

fairhall

NEWSLETTER OF
THE FRIENDS, GUIDES
AND VOLUNTEERS

ISSUE 4 | NOVEMBER 2011



THE JOHNSTON
COLLECTION

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FRIENDS NEW MEMBERS

Terri Ashton	Jeavons Baillie
Andrea Bendrups	Sarah Craig
Valerie Dickson	Judit Kaminszky
Rosemary Lloyd	Robin Marshall
Maryanne Moore	Julie Neylan
Jim Palmer	Judy Reach
Susan Scollay	Lynnette Swan
Gwenda Wallace	

A Wondrous Gift: Christmas at The Johnston Collection 2011–2012 has now opened and we welcome this year's annual Christmas tour.



The ninth in this series of *Christmas at The Johnston Collection* tours continues our 'inspired by' way of looking at objects in, and providing insights into, William Johnston's collection. The contributions have come from groups and makers from Albury-Wodonga, Shepparton, Wangaratta and surrounds.

I'd like to thank all the contributors and individuals who make the annual tour happen, (who take on the biggest tasks), and also those others who made suggestions, offered contacts and assisted with all the 'head, hand and heart' work that is put into developing the tour and rearranging *Fairhall*.

Our lecture series continues to go from strength to strength. We are looking forward to welcoming back our regular speakers along with some new ones. If you didn't manage to see some of our new lecturers this year such as Deirdre Coleman, Eugene Barilo von Reisberg, Jennifer Milam, Grace Moore, Mark Nicholls and Michelle Smith, I would recommend you do so next year. They offered wonderful insights through their specialist topics.

As we look ahead to 2012, it's also good to look back at what has been achieved over the year. Recently we have seen The Johnston Collection go live on *Wikipedia*. We have participated in new outreach activities such as the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival. We're planning to continue with these events next year, as well as Government House Open Day, as they continue to open other doors, and introduce and welcome more visitors to the Collection.

The Friends have also had an exceptional year of events, activities and even a lecture. Tremendous thanks must go to Robert and the committee members who initiated and organised a superb programme that has been enjoyed by so many.

And to Anne Glynn and all those involved with this issue of *Fairhall*. Please support the newsletter by not only reading, but also researching and writing for it.

From all of us on the team I'd thank everyone who has been involved with The Johnston Collection this year. Holiday greetings to all of you and we look forward to working with you in 2012.

Louis Le Vaillant, Director | Curator
The Johnston Collection

Thanks

The Johnston Collection gratefully acknowledges the support of The Copland Foundation.

We also gratefully acknowledge the support of The Friends of The Johnston Collection towards the production and distribution of *Fairhall*.

The best kept secret in Melbourne – The Johnston Collection – has received some very pleasing media exposure these last six months.



We cooperated with RMIT at the Melbourne *DesignMadeTrade* festival at the Royal Exhibition Building in July. The Johnston Collection also featured in the popular *Melbourne Open House* scheme and the *Melbourne Industry Tourism Exchange* in September.

We featured on the ABC *Collectors* in September as well as being advertised in their magazine. If anyone would like to view the *Collectors* or read the article there are copies in The Johnston Collection library.

There was an article in *World of Antiques and Art* issue 81, about the authenticity of our painting formerly attributed to Pietro da Cortona. Will we ever find the true artist?

Our profile is certainly out there so hopefully more people will want to find out what The Johnston Collection is all about.

The reputation of our Christmas tour is continually growing and this year we are proud to have craft groups from north east Victoria making the decorations for the *A Wondrous Gift* tour. As usual they are of a wonderful standard and well worth viewing.

Much of the focus of this newsletter is on Christmas, with the dessert table thought suitable for *The Art of Dining*, and the annual recipe easily able to be made for a tasty Christmas dessert.

Anne Glynn, Editor

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have also had other media exposure with an article in the *Qantas* magazine, the 'Gallery Review' in *The Age (Melbourne) Magazine*, a feature article in *The Saturday Age* 'Life & Style' section as well as a feature story in *The Melbourne Weekly* newspaper.

There have been articles in *The Shepparton News*, *The Wangaratta Chronicle*, *The Border Mail*, and the *Kilmore Free Press*, and radio interviews by Jane Edmanson (3AW), Phillip Brady (3AW), and three interviews on ABC Radio.

The Johnston Collection now has a Wikipedia page – visit www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Johnston_Collection

It has been a wonderful few months for The Johnston Collection.



We have been fortunate enough to have had some outstanding lectures, including The Garden of Ideas Study Day, convened by Christine Reid. This was a fascinating day with four great speakers, who combined at the end of the day for a stimulating panel discussion. Every lecture I have attended has been excellent;

I am so impressed with the delivery and content from such people as Gerard Vaughan, Sylvia Sagona, Susan Scollay, Jennifer Milam and many others. They are going to be as good if not better next year, so book early when the list appears.

The highlight of our winter season was a superb evening at the gracious home of Dr Donald and Mrs Joan Hossack. They have a beautiful collection of samplers worked by the women of Joan's family over several generations, plus fine paintings, rugs and antiques. The highlight was talking to the charming host and hostess, hearing about their interesting lives and enjoying their hospitality.

The Friends AGM, held at the Collection, was highly successful. Susan Scollay gave a fascinating talk about the upcoming study trip to Transylvania-Bucovina. After the meeting we had drinks, with all members mixing together.

On a sadder note two of our loyal Committee members, Andrew Dixon and Wendy Babiolakis, have resigned. We thank them both for the sterling job they have done. Andrew Dixon is still an Ambassador and Wendy will continue to volunteer at the Collection. We are delighted to welcome Mary Bourne to the Committee. She is an extremely keen member of The Friends, and will be a great asset.

We have enjoyed the most sensational A Day in the Country 2011 at two magnificent country properties Chandpara, once the country house of William Johnston and now the home of Graham Sellars Jones; and Westport, the property of Neil Robertson, originator of the Open Garden Scheme. The weather was perfect and the scene of everyone having their lunch in Neil's garden could have been straight from a garden of an English stately home (with an Australian flavour). An added bonus was being able to wander through Neil's house looking at his fascinating collections.

I look forward to seeing you at our annual Christmas function on 1 December. Enjoy all that is going on at the Collection.

**Robert Thomson, SIDA President,
The Friends of The Johnston Collection**



CHANDPARA



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WESTPORT





A DAY IN THE COUNTRY 2011: GARDEN VISITS IN THE MACEDON RANGES

The Friends' *A Day in the Country 2011* was conducted in conjunction with The Garden of Ideas exhibition at The Johnston Collection.

We made Spring visits to two fabulous gardens. Firstly *Chandpara*, the former country home of William Johnston, near Woodend, followed by lunch at Neil Robertson's rambling and delightful country garden, *Westport*, at New Gisborne.

- 1 Joan Dohle, Lisa Arrowsmith
- 2 Robert Smith, Anne Barry
- 3 Yvonne Hildebrand, Rod McKenzie
- 4 Janet Park, Andrew Dixon, Karina James, Sholto James, Maggie Cash, Anne Glynn, Anne Neri

AN EVENING AT A PRIVATE COLLECTION

(following page)

- 5 Maxine O'Neill, Paul O'Neill, Peter Glynn, Anne Glynn
- 6 Dani Balmford, Margaret Toomey
- 7 Margot Atkins, Barbara Morrison
- 8 Rosemary Stanton, Matthew Stanton, Christina Cadariu, Myrna Montague, Julie Walsh
- 9 Susan Wilms, Robert Thomson, Pam Hartmann
- 10 Barbara Beard, Margery Jensen, Ken Barnes
- 11 Joan Hossack, Donald Hossack



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ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

Thursday 2 February 2012 | 10.00 am to 12.00 pm

The morning will begin with a meeting with Kathleen McCarthy, President of The Friends of St Patrick's Cathedral, who will give a presentation on the Cathedral. It will cover a brief history of its construction as a world class example of neo-Gothic architecture. Following tea/coffee refreshments, we will proceed to do a tour of the Cathedral going via *The Pilgrim's Way* through the Cathedral grounds.



SOTHEBY'S

March 2012 (date to be notified)

The Friends are pleased that Sotheby's continue to invite us to their pre-auction night. Viewing the delights

on offer prior to their upcoming Fine and Decorative Arts auction is always a fascinating and informative evening.



WESTERN DISTRICT TOUR 2012

**Friday 23 March –
Saturday 24 March 2012**

The first day of this tour visits properties in the Camperdown district. Included will be a trip to Mt Leura to marvel at the panoramic view of the area; so beautifully depicted by von Guerard in his paintings.

We stay overnight in Hamilton, where The Friends of the Hamilton Art Gallery have again offered their wonderful hospitality at an exclusive evening in this interesting Gallery. The next day there is a visit to historically important homesteads in the Western District, including a wonderful property in the Penshurst area.

The *Western District Tour 2011* proved so popular so we are now taking expressions of interest. Numbers will be limited. Please contact friends@johnstoncollection.org



VISIT TO A PRIVATE COLLECTION

Wednesday 18 April 2012 | 6.00 pm

This event is a wonderful opportunity to view the amazing collection of one of The Johnston Collections Volunteer Guides in her home. More details to follow.



KAY CRADDOCK ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSHOP

Wednesday 23 May 2012 | 6.00 pm

One of Melbourne's iconic landmarks; Muriel & Kay Craddock opened their first store in 1965. Today, after 43 years, Kay Craddock offers a large and diverse stock of antiquarian and second-hand books, ranging from the 15th to the 21st centuries, covering most subjects and price categories.

Kay Craddock has kindly agreed to host The Friends at an evening reception within the historic premises on Collins Street.



LOVE AND DEVOTION WITH SUSAN SCOLLAY

**State Library of Victoria | June 2012
(date to be notified)**

Susan Scollay, Guest co-curator, *Love and Devotion: from Persia and Beyond* will introduce us to this exhibition which features nearly 70 rare 13th to 18th century Persian, Mughal Indian and Ottoman Turkish illustrated manuscripts and miniatures from the Bodleian Libraries of the University of Oxford.

Early European manuscripts from the Bodleian Libraries will also be on display, including a *Roman de la rose* and works by Chaucer and Dante. This is the first major exhibition of Persian manuscripts to be held in Australia.



A LOVE AFFAIR WITH ALL THINGS ROLLS-ROYCE

My story is not dissimilar to that of Mr Johnston and his Minton teacup, where an innocent remark or an object can trigger an obsession.

‘WHATEVER IS RIGHTLY DONE, HOWEVER HUMBLE, IS NOBLE.’ HENRY ROYCE, 1924

As a small child, it was my habit to identify different makes of cars whilst travelling with my father. One day in New Street, Brighton, there was a car I could not identify. My father remarked ‘that is a Rolls Royce - the best car in the world’, and from that day on I was determined I would have one of those.

On my eighteenth birthday whilst working as a prop boy at Channel 9, one of my colleagues told me of an old Rolls Royce sitting in a used car yard in Essendon. During our lunch break we went to check it out and consequently I came home with a 1927 20HP Rolls Royce with a coupe body by Martin and King of Malvern, for the princely sum of £406.12s.6d (I still have the receipt). It even had the flying lady (Spirit of Ecstasy) sitting on the radiator and the number plate 848 (which today would probably be worth in excess of \$100,000).

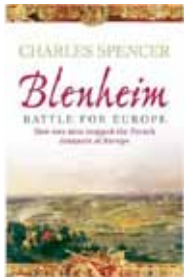
After several years of enjoyment I advertised the car and ended up selling it to a Perth buyer for £700 (his name was Robert Holmes A’Court) and I got to keep the number plate! I replaced the car with a beautiful 1930 20/25

Rolls Royce with a magnificent Cabriolet de Ville body by Hoopers of London, complete with ivory interior fittings. This same car was used to promote the film *The Yellow Rolls Royce* here in Melbourne in the late 60s.

Some years later and after living in London for three years, my beautiful yellow Rolls Royce was sold and enabled me to renovate my first house as well and acquire a lovely 1954 Bentley R type. Sadly that was sold some years later to finance my first business venture. As it turned out I need not have sold the car as the business took off and could have financed itself.

Since then I have owned and restored an elegant 1055 S1 Bentley, along with many other interesting classic cars such as Rover, Daimler and Jaguar etc. These days, in my dotage, I have the luxury of a beautiful 1979 peacock blue Rolls Royce Corniche 2-door saloon by Mulliner Park Ward of London of which I am immensely proud, and have been an active member of the Rolls Royce Owners Club for some 48 years.

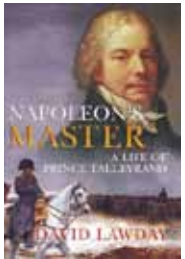
Robert Craig



BLenheim: BATTLE FOR EUROPE

Charles Spencer

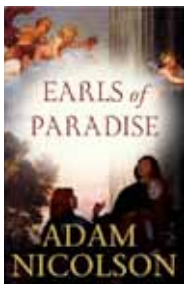
How two men stopped the French conquest of Europe. A compelling account of a major turning point in European history.



NAPOLEON'S MASTER: A LIFE OF PRINCE TALLEYRAND

David Lawday

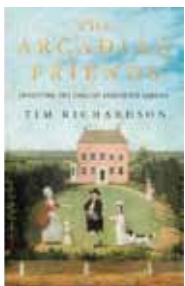
The author follows Talleyrand's remarkable career through the most turbulent age Europe has known and explores his extraordinarily perverse relationship with Napoleon.



EARLS OF PARADISE: ENGLAND AND THE DREAM OF PERFECTION

Adam Nicolson

In this book the author explores a world of transition, an England caught up in its first taste of modernity divided between the old and the new.



THE ARCADIAN FRIENDS: INVENTING THE ENGLISH LANDSCAPE GARDEN

Tim Richardson

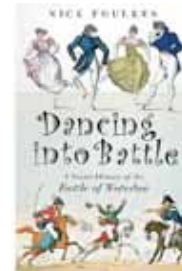
This book introduces us to a fascinating period of political and personal intrigue, where fantastic biblical landscapes competed for space with temples to sexual freedom, and where the installation of a water feature was a political act.



HIROSHIGE

Adele Schlombs

Published by Taschen, this is a wonderfully well-illustrated volume of the master of Japanese Ukiyo-e woodblock prints.



DANCING INTO BATTLE: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

Nick Foulkes

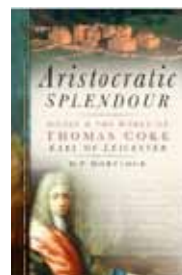
A fascinating new perspective on one of the most famous conflicts in British military history.



NAPOLEON'S BROTHERS

A Hilliard Atteridge

The author gives these brothers the recognition that they deserve by meticulously telling their life stories. Joseph, Lucien, Louis and Jerome each merit their own places in history independently of their better-known brother.



ARISTOCRATIC SPLENDOUR: MONEY AND THE WORLD OF THOMAS COKE, EARL OF LEICESTER

D P Mortlock

Coke's lasting monument is the great house he created at Holkham, a treasury for the wonderful works of arts he collected during his Grand Tour.

Wendy Babiolakis

REMEMBER: The Friends are welcome to make use of the Davidson | Copland reference library. Please contact us to make an appointment: friends@johnstoncollection.org or (03) 9416 2515.



RECOMMENDED READING – ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE EXQUISITE: AN ANECDOTAL HISTORY OF ELEGANT DELIGHTS

Jessica Kerwin Jenkins, Nan A Talese, Doubleday, 2010

This delightful book, *Encyclopedia of the Exquisite*, relates the origins and stories of many artifacts from both history and the present day. It focuses on the elegant, rare, commonplace and the delightful. For example, 'Love Letters' between Catherine the Great of Russia and Potemkin, 'Red Lipstick' regarded by many as the essential non essential, 'The Bob' the scandalous hairstyle of early 19th century, 'Turban' and its popularity in the 1700's, popularized by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. The American interior decorator Elsie de Wolfe introduced 'White Paint' on interior walls to replace the heaviness of the Victorian era décor. What about the adventures and language of gloves? All this and more.

CHILD OF ENLIGHTENMENT, WOMAN OF REVOLUTION: LUCIE DE LA TOUR DU PIN

‘By the time Lucie paid her first visit to Versailles in 1781, the court was enjoying Marie Antoinette’s new passion for flowers, which now decorated tables, filled sachets, perfumed gloves or wound around bodices, kept alive in artfully concealed ‘bosom bottles’. (p38)

As the *ancien regime* spent its dying days in opulent consumption, an aristocratic young girl of French and Irish descent, Henriette-Lucy Dillon, whose mother was a lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette, began a life which would place her in a unique central position to personally view political, economic and social revolutions in France, America and England. It was a position she could share as she was astute, educated and enlightened, keeping details of her experiences which resulted, at the age of fifty, in her writing a memoir of her life and times.

This memoir is at the heart of Caroline Moorehead’s entrancing biography *Dancing to the Edge of the Precipice: Lucie de la Tour du Pin and the French Revolution*, which is enhanced by the journalistic skills of the author. Initially worried she would not have sufficient material about Lucie’s childhood, Moorehead came upon 400 letters in a chateau in Belgium, of which du Pin’s descendants were aware, but only a handful had been published. They were a magnificent primary source around which to partially base the biography.

Born in the fashionable Faubourg Saint-Germain, Paris on 25 February 1770, Lucie was closely related to France’s powerful elites, the nobility and the clergy. Her parents were second cousins, with a mutual ancestor, the Irish soldier, Theobald, 7th Viscount Dillon who had followed James II to France. She was an only child and heiress to a great fortune.

Dancing to the Precipice is a multi-layered history. Lucie witnessed large historical including the French Revolution, the Terror, the moral dilemma of the slave trade in North America, Napoleonic Europe, the battle of Waterloo, as well as social and economic change in Regency England. She lived through the restoration of the French kings, and at the time of her death in 1853, Napoleon III had ascended the throne. Her friends included names at the centre of these large historical events, Lafayette, Talleyrand, Wellington whom she had known since childhood, Mme de Stael and Josephine Bonaparte.

Within the big picture is an equally fascinating portrait of the smaller incidents which allow the reader to visualise

the world in which Lucie lived. At the French court, ‘It was a time for collecting: shells, thimbles, lacquer boxes, telescopes, flowers – real, painted, artificial, embroidered, woven – stools, screens, porcelain from China, tiles from Delft, cups from Sevres. Never before or since, it would be said, was so much effort expended on dress, fashion, luxury and comfort.’ (p.13)

In contrast, the hardships encountered in escaping from the Terror to Bordeaux bring a graphic depiction of famine, malnutrition and horror.

On a more intimate level Lucie’s personal and domestic life is uncovered through her relationship with her dominating grandmother, her marriage to Frédéric, comte de Gouvernet, later Marquise de La Tour du Pin and the tragic death of several of their children, plus the difficulties in creating a home in many different places amongst turbulent conditions. All three layers of history integrate to expose a public and a private life.

Short listed for the Costa Biography Award in the Costa Book Awards in 2009, *Dancing to the Precipice* is a history of depth and breadth linked to an individual story of an exceptional woman. From the excesses of France in the time of Marie Antoinette to Lucie’s death in 1853 in Pisa when the divine right of kings had long gone, Versailles had become a museum, and the various revolutions had transformed politics, economics, industry, transport, employment and social life, Caroline Moorehead has encompassed a time of vast change in many countries with the compelling story of a remarkable life.

Barbara Summerbell



DANCING TO THE EDGE OF THE PRECIPICE: LUCIE DE LA TOUR DU PIN AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Caroline Moorehead, Vintage, Random House, London, 2010

Above: Anonymous painter of the French school, *Versailles*, 1781

INTAGLIOS

Collectors will be aware of the huge contribution made to the ceramic arts by Josiah Wedgwood but may not have noticed that among the products of his company were some of the smallest and most exquisite items of pottery offered for sale in the past 250 years.

These were the tiny intaglios that were used for sealing letters, for setting into jewelry, for personal adornment as watch fobs and chatelaines or simply collected for their own sake. The intaglios were produced self-shanked or as discs which could be set in gold, silver or pinchbeck, as seals, rings, pins, lockets or other forms of jewelry.

In the late 1760s Wedgwood, the consummate potter, developed a highly refined stoneware which he called black basalt and this proved to be the ideal material for pottery that was to be fashioned in extremely fine detail. In 1769 he had taken into partnership Thomas Bentley, an educated man who moved in cultured circles and who had introduced Wedgwood to the classics. In the latter part of the 18th and into the 19th century, collecting gems, plaques and other ceramic items representing classical mythology, historical events and important figures became something of a fad in Britain. Many English potters responded, and Wedgwood was perhaps the most notable.

By the time Bentley died in 1780 the Wedgwood factory was offering a complete range of monograms (or ciphers) that could be used as personal seals together with over 400 different intaglios. The latter included depictions of events and figures from Greek and Roman mythology and a large range of modern subjects such as the Kings and Queens of England, all the Popes, philosophers, physicians and poets. Production continued until the neo-classical period had run its race in the early 19th century.

These tiny items ranged from less than 1 cm to over 3 cm in diameter. Because basalt was such a dense material it took a polish or developed a patina with use, thus enhancing its beauty and making the intaglios more attractive to discriminating buyers. Some were given a



blue wash in slip so that the incised figure would be black and the ground (or surface) of the item blue, in imitation of blue-black onyx. Like most Wedgwood production, the disc intaglios carried an impressed Wedgwood or Wedgwood and Bentley (or simply W&B if too small) mark, plus a catalogue number on the reverse. The self-shanked seals were normally not marked, nor were the rather rare double-sided disc intaglios.

Wedgwood found designs and heads for his intaglios from a wide variety of sources. Many were based on antique gems, contemporary portraits, medals and classical artworks. In each case the master cameo would be modeled by the most skillful artisans Wedgwood was able to employ, and then impressed in intaglio form into the ceramic material. Intaglios were among Wedgwood's most popular products. In the mid-1770s they were sold individually at a shilling each, or could be bought in sets. If you were rich enough and had a sufficiently developed ego you could have your portrait modeled by one of Wedgwood's artisans and replicated as an intaglio; but that would have cost a good deal more.

Although basalt was the most appropriate ceramic body for the intaglios, by 1775 Wedgwood had perfected a new semi-translucent body he called jasper and this was also progressively introduced into production, including intaglios. Compared with basalt, very few jasper intaglios find their way into the antiques market today so it appears that, understandably, they were never as popular as the fine basalt material so admired by collectors of these tiny, exquisite objects.

Ken Barnes





ALAN EUSTACE & RECOLLECTIONS OF WILLIAM JOHNSTON

I first met Alan Eustace in the 1980s, about ten years after he left East Melbourne where he had been a tenant of William (Bill) Johnston, both at *Fairball* and also *Cyprus Terrace* in the years from 1961-1971.

Recently Alan came to my home for afternoon tea and we chatted about the Bill Johnston he knew and his interests, particularly in porcelain and furniture.

It was extraordinary to imagine William Johnston as a tall, tough, bullish man, always dressed in work clothes with very big clumsy hands, gently handling delicate blue and pink floral porcelain. Alan reminded me that the shape and the feel of these objects, together with the colour and translucency, had a remarkable and calming effect on the rather erratic, rude and volatile personality of Bill Johnston.

Furniture also captured his attention and he would talk about proportions i.e. the shape of the legs, the dimensions of the table, height, width, colour and patina. Often he would know a little about the history of the piece and where it had come from.

Mr Johnston had an eye for proportions, and that was true of houses, particularly *Cyprus Terrace* at 162 Hotham Street, which he loved. Alan mentioned that on completion of the renovations to his downstairs flat at *Cyprus Terrace*, Johnston showed his appreciation to Alan by giving him several pieces of furniture for a modest sum. This was his way of showing his gratitude.

Alan remarked that Mr Johnston loved to share with anyone who would listen his incredible knowledge of 18th century furniture and objects. He had an uncanny eye both for the genuine piece and for a bargain, and would delight in hunting around Melbourne to find it.

Alan thought Mr Johnston was a complex, moody and aggressive man at times, with a native cunning, who remained very much an enigma. He thought Mr Johnston was quite controlling but able to change in personality if the situation warranted it.

I asked Alan if Mr Johnston would be surprised at the success of The Johnston Collection. He felt that Bill would have loved the beauty of the place, but would have been unfamiliar with the ideas that brought the Collection together as it is today.

Alan Eustace sold his blue and white collection of porcelain in 2003, which no doubt had been the subject of many discussions with Bill Johnston, but he gave a Worcester blue and white *mug* circa 1765 to The Johnston Collection for all to enjoy.

Karina James

References: Conversation with Alan Eustace – March 2011,
Nina Stanton spoke to Alan Eustace – September 2009



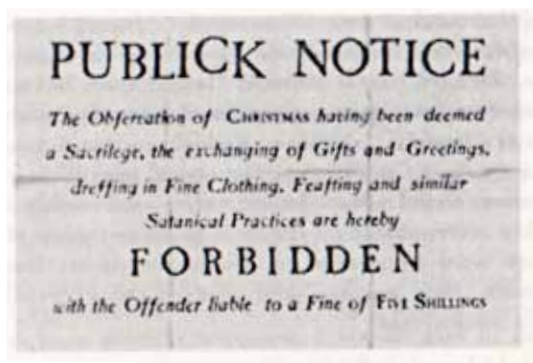
Top: William Johnston seen at Outer Crescent, Brighton, 1950s

Middle: Johnston, Ahmed Moussa and Alan Eustace, India, 1986

Above: *mug* 'Mansfield pattern', circa 1765-70 Worcester porcelain factory, Worcester, England, 1751-2009 porcelain (soft paste), underglaze decoration gift of Alan Eustace, 1993 collection of The Johnston Collection (A1264-1993)

WHEN CHRISTMAS WAS BANNED

From 1647-1660 in England, Christmas was banned. At times, congregations illegally attending church on Christmas Day faced Parliamentary soldiers armed with muskets, fines were imposed for eating mince pies and Christmas dinner could be confiscated.



By the time of the English Civil War, there was already debate about how 'religious' Christmas was. As part of the attack by the Puritans on the established church, all festivals of the church calendar, including Easter and Christmas, were abolished by Parliament in 1647. *The Book of Common Prayer* had been replaced by the *Directory for Public Worship*, and Armada Day and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot were substituted as national feast days.

So Christmas went underground. The 17th century diarist John Evelyn succeeded in finding churches in London which celebrated church feast days using the banned *Book of Common Prayer*, and recorded in his diary for Christmas Day in 1657:

Sermon Ended, as (the minister) was giving us the holy Sacrament, The Chapell was surrounded with Souldiers: All the Communicants and Assembly surprised & kept Prisoners by them ... (They) examined me, why contrary to an Ordinance made that none should any longer observe the superstitious time of the Nativity I durst offend. The congregation continued even though the troopers held muskets to their heads as they went up to receive Communion 'as if they would have shot us at the Altar.'

However, it was in suppressing Christmas feasts at home that Parliament most misread English public sentiment.

Prior to the abolishment, overindulgence at Christmas had reached almost bacchanalian proportions, harking back to the ancient pagan and Roman mid-winter festivals that Christmas replaced. There was great feasting and drinking, and little work was achieved over the Twelve Days of Christmas.

Christmas in 1631 is described by John Taylor. Following church 'some went to cards, some sung Carrols, many merry songs, some to waste the long night would tell Winter-tales'. There were maids with Wassail, the gargantuan feast, and then dancing and merriment under the 'kissing bush' suspended from the ceiling. Homes were decorated with greenery, holly, rosemary, ivy, bay, and mistletoe. Wassail was hot spiced wine or ale served from a decorative bowl to toast to good health.

The food itself included mince pies, then known as shred pies, which were made from shredded or minced mutton or beef, mixed with suet, vinegar, prunes, raisins and dates and coloured with saffron. Plum pudding was also made from beef, raisins, currants and bread. Both these were banned. Meats were served – beef, mutton and pork, accompanied by mustard – and dessert was cheese, apples and nuts. Parliament imposed fines for drinking ale and gave orders that food being prepared for the feast could be seized.

The ban on Christmas remained in place through the Protectorate when Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector, followed on his death by his son Richard. In 1660 Parliament dissolved itself, ordered new elections, and Charles II was restored to the throne. All legislation from 1642-1660 was pronounced null and void; the Parliamentarians had gone, the king was back and so was Christmas.

Helen Annett

THE DESSERT TABLE

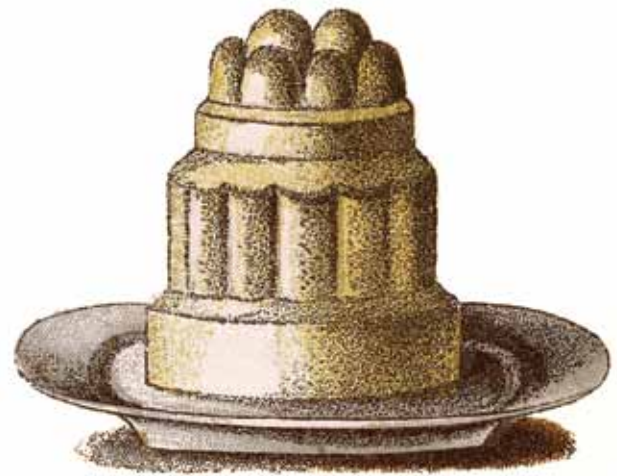
Since medieval times the dessert was the climax to a meal. It was originally meant to clear the palate after the main course, but it became much more. Its elaborateness showed the wealth of the host and provided amusement for the guests. It came to mean ‘a costly feast of the highest status.’ (Visser, p148)

It derived its name from ‘desservir’ meaning to clear the table and provide clean tablecloth and napkins. It enabled a pause in the meal to help digest what had already been eaten, or provide time for guests to mingle.

Wet sweetmeats would be served in individual bowls or glasses and eaten with a spoon. Dry sweetmeats would be eaten from thin wooden trenchers using the fingers. Berries, candied fruit or ginger preserved in syrup, or items that would stain the fingers, were eaten with a sucket fork, a two pronged fork. (see *Fairhall 1*, ‘History of the Fork’). Sweetmeats were highly decorated and often coloured with natural dyes like saffron, cochineal and powder of violets, then embellished with gold leaf. These spices and sugar were imported, so were expensive and laborious to manufacture, consequently they were displayed elaborately.

In the 16th century, the dessert became a separate meal known as the banquet. It would be held in the withdrawing room, a separate room from where the main course had been served earlier in the day, or might be held in the banqueting house overlooking the garden. Novelty themes for the table layout could be intricate, with displays from mythology, the classics, Chinese temples in gardens and formal gardens with fountains. These display layouts were shown in culinary manuals. Spectacular centrepieces were made with sugar confectionary, often enhanced with gold leaf, by court artists, and could be broken and eaten at the end of the meal. Dessert was meant to entertain and ‘gratify the eye’ (Glanville p93), so much use was made of silver as serving dishes.

By the 17th century, sculpted figures would be made from marzipan or biscuit dough. Food was served in silver bowls, earthenware or Chinese porcelain, and this extravagance demonstrated the host’s wealth. A new style of dining called ‘dining a la francaise’ introduced into



Blanc-Mange à la Vanille.

the English court in mid 17th century, where all the food was placed on the table at once, meant that dessert now became part of the meal, as a course, in the manner that we know dessert today.

It was during the 18th century that porcelain was favoured, not only in the figurines on the table but also the plates used. They were more hygienic, and unlike metal plates, did not taint the flavour of the food served. Knives, forks and spoons by this time were commonly used. The table was enhanced by elaborate designs of coloured sand, either placed on the table or mirror plateaux by a specialised artist called ‘sandman.’ It would then be covered with a sheet of glass to protect it. The mirror not only displayed the dessert but also reflected the lighting and decoration in the room. Epergnes or surtouts containing fruit, jellies, creams, and candied fruit became the new centrepiece and were made from silver or porcelain. The centrepiece could be interspersed with porcelain or sugar flowers as the scent of real flowers was seen as ‘distasteful in conjunction with highly flavoured food.’ (Glanville p12)

Porcelain and sugar figures fell from fashion in the 19th century, although they were revived for special occasions like state dinners. Instead, vases of real flowers and candelabras decorated the table, with emphasis on colour schemes or species of flowers. Today, our version of the centrepiece can be seen in the elaborate wedding cake or a simple vase of flowers. We do of course still enjoy our dessert, albeit as a less formal course of the meal.

Anne Glynn

VISSER, Margaret, *Rituals of Dining*, Penguin, 1992, GLANVILLE, Philippa and Hilary Young, *Elegant Eating: Four Hundred Years of Dining in Style*, V&A Publications, 2004

Next Edition: Dining a la Francaise



Above and below (respectively)

figure group (the Wigmaker and the Shoemaker from the Grand Toilette), 1775-80
 Derby porcelain factory, Bloor period (1775-80)
 Derby, England, est. c. 1748-1848
 after Sevres figures by Etienne Maurice Falconet (1716-1791)
 porcelain (unglazed), The Johnston Collection (A1191 -1998)



SHIRLEY'S ORANGE CREAM FOR CHRISTMAS PUDDING

150 ml (about 2 oranges) orange juice
 2 tablespoons orange zest
 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 2 tablespoons butter
 ½ cup caster sugar
 2 beaten eggs
 2 tablespoons orange liqueur
 300 ml whipped cream

Combine all ingredients except cream into a double saucepan and cook over hot water stirring till mixture thickens. Leave to cool.

This can be made up to three days in advance of using.

Fold in whipped cream when ready to use and serve with plum pudding.

Bet O'Brien

A MINTON MYSTERY

This piece, with Minton and Co. characteristics, bears a ‘Dresseresque’ design on a *bleu-celeste* ground, and is supported by putti from a line of Minton figures made in Parian, majolica, or bone china. Unusually without a Minton mark or date code; an identically constructed piece with a mark Mintons 1517 and a date code 1881 is illustrated in Cecil’s book.¹

The vase is decorated in Chinese cloisonné style enamel, with bands of differing decorative motifs featured against a *bleu-celeste* background. The neck features a gilded Chinese key motif, while immediately below a stylized floral band can be likened to Chinese embroidery, with which Dresser was familiar.² The shoulder of the vase is adorned with a ‘Dresseresque’ Egyptian style abstracted botanical motif. It features elongated lotus-like buds in green and white, alternating with raised crimson dots. The shapes are both surrounded and connected by delicate lines of gilding. The same motif appears on a pair of blue Minton vases dated 1869 attributed to Christopher Dresser, on display as part of the Robert Wilson collection at the NGV.³ Smaller Egyptian style flower buds decorate the bottom of the vase, alternating with a geometric pattern which is repeated on the rim of the rectangular base.

At the midway point a Vitruvian scroll in gold and white encircles the vase. Gilded rods protrude from the body of the vase at either side and extend over the shoulders of the putti holding the vase aloft. With their plain white glaze and trailing drapes these figures are similar to models used for Minton majolica ‘revivalist’ ware. Although majolica ware had enjoyed enormous success since its introduction in 1850, by the 1880s Minton had reduced its output because of competition from cheaper products both from England and Europe.⁴

The shape of the vase in The Johnston Collection seems to reflect Dresser’s view that the ovoid shape and the ‘subtlety’ of the elliptical line is particularly pleasing.⁵ A coloured drawing attributed to Dresser and exhibited by Minton at the 1862 London International Exhibition, depicts an elongated ‘Chinese bottle’ adorned with a simple version of the decorative motif featured on the more compact Johnston vase.⁶ The rounded bottom of the Johnston vase can also be compared to illustrations in Dresser’s book of Egyptian and Chinese water bottles, although the latter generally have a narrowed neck.

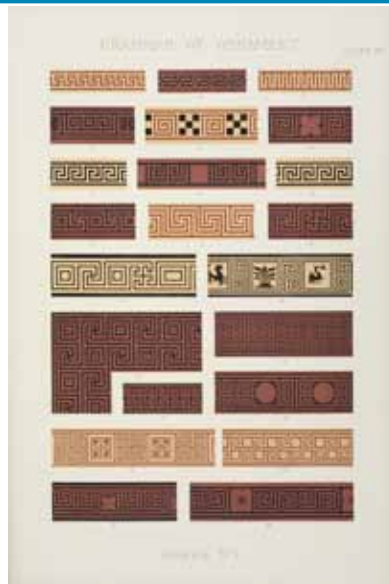
In 1848, Herbert Minton acquired the services of Leon Arnoux from Sevres, with the aim of making ornamental wares for the luxury market. Arnoux, a modeler and designer, brought with him his knowledge of new glazes

and the vibrant ground colours associated with Sevres. He also introduced Majolica ware, a body previously unknown in England. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was a triumph for Minton, where an elaborate dessert service was bought by Queen Victoria. It combined bone china with Parian ‘allegorical’ figure supports, some in the form of Renaissance ‘revival’ della Robbia-like putti.⁷

Herbert Minton was a supporter of the Design Reform Movement, established in 1835 to improve the quality of British design, with training based on historical styles. Staff employed by Minton were encouraged to visit museums, and were given access to important private collections. Minton also employed independent designers, the most famous being Christopher Dresser with whom they were associated from about 1862. Trained as a botanist, Dresser attended the School of Design, establishing himself as an independent designer. He made his services and those of his workshop available to a variety of manufacturers, providing advice and designs for ceramics, metal ware, textiles, wallpaper and carpets.⁸

In his book *Principles of Decorative Design* published in 1870, Dresser also encouraged students to visit museums and galleries. He wrote of the importance of geometry and repetition and the ‘idealisation’ of botanical forms, and expressed his admiration for the decorative styles of the East, especially China and Japan, as well as those of ancient Egypt and Greece.⁹ Much of his writing reflects the philosophy of his mentor Owen Jones, whose *Grammar of Ornament* published in 1856,¹⁰ included a colour plate by Dresser depicting both naturalistic and stylised botanical drawings.¹¹ Dresser, however, stated that all Renaissance ornament ‘repels and chills me’,¹² the antithesis of the putti strategically placed in the Johnston piece.

It is evident that Minton combined two disparate styles to make a piece that would appeal to the Victorian taste for ‘exoticism’, with the buyer perhaps reassured that his or her purchase was in ‘good taste’. It is unlikely that Dresser himself would have been similarly reassured by the mix in styles.



Above: vase, circa 1860s–1880s
Minton & Co (est. 1793–), Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
Bone china, enamel colours, gilding
The Johnston Collection (A0464 – 1989)
Photo credit | Ben Cordia

Clock-wise from top left: Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, 'Greek' plate vase, England, 1868 (dated), Christopher Dresser (probably, designer), Minton & Co. (maker) Bone china painted in enamel colours with gilding, V&A Museum, London (C.163–1981)
Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, 1865, 'Egyptian No 1' plate vase [centre piece], England, circa 1870, John Matlock (probably, designer), Minton & Co. (maker), [Bone china], glazed

1. Cecil, 1982: pp 66 – 67.
2. Dresser, 1995: p 48 Dresser recommends a visit to the South Kensington Museum, later to become the V. & A. Matthew Martin, Assistant Curator at the NGV also likened this decorative motif to Chinese embroidery.
3. NGV, Accession Number 2001.318.1–2
4. Jones, J., 2010: p 131.
5. Dresser, 1995: p 23.
6. Jones, J., 2010: p 89.
7. Jones, J., 2010.
8. Whiteway, 2004: pp 11–15.
9. Dresser, 1995: pp 5–11.
10. Jones, J., 2010: p 37.
Jones, O., 1910. Owen Jones book contains over 100 colour plates with decorative motifs categorized according to country of origin.
11. Jones, J., 2010: p 37.
12. Whiteway, 2004: p 24.
13. Dresser, 1995: p 13.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

We are grateful to Dr Matthew Martin, Assistant Curator – International Decorative Arts & Antiquities at the National Gallery of Victoria, who generously shared his time and expertise.

REFLECTIONS FROM A NEW AND TRAINEE GUIDE

Having completed solo tours for *My Cup Runneth Over*, *Francis W Dunn Rearranges Mr Johnston's Collection* and *Fair Hall to Glad Parlour*, it seemed timely to reflect upon all that has taken place since becoming part of the new kids on the block group, beginning in July 2010.

We survived the selection process, then were thoroughly and expertly whipped into shape by the incredibly talented and patient Robin Ives. We all had some hugely embarrassing and funny gaffs when presenting selected topics to our peer group. What a relief when we passed. We have been mentored and encouraged by the wonderfully generous and knowledgeable existing guides and staff. None of us will forget though, our first forays into solo tours, but as we relaxed we began to grow in confidence.

One of the many joys in guiding has been discovering the warmth of interaction with our visitors, sharing and expressing their delight and awe at discovering *Fairhall* and all it has to offer, then the gratitude of many happy smiling faces thanking you for a wonderful experience as they leave.

In the short time as a new guide and still in the early phases of learning, I am proud and privileged to be part of such a unique group. We are surrounded by caring and professional people under the dynamic leadership of Louis and his team, who make the Collection an exciting and unique experience for everyone. For me, it has been and continues to be a delightful journey of discovery.

Denise Way

GUIDE TRAINING DAY
A WONDROUS GIFT
FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2012

Top: Gitta Amor, Elizabeth Anderson, Anna Paule, Peter Amor
Middle: Margaret Parkinson, Dani Balmford, Anne Glynn, Anita Simon, Deirdre Basham, Yvonne Hildebrand
Bottom: Christine Newcombe, Wilma Oxley, Thelma Collins, Walter Heale, Jan Heale, Carol-Anne Whinray



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THE JOHNSTON COLLECTION:

PO Box 79 | East Melbourne VIC 8002

T: (03) 9416 2515

F: (03) 9416 2507

info@johnstoncollection.org

www.johnstoncollection.org

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Front cover: Minton & Co (est. 1793 -) vase, circa 1860s–1880s
(A0464– 1989), photograph by Ben Cordia

Back cover: Nathalie Pfahlert, Margaret England, Gitta Amor, Peter Amor,
Carol-Anne Whinray, Lisa Arrowsmith, Rose Wedler, Wendy McCormack, Thelma Collins



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