

Objects in Focus

Conservation

370 pieces of Parian ware to clean and repair



Ariadne on the Panther
Parian ware, made by Milton 1793-1873

What is Parian ware?

Parian ware is a type of porcelain that imitates marble produced commercially from 1846. This new version of porcelain was creamy-white, pleasantly smooth and marble-like to touch. It was prepared in liquid form and cast in mold's, allowing for mass production.

370 pieces of Parian arrive at the Fitzwilliam ...

In 2016 the Fitzwilliam Museum acquired over 370 pieces of Parian ware, consisting mainly of busts portraying figures considered worthy of commemoration in the mid 19th Century. Most were very dirty and required us to think differently about how to clean and care for the objects, finding an efficient way of processing them while also thinking about individual conservation needs.

Bringing the Parian ware into the collection, where to start?

We began by laying the pieces out to see what tasks might lie ahead.



During this initial investigation we found **some duplicate busts**, and some **busts that seemed like duplicates**, what followed was a game of **spot of the difference** ...



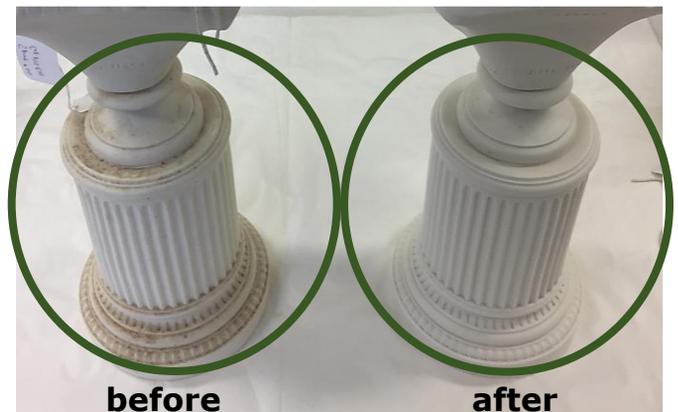
3 different busts, all representing Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria

The we started to clean them all ...

1. Here you see one version of **Sir Walter Scott** undergoing cleaning treatment. The results are already evident by the **dirt seen pouring onto the table surface.**



2. Here you see the reverse side of bases of two busts, one **before treatment and one after.** The results of cleaning can be very satisfying.



3. Some of the busts had been previously damaged and their **old repairs were in need of retouching.**





Behind the scenes at the Museum

Meet Tim Matthews, Collections Manager

Tim works behind the scenes responsible for the daily activities of the Collections Management team.

Before working at the Fitz Tim was a tour guide and lecturer at Buckingham Palace, a member of the conservation team at the Royal Collection and spent three years at Central London auction houses Bonhams and Christie's

Map of Fitzwilliam Museum ~ location of Parian ware

