthcoming London sale. Some of the group also made their way to St Cloud that afternoon where we saw a small but significant exhibition on St Cloud porcelain in the Musée des Avelines. The trip was organised by Patricia Ferguson, and John Whitehead as ever opened museum doors and arranged for us to meet the subject specialists. Very many thanks, as ever to both. Reports on the individual events follow.

## SAVE THE DATES: AGM & SYMPOSIUM

*2017 Annual General Meeting and Geoffrey de Bellaigue lecture*

This year's AGM and lecture will be held in London on **Monday 26 June 2017** at the Polish Club (full details to follow), and will be followed by the annual dinner.

We are also planning a visit to a major private collection in Cambridgeshire on the following day, Tuesday 27th June.

*2017 Symposium*

We are planning a symposium at the Wallace Collection, London, on 20 and 21 October 2017. This is organised by Aileen Dawson, and will explore the output of French porcelain factories other than Sèvres. It will cover factories from the 18th to the 20th century, and there will be speakers from French and UK museums together with other scholars, and dealers specialising in French porcelain. Further details will be announced in the Spring.

# NEW PUBLICATION

Patricia F. Ferguson, *Ceramics: 400 Years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces* (Philip Wilson Publishers Ltd, November 2016), pp. 256, £45.

Announced in our last newsletter, Patricia's beautifully-produced book focuses on 100 highlights from the ceramics collections of the National Trust, has now been published. With more than 80,000 items displayed in some 250 historic houses throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the National Trust possesses one of the largest and most diverse collections of ceramics in the world. Ranging in time from Ancient Greece to the Arts and Crafts movement, its highlights encompass rare treasures from imperial China and Mughal India, spectacular Italian renaissance maiolica, outstanding French porcelain of the 18th century, and some of the greatest works of factories ranging from Meissen to Wedgwood. Acquired over four hundred years, each of these remarkable objects has a story to tell: of exploration and international commerce, technical innovation and high fashion, extravagant collectors and family pride.

The book has much to tell us about the history of taste, manners and of collecting in Britain between the 17th and 19th centuries, and is grounded in original archival research.



## CERAMICS

*400 Years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces*

Patricia Ferguson

## SEMINAR: GARNITURES: VASES IN INTERIORS

*The Lydia & Manfred Gorvy Lecture Theatre, Victoria and Albert Museum, 17 March 2017, 10.00 – 17.15*



*Three-piece garniture de cheminée, Sevres, 1780, Upton House, Warwickshire, The National Trust. Picture credit Robert Morris*

This international symposium explores the phenomenon of 'garnitures' or matching sets of vases and the way in which they were used in the European interior. Displayed above chimneypieces, cabinets and cupboards or over doorways, they embellished or 'garnished' the interior and enhanced the status of the owner.

The fashion began in Europe in the 1640s using mismatched porcelain beakers, vases, bowls and jars, imported from China. By the 1690s, purpose made sets with matching decoration were produced in China, Japan and Europe.

The fashion continued well into the 18th century with almost every ceramic manufactory producing examples. The symposium will also explore how contemporary artists are re-interpreting vase sets in modern and historic interiors.

Speakers include Patricia Ferguson, Suzanne Lambooy, Rosalind Savill, Tamara Préaud, Selma Schwartz, Julia Weber, Edmund de Waal, Reino Liefkes, Yu-Ping Luk, and Matt Smith.

*Tickets: £25 (£20 concessions; £15 students).*

*<https://www.vam.ac.uk/shop/whatson/index/view/id/4063/event/Garnitures---Vases-in-Interiors/dt/2017-03-17/eType/1/free/2>*



# TRIP TO PARIS

Rebecca Wallis and Oliver Fairclough report on a visit to the museums of Paris



Fig. 1 - The Musée Nissim de Camondo

## Tuesday Morning

The French Porcelain Society study visit to Paris 6-7 December 2016 was brilliantly organised by Patricia Ferguson and John Whitehead, and I am enormously grateful to the Society for granting me a bursary to attend.

After any early start for many on the Eurostar, we all met at the Musée Nissim de Camondo for a tour of the wonderful Count Moïse de Camondo's Sèvres 'Buffon Birds' services by Head Curator Sylvie Legrand-Rossi. This temporary exhibition brought together 240 pieces from four services (350 pieces in total) and was displayed across rooms in the 1911 mansion house (Fig. 1). The services were acquired by Camondo between 1898 and 1920 and bequeathed, with the house and collections, to Les Arts Décoratifs after his death in 1935.

The ornithological decoration of the services derives from *Histoire Naturelle et Particulière* by Comte de Buffon (1707-88) published in 36 volumes between 1749-89, including *Histoire naturelle des oiseaux*. Buffon placed an emphasis on the quality of the accompanying illustrations (by François-Nicolas Martinet) which are particularly accurate owing, in many instances, to the use of live subjects. Buffon stated that 'these portraits of birds represented with their colours, enable one to recognise them better, at a single glance, than any long, fastidious and difficult description'. *Histoire Naturelle* was a popular and important source for the painters at Sèvres and the factory created 15 'Buffon Birds' services between 1779-96, including one for the comte d'Artois in 1782.

Camondo's collection is drawn from four services, all with his preferred green, partridge-eye border:

1) The Lefebvre service – a dessert service delivered on 29 December 1784 to the merchant Jean-Baptiste Lefebvre for an unknown client. It later belonged to Baron Léopold Double (1812-81) and then 110 pieces were bought by Camondo from the dealer Seligman in 1898 (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 - The Lefebvre Service

2) The Kendal service – a dessert service delivered on 22 February 1785 to the merchant Baron de Kendal. Supplemented by additional pieces, most of this service was bought by Camondo from the dealer Seligman in 1911 (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 - The Kendal Service

3) The Eden service – delivered on 15 March 1787 to Comte de Montmorin (Louis XIV's foreign minister), as a gift for Eleanor Eden wife of William Eden (Britain's special envoy to France). Bought, along with additional pieces, by the Prince Regent (future George IV) in 1814, it was subsequently bought by Baron Lionel de Rothschild and then Camondo 1898-1907 (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 - The Eden Service





Fig. 5 - The Madame Lefebvre Service

4) The Madame Lefebvre service – sold to A. M. Lefebvre, marchand-mercier, Paris, on the 15 December 1792. Acquired by Camondo 1898-1907 (Fig. 5).

The original Martinet drawings and editions of Buffon's publication were lent by the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, and many were displayed alongside the pieces in the Musée Nissim de Camondo which in total depict 136 bird species (Fig. 6). The exhibition was a unique opportunity to understand the design and production of these magnificent services, and the quality of both the original illustrations and the Sèvres painted decoration including seven plates by Charles-Nicolas Dodin.



Fig. 6 - The service on display alongside the original drawings

Further reading:

*Les services "aux oiseaux Buffon" du comte Moïse de Camondo: Une encyclopédie sur porcelain* by Sylvie Legrand-Rossi, 2016.

Film with Sylvie Legrand-Rossi:

<https://youtu.be/DSEFHSjg3Cw>

Rebecca Wallis, Curator, Ceramics and Glass Collection, Department of Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass, Victoria and Albert Museum

### Tuesday afternoon and evening

Happily Tuesdays are the Musée de Sèvres's closed day. We were greeted by Christine Germain-Donnat, Directrice du Département du Patrimoine et des Collections, Sèvres: Cité de la Céramique, and recently appointed from Limoges. Christine invited Ros and Tamara to choose their favourite pieces of Vincennes and 18th century Sèvres porcelain from the displays for discussion and one by one these were placed on a table before us. We began with the two well-known

Vincennes painter's palette bowls of 1748 and 1749 (fig. 7). These were seconds, on which the painters had applied little toned panels in a range of monochromes to record the shades at which these would fire. The larger, which is well-known, was that of Armand l'ainé. Ros had first seen the other smaller example when it had been brought to her for opinion at the Wallace some years ago prior to its sale at Sotheby's.



Fig. 7 - The palette bowls

Also very early and special was a white vase encrusted with flowers, recalling the centrepiece of the *Bouquet de la Dauphine* of 1748. It was a shock to realise that pieces like this had probably inspired the sadly lumpen encrusted vases made in white at Bow a few years later. We next considered a Vincennes tobacco jar with a damaged screw top, painted with landscapes and flowers in Meissen manner. The factory had attempted unsuccessfully to gild it, and on the base was the very rare mark in blue of a *fleur de lys* between O R for Orry de Fulvy – perhaps dating from as early as 1748, we thought. We were intrigued by a jug painted (again the Meissen manner) with a battle scene (fig. 8) – perhaps representing Louis XV at the battle of Fontenoy (in 1745). Its brilliantly white paste was covered in a white tin-glaze. Why? Perhaps because the enamellers were more confident that their pigments would adhere satisfactorily to a staniferous glaze – again there was some traces of gilding amid its purple scroll borders, and the piece may date from around 1746 to 1748. A chamber candlestick of 1754, moulded with flowers, and picked out in purple by Armand l'ainé was a perfect example of the light-hearted elegance of much French rococo design.



Fig. 8 - the tin-glazed jug painted with a battle scene



Another highlight from the 1750s was a plateau with the date letter 'D', an early example of the use of a green-ground ribbon border. Several cement-filled holes suggested that it had at some stage been mounted in ormolu to create an inkstand, but what was its original purpose? The decoration soon provided the answer – the centre was painted with a hen standing before an open-sided thatched shelter with projecting horizontal perches – obviously a hen-house. It was an egg cup stand (fig. 9). The letters B and S for its original owner were painted in flower trails on either side and on these would have been placed a single egg cup and a little biscuit figure.



Fig. 9 - The egg cup stand

A pink and green *cuvette à tombeau* of the first size of 1760 painted with a military scene was a reminder of how vibrantly colourful such wares had to be if they were to form a focal point of a rococo interior. Another wonderful piece of this sort was the green ground vase of 1759 painted with exotic birds from madame de Pompadour's menagerie by Armand. In complete contrast were a beautiful neo-classical vase with a dark blue ground ground, painted in 1786 with *singeries* in coloured golds and platinum for the prince de Condé, and a milk bowl in form of a woman's breast on an Etruscan stand, made for Marie Antoinette's dairy at Rambouillet (fig. 10).

Turning to hard paste, we examined a cabaret tray of 1773 with the great scrolling cypher of the future Tsar Paul of Russia. Less flashy but more intriguing was a small bamboo-form teapot also of 1773 painted with chinoiserie (fig. 11). The shape comes from Yixing stoneware, probably via Meissen, but unlike every other Sèvres teapot there were no strainer holes in the base of the spout. Could it possibly



Fig. 10 - The milk bowl



Fig. 11 - The bamboo-form teapot

be not a teapot, but a pot for coffee, perhaps even the unidentified coffee pot that madame du Barry is recorded as acquiring in that year? We then had a little time to find personal old favourites in the displays. As I also love the technical perfection of Sèvres painting and gilding during the First Empire and Restoration I wanted another look at the cameo-decorated *dejeuner des femmes célèbres de l'Antique*, painted by Jean-Marie Degault in 1813-15 (the figure group on the tray is after John Flaxman), and the large group of plates from the extraordinary *service des arts industriels* of 1823-35 with Jean-Charles Develly's busy scenes of craft production across a range of manufactories, including Sèvres itself. Two plates from the *service des oiseaux de l'Amérique méridionale* exquisitely painted (probably from life) by Pauline Knip in 1818-22 encapsulated the transformation the factory had undergone under the direction of Alexandre Brongniart since the manufacture of the services after Buffon during the 1780s.

We joined the Amis de Sèvres to hear a lecture by Gilles Grandjean, chief curator at the Museum of the Second Empire, at the Palace of Compiègne (which we had visited in 2015), on Albert Carrier-Belleuse (1824-1887): *Un sculpteur à la direction artistique de la manufacture de Sèvres de 1876 à 1887*. Carrier-Belleuse was one of most versatile and travelled French sculptors of the later 19th century who was in England between 1850 and 1855 (working for Mintons, and other leading manufacturers). His name is perhaps best known today because Auguste Rodin worked as his assistant between 1864 and 1870. He was appointed artistic director at the Manufacture de Sèvres in December 1875, where he greatly improved the quality of the models and expanded production in biscuit. The lecture was followed by the investiture ceremony. Introduced by Romane Safarti, Director-General of Sèvres: Cité de la Céramique, Daniel Alcouffe, the former head of the Department des Objets d'Art at the Musée du Louvre, spoke at length in celebration of the scholarship and curatorial achievements of the recipients before decorating Ros with the cross of an officer des arts et des lettres, and Tamara with that of a commander of the same order. Our President replied – with grace and in perfect French. We then enjoyed a reception with the Amis de Sèvres, including both their former president Antoine d'Albis and his successor Mme Cécile Dupont-Logié.





Figure 12: A historicist interior in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs

Specialist museums of applied art have often found it hard to define their role in the early 21st century, and struggle to attract audiences from the fine arts, both historic and contemporary. In Paris the Musée des Arts Decoratifs is literally on the doorstep of the Louvre, which of course has its own magnificent Département des Objets d'Art. The question of role and identity is therefore especially acute. The museum is one of the world's largest decorative arts collections with over half a million works divided into five chronological sections (the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the 17th and 18th centuries, the 19th century, Art Nouveau and Art Deco, Modern and Contemporary). These national collections embrace every aspect of artistic production in every field of the decorative arts, and represent a wide range of materials and techniques. The morning was spent examining two recent re-displays which present the evolution of taste and style in design (essentially in France) from the

1680s to the 1880s. We were met by Anne Forrey-Carlier, Conservatrice en Chef, with responsibility for the 17th- and 18th-century collections, which include outstanding oriental and European porcelains, often and rewardingly shown together. Her new displays weave together period room interiors and more formal areas of showcases.

The museum has rightly increased the area given to its 19th-century collections (up to Art Nouveau), bringing over 300 objects out of store to show the range, variety and quality of particularly French decorative arts. We were given a tour (in English) of these galleries by Audrey Gay-Mazuel, their curator. The new focus is on the major style changes throughout the period, from Neo-Classicism to Japonism. Prime exhibits include Empire period cabinet pieces, glorious historicist interiors (Fig. 12) and a wonderful painting from the 1855 Paris Exposition (by Prosper Lafaye) showing the *Salle des produits à la Manufacture de Sèvres*. A linear route around an open hall takes one through the First Empire, the Romantic and neo-gothic, the neo-Renaissance (where 16th century German stoneware rubs shoulders with reproductions by Jules Dirlair of the early 1840s), the rococo revival (including a corridor of pieces by Jacob Petit and his competitors), the Second Empire and neo-Grec, and finally orientalism in its many forms – including neo-turque and japonism. These displays recall the post-1800 section of the V&A's British Galleries, but the presentation and interpretation of the exhibits is excellent, with design drawings and contemporary photographs available on touch screens. For the ceramic specialist, the displays include outstanding 19th-century Sèvres, but also a rich array of art pottery by Taxile Doat, Théodore Deck and many others.

Oliver Fairclough and Rebecca Wallis

## GIFT OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM, 1901

For the first time in living memory, the British Museum has placed the spectacular "Paris Vase" on display in Room 2 (Collecting the World Gallery), just outside the recently re-installed The Waddesdon Bequest Gallery, where it will be on display until January 2018.



The monumental vase, which pays homage to the city of Paris in its decoration, was made at Sèvres, France's national porcelain manufactory, between 1886 and 1897, for an as yet unidentified official presentation. In 1900, the French government, however, selected the vase from the factory's warehouse as an appropriate reciprocal gift to the British Museum as part of a cultural diplomatic exchange. In 1899, the British Museum had presented thirty thousand pamphlets on the French Revolution, to be divided between the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and the Municipal Library of Paris. The pamphlets were duplicates of those held in the British Museum Library. The vase arrived in London in March 1901, following its display at the 1900 Paris Exhibition.

The "Paris Vase" was a major feat of technical virtuosity, taking over ten years to complete. The shape, known at the manufactory as the '*vase d'Entrecolles*', was initially cast in the hard-paste porcelain ('*pâte nouvelle*') in three pieces in 1886. The sculptor and modeller Taxile Doat (1851-1939) worked on it over two years, between 1895 and 1897. Employing the skilled *pâte-sur-pâte* technique, he built up the raised surface with successive layers of liquid clay in tones of pale green applied with a brush, carving some of the finer details.

The rim is inscribed with the city's motto, PARIS FLUCTUAT NEC MERGITUR (Paris floats and does not sink), while around the shoulders are four circular medallions suspended from garlands. Their subjects glorify Paris and the French Republic, depicting historic buildings: Notre Dame Cathedral, the Hôtel de Ville, the Louvre and the Arc de Triomphe. Below these are repeated the city's emblem, a large ship, along with four key dates: 56 BC, the foundation of Paris (today, it is identified as 52 BC); 1358, the first republican revolt led by Étienne Marcel; 1789, the French Revolution; and 1870-71, the foundation of the Third Republic following the fall of Napoleon III and the Second Empire, as well as the Siege of Paris and the Paris Commune.

Patricia Ferguson and Judy Rudoe