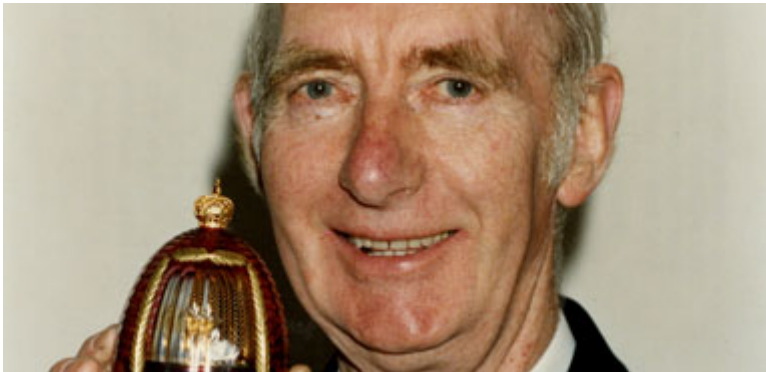


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Theo Faberge

Grandson of the Russian Imperial jeweller who became a skilled craftsman in his own right



Theo Fabergé was the grandson of Carl Fabergé and a skilled craftsman in his own right, known particularly for his “St Petersburg Collection” — which included decorative eggs — housed at 42 Burlington Arcade.

His father, Nicolas, had been sent in 1903 by Carl Fabergé, Warrant Holder to the Imperial Court at St Petersburg, to run the family jewellery business in London. After the October 1917 revolution he stayed in the UK rather than returning to revolution-torn Petrograd (as it then was), and Theo was born, illegitimately, to Dorise Claddish a few years later.

He was brought up as Theo Woodall by his aunt and uncle, and was in his fifties before he was made aware of his patrimony. Interestingly, he had already developed a great interest and an extraordinary skill in ornamental turning.

Theo Fabergé was born in Twickenham in 1922 and educated at a local school. Having been apprenticed to an aircraft engineer he served, during the Second World War, in the RAF in Egypt.

On his return he worked for the photographic company Wallace Heaton.

He later managed a small electromechanical company and became the works manager in a cinematographic factory. In 1967 he established his own business making electromechanical equipment.

It was in 1969 that a relation advised him to visit Somerset House, where he discovered that he was born Theo Fabergé. Fired by the revelation he perfected his turning skills and restored an 1861 Holtzappfel ornamental lathe. His ivory casket for the Silver Jubilee in 1977 won the Gertrude Crawford Medal and he was elected Freeman Prizeman of the Worshipful Company of Turners, a body to which he remained devoted all his life.

He developed techniques using diamonds, gold and silver, and enamel, and his work was shown at Goldsmith’s Hall in the City of London in 1979. He had decided not to copy his grandfather, but after being asked to make a wooden egg he became interested in the form and accepted a commission for a more elaborate decorative one.

He next turned to “anniversary eggs” and more followed when, with his daughter, Sarah, Fabergé set up the “St Petersburg Collection” in 1985, a hundred yards from his father’s original Bond Street gallery. His work also aroused enthusiasm in America, where he made many visits and became the focus of a keen group of collectors.

In 2003 Fabergé presented the city of St Petersburg with an egg (on which he had worked for 1,000 hours) to commemorate its 300th anniversary. He also designed a “With Pride and Passion” egg in blue enamel, containing as its “surprise” golden figurines of Robert Peel, Benjamin Disraeli, Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher; 50 were made and put on sale for £10,000 each to raise money for the Conservative Party last year.

In latter years he developed the first wristwatches in Fabergé history, with guilloché enamelled dials made in England, each pierced by an egg shape discreetly announcing their provenance.

At his 80th birthday party in London the Worshipful Company of Turners of London presented Fabergé with their Honorary Liverydom; the last recipient had been William Ewart Gladstone, also an enthusiastic ornamental turner.

Fabergé married Maureen Kearney in 1953. She died in 1994. Their daughter Sarah continues the family name and tradition.

Theo Fabergé, craftsman, was born on September 26, 1922. He died on August 20, 2007, aged 84

[More Theo Faberge](#)

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