

English Ceramic Circle News - July 2026

As we approach our 100th anniversary, I felt members would appreciate a short update to help you get as much out of membership as possible. The aim is to write and circulate these every two to three months.

Dates for your diaries

Neil has been busy working on an exciting programme of lectures for 2026 and the start of 2027. Please add these to your diary. All meetings, except the one on the 10th October 2026 are on Zoom, and links will be circulated in advance:

23rd July – Tea and the Invention of European Porcelain – Grace Benham (Zoom)

22nd August – Thrown Together Part II - picnic at Kate Malone's studio in Kent – payment/booking required. For more information see:

<https://www.englishceramiccircle.org.uk/event/summer-picnic-with-kate-malone-mbe/>

17th September – What's for Dinner? Tableware and Traditions in the 18th-Century - Leslie Grigsby (Zoom)

10th October – all day London meeting starting c11am – Nick Panes on Alexander Fisher (1864-1936); Simon Spier on Elers Brothers; Roger Massey on ceramic repair; Patricia Ferguson on Bowcock papers; Caroline Stanford on Coade Stone; and, Dr Nigel Cooke on the collection of John Hewett (DoubleTree by Hilton London Kensington, 100 Cromwell Road)

12th November – Recasting the Museum – Matt Smith (Zoom)

10th December – Nature gave his talents: Dr Wall Worcester representing the last triumphant chapter of the First Period 1765-1776 – Paul Crane (Zoom)

28th January (2027) – Wedgwood and the West Indies – Christopher Maxwell (Zoom)

Any amendments/revisions will be added to the website, which will always provide the most up to date information: <https://www.englishceramiccircle.org.uk/events/>

While writing, a big “thank you” to those members who make additional contributions to the Circle – we were able to rerun our ceramics research grants programme last year and the fruits of this are starting to appear in the forward programme. Neil is looking for other papers for 2027. If you are working on subjects, please contact him on neil.ewins@outlook.com

AGM 2026

The AGM in June confirmed the rule changes that were put to members – the updated rules (or constitution) have been added to the website and can be reviewed here: <https://www.englishceramiccircle.org.uk/constitution/>

The main change was around 7c, which now allows the Circle to make some publications available to members (and the public) for a fee. The previous rule stated we would publish work and circulate to all members free of charge. While we will apply this to Transactions, the rule change allows us to make some publications available as “print on demand” for a fee. The first such work will be the papers from

the Wedgwood and Dilettanti seminar. We hope that this will enable us to make more publications available over time.

2027 Plans

At the AGM, we highlighted some of the plans to celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2027. Nothing is “concrete” as yet, but we hope to have the programme complete by the end of the summer. The Circle first met in March 1927, and we are working on a physical event in London on 4th March next year, with papers from Errol Manners, John Mallet and Rachel Conroy. We are likely to also host a lunch or a dinner and have an appropriately themed handling session at the V&A. Still trying to land the location and costings – the food costs will be optional and would need to be met by attendees.

In addition, we are planning at least one seminar outside London in 2027 and, as about 1 in 4 members lives in the USA or Canada, we are looking at the practicalities of hosting something in North America. Again, still in the early planning stages, but something to keep a look out for.

The “main event” to celebrate our 100th anniversary is with the V&A, where we are in advanced discussions to use the temporary ceramic display space for 11 months, likely after October 2027. This will be themed as a dialogue between modern and old pots, and draw extensively from the V&A's own collections. It is expected that there will be an associated seminar at the V&A, probably in the spring of 2028. We will be commissioning three modern pots for the exhibition – and will be starting a fund-raising drive over the summer to support this. The V&A hosted our 21st birthday, 60th, 75th and 500th meeting, and there is no better place to celebrate our 100th.

Trustees

The AGM saw the retirement of Nick Panes from the committee – he had rejoined to look at new ways of printing – which is part of the print on demand efforts highlighted above, but also applies to Transactions which will have a different set-up and printer this year. We would like to thank Nick for his significant contribution, which makes the ECC much more flexible moving forward.

The AGM also saw the confirmation of Sally Goodsir MVO as a new ECC Trustee. Sally will be known to many of you as the Curator of Decorative Arts at the Royal Collection Trust, with particular interests in ceramics, royal gardens and animals, and the Royal Mews. She has been published in several Royal Collection publications, the 2024 Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle, and the Journal of the Daniel Ceramic Circle. Her interest in ceramics was nurtured growing up in Shropshire, not far



from the Potteries, and finding shards in fields and gardens, as well as more conventional work at an Auctioneers in Shrewsbury and South Kensington. In 2020, she embarked on a project to reconsider and expand the cataloguing of the ceramics held in the Royal Collection and of 14 000 individual records (for over 60 000 individual works of art containing ceramics) that is now about halfway through. Over the summer of 2025, she was the curatorial lead on the redisplay of the China Corridor at Windsor Castle which displays over 750 examples of dining ceramics. She is a trustee at the Museum of Richmond, an Honorary Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers and, excitingly, was awarded the Member of the Victorian Order (MVO) in the King's 2026 Birthday Honours. Please join me in welcoming Sally onto the ECC committee.

Transactions

Jacqui and Anton, our Editors, are making great progress with this year's Transactions. To date, this includes ten main articles, delivered over 2024 – 2025. Generally, we are scaling back on shorter papers and notes to focus on the main articles, although we remain open to including items that are too short to be presented as main papers. This Transactions will include, sadly, six obituaries, including one for our member Simon Spero who passed away recently. As highlighted, work continues on the papers from the Wedgwood and Society of Dilettanti seminar, under the editorial guidance of Anton and guest editor Robin Emmerson. The Trustees are grateful to all contributors and to peer reviewers that make these publications happen.

Oliver Towers has done a great job getting auctioneers and dealers to advertise in the Transactions – for which we charge £300 for a page. This goes some way to offsetting the ever increasing postage costs. Please contact Oliver on Otowers@btinternet.com to join in.

The Huguenot Museum, Rochester - <https://huguenotmuseum.org/>

The ECC Committee made a grant of £500 to the Museum to help with the display of English Porcelain. Patricia Ferguson's report follows:

In 2024, The Huguenot Museum, in Rochester, Kent, received a bequest of English porcelain and silver from the estate of the late Anthony Houssemayne du Boulay (1929-2022), a longtime member of the English Ceramic Circle. The Museum was established in 2015 by The French Hospital, an almshouse charity, to showcase the history and heritage of Huguenot refugees in Britain, Protestants escaping persecution in France from the 1500s as well as the stories of other refugees. In order to showcase the bequest and its new display within the Museum, its Chair, Tessa Murdoch organised a seminar on 4th February 2026, entitled 'Celebrating Ceramics and Silver New Acquisitions through the Arts Council England: Purchase Grant Fund'. It was also an opportunity to thank the ECC and two others for their contribution to the costs associated with the new display. The material gift was made through the UK Government's Acceptance in Lieu scheme, and the seminar had two major objectives.

To honour the legacy of Tony du Boulay, himself a Huguenot and one-time Director of the French Hospital, a ceramic specialist, who worked for Christie's and later as an advisor on Ceramics to the National Trust and the government, and author of several papers surveying the contributions of Huguenot craftsmen, founders and workmen in the production of early English porcelain. Tessa Murdoch and Guy Schwinge of art advisors, Hanover Forbes, shared highlights of Tony du Boulay's career as an expert on



Chinese and European ceramics, as both a collector and auctioneer. I, together with another ECC member, and Expert Advisers appointed to review the gift, discussed the bequest of five examples of Chelsea porcelain, representing a concise chronological survey of the factory's production. The factory worked very much in a cultural milieu populated with Huguenot craftsmen in London. In addition, a Worcester triple shell salt, marked TO, probably for the peripatetic Huguenot John Toulouse; a St. James's factory seal from the factory founded by Charles Gouyn, the Huguenot who had also established the Chelsea factory, before his dissolution of a partnership with Nicholas Sprimont; and a bowl made by Katharine Pleydell-Bouverie (1895–1985), a Huguenot pioneer in modern studio pottery. The silver made by Huguenot silversmiths, included in the gift was not discussed but is included in the new displays.

The seminar was a unique opportunity to learn more about the process of the Acceptance In Lieu and the Cultural Gift System which benefit individuals as well as Museum and Heritage organisations. The schemes allow those who have a bill to Inheritance Tax to pay the tax by transferring important cultural, scientific or historic objects and archives to the nation. Material accepted under the scheme is allocated to public museums, archives or libraries by the appropriate minister and is available for all. For small, independent institutions, such as The Huguenot Museum, it is a critical source for building collections. To that end, the seminar included enlightening talks by Anastasia Tennant, of Tennant McQuillan LLP, 'Enriching public collections through the acquisition of objects'; Leanne Manfredi, V&A National Programmes Director, 'Introducing the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund', and Ruth Cornett, Christie's on 'Christie's Personal Advisory Service'. The seminar day was well attended by English porcelain enthusiasts, curators, collectors, auctioneers, legal advisors, members of the Arts Council and friends of the Huguenot Museum. While the scheme benefits individuals and institutions, it allows the public to enjoy treasures which otherwise would remain in private hands. ECC members are encouraged to visit Rochester to see the gift and to learn more about the contributions of refugees to British life over five hundred centuries.

Membership

As we approach our 100th anniversary we are seeking to grow our membership. If you know of any other collector, museum colleague, auctioneer, dealer etc that you feel would benefit from ECC membership, please can you encourage them to join? We will do more in 2027 by way of celebration, so now is a great time to become a member. The simplest way for new members to join is using the link on the website: <https://www.englishceramiccircle.org.uk/membership/>

There are a small number of members who have not yet renewed their membership for this year!! Sadly, we will remove you from the lists at the end of July if we do not receive payment and will be unable to send you the Transactions. It's not too late to renew, which can be done using the above link.

Trustees

The Circle is looking for help on gaining new members and is looking to refresh the website for the 100th anniversary year, and if you are in the UK and have time to contribute, please contact president@englishceramiccircle.net. The same email can be used to contact me to provide feedback on this or any other issue regarding the Circle.

Jonathan Gray