

Royal Delft Collectors' Society Newsletter

Issue 3

28 September 2004



Welcome to the third issue of the newsletter for collectors of Royal Delft (De Porceleynse Fles), with a special welcome to new members. *De "Royal Delft Collectors' Society Newsletter" heet U van harte welkom. Wij wensen U veel lees pret toe.* More information about our Royal Delft Collectors' Society can be found at the back of this issue, along with a membership form. If you know of any other collectors, please share this information with them, so that they may also enjoy the benefits of Society membership.



Many of the painters and designers at De Porceleynse Fles also made use of their considerable talents in their own free time by drawing or painting in other mediums. From time to time we hope to show examples of such artistic creations. The above is a sketch by Adolf Le Comte, Artistic Director at Porceleynse Fles. It shows the fishing boats returning from the Zuider Zee to the haven at Volendam. The drawing was published in 1910 in an uncopyrighted book *Things seen in Holland*, by Charles E. Roche.

Royal Delft and the Olympics

The excitement of the Olympic and Paralympic Games this year in Athens has captured the interest of many of us. Over the years Porceleynse Fles has produced various

items commemorating the games, and these are highly sought after by both Royal Delft collectors and collectors specializing in Olympic memorabilia.

In 1928 the Ninth Olympiad was hosted by the Netherlands with the games staged in a New

Stadium in Amsterdam. Porcelain Fles, newly bestowed, by Royal warrant, with the predicate *Koninklijk* (Royal), fully rose to the occasion and produced 6 different souvenir items ranging in price from an inexpensive 1.50 guilders to a costly 50 guilders, thus allowing people of different means the opportunity to have a special keepsake.



1928 plate, 18cm. Originally selling for 8 guilders, 490 plates were produced.



1928 plate designed by Piet Senf, 25cm. Originally selling for 20 guilders, 500 plates were produced.



1928 combined *asch- en sigarettenbakje* (ashtray and cigarette dish) made in the shape of the Olympic stadium and decorated in the usual Delft blue, 9 x 13cm. Originally selling for 5 guilders, 425 were produced but, unlike the plates, few seem to have survived, probably because of use.



1928 34cm *schotel*, designed by Piet Senf, depicting the New Stadium in Amsterdam, with the symbols of a hart (deer), eagle and lion, respectively representing speed, the striving, and power. Selling originally for 50 guilders, only 195 were produced.



1928 coloured Cloisonné tile showing the stadium, 10 x 15cm. The sales brochure called the tile a *Plaquette*. Originally selling for 3 guilders, 450 were produced.



1928 coloured Cloisonné tile, 12 x 12cm. Originally selling for 1.50 guilders, 680 were produced.

The economic difficulties of the 1930s precluded Royal Delft producing Olympic commemoratives, and then the Second World War interrupted the pattern of the Games. But

in 1972 Royal Delft again produced a plate for the games hosted in München (Munich).



1972 plate, 18cm. Original price 70 guilders. Photo courtesy of Ivan Glickman.

Once again Royal Delft produced an 18cm plate for the Summer Olympics hosted by Los Angeles in 1984, producing a limited edition of 500. (See photo on page 9). Hopefully the factory will resume making these special pieces for the future Olympic Games.

Members' Ideas & Contributions

Is there anything that you would like to have us include in future issues of this Newsletter?

A few ideas have been suggested:

1. Cleaning and repairing pieces;
2. Cataloguing and insuring your collection and your experiences with insurers.
3. Developing a standard code in descriptions when buying and selling over the Internet to assist collectors who can not see the item in person.
4. Dealing with damage when you break a piece at home or at an antique fair/show (might be some humorous stories there!)

If you have any ideas (from a few words to a few pages) please share them with us. Perhaps as a member you could write an article about your pieces (such as Stuart's article below), how you started collecting, or about a memorable visit to Delft. From collector's plates and cloisonné tiles to pots and vases, other collectors would enjoy knowing more about your treasures. Photographs of any pieces in your collection that you would like to share are most welcome. We warmly encourage contributions to this Newsletter. Please submit them to the editor at tegel@delfthuis.com.

Mr Halley and his Comet

By Stuart Lonsdale

Imagine – you have just walked into a coffee shop in London. At a table near you are four men. Smartly dressed, albeit all with long hair and engaged in deep conversation. One of the men, called Edmond, says, “Yes Isaac, that is all very well but how do you know?” His friend Isaac replies: “Trust me I do know, I have worked it out.” The other two, Robert and Christopher, listen intently while sipping their drinks. Sounds like an ordinary scene during an August summer in London? This, however, is the summer of 1684 and the four highly educated (to put it mildly) friends were Edmond Halley, Isaac Newton, Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke.

In 1682, Halley had observed a comet from his observatory in Islington near London. Not the first comet he had observed nor was astronomy his only forte. Halley, born in 1656, was no ordinary man: inventor of the diving bell; Commander of the vessel *Paramore*, with two voyages to the South Atlantic to plot the Earth's magnetic field; chart maker; surveyor of the tidal currents in the English Channel; meteorologist (he mapped the trade winds and monsoons); geophysicist; demographer; Master of the Mint, Astronomer Royal, Member of Parliament... and so on. How did these men of genius find the time!

In 1680 while living in Paris he became fascinated with comets. At that time a great comet was visible and Halley, with his usual scientific enthusiasm, plotted its course against the starry sky. His attempts at this proved a failure, not because of his inability at recording, but because the celestial path of the comet did not follow the “straight line” it was supposed to. Halley was following the centuries old theories of the great Kepler who “proved” that they moved only in straight lines. Halley's calculations just did not work out – the comet was moving in a curve – he was confused.

Returning to England, Halley continued checking his data. It was still the same – a curved path. Into our story comes his great friend Isaac Newton. Newton had also observed the 1680 comet and concluded: “This comet has a sharply veering orbit around the sun. I am out in my judgement. Comets revolve in orbits that return into themselves with a continual motion”. In other words they do not travel in straight lines but orbit the sun in an elongated ellipse.

Now you know the subject of the coffee shop conversation. Halley told Newton of his calculations. Newton drew a diagram of the orbit (on the table cloth?) and told Halley to go and work out the arithmetic. By the way, the *Principia* by Newton, probably the greatest scientific book ever written, was actually financed by Halley.

Halley was now on a high. He began to conjugate all the earlier studies of comets using the laws of Newton. Something was beginning to fall into place. All these comets had been going the “wrong way” around the sun – in other words – opposite to the motion of the planets. There had to be a connection. In 1695 he concluded that the comet he saw in Islington in 1682 was the same one observed in 1607 and 1531. When he further studied records of a comet with a retrograde orbit in 1456 there could be no mistake – it was the re-appearance of the same comet – returning to our solar system every 76 years.

In 1705 Halley wrote: “Whence I would venture confidently to predict its return, namely in the year 1758”.

Halley died in Greenwich in 1742; he was Astronomer Royal at the time. After his death it was written: “If according to what we have already said it should return again about the year 1758, candid posterity will not refuse to acknowledge that this was first discovered by an Englishman”.

On Christmas Day 1758, it was seen by an amateur astronomer living near Dresden. He was correct, Halley was thus immortalised for eternity – Comet Halley. In 1835, 1910 and recently 1986 it again returned to our solar system with the next visitation due around 2061. Records have shown that it was seen as long ago as 467 BC. The comet appeared in 1066, some seven months before the Battle of Hastings and can be seen represented on the Bayeux Tapestry.

What then of the Royal Delft commemorative plates?



De Porceleynse Fles - date code AE – 1909.
Artist - Jacobus Frölich Snr. - work period 1889 to 1929, 24.8 cm diameter.



This is a very rare piece and was only the 3rd commemorative plate that Fles actually issued (though a few one-offs were made in the 1870's - 1890's). The Royal Delft factory does not know how many were actually made. When we asked for details during a visit in October 2003, Royal Delft were unable to help saying there were little or no records.

The depiction of Comet Halley itself is the stylized one with the word "HALLEY" in the centre. You can also see depictions of the constellations Aquarius and Gemini above. These were the two constellations that Comet Halley passed through as it was seen in the night sky. It was seen from about February to July 1910.

To the upper left of the plate there is another smaller comet with the designation "1910A". This part of the plate refers to another comet

which was so bright that it was seen during the day. This comet has been called - "The Great Comet of 1910" or "The Daylight Comet of 1910" or "Winter Comet 1910". It was actually brighter than Comet Halley. The "A" indicates the first comet to be observed in the sky in January of 1910. The second comet is "1910B" and so on.



De Porceleyne Fles - date code - DE - 1986
Artist - Jos. L.P.M. van der Giessen - work period
1962 to present, 18 cm diameter



Rare plate commemorating the 1986 return of Halley's Comet. Only 42 were made and this is number 3. The date of 9 February 1986 was when the comet approached closest to Earth. My friend Kim Lindley and I were in Malta during April of 1986 and had a wonderful view of it.

There is a saying that "every picture tells a story" and I hope this story has given you some insight into the man Edmond Halley and the comet that so rightly bears his name.

Stuart is the Honorary Life President of Sheffield Astronomical Society and is appreciative for help from Jessica Wallien-van Erkel from Royal Delft, Rick Erickson, Peter Cameron, and Kim Lindley. Photographs by Stuart Lonsdale and Kim Lindley.

Porceleyne Fles Personalities

In each issue of the Newsletter we feature a painter or designer whose work at Porceleyne Fles is especially noteworthy. In this issue we present **Adolf Le Comte**, the artistic advisor and designer at Porceleyne Fles for almost 40 years.



Born 30 August 1850 at Geestrug (near Rijswijk, the town between Delft and den Haag), Le Comte was educated in Delft and Leiden, before studying ornament, drawing and sculpture at the Delft Polytechnical School (now the University). Then after further studies in Germany and Paris he returned to Delft to teach at the Polytechnical School. A gifted and natural teacher, (his parents managed a boarding school) he also taught at the Royal Art Academy in den Haag, and the Art Academy in Rotterdam. Through his own work as an artist and designer, as well as a teacher of many of the "leading lights" of the next generation (such as Leon Senf, Karel Sluyterman, Bram Gips, Jan Toorp, and both W.W.F. von Gudenberg and Jurriaan Kok, (who founded Rozenburg) he was arguably the most influential Dutch applied arts designer of the 19th century.

Le Comte became artistic advisor at Porceleyne Fles in 1877 just as Joost Thooft was beginning to start the factory's renaissance. Though only working part-time at Porceleyne Fles his importance cannot be overstated. He designed at least the majority of the *Delfts Blauw* forms (shapes) and much of their decoration during his time there. Almost half of the models still in the current Royal Delft catalogue are Le Comte designs, and a great many delftware pieces made by other factories are unacknowledged copies of his forms. Le Comte was very talented in copying paintings, and it was undoubtedly this interest which led Porceleyne Fles to reproducing landscapes, portraits and genre paintings on plates, tiles, tableaux and appliques.



Marked *proef A.C.* (proof Adolf Le Comte), this 23.5cm Portrait *schotel* was unusually painted by Le Comte as a test piece, and although marked with the impressed factory mark 9, does not have the usual underglaze factory mark 4 or a year letter.

In addition to his work on the hundreds of *Delfts Blauw* models and special commissions, Le Comte designed the *Berbas*, *Reflet Métallique*, *Jacoba*, and *Porselein-Biscuit* art-pottery models produced by the factory (both forms and decoration). He further contributed decoration designs for both some *Tin-glazed Delft* and *Nieuw Delfts* styles. He resigned, age 65, from Porceleyne Fles in 1915, but continued as a director, and died in January 1921 in den Haag.

In his lifetime Le Comte was also known for his paintings, watercolours and drawings, frequently exhibiting. He was a member of the *Pulchri Studio*, and had contact with many painters in the Hague School, which are often reproduced on Porceleyne Fles pieces. Anton Mauve was his brother-in-law. Le Comte also designed architectural ornaments, graphics, and especially stained glass, including windows in St Bavo Cathedral, Haarlem, the New Church, Amsterdam, and the Peace Palace, den Haag.

Looking Back

Left, this 1902 sepia photo shows an American visitor (on the left, dressed in black and holding a piece of Porceleyne Fles) with the two daughters of Abel Labouchere, owner of the factory at that time. They are standing outside of the original factory on Oosteinde. The factory still warmly welcomes visitors.



Rare *Jacoba* tile, 42 x 16.1cm, inscribed on the reverse *naar A. Le Comte*.



News from the Factory

The kilns at the Royal Delft factory continue to turn out exciting new products to tempt all sorts of people, from collectors and tourists to those seeking a special piece for their home or as a gift. Many of these can be found in *The Porceleyne Flash* news-sheet (in Dutch only) published on the Dutch side of the factory's website: www.royaldelft.com.

This is the time of year when the new Christmas collection is launched, including the limited edition annual 18 and 25cm Christmas plates and Christmas bells. In addition there is the new series of Christmas tree ornaments: balls and drops. Special limited edition sculptures/statues by Jan Coelewijn have recently been introduced, and a whimsical set of small liquer glasses and jug are certain to be popular for contemporary entertaining.



Other new products include a desk nameplate, letter opener and paperweight, available in three designs: traditional blue decoration, a blue Art Deco design by Paul Bartels, or a stylish new polychrome decoration. These can all be ordered individually from the factory.

This range of desk accessories will certainly be expanded. At the moment a magnifying glass (the magnifier 9cm [3 ½ inches] diameter), a silver-plated candle snuffer, a silver-plated cheese knife, a lady's makeup brush, and a gentleman's shaving brush and razor, all made using the same 3 handle styles as the letter opener, can be special ordered in time for Christmas gifts. Please contact Rick at tegel@delfthuis.com for further details and prices.



One of the most impressive new projects now being undertaken by the factory is a massive *Delfts Blauw* tableau of 7,600 tiles – the largest ever made by Royal Delft. The tableau is approximately 4 meters high and 40 meters long. It is being made for the Netherlands Pavilion at next year's World Expo in Aichi, Japan. The tableau depicts 17th and 18th century canal houses in Amsterdam, and will certainly make a stunning visual statement to Expo visitors. Should you like to create something similar, but probably on a somewhat smaller scale, stencil-decorated tiles showing the Amsterdam canal houses are made by Westraven, a subsidiary of Royal Delft, and retail for a more modest €13 (about \$16.50) a tile.

Royal Delft on eBay

The unique Millennium tile tableau, a life-size reproduction of Rembrandt's famous *Nachtwach* (Nightwatch) has recently been listed a few times on the Internet auction site eBay. Made by Royal Delft between 1999 and 2000, it measures 363 x 473cm (approximately 12 ½ x 15feet) and consisting of 480 tiles. When it was made four years ago it was the largest tableau by the factory to date. That is now changing (see above). After the *Nachtwach* tableau was made it was sold to a buyer who wished to remain anonymous, and remained at the factory where it received a huge amount of attention and interest from the public, even featuring in television documentaries. Now being offered for resale its vast size may be as much of a deterrent to most Royal Delft collectors as the opening bid price of £2,040,000!

Featured Original artist – Apol



Louis Apol's *Jaagpad* (towpath) reproduced on a *schotel*.

Many Royal Delft collectors enjoy pieces with reproductions of well-known paintings, and Porcelayne Fles has established a world-wide reputation for her exceptionally high quality of these pieces. A great many original artists are represented over the last 120 or so years, including land- and seascapes, genre paintings and portraits (very often by Rembrandt). Probably more than 700 different paintings have been reproduced on Porcelayne Fles plates, tiles, tableaux, and appliques. Each issue of the Newsletter we feature a painter or painting copied by Royal Delft. It may take the best part of a century of Newsletters to include all of them, so collectors will need some patience!

Louis (Lodewijk Franciscus Hendrik) **Apol** was born 6 September 1850 in den Haag. He first exhibited in 1869, but quickly made his name by specializing in winter landscapes, usually where the overall mood is the focus rather than the people or animals in the paintings. His works became extremely popular with the public and 15 of his paintings were copied on Porcelayne Fles pieces, some of which are also found on tiles or tableaux by Rozenburg. Once the Porcelayne Fles painter had mastered the considerable skills required to paint only the medium to dark parts of the picture, delftware made an ideal medium for reproducing Apol's paintings where the white of the unpainted *biscuit* served well for the snow.

Jaagpad, the particular painting shown above, captures the clear cold and snow along the canal towpath, the trees and windmills framing and balancing the composition, subordinating

the figure walking. Used on pieces from at least 1892 until the late 1960s, it was widely used on 23, 29, 34, and 40cm plates (rimless *schotels* and the notched rimmed *razer*). It was also used on individual tiles, medium-sized tableaux, *Schol* appliques and applique No. 4.

Rick Erickson is carefully assembling a database, tracing as many of these art reproductions on Porcelayne Fles pieces as possible, noting on what kind of pieces, when, and by which Royal Delft painter these were done. He would appreciate hearing from all collectors who are willing to share information or photos of their pieces. Rick can be reached at tegel@delfthuis.com.

Q&A

Question: I have been collecting for about a year now and have a question about a piece's value related to the artist(s) who painted the piece. For example, with the War Plates, would a plate of the same pattern, but painted by another, perhaps less well-known artist, be of lesser value than one shown in the book, painted by a well known artist. Would this also hold true for vases and bowls? Purchasing over the internet does not allow one to study the quality of painting first hand and I must rely on the signature of the artist as to quality.

Answer: For the most part over the last 125 or so years Porcelayne Fles has generally had the "best" (higher-paid, or "well-known") artists use their talents painting the more expensive or special pieces; and the younger, less-experienced, or "less well-known" artists worked on the less-expensive pieces that perhaps did not require as much talent, detail, or finesse. From a commercial point of view this made obvious sense, and many of the painters developed their own speciality. Leon Senf generally painted the art reproductions on large plates, large appliques, large tiles, tableaux, and special commissions from 1880 to the early 1900s, and then from 1910 onwards concentrated on painting the lustre pieces. Vreeswijk painted most of the tile friezes and tableaux of "fantasy" landscapes. Bottelier and de Fouw worked on the expensive appliques. Initially most of the polychrome pieces were painted by van Lingen; Guérain seems to have mainly painted medium-priced pieces, but was very good at small landscapes. However, when the production schedule demanded, even the top artists might be drafted in to help paint more common, cheaper pieces. Some of the artists were given a variety of work in order to keep their artistic juices flowing and to prevent

boredom. Occasionally a "top" artist's signature can be found on a quite ordinary piece.

This same principle of generally using the "master" painters for the most expensive or specialized work still applies to the present day. Generally it does not make any difference to the value who actually painted the piece in question - the exception being with Leon Senf, whose pieces almost always command a higher price than those of his colleagues. For example, the war plates were made quickly in large numbers (usually some 5000 to 6000 each in just one year), and the value of a plate in question is not in anyway related to who the artist was. Because the decoration is simple, with little detail, the differences between the painters, regarding their talent and the finished results, was (and is) considered to be unimportant.

Obviously painters had "good days" and "bad days" when the quality of work slightly varied. It is also possible to see a painter's talent (as in brush technique, accuracy, detail, etc.) develop when viewing their pieces made over a number of years. This is especially obvious when you see that in their first or second year of employment they usually painted simple flowers on small, inexpensive items, but later were entrusted with painting Old Master portraits on large, expensive plates. Of course small "errors" can sometimes be found in the work of most of the painters, so that it is not possible to always rely just upon a painter's signature to determine the "quality" of a piece in question. Generally pieces made between the mid -1880s and the First World War were painted with finer paint brushes, and with more detail than newer pieces, and pieces made in the last 20 years often have less decoration than those of even the 1950s and 60s. This is due more to the public's unwillingness to pay for labour-intensive pieces and the changing fashions rather than the talent of painters.

Article by Member published

A 6-page article by Royal Delft Collectors' Society member Dr Harry Scharmann has been published in the September 2004 issue of Germany's largest collectors' magazine, *Trödler & Sammler Journal*. Containing 13 excellent photos of pieces from his impressive collection of Porcelaine Fles, as well as photos of factory marks and a table of year letters, the article certainly informs German readers about the ceramics that all of us already so enjoy, and will serve to introduce new collectors to our chosen interest. Well done, Harry, and congratulations!

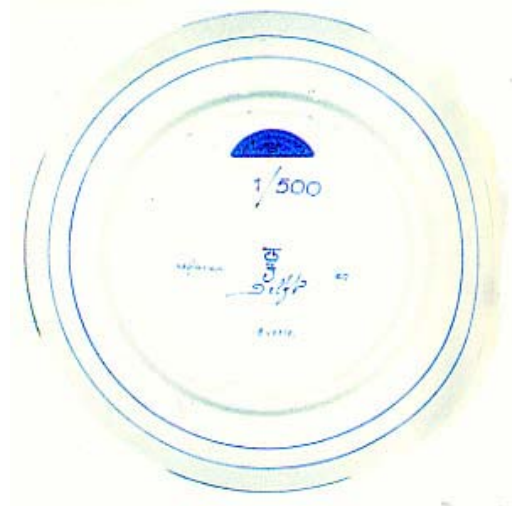


This Original Royal Delft Olympic plate is number one in an edition of 500. It shows a Discobolus figure (discus thrower) within decorative edge design. 18.1cm diameter.

Each Original Royal Delft Olympic plate is completely painted by hand using brush strokes underglaze. Every plate is individually numbered and gives the edition size. Each plate is signed by the artist. Original Royal Delft has been made since 1653 at De Porcelaine Fles. Original foam packaging included. Very rare.

The available plates are 1/500, 2/500, 3/500.

Write for pricing to Ivan Glickman, 85 Allendale Drive, Rye, New York 10580, USA.



Members Advertising is available for all members of the Royal Delft Collectors' Society. For further information contact us at tegel@delfthuis.com



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Dealing in Delftware and other antiques and collectibles. Searching out the unusual types of Porcelaine Fles throughout Holland and Europe. Selling on eBay as "Albion-Antiek" and at fairs in Holland

Christmas cards for sale



Luxury-quality Christmas cards go on sale next month. Approximate folded size of 9 ¼ x 5 3/4 inches (21 x 14.7cm), the glossy photograph captures Delft at the holiday season, featuring special Porcelaine Fles pieces. The *klomp* awaits a treat from St. Nicholas, and the *sleedje*, rocking horse, and *varken* (pig-shaped) money box conjures up memories of past Christmases. The candle and greenery frame the 1925 *Kerstmis* plate depicting the ancient East Gate in Delft, covered in snow. The inside of the card is left blank for your own message, and each card will be supplied with a strong envelope. For further details please contact Rick Erickson at tegel@delfthuis.com.

Royal Delft Collectors' Society

The **Royal Delft Collectors' Society** was launched on the 28th March, 2004, bringing to a close the 350th Anniversary year of the Porcelain factory in Delft. This famous factory was founded on that date in 1653. In recent years some collectors have informally met or chatted by email, confirming that there are many hundreds, probably thousands, of Royal Delft collectors worldwide who share this common interest. The purpose of our society is simply to expand the knowledge and appreciation of Royal Delft. Many other ceramic factories have collectors' groups, including such famous names as Royal Doulton, Moorcroft, Wedgwood, Belleek, Gouda, Clarice Cliff, and Susie Cooper, some with over 10,000 members. A "club" like this can be an enjoyable way for collectors to be in contact with each other in whatever way they wish, sharing information and the joys of owning wonderful ceramics made at our favourite factory. People just beginning to collect are as welcome as those who have collected for some time, perhaps amassing a great number of pieces or a specialized collection of say, just plates, or a certain style. Although delftware is a term frequently heard, the general public, and even many "antiques experts" know very little about Royal Delft. A society like this can help "spread the word" about the products from Royal Delft, serving as informal ambassadors for the factory. Such members are avid supporters of Royal Delft as a company, and we actively encourage this since generating more business ensures that she will survive for a great many years to come. The society itself is a non-profit organization.

Your invitation to join

Increasing numbers of people are interested in Royal Delft. The number of people bidding on antique and second-hand pieces of Royal Delft on the internet auctions is increasing, and is a good indication of the huge interest in this very special ceramics. This is your personal invitation to join our enthusiastic group of collectors worldwide.

Benefits of Society Membership

The primary benefit of membership in a collectors' society is obviously interaction with other members and the sharing of information. For a small annual membership fee we are offering a quality Newsletter four times a year, packed full with news, information, colour photos, regular features, and articles of interest to collectors and dealers. This publication in English will be available in printed and electronic forms. As the society membership expands we expect to have a devoted website and perhaps get-togethers or meetings on a local/regional basis (Holland, America, Britain, etc.), at an antiques fair or visiting someone's collection. Other ideas that have been suggested include the opportunity to purchase special limited edition pieces commissioned from factory exclusively for members, and a volunteer directory of collector and dealer members with contact details for those who wish to keep in touch with each other.

If you would like to be a part of the Royal Delft Collectors' Society or would like for information please contact us.

Royal Delft Collectors' Society

Membership Form

Name: _____

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Annual Membership Fees: US dollars \$15.00; €12.00; or £10.00 per individual:

Please contact us for further details at tegel@delfthuis.com

or

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