

Spring 2016



An opportunity to see the Wallace Collection's Sèvres up close at a recent handling session

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Introducing our new Chairman, Oliver Fairclough FSA, and his plans for the Society

I was genuinely surprised when I was asked last year by Errol and other members of the FPS's Council to take on the role of Chairman of our Society. Although I had been the editor of the Journal for nearly fifteen years, my knowledge of French ceramics was modest compared to that of some of our members. However I was shortly to retire as Keeper of Art at the National Museum of Wales, so I could not deploy the usual excuse that I was too busy.

So what can I bring to the Society and what do I hope to achieve over the next few years? I spent my whole career as a curator in large museums outside London – Liverpool, Birmingham, and since 1986 in Cardiff at the National Museum of Wales. I trained as a decorative art curator, and I specialised in British ceramics and silver until I came to Cardiff, where I was responsible for the outstanding collection of 18th-century Continental porcelain given by W. S. de Winton to the National Museum between 1916 and 1929. With my post also came responsibility for the wares of the Welsh ceramics industry, and especially the Regency porcelains of Swansea and Nantgarw, on which I still work. These are perhaps more French in influence than any other British factories, and in the 1990s when we had more generous acquisition funding than today I was able to research and acquire a number of major pieces of early 19th-century Sèvres. I come therefore from a museum background,

and I am keen to support younger museum curators and to help them to develop their expertise in French ceramics. In a shrinking and stressed profession it is increasingly difficult for them to gain the specialist knowledge of real objects that in turn enables them to enthuse others.

Perhaps more than any other art form, ceramics can be objects of astonishing beauty and immediacy, and also a window into the social life of the past. Nowhere is this truer than in eighteenth and nineteenth-century France. I hope this Society will continue to proselytise the invention and quality of French porcelain. Our next symposium on 20 and 21 October 2017 will focus specifically on French factories other than Sèvres during the 18th century.

However it is inherently unsatisfactory to study any art form only within modern national boundaries, and like many members I am interested in European ceramics more widely. I think it is also the role of this society to explore the powerful influence of France on the ceramic art of her neighbours. We made a start on this at our 'Ceramics without Frontiers' symposium in 2015, and some of the papers given on that occasion will be published in our next journal later this year.

Continues on page two

COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH PORCELAIN SOCIETY 2016

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT *Continued from page one*



The FPS's new Chairman, Oliver Fairclough

I am extraordinary fortunate to be able to work with such an able and delightful group of people on the FPS Council. There have been a few recent changes in its composition, Georgina Le Sellier de Chezelles has resigned as Treasurer, and has been replaced by Sophie von der Goltz. Diana Davies has taken on the burden of Journal editor. I am very grateful to them both, and to Georgina who has since taken on

some freelance work for the Society. Many congratulations to Nette Megens and Sebastian Kuhn on the birth of their daughter, and thanks to Patricia Ferguson and others who have kept up the activities programme. We had a fascinating visit to Sèvres and to Compiègne and Fontainebleau last October, and study session at the Ashmolean, Woburn, and the Wallace Collection, as well as two days in County Durham reported in this newsletter.

The FPS is in quite good shape. Its membership is static rather than declining, and its finances seem sound. I also believe that we do what we do – organise visits, encourage research, and produce publications – rather well. I believe, though, that we need to communicate our passion for our subject more effectively, and to improve the ways in which we communicate with you, our members, and with everybody who has an interest in French ceramics.

Over the next couple of months, the website will be completely redesigned, making it richer, more attractive and easier to use. It will highlight all significant forthcoming events in the world of European ceramics, as well as our own programme. It will carry our current (and past) newsletters, and in due course our journals and monographs as well. We will also redesign our print material. In future, the newsletter will move online (though we will send hard copies to those individual and institutional members who request one), and I hope will contain more topical stories – pieces on new discoveries, sales and collections, and reviews of books and exhibitions – especially from overseas. We are very grateful to all the members who completed our recent on-line survey which has helped to guide these developments. Their purpose to fit us better for the present, and also over time to attract new and younger members to the Society.

Oliver Fairclough, May 2016

FORTHCOMING EVENT

French Porcelain Society AGM

Annual General Meeting, Lecture and Dinner

Saturday, 25 June 2016

The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square, London W1U 3BN

6:00-6:30 pm Drinks, Cash Bar

6:30-7:00 pm Annual General Meeting

7:00-8:00 pm Sir Geoffrey de Bellaigue Memorial Lecture

8:00-11:00 pm Dinner (£65; £75 for non-members)

Sir Geoffrey de Bellaigue Memorial Lecture:

Baron Jean-Charles Davillier: a paragon and historian of taste in nineteenth-century France

Dr. Thomas Stammers, Durham University

Baron Jean-Charles Davillier (1823-83) was a pioneering figure in the Second Empire, not simply through his forays into neglected fields — such as Spanish decorative arts — but also through the self-consciousness and erudition he brought to the study of collecting. His landmark publications on the celebrated cabinets and sales of the old regime demonstrate how nineteenth-century amateurs situated themselves in a lineage stretching back, across the revolution, to the *ancien régime*. This paper situates Davillier within the context of French mid-century collecting, characterized by its expanding geographical reach and heightened emphasis on selection and discernment. It will consider his methods and sources as an historian, and relate his scholarship to both other nascent attempts to write the history of collecting, and to wider cultural politics, not least the violent events of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune. It will conclude by considering Davillier the patriot, and the controversy that engulfed the donation of his collections to the Louvre and

to Sèvres in 1883. Davillier's career and research are central for understanding how French porcelain was revered as both an aesthetic and technical marvel, and also as an historical document.

Tom Stammers is a cultural historian of France from the Revolution to the end of the nineteenth century. His PhD thesis and forthcoming book explore questions of collecting, material culture and heritage in post-revolutionary Paris. He is currently finishing research related to early collectors of revolutionary prints, the afterlives of Rococo artefacts, clandestine worker theatres and the political controversies surrounding the antiques trade. Future research projects include a study of artisans and connoisseurs in the nineteenth-century museum, entitled the 'untutored eye'. Tom is interested in a wide range of historiographical and theoretical controversies related to eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe.

Closing date for registration for AGM & Dinner: 21st June 2016

Please send your completed registration form & payment to: The French Porcelain Society, c/o Miss Sophie von der Goltz, Bonhams, European Ceramics, 101 New Bond Street, London W1S 1SR Telephone: +44 (0)20 7468 8349 Fax: +44 (0)20 7468 8252 or E-mail: Sophie.vondergoltz@bonhams.com

FORTHCOMING EVENT

Art Antiques London

Friday 24 June to Thursday 30 June 2016

Art Antiques London takes place in a purpose-built pavilion in Kensington Gardens opposite the Royal Albert Hall and close to the site of the Great Exhibition of 1851. This year's lecture programme includes specialist speakers on a fascinating range of ceramic-related topics.

On Monday 27 June at 5.15 pm, Dame Rosalind Savill will host *Face to Face: Dame Rosalind Savill in conversation with Richard, 10th Duke of Buccleuch and 12th Duke of Queensberry*

On Tuesday 28 June, 11.00am - 5.00pm, the English Ceramics Circle Study Day will take place on the theme of *A Taste for the Antique, The Neo-classical Style and Ceramics in England, c. 1770-1800*

Other lectures in the full programme include:

Elisabetta Dal Carlo, *Geminiano Cozzi, his manufactory and its porcelain*

Suzanne Findlen Hood, *Ceramic Treasures from the Colonial Williamsburg Collection*

Rosalind Sword, *Coloured Worcester Porcelain of The First Period: The H.R. Marshall Collection at The Ashmolean Museum*

Sally Kevill-Davies, *Chelsea 'Hans Sloane' Botanical Porcelain: Visions of Arcadia and America in the English Landscape Garden*

Dr Katharina Hantschmann, *Chinese and Meissen Porcelain of the Bavarian Elector Karl Albrecht - an exercise in propaganda*

For further information and the full programme, visit <http://www.haughton.com/>

FORTHCOMING EVENT

Summer Outing:

Vogue Regency and the Original Regency: Hinton Ampner, Hampshire and Uppark, West Sussex (NT)

Sunday 26 June 2016, 8:30 am-7:00 pm

£70.00 (includes coach, all entrance admissions and lunch)

Sir Osbert Lancaster (1908–86), the original style guru, brought humour to the study of architectural history with his *Home Sweet Home* (London, 1939), where he introduced the term 'Vogue Regency', mocking the Regency Revival of the 1930s. The furnishing of Hinton Ampner is evocative of this taste. Ralph Dutton, 8th Baron Sherborne (1898–1985), a former Trustee of the Wallace Collection, inherited the estate in 1946. He restored the house to its late 18th-century state, described in his *A Hampshire Manor*, having created the gardens in the 1930s. Lord Sherborne assembled a large collection of colourful hardstone ornamental wares, as well as Sèvres, including a pair of seated biscuit figures in pale blue paste (*pâte blentée*) of 'L'Insomnie' and 'Venus at a bath', and a pair of vases 'à panneaux' or 'à perles', tablewares and Continental wares. Following the morning visit to Hinton Ampner, lunch is at the Fork Handles Kitchen in Petersfield.



A Sèvres biscuit porcelain surtout emblematic of Autumn ('gerbe de raisins') from the 'Service de Saison', dated 1816, at Uppark, West Sussex, acquired in 1819 by Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh Copyright National Trust Images / Andrew Fetherston



L'Insomnie, Hinton Ampner Picture credit Richard Holttum

In the afternoon we will visit Uppark, a late 17th-century manor house on the South Downs with magnificent views. The house has been occupied by the Fetherstonhaugh family from 1747, and furnished during several Grand Tours in the 1750s and in the early 1800s by Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh. FPS members will be familiar with the Sèvres porcelain collections formed by Sir Harry (much of the finest now gracing museums in California, namely the Getty and the Huntington) from the blue FPS monograph by Anthony du Boulay, *Sèvres porcelain at Uppark: a Re-Assessment* (XV), 2000, and Christopher Rowell, 'A Sèvres Bisuit Centrepiece by Alexandre-Théodore Brogniart Restored to Uppark', *Apollo*, 149, no. 446 (April 1999), pp. 54–7.

Uppark also has a rare mid-18th-century baby-house with its original furnishings. We are delighted that James Rothwell, the National Trust Curator and Curator of Silver, will be joining us.

Departure is at 8:30 am from the Rembrandt Hotel, 11 Thurloe Place, London, SW7 2RS (South Kensington tube), directly across from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

To book: visit the website www.thefrenchporcelainsociety.com. Under the 'Payment' page, in the white box enter '70' and you will be directed to pay with WorldPay. For any payment queries, please contact: Georgina Le Sellier de Chezelles georginalsd@gmail.com

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION

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

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 greatest 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, French royal porcelain of luxurious beauty, and the ground-breaking experiments of Meissen and 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.



Pot-pourri vase from the seven-piece Chelsea-factory garniture, 1762-4, at Upton House, Warwickshire. © National Trust Images / Claire Reeves



CERAMICS

400 Years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces

Patricia Ferguson

For the book Patricia F. Ferguson has selected one hundred masterpieces that provide a comprehensive overview of this great resource. Instead of being arranged conventionally by material, place of origin or date, they are ordered by the time these objects began to appear in British households. Beginning with the Elizabethan and Jacobean passion for Chinese porcelain, the story advances through the cult of delftware in the seventeenth century, the fashion for Dresden china and the growth of 'vase mania' in the eighteenth century to the explosion of interest in historic ceramics in the Victorian age.

The author draws on a wealth of new evidence – letters, inventories, watercolours, paintings and historic photographs – to explain how these ceramics were used and displayed over four centuries. The result is a history that encompasses furniture and interior decoration, silver and sculpture, botany and horticulture, changing fashions in food and dining – in short, every aspect of family and social life in which ceramics played a central role.

FORTHCOMING EVENT

Complimentary tickets for French Porcelain Society Members to The Art & Antiques Fair, Olympia 28 June to 3 July

The Art & Antiques Fair, Olympia celebrates its 44th year this year. showcases 160 of the world's leading specialist dealers. The fair is accompanied by an exciting talks programme, and will host leading museums and institutions including the Royal Academy of Arts and The National Gallery. Visitors can enjoy free entry to all talks.

To register for your complimentary ticket, visit
<http://www.olympia-art-antiques.com/FrenchPorcelainSociety>



JEAN-LOUIS PÉRÈS AND A REGENCY CONUNDRUM

Diana Davis on an intriguing advertisement from 1823

Readers scanning their *Morning Chronicle* on 17 July 1823 may have paused over a lengthy advertisement addressed to 'the Amateurs of Works of Art and Rare Curiosities' (Fig. 1). It described the purchase by a Monsieur Peres [sic], 'Merchant of Curiosities at Paris', of 'the fine delicate Porcelaine of the old manufactory of Sevres' from the comte de Pradel and 'Monsieur Brogniard [sic]' on 29 March 1816. Comprising desert and breakfast services, vases, 'divers pieces mounted in bronze and or molu', cups, bowls and dishes, the collection included pieces whose gilding and painting 'are not entirely finished'. Offering 'to have their ornaments completed (in the stile of the ancient, and from drawings left with him by the manufactory of Sevres)' by artists previously employed at the manufactory, M. Peres would 'match faithfully all services and other articles that are incomplete'. To 'prevent counterfeits' he would add 'his own cypher d P' to the Sèvres factory mark. While the notice poses an unsolved puzzle, it can also tell us much about the Regency art market, just as it serves to highlight early nineteenth-century attitudes to porcelain redecoration.

The advertisement confirms the purchase of a large stock of unwanted soft-paste porcelain from the Sèvres manufactory by a triumvirate of French dealers, including Jean-Louis Pérès (d. 1835), described in detail by Geoffrey de Bellaigue in the 2011 volume of the society's journal.¹ It sheds further light on this elusive dealer. Various recorded as trading from boulevard des Italiens (1809) and boulevard des Bains Chinois (1819), Pérès had by 1823 moved from 15 rue Taitbout to 114 faubourg St. Honoré. Although specializing 'above all' in Sèvres porcelain, like most dealers his stock was wide ranging and included ancient and modern bronzes, bouille furniture, pictures, engravings, and medals. Pérès was evidently familiar with three of London's leading china dealers: Robert Fogg the younger (1758-1823), his nephew Joseph Fogg (1788-1830) of 150 Regent Street (both 'Chinamen to His Majesty'), and the jeweller and curiosity dealer John Boykett Jarman (c. 1783-1864), then at 34 St James's Street, all of whom were recommended in the advertisement as London stockists of Sèvres. This acquaintance is just one example of the pragmatic trading links forged between English and French dealers to smuggle goods across the Channel during the Napoleonic Wars when trade between the two countries was prohibited, links which were maintained throughout the 1820s and 30s.

Although Pérès had tried to sell some of his wares in Paris, even offering a counterfeit déjeuner to Louis XVIII, as de Bellaigue described, he clearly considered the British market ripe for exploitation. An unsigned report for Alexandre Brongniart of the Sèvres manufactory on the déjeuner, had highlighted 'l'importance que certaines personnes et surtout des étrangers ont mis à la porcelaine tendre ancienne qu'est devenue un objet rare et par conséquent très recherché...'² The advertisement placed in the *Morning Chronicle*, imperfectly

TO the AMATEURS of WORKS of ART and RARE CURIOSITIES, and to MERCHANTS in general, — Monsieur PERES, Merchant of Curiosities at Paris, No. 15, Rue Taitbout, has the honour to inform them, that he has REMOVED his MAGAZINE from No. 15, Rue Taitbout, to No. 114, FAUBOURG ST. HONORE, in the same City. In his Magazines are found ancient and modern Bronzes, different articles of Buhl Furniture, Pictures, Engravings, Medals, and, above all, the fine delicate Porcelaine of the old manufactory of Sevres, such as table, desert, and breakfast services, vases of different forms, divers pieces mounted in bronze and or molu, divers bowls, cups, dishes, &c. &c. This fine Collection results from the sale that was made to Mons. Peres on the 29th March, 1816, by Monsieur le Comte de Pradel, Minister of the King's Household, and by Monsieur Brogniard, Administrator of the Royal Manufactory at Sevres. Among the whole of the Porcelaine which remained at Sevres, there are pieces, the gilding and painting of which are not entirely finished. Mr. Peres undertakes to have their ornaments completed (in the stile of the ancient, and from drawings left with him by the manufactory of Sevres) by those Artists who were retained to make Designs for that porcelaine prior to 1789, the time it ceased to be manufactured. He engages to match faithfully all services and other articles that are incomplete, by furnishing that may be wanting to such as shall require them. Of this one may be convinced, by viewing most of the porcelaine, at Mr. Jarman's, St. James's street; at Mr. Fogg's, Regent-street; and at the different London Merchants, who have such porcelaine in their possession. To prevent counterfeits, the porcelaine will bear the mark adopted by the Royal Manufactory of Sevres, viz. two ell crossed together; and to it Mr. Peres will hereafter add his own cypher d P. Besides, it is easy to distinguish that fine sort of porcelaine, in noticing its beautiful and rich tints; such as the royal blue, turquoise blue and inimitable greens; colours; such as the smoothness of its paintings, imitating paintings on enamel, advantages that no other porcelaine possesses. This Collection sold, it will then be next to an impossibility to obtain any of that fine production, as the manufactory has ceased for these 30 years, making that sort of delicate and tender porcelaine, owing to the dangerous state of illness to which the workmen were subject during the process of its fabrication. Mr. Peres's Correspondent resides in London, No. 30, Conduit-street, Bond-street, where applications are respectfully intreated to be made.

The Morning Chronicle advertisement, 17 July 1823.

translated from the French, shows an informed knowledge of the British market, appealing to the qualities which collectors valued and dealers promoted: 'beautiful and rich' ground colours, depth of glaze, 'smoothness of...paintings' and narrative richness.

The episode demonstrates that early nineteenth-century dealers in London and Paris were both honest and fraudulent about their redecorated wares. While the advertisement is overt in its offer to repaint soft-paste Sèvres overstocks, as is well known dealers more commonly passed off nineteenth-century redecorated wares as eighteenth-century originals, a practice in which Pérès was also deeply involved. However, attitudes among customers were equally mixed. Some knew and were evidently unconcerned by the fact that Sèvres soft-paste blanks and lightly decorated wares were routinely redecorated by British dealers. In 1818 George, Viscount Newport, later 2nd Earl of Bradford (1780-1865), discussing the equipping of his new home with his mother, Lady Bradford, wrote: 'I thought it was quite a common thing to have french [sic] china painted and gilt in England'.³ Newport simply wanted his porcelain to be as colourful and lavish as its eighteenth-century equivalent, much as others frequently augmented a French porcelain service with British equivalents from manufactories such as Derby. Newport could be an exacting customer. In 1829 he was outraged when he considered himself to have been duped over a set of mandarin china sold to him by the Shrewsbury chinaman, Methodist preacher and cheesemonger Thomas Brocas (1756-1818). Rejecting the order, Bradford maintained that, 'some of the pieces at least are of English manufacture both

on account of their shapes, the color [sic] of the ground'.⁴ In an acrimonious exchange, Brocas, misjudging his opponent, retorted that, 'a diversity of colour & craz'd glaze' were natural imperfections and that, 'a more perfect sett of Manderine [sic] China never left my warehouse'. Honour was only satisfied when Brocas deducted 40 per cent from his bill. Bradford's attitudes were not conflicting. They suggest rather that approaches to 'authenticity' in the early nineteenth century were not the same as those of today when patrons like George IV would readily alter eighteenth-century French furniture to suit his own taste.

Pérès employed his own agent or 'Correspondent' in London at 30 Conduit Street. Westminster Rate Books and contemporary trade directories list the owner of 30 Conduit Street as a Thomas Holt who had a chemist's shop. The 'correspondent' may have rented a room. Conduit Street connected the fashionable shopping areas of Regent Street and New Bond Street. Robert Fogg's sister, Dorothy Carbury, widow of Francis Carbury, plumassier to the Prince of Wales, lived opposite at 29 Conduit Street. This suggests that one of the Foggs may have recommended the address to the French *marchand* and, indeed, have been involved in the scheme.⁵

Little is known about the activities of Jean-Louis Pérès in Britain. His British clientele included Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh, 2nd Baron of Uppark (1754-1846), who

he supplied with a *scean à glace*, an *ecuelle* and a *pot à l'eau* in 1819 and Lord James Murray, 1st Baron Glenlyon (1755-1830) of Blair Atholl who bought porcelain to the value of 250 £ in 1822 although the bill itself does not survive. Neither collection has porcelain marked with the cypher dP nor has any been found to date. Perhaps it was never made. If anyone turns up a piece of redecorated porcelain marked in this way, please do let me know! What the episode does confirm is London's trading importance for French decorative art in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the interdependence of the British and French art markets sustained by the dealer.

1. Geoffrey de Bellaigue, 'Les Bains Chinois' in *France and the Exotic, Papers in Honour of Tamara Préaud, The French Porcelain Society Journal*, vol. IV (London, 2011), pp. 97-116.

2. Cited in Geoffrey de Bellaigue, *French Porcelain in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, 3 vols (Royal Collection Enterprises: London, 2009), I, 63.

3. 28 January 1818. SRO: D1287/P/838. Newport later became the 2nd Earl of Bradford.

4. Staffordshire Record Office: D/1287/18/25Q50: 9 August 1829; 10 and 16 August 1829; D 1287/18/25Q 56, 14 January 1830.

5. Both she and Robert Fogg are listed in the baptismal register of the Bavarian Catholic chapel a few doors up from Robert Fogg's previous shop at 16 Warwick Street as sponsors or godparents for Joseph Fogg. 'Josepho' Fogg witnessed the marriage of Elizabeth Carbury in 1813. (Westminster Diocesan Archive, Baptismal Register 1770-1792 and Marriage Register 1793-1840).

Diana Davis

VASE MANIA AT THE V&A!

Forthcoming exhibition: *Garnitures: Vase Sets from National Trust Houses*
11 October 2016 to 30 April 2017, Ceramics Galleries, Room 146



A five-piece set of beakers, Arita, Japan, c.1700-20, at Dunham Massey, Cheshire. © National Trust Images / Robert Morris

This autumn, the Victoria and Albert Museum, in conjunction with the National Trust, have organized a display on the history and origins of the ceramic garniture de cheminée (chimney ornaments). Defined as a set of vases unified by their design and specific context, typically a chimney-piece, they were also displayed on cabinets, overdoors, the hearth and even side tables. The quantity generally ranges from pairs to sets of eleven pieces. The ceramic phenomenon was established by the 1660s, when it included late Ming jars, beakers and over vessels from the 1640s, and was replaced with European faience from Delft and Nevers, and later Japanese porcelain, when supplies from China ceased in 1657. In England the fashion was for silver garnitures imitating Chinese porcelain forms of the 1640s.

The sixteen garnitures, including a unique, seven-piece garniture of late Ming Chinese porcelain assembled specifically for the display, will chart the development of the vase set from 1650 through 1810, in Europe. A publication accompanies the display, with the eponymous title, *Garnitures: Vase Sets from National Trust House*, by Patricia F. Ferguson, National Trust Advisor on Ceramics, by V&A Publishing, with an introduction by Reino Liefkes, Senior Curator, Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics, and Glass. The display and publication have been generously sponsored by The Headley Trust.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS: SÈVRES PORCELAIN BROUGHT TO LIGHT

Rory Ellis Tyler on a show in the Portico Gallery at the Frick Collection earlier this year



Portrait of Helen and Henry Clay Frick, circa 1910, by Edmund Charles Tarbell (1862-1938)

Those of us who adore porcelain know how rare it is to find new and exciting exhibits in major museums, much less those in New York City. Earlier this year, porcelain devotees, The Frick Collection showed a lovely, albeit small, selection of their world-famous porcelain holdings in their gorgeous, light and airy Portico Gallery.

The Portico Gallery is the legacy of former director, Anne L. Poulet, who oversaw this rare modification of the grand Frick mansion/museum on Fifth Avenue between East 70th and 71st Streets. While in residence, the Frick family enjoyed the portico as an occasional space for a leisurely breakfast or luncheon, when weather permitted. Constructed with the same impeccable neoclassical proportions with which the architect, Thomas Hastings (1860-1929) of the firm Carrère and Hastings (whose most renowned project was the New York Public Library), endowed the house he built in 1912-14 for the industrialist, Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919), the portico extends an elegant arm from the northwest corner of the Library, running along East 71st Street and pointing directly into Central Park. Mrs. Poulet's vision was to convert the space into a rotational gallery that might bring to light some of the objects seldom seen, or largely unsung, often hidden away in the numerous nooks

and crannies of the modestly-sized, yet still surprisingly expansive Frick Museum.

The offering in the Portico Gallery is devoted to the 18th century. Two exquisite busts by Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741-1828), one near the entrance and one further in, greet the visitor, and beckon to the almost life-size sculpture of 'Diana the Huntress', also by Houdon, at the western most end of the gallery. Seeming as though she has just leapt from the shrubbery of Central Park in pursuit of a fleeing stag, or perhaps to strike down an overly curious Actaeon, Diana stands alert – a terracotta goddess guarding the cache of 'white gold' currently shimmering in the gallery.

Titled *From Sèvres to Fifth Avenue: French Porcelain at The Frick Collection*, the exhibit features several pieces of 18th-century Sèvres porcelain purchased by Henry Clay Frick from 1916 to 1918, as well as pieces given to the museum by Frick's youngest daughter, Miss Helen Clay Frick, in the 1930s.

The exhibit begins with a garniture of three '*Pots-pourris Feuilles de Mirte* or *à Feuillages*' (figure 2). As most readers might recall, Dame Rosalind Savill discovered and disclosed in her seminal *Wallace Collection Catalogue of Sèvres Porcelain* that this graceful inverted pear shape, quintessentially rococo, was adapted by the Sèvres modeler and artistic director, Jean-Claude Duplessis (1699-1774), from a silver piece (most likely a censer) in the 1750s. These vases are dated 1762 and are, according to Savill, the last strongly visual rococo shape made at the Sèvres manufactory. Though the frivolity of the rococo had not disappeared entirely by the 1760s, a shift in taste toward a more rural, pastoral sensibility had taken hold.



Figure 2: Garniture of three Sèvres 'Pots-pourri Feuilles de Mirte' or 'à Feuillages', circa 1762

Heights: larger vase: 36 cm; smaller pair: 27.9 cm.
Henry Clay Frick Bequest, 1918

This pursuit of the sublimely simple would reach its full flowering in the late 1780s, around the time Queen Marie Antoinette ordered the construction of her *Hameau de la Reine*, the mock farmhouse where she could indulge in a royal facsimile of peasant living.

It is important to remember that styles never change overnight, but rather, it is usual for one taste to gradually morph into another. The curious result is often pieces that exhibit a hodgepodge of different design elements – an effort to accommodate all the trends and tastes and to keep up with the shifts. This garniture is a prime example. The aforementioned rococo inverted pear is offset by equally sensual swirling handles, and yet these sit on short stems that are anticipating the neoclassical taste with a Greek key design and repeating leaf and berry pattern encircling the bases. To appeal to the burgeoning rustic taste, the rather large reserves facing the viewer are painted with peasant scenes in the style of Flemish artist, David Teniers the Younger (1610-1690). The accompanying literature tells the viewer that the obverse reserves are painted with scenes from François Boucher (1703-1770), leaving one wishing that mirrors had been installed so we might fully appreciate this delightful salmagundi in purple, pink, green and gold.

The following vitrine contains a selection of tea wares and plates from a dessert service. Special notice should



Figure 4: Pair of Vincennes 'Vases Duplessis à Enfants', circa 1753
Height: 21.3 cm.

Henry Clay Frick Bequest, 1918

be taken of the tiny teapot, sugar bowl, and milk jug with their wonderful depictions of fantastical birds painted by Antoine-Joseph Chappuis (active 1756-87).

It is important to turn around at this point in one's wandering and marvel at an unprecedented view of a tripod table made of gilt bronze and two large Sèvres porcelain plaques painted with exuberant baskets of flowers (figure 3). This piece is usually displayed in the Fragonard Room, where its situation, though decoratively correct and unquestionably pleasing, doesn't afford the same proximity and illumination as its placement here in the Portico Gallery, with natural light pouring in through its fully-glazed southern exposure. The piece is dated 1783 and is thought to have been made for sale by the *marchands-merciers* Simon-Philippe Poirier and Dominique Daguerre.

Turn again, and the next vitrine is perhaps the most instructive in the exhibition. It is a reminder that Sèvres porcelain did not begin as such. It recalls the early days of the manufactory when its offerings were still being produced at Vincennes, and shows some wonderful examples of the fledging enterprise that would find its champion in the tastemaker, Madame de Pompadour, Louis XV's fourth and – dare we say – favorite mistress. A pair of 'Vases Duplessis à Enfants' crown the display, beginning a visual progression of style, innovation, and taste as the manufactory made its way across Paris to Sèvres and into history (figure 4). The base of the display features two water jugs and basins that are decidedly Sèvres, down to their *bleu céleste* ground and beautiful reserves, one painted with flowers and the other with a military scene.

A simple pivot will put the viewer face to face with a new, rather mysterious Frick acquisition sitting magisterially in its own vitrine (figure 5). The mystery of the much-discussed 'Vase Japon' begins with its name. Its shape actually is based on a Chinese vase form, the bronze Yu vase produced during



Figure 3: French Gilt-Bronze and Oak Tripod Table Mounted with Sèvres Soft-Paste Porcelain Plaques

Paris, circa 1783

Height: 74.9 cm; diameter: 37.1 cm.

Henry Clay Frick Bequest, 1918



Figure 5: Sèvres Hard-paste porcelain 'Vase Japon', dated 1774, with silver-gilt mounts

Height: 26.7 cm.

Purchase in honor of Anne L. Poulet, 2011

the Han Dynasty (205 BCE-220 CE). The piece, dated 1774, was purchased by The Frick Collection in honor of Anne L. Poulet, when she retired as the Director in 2011, making its presence in her legacy gallery entirely appropriate.

To say the best has been saved for last may be somewhat of a presumption, but it is certainly safe to say that the rarest (and in this author's estimation, the most exciting) piece in the exhibition ends, indeed punctuates it, with an exclamation mark. Here sits a garniture (perhaps incidental) of three Sèvres pieces dating to approximately 1759 – the same year Louis XV purchased the manufactory at the urging of Madame de Pompadour. Two pieces here will be familiar to those with even a casual acquaintance with Sèvres: the 'Vases à Oreilles', a shape also attributed to Sèvres' master modeler, Jean-Claude Duplessis, which became so popular that the manufactory continued its production well into the 19th century, when it was reproduced brilliantly at the Minton factory in Staffordshire. While these rather large examples (they stand at 31.7 cm high; the shape was produced in sizes ranging from about 11.4 to 38.2 cm) are spectacular, it's the central piece that dazzles.

The 'Pot-pourri à Vaisseau', also known as the 'Vaisseau à Mat' – the star of the garniture – amazes. Yet another masterwork (arguably his best) by Jean-Claude Duplessis, the pot-pourri vase in the shape of a battle ship with its effortless juxtaposition of a traditionally masculine form realized through a sensual, feminine, curvilinear profile, is both disturbing and enchanting. One of only ten Sèvres vases of this form known to exist (there are five in various English museums, four in the USA and one in France), this

piece is not only an odd marriage of form and function, but also a technical marvel. Considering the challenges soft-paste porcelain presented to the manufactory at this rather early point in its history: frequent slumping, melting, and exploding in the kiln, a piece of this size and with so much pierced and open work, must have proven a nightmare for the factory at all stages of its production. Its technical merits notwithstanding, however, there is a rather juicy story about this piece that is not included in the accompanying literature or on the exhibition label. Rosalind Savill relays the tale in the BBC documentary, 'Beautiful Thing: a Passion for Porcelain'. Frick purchased this piece from art dealer, Joseph Duveen,



Figure 6: Sèvres Pot-pourri à Vaisseau, circa 1759

Height: 44.5 cm; length 37.8 cm.

Henry Clay Frick Bequest, 1916

in 1918, but before then it had belonged to the Lord and Lady Dudley. Like most British aristocrats in late 19th/early 20th-century England, his lordship had fallen on hard times – the *Vaisseau* had to go. As Dame Rosalind tells it, Lady Dudley was so mortified by the loss of her prized piece of 18th-century Sèvres, that his lordship approached Minton, the famous British manufactory, to make a copy. The copy evidently was so successful that Minton began to offer it to a wider swath of their client base. Often visitors to The Frick Collection will see the *Vaisseau* and instantly recall it from childhood, looming large over the various bric-a-brac on Grandmother's hutch. They are always advised to turn it over on their next encounter and see if its markings reveal it to be a Minton copy – an object of some considerable value itself – or that undiscovered eleventh *Vaisseau* by Sèvres – 'white gold' and priceless.

Rory Ellis Tyler

THE BOWES MUSEUM

Caroline McCaffrey-Howarth on a recent FPS outing to the Bowes Museum in County Durham



The teapot decorated by Louis-Denis Armand l'aîné, 1758, museum number X.1271

Undeterred by a forecast of snow on the morning of Wednesday 27th April the FPS group arrived at the wonderful French-style chateau, Barnard Castle, which holds the Bowes Museum in County Durham. We were greeted by the Keeper of Ceramics Dr Howard Coutts who gave us a short introduction about the history of the museum. Howard explained that the Bowes was a purpose-built museum to house the art collection of Josephine (1825-74) and John Bowes (1811-85). She was a French actress, whilst he was the illegitimate son of the 10th Earl of Strathmore. Interestingly, they spent much time in Paris where they purchased Louveciennes, the former chateau of Louis XV's last mistress, Madame du Barry. The Bowes, who could not have children, pursued art collecting avidly between 1862-1874. Sadly neither party was still alive to see the finished product when the museum first opened to the public in 1892. Howard gave us a wonderful tour of the rooms and in the European Decorative Art Gallery we looked briefly at a wonderful Sèvres porcelain *bonheur du jour* by Martin Carlin which came into the museum from the Duke of Portland collection. As the plaques are dated with date letter 1765 it appears to be the first known example of this type of Sèvres table which was probably sold by the *marchand-mercier* Poirier. It is beautifully preserved as in the 19th century the Portlands, who clearly cherished the table as a work of art, added a glass case to protect it.

After a lovely lunch we got to watch a magnificent 18th-century working automaton in the form of a silver swan and then visited the recently redone Ceramics Galleries. Here we had a privileged opportunity to study and handle some of the collections to discuss their authenticity.

Howard started with the most controversial object which was a pink Sèvres teapot, with date letter 1759, painted by Armand, whose authenticity has been doubted previously. As the teapot was passed around the group we discussed if the peacock feathers are correct as they go over the ground colour and if the pink ground was original or not. We soon learnt that peacock feathers are found on other Sèvres examples, and that the peacock feather should be raised over the base ground colour. Similar decoration on white ground can be seen in a set owned by Adrian Sassoon of which he passed around a photograph. We then talked briefly about the unpredictability of glazes and gilding and discussed that often the edge of pink ground goes pale and slightly yellow where it bleeds into the white. In the end, we all agreed that this pink peacock teapot was authentic and a very snazzy and unique piece indeed! We also got the opportunity to look at a Vincennes eye bath, a small ice-cream cup, a yellow-ground Sèvres 'riddle' cup and a rather questionable dwarf thought to be made by St Cloud.



Bulb pot, one of a pair, Andre Vincent Viellard l'aîné, 1756, museum number 1977.75.2/1 & 2/Cer

After a cup of refreshing tea, we headed back to the European Decorative Art gallery to take some Sèvres pieces out of the cabinet. Here we examined a unique Sèvres price label on a circular coin of white porcelain. However, it was decided that the quality of the porcelain did not feel like Sèvres and was a bit grey. We concluded that the paper price label was original but probably from a different piece of Sèvres porcelain. Finally, we looked at two gorgeous green bulb pots or *piédestals à oignon* by Viellard which were originally owned by the Rothschild family at Mentmore. The decoration was extremely detailed, with a lovely snail painted on a corner; gilding could be found even in the inside of the pot where the bulb would have sat. There were also four holes to accommodate sticks to be to help the flowers grow tall. After an extremely informative and interesting day we thanked Howard and headed off to our hotel for a well-earned dinner and a glass or two of wine!

Caroline McCaffrey-Howarth

RABY CASTLE AND ROKEBY PARK

Oliver Fairclough on a visit to some of the stately homes of County Durham

We spent the morning of Thursday 28 April at Raby Castle. Built in the 14th century, and the headquarters in the Middle Ages of the Neville family, it has the same scale and grandeur as Alnwick, the seat of their great rivals, the Percies, and is also a 'must' for anyone with an interest in European ceramics. Raby was acquired in 1626 by the Vane family, later Lords Barnard, and from 1833 to 1891 Dukes of Cleveland. We were warmly welcomed by curator Clare Owen and her staff in the vast entrance hall, remodelled by John Carr of York in 1787 to provide carriage access to the castle. The 1st and 2nd Dukes of Cleveland were both important collectors of porcelain and other works of art, and the castle was further remodelled for the latter by William Burn during the 1840s.

In the small drawing room, set into the top of a small table of English manufacture, we found a large Sèvres tureen stand, and John Whitehead explained that this had been intended for the Louis XVI service, but was one of a number of pieces that on the fall of the monarchy had instead been decorated with botanical flowers, named on the reverse, by Jacques-François Micaud. The passage to the Library contained good Worcester, Meissen and Derby, as a pair of Rockingham cache pots painted with Raby itself. In the ante-library we admired the Dutch and Flemish paintings acquired by the 2nd Duke in the 1840s, especially *An Artist's Studio* (c.1640) by David Teniers the Younger, and a magnificent Flemish marquetry cabinet of about 1660 on a later English stand. One of Raby's showstoppers is the Octagon Drawing Room, created by Burn in 1848 for the 2nd Duke, and carefully restored in 1993.



The small drawing room at Raby Castle

There, amid the gilt and red damask furniture by Morant, we admired several major pieces of Sèvres which form part of this lavish early Victorian interior. These include an outstanding (and exceptional large) jewelled cup and saucer of 1782, in astonishingly good condition. Another 'jewelled' piece, a bowl, had 'Baldock' bronze mounts. The garniture of six vases on the mantelpiece was similarly 'improved' but included two small seaux from the Godoy service of mid 1790s. In contrast two larger seaux of the late 1750s with

underglaze blue grounds and landscape reserves, had good, if later, French mounts.

The vast Baron's Hall was also remodelled by Burn, and among much else contains some major pieces of earlier Gothic furniture, dating from the 1820s, which recall that made for Windsor. The highlight for us (and perhaps of the whole visit) were the five great white porcelain birds modelled by Kändler and Kirchner, and made at Meissen in 1727 to 1732 for the Japanese Palace in Dresden. These were bought by the 2nd Duke at Christie's in 1858.



Rokeby Park

After lunch in the former stables, our coach took us through worsening weather to Rokeby Park, near Greta Bridge. Rokeby is one of England's most perfect Palladian villas, and was built by the amateur architect and spendthrift Sir Thomas Robinson (1702-1777). J. S. Morritt who bought Rokeby in 1769 was responsible for the Print Room, where a fascinating range of French engravings of the late 17th and early 18th centuries are pasted on to the walls in fictive frames. His sister Anne Morritt was one of the finest needlewomen of her day, and produced a large group of copies of paintings in silk and wool. B.S. Morritt (1771-1843), the son of J.S. Morritt, owned the house for over 50 years. He was a close friend of Sir Walter Scott. A cultivated scholar and lover of the arts, it was he who acquired Velázquez's *Toilet of Venus* in 1809. This was sold to the National Gallery in 1906, though its English 19th-century frame remains (with a copy of the painting) in the saloon.

The house contains a good selection of English and Oriental ceramics, including two vast Islamic vases made by Minton in 1853. Although we saw no French porcelain of significance, we were fascinated by a large 17th century French painting of the coronation of Louis XIV at Rheims Cathedral in 1654, probably copied from an engraving. The visit concluded with tea, and a further opportunity to discuss what we had seen with Sally Davies, curator, and her staff.

Oliver Fairclough