



The Ashmolean

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE
ANNUAL
REPORT
2007-08

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The
Ashmolean
Museum

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE
Annual Report
August 2007–July 2008



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The Ashmolean

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3D rendering of the
Mediterranean Gallery,
based on the current
design of the gallery



The dream was not just to replace tired buildings with a thrilling new one but to take the opportunity to rethink fundamentally the way the Ashmolean's collections should be presented to the world and so make the Ashmolean once more a jewel in Oxford's crown.

Chairman's Foreword

In March we held the topping-out ceremony for the remarkable new building which will house the 39 new galleries due to be opened in November next year. This was a major milestone and it was fitting that the ceremony was performed by the University's Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Hood. The University has given the project a strong following wind throughout and I want to record the Visitors' gratitude to Dr Hood and the University's Council.

The project will transform the Ashmolean. Its radical nature is the sort of thing an institution might undergo once in a century, at most. It reflects the vision of the Director, Dr Christopher Brown. Without Christopher's drive it would have been stillborn and it is exciting that after such a long gestation we are within a few months of realizing his dream. The dream was not just to replace tired buildings with a thrilling new one but to take the opportunity to rethink fundamentally the way the Ashmolean's collections should be presented to the world and so make the Ashmolean once more a jewel in Oxford's crown. This purpose is to serve two distinct audiences, both the wider public and the world of researchers and students, and to do so in a way which makes the Ashmolean part of the University's shop window and helps visitors of all backgrounds to appreciate beautiful things and enjoy the fun of learning.

The project has four main components: construction of the building, installation of the gallery displays, fundraising, and a change management programme involving every member of the staff. During the year excellent progress was made on all four fronts.

Rick Mather's new building is still a shell but it is already clear what a draw it will be when it opens. We have been taking our prospective supporters on hard-hat tours and the buzz they create is palpable. These tours are now at the heart of our fundraising campaign as we work to raise the balance of the £57.3m required. The Ashmolean's plans are inspiring and we are deeply grateful for the response of our many supporters. This autumn we are holding our third event to award Ashmolean Fellowships to a number of our major benefactors. A full list of the Ashmolean Fellows appears at the beginning of this Report. I also wish to record our continuing gratitude to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which not only gave us our largest grant but contributes helpfully to our planning.

For the staff the most demanding aspect of the project is working up the new gallery displays. Guided by our theme Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time, these displays will make the new Ashmolean a distinctively exciting museum to visit. So will the tone of voice being adopted to explain them. The panels and labels and other sources of information will offer questions as well as answers and will seek to inspire the visitor's curiosity to learn more. Where the interpretation of an object or topic is uncertain or controversial we will say so. Where a major scholar has made an outstanding contribution to our collections we will tell the scholar's story, next to the objects he or she collected and studied. The Ashmolean is a university museum. We want it to

be an open door to the excellence of Oxford and we want our visitors to sense our curators' enthusiastic spirit of inquiry. Learning need not be dry and stuffy. Museums should be enjoyable. We want our visitors to come back for more.

The gallery installation work is of course led by the curators but it is a task which calls heavily on many others too, our designers, conservators, educators, IT specialists, photographers, almost everyone in the Museum. It is a huge task, way beyond anything else in the Ashmolean's history, and it would be hard to exaggerate the pressure the staff have been under and continue to be under. In the circumstances it is remarkable how much they managed to continue their normal work, whether front of house continuing to make our visitors welcome despite the unavoidable closure of much of the Museum or behind the scenes researching, teaching, and adding to the collections. Their efforts are enormously appreciated by the Board and myself personally. The same applies to the very important contribution made by the Friends and volunteers.

Fundraising for revenue is as important as for capital. This will be particularly vital after the opening of the new building as the Museum gears up for the new era and increases its staffing costs accordingly. During this year Heads of Human Resources and Exhibitions were appointed and the coming months will see a significant increase in our Education and Marketing activities. Improved trading through the shop and café will be important sources of increased revenue as will the continued success of our Annual Fund, now in its second year, and the growth of our excellent Friends and Patrons groups. Even more important will be the public sector grants received through the University. In this context the Board warmly welcomed the recent review of the funding of Oxford's museums by a University working group. We were delighted when the University's Council approved the report including the recommendation that steps needed to be taken to ensure the museums' financial sustainability.

On the Board of Visitors we were sorry to say farewell to Lord Rothschild. He was succeeded by Peter Rogers who brings wide experience of major construction projects including at the National Gallery, Tate and V&A. The year end saw the retirements of Lord Butler and Professor Martin Kemp. They too were active contributors to our thinking. Lord Butler in particular was an outstanding chairman of the Finance Control Committee (FCC). In their place we welcome Professor Craig Clunas, Professor Kemp's successor as Professor of History of Art, and Professor Steve Nickell, Warden of Nuffield College. Professor Nickell will chair the FCC. The work of our board committees is demanding and I thank the chairmen of the other committees, Martin Smith (Trading) and Andrew Williams (Fundraising).

Great things are happening at the Ashmolean. The past year has been particularly demanding and there is no let-up in the current year. The prize is a great one and all our eyes are on November next year.

Nicholas Barber

October 2008

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The building will be completed early next year and then the huge task of reinstalling the collections will begin.

The Director's Report

The efforts of everyone in the Museum this year have ensured that the new building is on time, on budget, and we believe will deliver everything that we want from it. That I am able to report in this way is a tribute to the very hard work of all my colleagues and, of course, all the other members of the team – architects, project managers, builders, engineers and many others – with whom we are working. In many respects the highlight of the year was the topping-out ceremony which took place on 10 March, when we were able to show many of our friends and supporters the shell of the building for the first time. It is only, I think, when you enter the building – and it has advanced by leaps and bounds since March – that you get a real sense of the ambition of the task we have set ourselves. A hundred thousand square feet, six floors, thirty-nine galleries: these statistics only come to life inside the new building as you walk from gallery to gallery, and from floor to floor.

The building will be completed early next year and then the huge task of reinstalling the collections will begin. This year all the preparations for that moment have been taking shape. Twelve thousand objects have been selected for public display in four hundred showcases, lighting has been tested and retested, labels are being written and gallery texts prepared. The exercise of creating a prototype gallery in the Randolph Sculpture Gallery has been a huge success: it has been a testbed for lighting and labelling and has enabled the staff – with the support of the public, who enthusiastically filled in the questionnaires – to refine our plans. All this work has been going on in workshops and meetings in the Museum and in our offices on the Radcliffe Infirmary site, where many of my colleagues have been housed since work began in Beaumont Street. In addition to planning the fit-out of the new building, we have been redecorating and relighting galleries in the old building, especially the Western Art galleries which have been substantially improved with funds largely provided by the Wolfson/DCMS Museum Improvement Fund, to which we are immensely grateful. At the time of writing, the top floor of the old building, containing galleries now devoted to our nineteenth-century collections, has been re-opened and work is going on in the galleries on the first floor. It is very important that there should not be a painful contrast between an old building whose décor is showing its age and the new building. With so much work going on in both old and new buildings next year, we reluctantly took the decision to close the Museum to the public from 23 December 2008 until the reopening in November 2009. This will ensure that the galleries are complete, ready for the re-opening. Unfortunately, the impact of this decision has placed a small group of our staff at risk of redundancy and at the time of writing we are working closely with them to ensure that they are supported, and given other opportunities within the Museum.

Despite the problems posed by the work in Beaumont Street the Departments have continued active programmes of acquisition, research, teaching and publication which are described in this report. I would like to single out the launch of the book on *Sir John Evans (1823–1908)* by the Danish Ambassador and the associated day of lectures. This project was led by Arthur MacGregor, the great historian of museums and of medieval

The Conservation Department has been at full stretch planning two public galleries, contributing to detailed building and showcase development and re-installation planning, and has begun the huge task of preparing twelve thousand objects for redisplay.

Europe, who is retiring this year after a long and distinguished Ashmolean career. The Western Art Department has made two truly outstanding acquisitions: an allegory by Titian – our second Titian in eight years! – and the beautiful porcelain osprey made at Meissen by J. J. Kändler for Augustus the Strong's Japanese Palace at Dresden. The Heberden Coin Room, too, has made significant acquisitions, many as a result of the generosity of Richard Falkiner, a devoted supporter of the Museum. In Eastern Art there has been great progress on the development of the Yousef Jameel Online Centre for the Study of Islamic and Eastern Art, a truly innovative enterprise which will put all our Eastern Art collections on-line, beautifully photographed and expertly researched. The Cast Gallery arranged an outstanding conference on the making, collecting, and display of plaster casts and completed the Gallery's catalogue. All these activities were undertaken by a staff whose principal preoccupation was preparing for the new building. The Conservation Department has been at full stretch planning two public galleries, contributing to detailed building and showcase development and re-installation planning, and has begun the huge task of preparing twelve thousand objects for redisplay. The Education Department is, of course, very closely involved with the interpretation of the collections to the public in the new building and designing the Education Centre. This year, as this report makes clear, the Education Team has been especially active in going out into the wider community. None of this would be possible without the funds being raised by the Development Team. We have reached the remarkable figure of £43.5m at the time of writing towards a total of £57.3m and I am immensely grateful for the support that they have given to me in this endeavour.

I would like to thank all my colleagues in these and all the other departments of the Museum for their outstanding efforts this year and a particular, personal vote of thanks to the senior team: Robert Thorpe, who has taken on the demanding role of Operations Director until the conclusion of the project; Edith Prak, Deputy Director (Outreach and Development), who not only leads the Development Team but has also been in charge of our change management and rebranding initiatives; and Nick Mayhew, Deputy Director (Collections) who, with Henry Kim, is supervising the extraordinarily complex task of reinstalling the collections in the new building. I would also like to pay tribute to Nicholas Barber, Chairman of the Visitors, who has given so generously of his time and energy in helping us to realize our vision, and to the other Visitors, particularly those who chair our internal committees.

Many moments from the past year remain in my mind but one is especially vivid. In January I was one of a panel of judges who awarded prizes to the winners of our 'Picturing the New Ashmolean' competition, in which school-children were asked to imagine what the new Museum would be like. Judging the hundreds of entries was very difficult and deeply moving because it is this generation for whom we are building the new Ashmolean. It is this generation who will learn from the new Ashmolean about the richness of diverse cultures. They will learn about the profound lessons of history and the endless possibilities of human creativity. The winning entries have been displayed on the forecourt of the Museum and on the back of the buses of the Oxford Bus Company, which generously sponsored the competition. The visions of these young people are truly inspiring and make it evident to all of us at the Ashmolean the huge importance of the task we are engaged upon.

Christopher Brown

October 2008

The Building

When we last reported, the lower ground and ground floor slabs had just been poured. This year we can report the completion of the main structure of the building and the start of its interior fit-out. The frame reached its maximum height in February 2008; this was marked by the traditional topping-out ceremony on 10 March. Inclement weather had troubled the site for a number of weeks, limiting crane operations. On the day of the ceremony, torrential rain and sixty-mile-an-hour winds lashed Oxford. Nevertheless, the ceremony took place in a slightly wet basement, presided over by Dr Hood, the Vice-Chancellor, and Richard Gregory, Chief Executive of HBG. There was a large gathering of friends, supporters, and representatives of the design team and builders. Work continued thereafter; the roof steel was completed by the end of April, and a watertight shell (except the atrium) was achieved by 27 June. It is now possible to grasp the ambition of the architectural design, particularly when standing in the atrium looking upwards at the grand staircase climbing the floors, or looking down into one of the double-height galleries. Meanwhile, external and internal walls have started to rise, and the great west window was installed in August.



View of the main staircase,
May 2008 ▲

View from the rooftop to
the south ▼



Gallery Design and Interpretation

New Galleries

Exciting strides have been taken in 2007/8 towards ensuring that the new Museum will offer visitors, both old and new, an accessible, enjoyable, and inspiring experience. The project for designing and delivering 39 new galleries has reached a number of major milestones over the last year. The unveiling of the prototype display was the first achievement, as it provided our staff and visitors with their first chance to see what one of the new galleries will look like when completed in 2009. The year also saw the beginning of the detailed design phase of the project, the start of the manufacture of showcases, and a focus on the interpretation plan to unify aims and approaches for all galleries. Both activities are crucial for the successful completion of the project and involve an increasing number of staff and designers.

Detailed Design

Detailed design is the phase of the project where galleries are designed down to the smallest detail. Working alongside the design company Metaphor, the Museum's design team is responsible for designing over 400 showcases and over twenty central display installations. Their work begins with the creation of exact scale drawings of each individual object – a substantial task, as galleries average between 250 and 500 objects each. Working with curators, they place each object in position within scale drawings of the showcases. They can choose to display objects either on shelves or supported individually, and can add colour and texture to the displays by specifying backboards that are wrapped with fabric or coloured with paint. Once a showcase is laid out, they turn their attention to designing all the graphic panels that appear on walls and in cases.

Objects drawn to scale and placed in the central showcase of the Islam Gallery. ▼

The completion of the detailed design of a gallery is a major achievement, as it represents over four years of work. It also triggers a chain of activity necessary to prepare galleries for installation. The designs are forwarded to the



showcase manufacturer Meyvaert so that the shelves, backboards, and plinths can be custom-made for each showcase. They are also provided to the lighting designers, so they can plan the lighting for each individual installation. Inside the Museum, the team of object retrievers begins the task of organizing objects for display according to gallery and individual showcases. The mountmaking team designs and builds mounts in metal and perspex for each object that requires one. Finally, the installation team begins planning the logistics of installing each of the galleries. With 39 galleries and over 12,000 objects, the task of preparing galleries for installation is immense and requires close coordination of the many teams both inside and outside the Museum.

Prototype Display

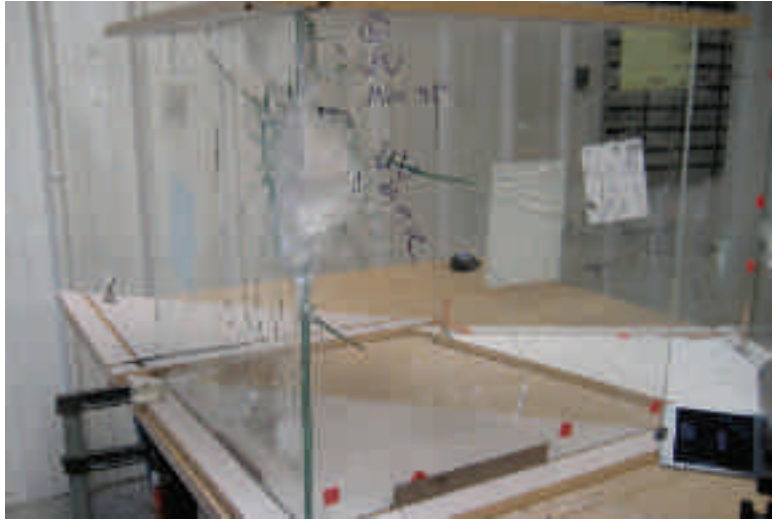
As part of the ongoing work to develop the design of the thirty-nine new galleries, the Ashmolean unveiled a prototype gallery in October 2007, offering visitors the chance to see what the new galleries will look like when they are completed in late 2009. Set within the Randolph Gallery, the prototype gallery is a full-scale mock-up of a typical space, complete with oak floors, a standard-height ceiling, and a themed exhibition of objects related to Arthur Evans and the Discovery of Minoan Crete.

The prototype gallery was built to help the Museum understand how visitors might respond to the new displays. It is a test bed for the wide range of design innovations that have been proposed for the new museum. New gallery boards provide a new, more user-friendly approach to explaining what is on display, and individual objects are described consistently, according to the Museum's new house style for object information. Objects are displayed in newly designed showcases, allowing them to be seen more prominently, from large vases to small gems and jewellery. The space also has its own controlled lighting, offering visitors a sense of the atmosphere of the new spaces.

The prototype display



Sample showcase after a programme of destructive tests



The gallery is also being used as part of an evaluation process to assess visitor responses. From October 2007 to January 2008 the Museum conducted a series of audience surveys and focus groups, to determine how different audiences responded to the range of design elements. Since its installation, the gallery has been improved several times. Several cases have been overhauled completely to test out newly designed shelving and lighting systems. The cases have undergone a thorough security evaluation to prove that they are as strong and secure as is required in a modern museum. As part of this, the Museum and Meyvaert engaged in a programme of destructive tests, to determine the strength of the showcases and their components, in which they held up well.

Interpretation

The defining feature of a museum is public access to its collections. To ensure that our collections are enjoyed by the widest possible audiences, the last year has seen the writing of an audience development plan, led by the Education Department. A Museum-wide plan, it sets out actions that will help us to attract new audiences, and identifies ways in which to ensure that our regular visitors continue to be well served.

Key to the visitor experience is interpretation, the way in which Museum objects and artworks are displayed to provide people with ways of understanding the collections. In autumn 2007 a Museum interpretation plan was written outlining how the Crossing Cultures, Crossing Time (CCCT) concept will be delivered in the new galleries. It identifies six themes that help to deliver the concept: trade links and transport; transmission of ideas and knowledge; beliefs, ritual, religion, and spirituality; political power and empire; experience of daily life at all levels of society; creativity; and craftsmanship. The themes will ensure a coherent and enjoyable experience for visitors as they move between galleries and floors. The Conservation and Exploring the Past galleries are working to a distinct yet related concept, Crossing Arts and Sciences.

During the first half of 2008 curators have worked with the interpretation team to consolidate gallery planning. Individual gallery interpretation briefs have been written, and ideas are now being worked through with designers as we begin the detailed design programme. This work has benefited enormously from the knowledge and expertise of Tim Gardom Associates (TGA), who have been contracted to work with Helen Ward in her role as Project Interpretation Manager. Another valuable source of advice and support comes from one of our key stakeholders, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

So what can visitors to the new Museum expect?

A key component of the new Ashmolean experience will be the connections that are made between apparently different subject areas. In addition to maps and timelines that provide a sense of time and place, a particular feature will be the identification of 'Connections' objects. These will highlight the ways in which different cultures have interacted, both peacefully and in conflict, resulting in the transmission of products, ideas, knowledge, and beliefs that have all impacted on the human experience. Uniquely, visitors will be able to follow a 'Connections' trail if they so choose.

Object-rich displays that play to the strengths of the Ashmolean's collections will be supported by gallery text that provides layers of information in an accessible form. The Ashmolean has many specialist curators, so the Ashmolean voice will tell visitors not just 'what is known' about a subject, but 'how we come to know it' through study, research, and expert knowledge from the past and the present. The stories of those experts who have made significant contributions to the Ashmolean's history, such as Sir Arthur Evans, T. E. Lawrence, and of course Elias Ashmole himself, will be told alongside the objects most associated with them. Where appropriate, controversy and debate will be highlighted, as we know from consultation with visitors that this is something they are interested in. Gallery text will help visitors to connect with people of different times and cultures, through the inclusion of personal stories and quotations from these periods. Another feature in some of the new galleries will be child-friendly text, encouraging close observation and investigation of the objects and displays.

Finally, recognizing that our visitors like to learn in different ways, the new Museum will include interactives, ranging from audio-visually and multimedia to hands-on activities. These will encourage the visitor to journey through the times and lands represented in our collections, asking questions of the objects and artworks and their context. Visitors will be able to access archive material that could not otherwise be displayed, and audio stations will allow them to listen to musical instruments and travellers' tales. There will also be opportunities to handle objects, to solve puzzles, and to play games that test their learning. Interactives are in no way a substitute for the collections themselves, but they have a key role to play in helping bring these to life.

This visitor-led approach is being carried through into the Education Department's planning for new programmes. Gallery tours, drop-in activities, workshops, and lectures will all be part of a wider array of activities ensuring that visitors of all ages and from all backgrounds can find something for them in the new Ashmolean.

Collections

Departmental Reports

Antiquities



Fragments of gold glass from the Wilshere Collection (Rome, AD 300-400). AN2007.13 and AN2007.16

The very important acquisition of last year, the Wilshere Collection of Gold Glass and Inscriptions, was marked by a lecture 'Miracles, Myths and Menorahs: Celebrating the Wilshere Collection at the Ashmolean Museum', given by Professor Michael Vickers and Dr Susan Walker, and hosted jointly on 1 May 2008 by the Ashmolean and the Centre for the Study of Late Antiquity (University of Oxford). A small display of key items from the Wilshere Collection was exhibited in the Braikevitch Gallery, and can now be seen in the 'Treasures of the Ashmolean' exhibition. When the Ashmolean Plan is completed in 2009, the collection will be displayed in the new gallery of the Mediterranean World from AD 300, curated by Susan Walker with Dr Anthi Papagiannaki.

This year, the Department received the most welcome gift from Professor A. M. T. Moore of Rochester, NY, of a prehistoric (late Neolithic) carved granite pebble in the shape of a gazelle's head, as part of the Ashmolean's allocation from Professor Moore's excavations in the 1970s at Abu Huregra, Syria. This will be displayed in the new gallery of the Ancient Near East, curated by Dr Jack Green.

The most significant display project this year has been the ongoing development of the prototype gallery of Arthur Evans and the Discovery of Minoan Crete, curated by Ioannis Galanakis (see p. 11 for more details). In the course of the year Dr Galanakis has given a series of tours of the prototype to Museum staff, specialists, and visitors (from its unveiling at the Elias Ashmole Patrons' Group dinner to, most recently, the open day for Archaeology and Anthropology, in collaboration with Dr Lisa Bendall, Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford).

Early Egypt was the focus of a study day for the Tradescant Patrons Group on Saturday, 24 November, when Dr Helen Whitehouse was joined by Drs Renée Friedman and Joanne Rowland and graduate student Liam McNamara in a programme of talks and handling sessions designed to show how current excavations are helping to elucidate the Ashmolean's collections of prehistoric and Early Dynastic objects from Egypt.

Displays of objects from Early Dynastic Egypt were prepared by Liam McNamara and Xavier Droux for participants attending 'Egypt at its Origins', the third biennial conference devoted to Pre-Dynastic and Early Dynastic Egypt, held this year in London. Hundreds of conference delegates visited the Ashmolean on 30 July 2008. We are delighted that our distinguished collection has provoked so much interest, discussion, and, best of all, connections between objects excavated a century and more ago and objects recovered from current campaigns.



Carved granite pebble in the shape of a gazelle's head. AN2008.32

On 27 May 2008 the Department hosted a lecture by Dr Abbas el-Husseini, Director of Antiquities for Iraq, 2006–7, and Professor Roger Matthews, University College London, on the current state of archaeological sites in Iraq. On 30 May the Department hosted the annual Roger Moorey Memorial Lecture. This year's speaker was Professor Elspeth Dusinger of the University of Colorado, who spoke with great verve and authority on the nature of power in ancient Persepolis. Both lectures on the Ancient Near East were extremely well attended.

During a particularly good year for departmental publications, on 31 May 2008 the Museum celebrated the launch of *Sir John Evans (1823–1908)* by His Excellency Birger Riis-Jorgensen, Danish Ambassador to the UK. The launch marked the culmination of an Ashmolean project led by Dr Arthur MacGregor, with the aim of making accessible to the public the work of Sir John Evans. Father of the better-known Sir Arthur Evans, Sir John was a major nineteenth-century collector and a leading international figure (with especially strong contacts with Denmark) in the development of the scientific study of prehistory. The Ashmolean project was timed for launch on the centenary of Sir John Evans's death. Our work has been generously supported by the Leverhulme Trust.

On the following day, 1 June, we held a seminar entitled 'Antiquity, Husbandry, and the History of Collections' in honour of Dr Arthur MacGregor, who retires this year. The seminar was organized by Professor Michael Vickers and Dr Hildegard Wiegel, who will edit the papers for publication.

Western Art

During the year under review, the Western Art galleries have constituted the largest part of the Museum remaining open to the public. The Print Room and the rest of the Department have continued to provide an almost complete range of services to visitors. At the same time, in collaboration with a process of improvements to the physical fabric of the Cockerell building being carried out by the Oxford University Estates Department, the opportunity is being taken to institute a rolling programme to reconfigure, relight, and improve all of the galleries. The Daisy Linda Ward collection of still-life paintings has been moved to the first floor, and three new galleries devoted to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art have opened on the top floor, where after 2009 they will link to the new Sands and Lewin galleries for twentieth-century and contemporary art in the new building. Among the generous supporters of this work have been the Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust, the Helen Roll Charity, the Still Waters Trust, and from August 2008 the Wolfson DCMS/Fund.



Lucinda de Jasay, Catherine Whitworth-Jones (great-granddaughter of John Evans) and Arrabella Douglas-Menzies at the launch of the book on *Sir John Evans (1823–1908)*

The old Daisy Linda Ward Gallery, now rechristened The Combe Gallery





An osprey, J. J. Kändler (1706-75), Meissen factory. WA2008.61



Jug painted with grotesques, London (Southwark), c.1635-40. WA2008.65

The Triumph of Love, Titian. (c.1540-50). Oil on canvas, mounted on panel. 88.3cm diameter. WA2008.89

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Among new displays now in preparation on the first floor is a gallery devoted to Britain and Italy, concentrating on art and collecting linked to the eighteenth-century Grand Tour; this cross-departmental gallery, on a theme that the Ashmolean collections are particularly well adapted to illustrate, will be the first in England devoted to this key chapter in British cultural history. The Fortnum and Farrer galleries are currently in the process of being re-lit, repainted, and partially relabelled.

In order to keep some popular twentieth-century paintings on display as long as possible, a temporary hang was arranged in the Eldon Gallery, which will last until the end of 2008.

Despite the need to focus financial as well as human resources on the Ashmolean Project, several heartening and important additions to the collections have been made, mostly through the generosity of others. A donor who wishes to remain anonymous has presented a spectacular white porcelain osprey modelled in 1731 by J. J. Kändler for the great menagerie of porcelain creatures installed by Augustus the Strong in the Japanese Palace in Dresden. Large-scale support from The Art Fund and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, together with private donations, made possible the purchase of a key piece of early London delftware demonstrating the origins of English delftware in the sixteenth-century emigration of Italians to Antwerp. Acquisitions by acceptance in lieu of Inheritance Tax included major paintings by Richard Wilson and Burne-Jones, while gifts, often from long-standing supporters, ranged from a fourteenth-century Italian painting to modern German prints and from seventeenth-century metalwork to contemporary studio pottery. In summer 2008 negotiations were completed for the acquisition of a painting by Titian, an allegorical cover for a lost female portrait. This was acquired, with the cooperation of Christie's, through the 'hybrid' process, where part of the value is met in lieu of



Inheritance Tax by the Treasury; the balance that had to be raised by the Ashmolean was met with help from several quarters, including a large grant from The Art Fund, with help from the Friends of the Ashmolean and various private donors, including a munificent gift from Daniel Katz. The painting will be described fully in next year's report.

We congratulate Dr Jon Whiteley on being appointed by the French Government as Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

Dr Christian Rümelin, our first ever specialist curator of prints, left to take up the post of Keeper of the Print Room in Geneva in March 2008. He brought proper scholarly and cataloguing attention to what is by far the most numerous part of the collections and we hope to have a specialist print curator again in the future. In honour of his work at the Ashmolean, a group of subscribers presented to the Museum a *livre d'artiste* by Linda Karshan.

Heberden Coin Room

The main task of the year has been the development of the new Money Gallery, and of displays of coins, banknotes, and medals for twenty-six of the other new galleries. In October 2007 a presentation and discussion of plans for the new Money Gallery was attended by forty Friends of the Coin Room.

The most notable acquisitions of the year were two coins donated by Richard Falkiner on the occasion of a dinner to mark the sixtieth anniversary of his first visit to the Ashmolean. One is a unique gold 'aureus' of the Roman emperor Commodus. The imperial titles given on the obverse include 'Britannicus', taken for a victory in Britain in AD 184. The other is a half ducat of Philip II of Spain, struck in the Kingdom of Naples. The reverse combines the coats of arms of Spain–Austria–Burgundy with those of England–France.

Under the Coin Room's programme of visiting scholars, funded by the Robinson Charitable Trust, Professor Keith Rutter was Robinson Visiting Fellow. He worked towards a new volume of the second edition of *Historia Nummorum* devoted to Sicily, a project begun by Stanley Robinson himself. Amelia Dowler, the Curator of Greek Coins at the British Museum, was Kraay Travel Scholar. The Shamma Visiting Fellow this year was again Dr Doug Nicol. The publication of the Ashmolean's collection of Islamic coins is greatly facilitated by this fellowship programme and by Dr Nicol's efforts in particular.

Numismatic research continues, although inevitably with less emphasis than has been usual. Cathy King's work on the John Evans Centenary Project involved the cataloguing of the coins donated by Sir Arthur Evans that originally belonged to his father. As a result of the project, three papers relating to Sir John Evans's contribution to numismatics, by Philip de Jersey, Cathy King, and Lord Stewartby, were published in the centenary volume.



Commodus, aureus, AD 188–9, reverse Securitas seated. HCR7459

It is also a pleasure to report the continuing support of the Carl and Eileen Subak Family Foundation. Their generous grant will be used in the following year for the purchase of an Iron Age coin hoard. In addition to their annual grant, the Robinson Charitable Trust made a one-off award towards the building-up of handling collections to complement displays planned in the new Money Gallery to support the history topics covered for Key Stage 2 in the National Curriculum. Mr William Stancomb also made a generous donation. The Coin Room remains deeply grateful to its benefactors for their effective support.

Eastern Art

Most of the Department's work this year was again devoted to detailed planning for the gallery displays in the new building. Oliver Watson continued to develop the new Islam Gallery, Andrew Topsfield the three Indian galleries, Shelagh Vainker the two Chinese galleries, Clare Pollard the two Japanese galleries, and Ruth Barnes the new Textiles Gallery and two orientation galleries. Planning for our new storage areas was also in hand.

With the continuing generous sponsorship of Mr Yousef Jameel, work on the Yousef Jameel Online Centre for the Study of Islamic and Eastern Art gathered pace during the year. Paul Groves, appointed as Project Manager in October 2007, formulated a programme of work that will lead to a launch of the Yousef Jameel Online Centre website by the time the Museum reopens in November 2009. The website will, in this initial phase, make available images and texts relating to all the objects displayed in the Department's new galleries. Jo-Hung Tang, Project Photographer, and Sigolène Loizeau, Collections Coordinator, continued their work in producing high-resolution digital photographs of the Department's objects. Over 12,000 images have



Dr Angelita Trinidad Reyes
and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr
John Hood



been stored so far. In July 2008 the project team was joined by Susie Griffith, to assist in structuring the website design, and by Alessandra Cereda, as Islamic curatorial assistant. An information website showcasing selected examples of the photography to date, with information about the project and contact details, went online in September 2008 (jameelcentre.ashmolean.org).

Zhao Xiaomo (b. 1949, Shanghai) *Golden Sea*. EA2007.29

While many normal departmental activities were necessarily curtailed, the annual William Cohn Memorial Lecture – the fortieth in this series – was given as usual, by Professor Jonathan Bloom of Boston College on 29 May 2008. His subject was ‘On the Paper Trail: How Paper Travelled from China to the West’.

Weimin He, Christensen Fellow in Chinese Painting, organized the Eldon Gallery exhibition, ‘Chinese Prints 1950–2006: New Acquisitions’ (shown in two parts between 16 October 2007 and 24 February 2008). The exhibition was selected from the extensive range of modern prints that he had purchased for the Museum in China last year. He also co-authored with Shelagh Vainker the exhibition catalogue, *Chinese Prints 1950–2006 in the Ashmolean Museum*. To coincide with the exhibition opening, the 4th Ashmolean Chinese Paintings Colloquy was held on 16 October, with speakers from Hong Kong, Guangzhou, New York, Princeton, and London.

In November 2007 the Director and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Hood, hosted a dinner in honour of Dr Angelita Trinidad Reyes, to welcome her as a Fellow of the Ashmolean and to celebrate her 75th birthday. This occasion was also marked by the presentation to the Museum of the fourth part of the Reyes Collection of modern Chinese paintings and calligraphy.

The Department is also very grateful to a number of other benefactors for gifts or bequests of objects during the year. We thank especially the Neil Kreitman Foundation for a generous donation that enabled us to purchase a superb and important early fifteenth-century Tibetan mandala painting. We are also grateful for the Foundation’s continuing support for our Indian and Himalayan publication projects. *Early Himalayan Art*, a catalogue by Amy Heller of our collection of pre-1450 Tibetan and Nepalese art, was published early in 2008. Two further catalogues, of the early Indian collections to AD 600, remain in preparation.

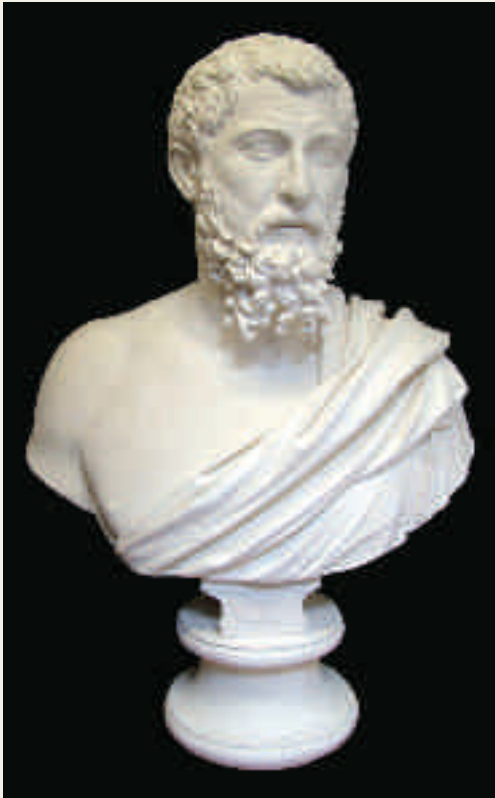
Among other staff changes during the year, Oliver Watson, Keeper of Eastern Art, left the Museum in June 2008 to take up the Directorship of the Qatar Museum of Islamic Art. Andrew Topsfield was appointed Acting Keeper. Ruth Barnes was confirmed in her appointment as Curator of Textiles. Weimin He completed his three-year term as Christensen Fellow in March but remained with us, following his special appointment as Museum Artist-in-Residence until December 2008. He continued to build up his impressive portfolio of paintings and drawings depicting Museum staff and recording the construction work on the new building in progress.

The Cast Gallery

The Cast Gallery is still closed to the public and being used as a store for material from other departments during the main Museum building works. Nevertheless, it continued to play a significant role in research, teaching, and outreach programmes for prospective students, and important new casts were acquired.

Two bearded Antonine portrait busts, originally from Smyrna, purchased from the Musée du Cinquantenaire in Brussels. H98 and H99

Two top-quality bearded Antonine busts were purchased from the Musée du Cinquantenaire in Brussels. They are typical representations of leading Greek citizens of the period, with intense thoughtful expressions and a well-



groomed appearance. They came originally from Smyrna, and were intended to be viewed as a pair.

The cast of an important classical Greek funerary relief, reworked in the Roman period, was also added to the collection, purchased from the Freiburg Archaeological Museum with the support of the Friends of the Ashmolean. It represents a seated surgeon with his medical instruments and scrolls depicted next to him.

Two main research projects were pursued this year and are near completion. The complete and up-to-date catalogue of the cast collection, prepared by Dr Rune Frederiksen and Dr Milena Melfi, has been finished and is being edited for publication. The study of the reliefs from the Sebasteion in Aphrodisias is also close to completion. This was prepared by Professor Bert Smith, with the assistance of Dr Julia Lenaghan and Dr Olympia Bobou.

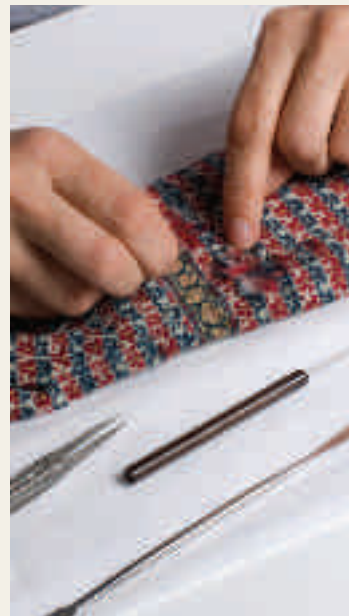
The Cast Gallery staff also co-organized and co-hosted a major international conference on plaster casts: 'Plaster Casts: Making, Collecting and Displaying from Classical Antiquity to the Present' (September 2007). The conference was supported by the Classics and History faculties and Worcester College.

Conservation

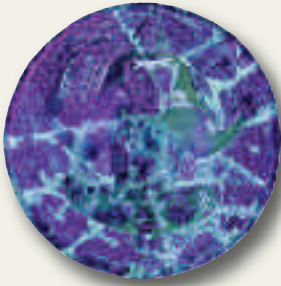
The Conservation Department has been involved across the full spectrum of the Ashmolean's activities – the redevelopment, the refurbishment of Western Art Galleries, a temporary exhibition, loans, and a large travelling exhibition. To help it achieve its objectives, it has been fortunate in securing extra staff – a paper and a paintings conservator and two project-funded conservators specializing in ceramics and metalwork, all of whom will be in the Department for at least two years.

As part of the redevelopment, all galleries were assigned a lead conservator whose task is to liaise with both curators and designers and identify any potential conservation problems as early as possible. A member of the Department also travelled to Meyvaert's factory in Ghent twice during the year to discuss details of showcase production and to view security testing. The Department continues to comment on construction, materials, and environmental control systems as appropriate. Installation of the prototype gallery provided a valuable opportunity to test and then review procedures, and much that was useful was gained from the experience. Crucially, it has provided an opportunity to assess mounting, environmental control and lighting systems as well as trialling the installation regime.

The Department has also been closely involved in the detailed design process for its own galleries – Restoring the Past, Conserving the Past, and Exploring the Past. The object lists for both galleries are well advanced, but final selection of objects has, in some instances, been difficult, as potential 'candidates' have emerged only during the assessment process for other areas. It is also throwing up interesting presentational challenges for all involved – conservators, designers, and interpretation specialists – as the themes covered do not dovetail



Stitching support fabrics to Warren Hasting's glove in a moth-damaged area. For the West meets East Gallery. EA2479



Investigation of a ninth-century lustreware bowl from Basra, Iraq using ultra violet light to reveal the extent of previous treatments - the restored and overpainted areas fluoresce, and appear lighter, but original surfaces do not and are dark. For the Islam Gallery. EA1956.66

neatly with the other galleries in the project, largely because of their scientific bias. To deal with this, Restoring the Past, Conserving the Past, and Exploring the Past have now been grouped in their own Crossing Arts and Science bloc and together will offer an educational resource unique to Oxford.

Some particularly interesting projects have presented themselves this year, including the Ashmolean's seventeenth-century lacquered leather shield, which was chosen from amongst lacquer items in many other collections around Europe for treatment in Japan. As part of the arrangement, the National Research Institute is funding a visit by an Ashmolean representative to view and discuss the conservation work as it progresses. This project will form an important element in the Conserving the Past Gallery, where, in collaboration with our colleagues in Tokyo, a case will demonstrate the Japanese approach to lacquer conservation as part of the Crossing Cultures theme. Students from the Conservation Department at the Courtauld Institute have completed work on the six paintings of the *Cardinal and Theological Virtues* [A31–36] by an anonymous late seventeenth-century Franco-Flemish artist, with *Faith* proving to be of particular interest because of the historic alterations revealed during x-ray examination. It will be a focal point in the Department's Conserving the Past Gallery, whilst some of the other paintings will feature in the Human Image Gallery.

Work is also in hand on objects for the Islam Gallery, where the ceramics are proving extremely interesting and challenging as the true extent of previous restorations has become apparent during examination. This is particularly true of the ceramics from Kashan in Iran and is a well-known phenomenon associated with ceramics from this area. Examples are widespread – many surviving ceramics from Kashan are bravura examples of the faker's art, in which components of a number of disparate, but similar, vessels were modified and assembled into single hybrid pots and skilfully distressed to deceive the collector's eye.



Removal, using a scalpel, of the old inlay paper obscuring the edges of the image on the verso of a fifteenth-century double-sided silverpoint drawing, school of Rogier Van Der Weyden. WA1863.221



Consolidation of flaking layers of the prepared chalk ground of a fifteenth-century silverpoint drawing, school of Rogier Van Der Weyden. WA1863.221

Major Acquisitions, Gifts, and Loans



Antiquities

Prehistoric (late Neolithic) carved granite pebble shaped as a gazelle's head

Presented by Professor A. M. T. Moore of Rochester, NY, as part of the Ashmolean's allocation from Professor Moore's excavations of the 1970s at Abu Huregra, Syria. H: 3.6 cm. AN2008.32

Western Art

The Virgin and Child with Saints (triptych)

Andrea da Firenze (Andrea da Bonaiuto) (active in 1346, died after 16 May 1349). Tempera and gilding on panel. 56.7 x 52.5 cm (open). Presented by Mrs Jacqueline Worswick. WA2007.152

In this rare portable triptych by one of the more notable Florentine artists of the generation after Giotto, the Virgin and Child on the central panel are accompanied by SS Peter, Zenobius, and Catherine of Alexandria; on the left-hand panel are a female saint, St Anthony Abbot, St Lawrence, and the Angel of the Annunciation above; on the right, the Crucifixion, with the Virgin Mary, St John, and Mary Magdalene, with the Virgin Annunciate above.



Andrea da Firenze is chiefly famous for his frescoes in the Spanish Chapel attached to the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Although somewhat obscured by overpainting, the artist's soft, delicate style is evident. The attribution was made by Dr Dillian Gordon of the National Gallery.

Alexander the Great

North Italian, 16th century. Bronze plaquette. 4.8 x 4.0 cm. Presented by Richard Falkiner. WA2008.22

The medallion is cast with the same bust on both sides and pierced for suspension as a badge or pendant. The rather androgynous features of Alexander are explained by the fact that they are derived from another relief of Minerva. Double-sided Renaissance reliefs of this sort are unusual.



Jug painted with grotesques

London (Southwark), c.1635–40. Tin-glazed earthenware (delftware). H: 28 cm. Initialed on the neck D over I E. Purchased at the sale at Christie's of the late Simon Sainsbury, with the aid of The Art Fund, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, the Friends of the Ashmolean, Martin Foley, Sir Harry Djanogly, the Oxford Ceramics Group, and other donors. WA2008.65



The English delftware industry was founded in the late sixteenth century partly by men from Antwerp, two of whom were sons of Guido di Savino, a potter from Castel Durante in Italy, who had settled in Antwerp by 1508. In the reigns of James I and Charles I, several potteries were set up in South London, mainly run by immigrants. This jug, painted with the owners' initials, is a rare example of London decoration in the Antwerp style and forms an eloquent bridge between Italian Renaissance maiolica and English delftware.

Mourning ring

English, 1679. Gold with black enamel, rock-crystal, gold wire, and plaited hair. Presented by Mrs Joyce Hicks. WA2008.70

From the seventeenth into the nineteenth century it was customary on someone's death for friends to receive rings made in his or her memory. This handsome early example is dated inside the hoop 24 January 1678 (1679 in the modern calendar) and was made in memory of 'FC', identified by long tradition in the family in which it has descended as Fanny Carpenter.



An osprey

J. J. Kändler (1706–75), Meissen factory. Hard-paste porcelain. H: 54.5 cm. Presented by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. WA2008.61

This monumental sculpture in porcelain, modelled in 1731 by Johann Joachim Kändler, was part of an extraordinary 'menagerie' of hundreds of more-or-less life-size porcelain creatures commissioned by Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, for the Japanese Palace in Dresden. Most of the Japanese Palace creatures have remained in Dresden but some, of which this is one, have been sold at various times over the centuries. They are the most ambitious series of porcelain sculptures in the history of ceramics.

Truth Unveiled by Time



Siena, painted by **Ferdinando Maria Campani**

(1702–71). Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica).

Diameter: 24.6 cm. Purchased (Madan Fund), with the aid of The Art Fund, the British-Italian Society, and private donations. WA2007.142

This plate, acquired from an Italian private collector, is the sole example in a UK museum of the only known armorial maiolica service commissioned in the eighteenth century for an English Grand Tourist. It bears the arms of the Marquess of Rockingham, builder of the great Palladian house Wentworth Woodhouse in Yorkshire, and was probably ordered in Siena by his son the Earl of Malton (later second Marquess and twice Prime Minister) on his Grand Tour in 1749. It will be a prominent item in the planned new 'Britain and Italy' gallery. The allegorical painting is one of the small number of works definitely by Campani, who was among the most talented maiolica-painters of eighteenth-century Italy.

Cicero and his Friends, Atticus and Quintus, at his Villa at Arpinum

Richard Wilson (1713–82). Oil on canvas. 91.8 x 129.5 cm. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum, 2007. WA2007.155



This sophisticated landscape, painted around 1769–70, illustrates a passage from Cicero's *De Legibus*, recording a conversation between Cicero and his friends Atticus and Quintus in which Cicero advocated the delights of retiring into the country 'for undisturbed meditation, or uninterrupted reading or writing'. Wilson's patrons shared Cicero's enthusiasm for the country, and identified his Italianate scenery with their own estates.

Drawings of Monuments in St Paul's Cathedral

Comprising (i) a relief monument to Captain John Cooke, sculpted by Sir Richard Westmacott, and (ii) a monument to Charles, 1st Marquess Cornwallis, sculpted by John Charles Felix Rossi.

Henry Corbould (1787–1844). Pencil with yellow wash on cream wove paper. Presented by Daniel Katz.
WA2007.150.9–10

These two drawings are part of a group of twenty-eight that Henry Corbould produced as illustrations for a lavish folio edition of William Dugdale's *History of St Paul's Cathedral*, published in 1818. The drawings show two monuments to national worthies, commissioned by the British state, and erected in 1810 and 1811 respectively. The sparse, linear, neo-classical style of the drawings reflects the style of the monuments. In the Cathedral the monument to Cooke overlooks the statue of Cornwallis. Cooke was one of Lord Nelson's captains at Trafalgar, hence the putti adorning themselves with nautical attributes. Cornwallis is seen flanked by Britannia, and, in deference to his role as Governor-General of India, male and female 'Indian' figures. The gift included engravings after the drawings by Charles Heath, a relative of the draughtsman.



Hamlet and Ophelia

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82). Watercolour and bodycolour on paper. 37.8 x 28 cm (sight), in the original frame. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax on the estate of Miss Jean Fiora Preston and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum. WA2008.18

During the 1850s and 1860s Shakespeare was one of the authors whose writings preoccupied Rossetti, notably *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. As early as 1854 he was trying out a drawing of the scene in *Hamlet* in which Ophelia tries to return Hamlet's gifts, while he gives voice to his doubts. Rossetti brought the idea to a culmination in this magnificent watercolour, which is dated 1866.



Music

Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833–98). Oil on canvas. 67.7 x 43.5 cm. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax on the estate of Miss Jean Fiora Preston and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum. WA2008.15

Music was painted in 1877 for Burne-Jones's principal patron, William Graham, a wealthy India merchant and Liberal MP for Glasgow. The subject of the painting epitomizes the artist's interest in the Aesthetic style, in eschewing narrative content in favour of purely formal values. The intensely Italianate nature of *Music* is also highly characteristic of Burne-Jones's work at this period.

David Lloyd George

Sir David Low (1891–1963). Pencil on wove paper. 46.5 x 32 cm. Inscribed: *L.G.* Purchased (Blakiston Fund). WA2008.34. © the artist's estate

Lloyd George (1863–1945) was Prime Minister from 1916 to 1922 and one of the most controversial politicians of the twentieth century. Low remembered that, however hard he tried to make his cartoons of Lloyd George critical, 'he would spring off the drawing-board a lovable cherubic little chap'. This caricature was published in the *New Statesman* for 6 March 1926.



Siena (large version) 1966

Ben Nicholson (1894–1982). Etching, drypoint, fowl-biting, and burnisher, on white paper. 32.3 x 27.7 cm (plate), 44.3 x 37.9 cm (sheet). Inscribed and signed in graphite: *bon a tirer BN*. Purchased (Blakiston Fund) with the assistance of The Art Fund. WA2007.158. © the artist's estate

Between 1965 and 1968 Nicholson made over eighty experimental etchings in collaboration with the Swiss printer François Lafranca. The subjects were mostly architectural, and based on his travels in Greece and Italy. Siena was one of Nicholson's favourite places in Italy—he once joked that, in a previous life, he must have laid some of the stones of the cathedral. This is one of three etchings purchased with the support of a benefactor who wishes to remain anonymous from the distinguished collection of Frank Retsch to represent Nicholson's work as a print-maker in the Ashmolean.



Portrait V

Jean Lodge (b. 1941). Woodcut printed from four blocks, on white wove paper. 54 x 39.3 cm (image), 75.5 x 56.4 cm (sheet). Signed and dated in graphite, *Jean Lodge 2007* and inscribed *5/12 Portrait V*. Purchased (Blakiston Fund), 2008. WA2008.68 © the artist

Jean Lodge taught printmaking for many years at the Ruskin School, before moving permanently to Paris. This remarkable portrait is one of a recent series of seven woodcuts printed from multiple blocks, for which the model was the Argentinian artist Angelica Caporaso. Two other works from the same series were acquired at the same time, one of which was a gift from the artist.

Bowl

Laurence McGowan (b. 1942).
Stoneware, zirconium silicate-
opacified glaze. Diameter: 33.2
cm. Presented by the artist.
WA2008.62 © the artist

The inscription reads: 'I am
a bird of the heavenly
garden | I belong not to the
earthly sphere | They have
made for two or three days a
cage of my body.' McGowan, who
trained at the Aldermaston Pottery
with Alan Caiger-Smith, has developed
his own technical version of the maiolica
tradition, using a stoneware instead of earthenware
body. He writes of the decoration of this bowl, made in 2008:
'The starting point for the interior of the bowl was the inscription, taken
from the thoughts of Mehlavi Rumi, the founder of the Whirling Dervish
school of Sufism at Konya, Turkey. ... Whilst not actually copying any
particular geometric pattern, the arrangement of the interior was conceived
with the idea of reflecting both the sentiments of the inscription ...
acknowledging its origin in the use of a framework suggestive of the
geometry which suffuses nearly all Islamic art.'



Heberden Coin Room

Philip II, half ducat of Naples, 1554-6

Diameter 34mm. Presented by Richard Falkiner. HCR7452

The obverse combines a bust of Philip with the inscription PHILIP R ANG FRA NEAP PR HISP (Philip King of England, France, Naples, Prince of Spain). The coin may be dated accurately to the period 1554-6. The year 1554 saw Philip's wedding to Mary, Queen of England. Philip's claims to the thrones of England and France rest on this union. The reverse combines the coats of arms of Spain-Austria-Burgundy (left) with those of England-France (right). This coin will make a splendid addition to the display on the Tudors being designed for our new Money Gallery.





The Shearers

Samuel Palmer
(1805–81). Oil and
tempera over black chalk
on panel. 51.4 x 71.1
cm. Lent from a private
collection, 2008

This is the largest and
most ambitious of
Palmer's early works.
It shows the old
shepherd's barn in the
village of Shoreham,
with a view into the
Darent valley beyond.



The Staircase of a House at Capri

Frederic, Lord Leighton
(1830–96). Oil on
canvas. 27.6 x 29.8 cm.
Lent from the Loyd
Collection, 2008

One of four oil
sketches by Leighton
lent from the Loyd
Collection. Three were
painted at Capri in
1859, and the fourth
on the Nile in 1868.
They are among the
artist's most brilliant
works.



Eastern Art

Vase in double-gourd form with raised decoration beneath green glaze

China, Longquan ware, Zhejiang province, Yuan dynasty (1279-1368).
H: 26 cm. Given by Professor James McMullen. EA2008.30

The Longquan kilns in the southern part of Zhejiang on the east coast were established in the tenth century and are renowned for wares with smooth, bluish-green glazes. The raised floral scroll on this vase is similar to those painted in blue on porcelains from Jingdezhen in the neighbouring province of Jiangxi. Wares from both kilns were exported in quantity to the Middle East during the fourteenth century, though by the end of the Ming dynasty in the seventeenth century the Longquan kilns could no longer compete with Jingdezhen and fell into disuse.

Lotus

Lui Shou-kwan (1919-75). Ink on paper. Presented by Dr Peter and Dr Jean James in recognition of the services of Mary Tregear to the Museum in the Department of Eastern Art. EA2008.55

Lui Shou-kwan, who moved from China to Hong Kong in 1947, is the most renowned Hong Kong artist of the 1960s and 1970s. His work uses ink and only occasionally colour, and ranges between representational works, as here, calligraphic depictions of Hong Kong landscapes, and abstracts relating to Zen Buddhism. The Ashmolean has a strong group of works by Lui bequeathed by Roger Barker in 1981, to which this large, traditionally themed painting makes a valuable addition. Mary Tregear, Assistant Keeper of Eastern Art from 1961 and Keeper from 1985 to 1991, organized two exhibitions of work by Lui Shou-kwan in the Museum's Eric North Room during the 1980s.



Horse and groom

Ren Bonian (1840–95). Fan painting, ink and colours on silk. Presented in celebration of the 75th birthday of Dr Angelita Trinidad Reyes. EA2007.192

Ren Bonian, also known as Ren Yi, was one of the leading painters of the Shanghai School in the late nineteenth century. He is well known for his figure paintings, in which he typically depicts traditional subjects in a newly free and calligraphic manner. This painting is one of more than a hundred scrolls and album leaves presented to the Museum as part of the fourth Reyes Collection gift of modern Chinese paintings and calligraphy dating from the mid-nineteenth to the early twenty-first century.



Lacquer writing set

Tomita Kōshichi (1854–1910). Japan, mid-1890s to early 1900s. Writing box H: 22.5 x W: 24.7 x D: 5.5cm.; document box H: 41.5 x W: 35.5 x D: 15.7 cm. Acquired with the help of the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, The Art Fund, the Elias Ashmole Group, and the Story Fund. EA2007.258–59

This fine example of Meiji lacquerwork fills a major gap in the Museum's otherwise strong collection of Meiji decorative arts. The writing case and document box were made by the Kyoto lacquer artist Tomita Kōshichi in the late 1890s. The boxes are decorated with spring and autumn landscapes in a wide variety of lacquer techniques. The designs reflect the preoccupations of Japanese artists of the mid-Meiji period, who, as Japan emerged onto the world stage after centuries of national isolation, aimed to preserve Eastern traditions while exploring the potential of Western artistic conventions and painting methods.



Tokyo school bronze figure of an Ainu fisherman

Signed in a cast seal 'Kazuo kata Seijo iru Kaneda ki' (model by Kazuo, cast by Seijo, recorded by Kaneda). Japan, c.1900. Purchased with the help of the Story Fund. EA2008.8

In 1876 the first Western-style art school was established in Tokyo, with European artists teaching Western-style painting and sculpture courses. This bearded Ainu, standing holding his catch in one hand with a basket of fruit hanging from his shoulder, is a fine example of Tokyo school sculpture of the period. The Ainu, the indigenous population of Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, were a source of fascination in the West at this time. Depictions of Ainu were not uncommon for the export market and for international exhibitions.



Stoneware vase with Satsuma-style borders and modelled decoration of ducks and lotus plant

Makuzu Kozan (1842–1916). Stoneware with overglaze enamels and gold, 1870s. H: 36 x W: 26 cm. Purchased with the help of the Friends of the Ashmolean and the Story Fund. EA2008.65

This extraordinary vase is by the important late nineteenth-century potter Makuzu Kozan, a traditional Japanese potter who incorporated and adapted Western techniques and styles into his work after Japan was opened up to the West in the mid-nineteenth century after two and a half centuries of national isolation. The Ashmolean already has a good selection of the colourful porcelains that Kozan produced from the 1890s and for which he is best known, but examples of the intricate modelled wares that he produced during the 1870s and early 1880s for the Western market are very rare.



Yuzen textile screen with design of cranes in water

Minagawa Gekka. Colour on silk, c.1920. 190 x 176 cm.
Purchased with the help of the Story Fund. EA2008.68

This unusual twofold screen uses the Japanese *yuzen* (resist-dyeing) technique, which originated in Kyoto in the seventeenth century for the decoration of kimono. Here it is used by the early twentieth-century painter and textile artist Gekka to create a large-scale screen painting. During the 1920s and 1930s, traditional Japanese beliefs and values were being questioned in the light of imported social and cultural ideas and practices from the West. This screen, with its traditional subject matter and technique and yet showing the influence of Western Art Deco style, beautifully illustrates the developments of the period.



The Mandala of Manjuvajra

Tibet, early 15th century. Gouache on cotton cloth. 49.5 x 41.3 cm. Purchased with funds provided by the Neil Kreitman Foundation in memory of Hyman and Irene Kreitman. EA2007.246

This mandala painting is dedicated to Guhyasamaja-Manjuvajra, an aspect of Akshobhya, the 'Imperturbable' Buddha. Manjuvajra is shown presiding at the centre of the cosmos, embracing his *prajna* (wisdom goddess) and so embodying the Secret Union (*Guhyasamaja*) of Wisdom and Compassion as the means to Enlightenment. This very fine mandala may have been painted by Newar artists from the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, who are known to have produced related works for the Ngor monastery, south-west of Lhasa. The mandala (a kind of cosmic palace seen in plan form) and its many resident Tantric deities closely follow the prescriptions of iconographic texts. But the artist has clearly delighted in creating its wealth of decorative scrollwork. The overall effect is a kaleidoscope of brilliant colour and pattern.



Wall hanging or bed curtain

South India, 1700–40. Cotton, mordant- and resist-dyed. 245 x 132 cm. Purchased with the help of the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, The Art Fund, and the Friends of the Ashmolean. EA2008.57

When the European trading companies established themselves in Asia, they soon discovered the thriving production of local textiles and their importance as trade goods for the Western market. Large Indian painted chintz textiles (also called ‘palampore’) became highly popular in Europe as bed curtains or wall hangings. This is an outstanding example of the fine chintz made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in south-east India, specifically for export to Europe. Its design, showing a stylized flowering tree rising from a rocky mound, is typical of its kind, but here it is further animated by animals and birds, depicted in charming detail.

The design was painted onto the cloth with resist and mordant prior to dyeing, a process repeated several times to obtain the different colours. This highly complex technique was developed to perfection in the textile workshops of the Coromandel coastal region.

Cast Gallery

Two bearded Antonine portrait busts

Originally from Smyrna, purchased from the Musée du Cinquantienaire in Brussels [H98 and H99]

They are typical representations of philosophers of the period, with intense thoughtful expressions and well-groomed appearance. They came originally from Smyrna, and were intended to be viewed as a pair.



Learning in the Museum

34,998 people visited the Ashmolean in 2007/8 to take part in a lively programme of tours, talks, workshops, lectures, family events, and gallery activities developed and delivered by the Ashmolean Education Department.

Adult Programmes

A varied programme of activities was delivered for adults, with 8,441 people taking part in booked sessions. These sessions included a hugely successful afternoon lecture series with Tim Porter on 'Pilgrimage', 'The Medieval Period', and 'The Age of Chivalry'; Tim Healey on 'The Green Man'; Dr Jon Whiteley on 'Drawings by the Masters'; Linda Farrar on 'Ancient Roman Gardens'; and Dinah Reynolds on 'The Cup that Cheered: Tea and Chocolate in the Eighteenth Century'. 'Treasures of the Print Room' continued with its monthly programme exploring this remarkable collection. The ever-popular lunchtime gallery talks, Saturday highlights tours, and ten-minute treasures talks continued, with diverse and quirky subjects ranging from 'The Pre-Raphaelites' to 'Wigs, Beards, and Whiskers'. These continue to be delivered by our dedicated team of volunteer education guides.

A series of inspiring study days was well attended: 'The Sword and the Flame: 150 Years of the Indian Mutiny' with Dr Shailendra Bhandare, 'Glorious Gothic' with Tim Porter, and 'The Long Bow' with Magnus Sigurdsson.

Art workshops for adults offer a wonderful opportunity to experiment, play, and learn new skills inspired by the collection. This year Dr Weimin He demonstrated Chinese printing and led some practical art workshops; artist Qu Lei Lei demonstrated Chinese calligraphy and painting; and artist Kay Elliott led a delightful flower-inspired watercolour workshop.

Professor Paul Joannides gave the Sir David Piper New Year Lecture on 'Michelangelo, Raphael, and Sebastiano del Piombo'.

Sessions for Visually Impaired and Hearing Impaired Adults

Our successful programme of handling sessions for visually impaired people and BSL-signed tours for deaf people continued to grow in popularity. This year's programme for VIPs included 'In Touch with Ancient Egypt' and 'The Story behind the Pictures'. Our BSL-interpreted tours explored 'The Building of Cockerell's Ashmolean', 'Drinking in the Past', and 'All that Glisters' looking at the silver collections.

Children and Families

In 2007/8 we organized twenty-one inspiring (yet practical) family activities and workshops at the Museum, in which 4,164 children took part. In addition to these, the Activity Trolley offered free self-conducted activity



Family Drawing Day with Korky Paul, October 2007

sheets for families during normal opening hours. The 2007/8 themes were: 'Beside the Seaside', 'Picturing the New Ashmolean', 'Go Green', and 'Pick and Mix'. Activities and workshops were delivered to support National Archaeology Day, the Big Draw, Family Learning Week, National Science and Engineering Week, and Heritage Open Weekend.

Our free monthly Saturday drop-in events included 'It's All Greek to You' for National Archaeology Week, 'The Top Drawer with Korky Paul' as part of the Big Draw, 'Ancient Technologies' for National Science and Engineering Week, and 'Impress an Impressionist' for Art Weeks.

Working with Schools

Schools programmes continued to be extremely popular, despite a restricted number of galleries being available: 21,974 schoolchildren visited the Museum to take part in gallery activities, tours, and workshops. The Egypt Gallery activity session is particularly popular. We worked with Key Stage 2 (age 7–11) groups in the Egypt galleries every day of the school term.

This year we also welcomed several groups of secondary students as part of the Oxford University Widening Participation and Access programme. This programme works with schools that traditionally do not have students applying to Oxford and runs taster sessions and open days. We have contributed to several of these visits, welcoming students to the Ashmolean to take part in informal activities and tours. We have also offered sessions as part of Oxford University open days.

The Education Team has continued to work in partnership with Oxford Brookes University to welcome all 300 primary PGCE students to the Museum for an 'Art for the Afraid' workshop. This taster session introduces teachers to the benefits of using pictures with their classes, developing their questioning and observation skills. This is the fifth year that we have welcomed this group of students, and we plan to continue this programme. This year we worked directly with 419 teachers and student teachers in the Museum as part of training days, tours, and special projects.

As well as our standard programme of gallery activities and sessions we also work in partnership with other organizations to develop and deliver focused projects. They offer wonderful opportunities to use the collections in new and diverse ways to inspire learning.

Two examples of our project work with schools are:



'Take One Picture':
A school group working in
the new Sickert and Camden
Town Group gallery. *Brighton
Pierrots* by Walter Sickert
has been chosen by many

- **'Take One Picture'**: 2007/8 was year 2 of the 'Take One Picture' partnership with the National Gallery and student teachers from Oxford Brookes University. This is a high-profile, innovative project inspiring student teachers to use paintings as a resource for creative teaching across the primary curriculum. This year we had contact with 55 student teachers, welcomed 25 school groups and worked with 728 children on their chosen painting. This was an increase of 200 children from year 1 of the project. We are delighted that this partnership will continue next year.
- **'Mini Beasts at the Ashmolean'**: a Creative Partnerships project: as part of a cultural initiative with Creative Partnerships, sixty children from the Early Years Unit (4- and 5-year-olds) at SS Philip and James School visited the Ashmolean to look for the mini beasts hiding in our collection of Dutch and Flemish still-life paintings. They examined the paintings in the Museum, sketched in the galleries, and gathered inspiration and ideas in order to create exciting artwork back at school as part of a creative, cross-curricular project about mini beasts.

Creative Partnerships and SS Philip and James School have established an innovative programme called 'Creative Cultural Curriculum' (C³) involving seven different cultural partners, including the University of Oxford museums. Pupils who remain at SS Philip and James Primary School for their entire primary education will experience visits and activities with each of these partnerships. Creative Partnerships is the Government's flagship creative learning programme, designed to develop the skills of young people, raising their aspirations and achievements and opening up more opportunities for their futures. This ambitious programme is transforming teaching and learning across the curriculum.

The Ashmolean in the Community

We have continued to develop the Museum's outreach programme. In 2007/8 we worked directly with 1,552 people in the wider community. This programme is designed to take the Museum and its collections to communities and audiences who do not traditionally visit us. The aim is to enthuse and motivate people about the delights the Museum has to offer, and to encourage them to visit.

We continued to deliver a targeted outreach programme for schools, with 829 children taking part in school-based sessions. Our 'Greeks on Tour' workshops took place in four schools in each term. Our family outreach programme maintained our hugely successful partnership with the Oxfordshire Libraries, taking Museum objects and activities out to family audiences throughout the county. During the October half-term Jude Barrett, Ashmolean Access and Outreach Officer, took an 'Egyptian Journey' activity to eight libraries. A total of 483 children and 240 adults took part in these workshops throughout the year.

In addition, the Ashmolean Education team has also worked in partnership with colleagues from the Oxford University Museums Volunteers and Outreach Department. This small team of people works across all the University's museums. Our work with this team has included the following projects:

- **'Behind the Façade':** In September 2007 the Ashmolean, along with the other Oxford University Museums, opened its doors to a new project. This was led by Susan Birch, Community Education Officer for Oxford University Museums.

'Behind the Façade' involved taking different community groups on a behind-the-scenes tour, looking at how the Oxford museums worked. Three members of Ashmolean staff, Hugo Penning, Weimin He and Alexandra Greathead, braved the cameras as they were photographed by a group from the Oxford Night Shelter during their own personal tour of the Museum. The Night Shelter provides services and support for homeless people in Oxford, and many of those involved in the project were visiting the Ashmolean for the first time. The photos they took during their tour helped to form artwork produced in conjunction with the artists *brook & black*, which was then displayed in the museums.

- **'Introducing Art':** Following a series of outreach visits by Susan Birch, users of 'The Mill' day centre wanted to find out more about the Ashmolean's art collections.

'The Mill', part of the charity MIND, provides help and support for those with severe and continuing mental-health problems. Together with Mary Lloyd (Ashmolean Education Officer) and several Ashmolean Education Session Leaders, Susan helped to devise a programme of workshops aimed at introducing art history to this particular audience.



Portraits of Ashmolean staff produced by users of the Night Shelter as part of the 'Behind the Façade' project

These workshops were themed around portraiture, Dutch still life, the Pre-Raphaelites, and twentieth-century art, and featured slides of artworks on display at the Ashmolean. The workshops were followed by a guided tour of the Museum. For some participants, this was the first time they had visited.

The group created a piece of communal artwork inspired by Kandinsky's *Murnau – Staffelsee I*, one of their favourites from the project. This was displayed in the café lobby at the Ashmolean in July 2008.

Site Visits

Regular hard hat tours of the development site have been made available to the public. Since demolition of the old nineteenth-century building was completed in 2006, hundreds of different stakeholders from across the University and the city have visited the site and witnessed the construction of the new Rick Mather building. The completion of the external frame of the new building was celebrated in a special topping-out ceremony on 10 March 2008, generating coverage in the local press, television, and radio.

Children's Art Competition

In August 2007 the Museum launched the children's art competition 'Picturing the New Ashmolean', giving young artists an opportunity to create and publicly exhibit their vision of the new Museum. A series of hard hat site visits, gallery tours, and workshops were organized, to inspire children between the ages of 4 and 16 to create their pictures. School groups totalling more than 180 children from six local schools joined HBG Construction on the Museum's viewing platform to sketch the builders and machinery at work. As part of the Big Draw in October, 75 children took part in workshops led by Korky Paul, the children's book illustrator, in which they pictured their new Ashmolean.

Out of 450 entries received from across Oxfordshire, the neighbouring counties, London, and the USA, a panel of judges chose the following three first prize winners: Lucy Southam, age 5, from St Michael's School, Stewkley; Edward Saunders, age 9, from St Barnabas School, Oxford; and Alice Eccles, age 15, from Oxford High School. The competition's lead sponsor, the Oxford Bus Company, will exhibit their artwork until 2009 on the back of two Oxford Park & Ride buses, and on 60 internal bus display panels. At the awards ceremony in January 2008, the winners were presented with a range of prizes from laptop computers (sponsored by HBG) to a selection of books (sponsored by Oxford University Press). Artwork by the winners and the runners-up feature in graphics on the HBG portacabin on the Ashmolean forecourt and online at www.ashmolean.org/competition. The competition raised the profile of the development through widespread local media coverage and word of mouth.



A participant enjoying a practical workshop at one of the series of 'Introducing Art' outreach workshops at 'The Mill' Day Centre in Oxford.

'I've been coming to the Ashmolean since I was in nappies. I'm so excited to be a part of that ... it is such an incredible part of Oxford.'

(Alice Eccles, Oxford Star)

'This is all about getting children to picture the magnificent, marvellous and magical new Ashmolean.'

(Korky Paul, Oxford Mail)

'It is difficult to exaggerate the scale of the transformation.'
(Oxford Times)

White Night

On 7 December 2007 over 2,000 visitors attended the Ashmolean's late night opening to celebrate White Night, a city-wide celebration of Christmas organized by Oxford Inspires. Visitors were entertained with live music on the forecourt, they enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine in the café and late-night Christmas shopping in the Ashmolean shop. Carols were performed by St Ebbes School in the Randolph Sculpture Gallery, and the public had the opportunity to see the collections after hours.

Engaging with Local Companies

The Ashmolean's relationship with the Oxford Bus Company was established with their lead sponsorship of 'Picturing the New Ashmolean'. Continuing this successful relationship, the Oxford Bus Company announced in April 2008 that it will use the backs of London Espresso and Oxford city buses to display the future publicity campaign for the reopening, 'My Ashmolean, My Museum' in the lead up to the reopening of the Ashmolean. This relationship is instrumental in expanding the public profile of the Ashmolean within the local and wider community.

HBG Construction has supported the Ashmolean's public-engagement programme by giving access to the development site, construction expertise, and sponsorship for both 'Picturing the New Ashmolean' and the topping-out ceremony, as well as facilitating ongoing site visits and partaking in regular local residents' meetings.

As a member of the Oxford Marketing Group, and by collaborating in city-wide events with Oxford Inspires, the Ashmolean continues to engage with local companies, city and county councils, hotels, and other tourist attractions.

Loans In and Out

During 2007/8 the Registrar's section managed the outward loan of 242 works to 67 exhibitions held in 93 venues. The loans were made to Australia (2), Austria (1), Belgium (2), Denmark (1), France (3), Germany (3), Ireland (1), Italy (8), Japan (1), The Netherlands (3), Spain (2), Sweden (1), Taiwan (1), and USA (8), with the remaining works being lent to UK venues. Exhibitions to which the Ashmolean lent have had in excess of 2,444,000 visitors.

Major exhibitions to which the Ashmolean has contributed loans include 'The Phoenicians and the Mediterranean', Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; 'Poussin and the Landscape', Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; 'Millais', Tate Britain, London and Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam; 'Babylone', Pergamonmuseum, Berlin; and 'The Ramayana' at the British Library.

In April the travelling exhibition 'Camille Pissarro and his Family: Masterworks from the Ashmolean Museum', a selection of 50 paintings

and 30 works on paper organized by the Ashmolean, began its tour of venues in Japan at the Takamatsu City Museum of Art before transferring to the National Palace Museum, Taiwan.

During 2007/8 several works were brought into the Museum on long-term loan, including loans from private collections of the following works: Hans Schäufelein, *Christ Taking Leave of his Mother*, oil on wooden panel; Neroccio de' Landi (Del Poggio), *An Emperor Visiting a Walled City*, tempera on panel; Giovanni di Ser Giovanni (Lo Scheggia), *The Wedding Procession of the Queen of Sheba*, tempera on panel.

Once again we are very grateful to the important support we receive from the MLA, which manages the Government Indemnity Scheme and allows the Ashmolean to bring in such important loans for the benefit of our visitors.

'This exhibition may be small in size but not in ambition.'
(Oxford Times)

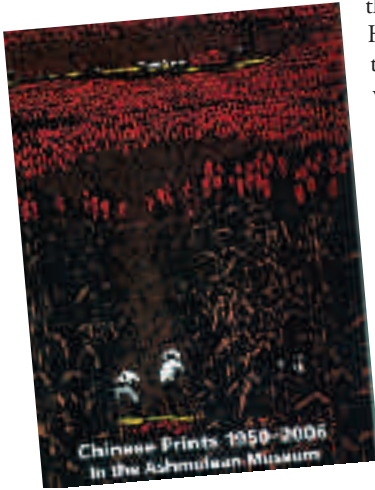


'I've heard people compare entering the building to Dr Who's Tardis. It is quite startling to experience this much light and space unexpectedly.' (Antony Nagle, Construction Manager)

Inside the Ashmolean

The Ashmolean has many other departments providing a range of services and making important contributions to the life of the Museum.

Publications



Chinese Prints 1950–2006, a catalogue to accompany the exhibition of the same name, was published in October 2007. Written by Weimin He and Shelagh Vainker, this publication focuses on the period since the establishment of the People's Republic of China and contains 120 works from 67 established Chinese printmakers. (245mm x 175mm, portrait, paperback. 160pp. Price £14.95.)

The twenty-fourth publication in the Handbook Series, *Watches in the Ashmolean Museum* by David Thompson (Curator of Horology at the British Museum), was published in January 2008. The history and development of watch design are extremely well served in the Ashmolean. This handbook discusses 31 of the best of the collection. (210mm x 145mm, portrait, paperback and hardback. 92pp. Price £7.95 paperback and £11.95 hardback.)

The twenty-fifth Handbook, *The Alfred Jewel*, written by David Hinton (former Assistant Keeper in the Department of Antiquities, now a Professor of Archaeology at the University of Southampton), was published in February 2008. The Alfred Jewel is one of the greatest treasures of the Ashmolean, which houses many other objects relating to the late Anglo-Saxon period. (210mm x 145mm, portrait, paperback and hardback. 96pp. Price £7.95 paperback and £11.95 hardback.)



Also published in February was *Early Himalayan Art* by Amy Heller (a leading authority on Tibetan art and culture). Beautifully photographed, this book presents the Museum's collection of some 60 important early sculptures and other objects from Tibet and Nepal dating from c. AD 500 to 1400. This includes a number of secular objects as well as images of deities in the Hindu and Buddhist pantheons. (267mm x 194mm, portrait, paperback. Price £16.95.)

Arthur MacGregor's volume *Sir John Evans 1823–1908: Antiquity, Commerce, and Natural Science in the Age of Darwin*, was published in May 2008. The figure of Sir John Evans might stand as an exemplar for many aspects of Victorian endeavour. Having set out on a career in his uncle's paper-mills as a clerk, he rose by hard work and astute judgement to direct the company and lead the national paper industry. Something of a phenomenon amongst the learned societies in London, he held at times the treasurership of the Royal Society, the Geological Society,

the Society of Antiquaries, and the Egypt Exploration Society. His involvement in all these areas is examined in this volume by fourteen specialist authors to form the first-ever assessment of Evans's enduring significance. (240mm x 165mm, portrait, hardback. 326pp. Price £45.)

The Shop

The shop has had a tremendous year. With the annual target reached by mid-July (two weeks before the year end), we have closed the year nine per cent up on the previous year. The average transaction value has improved by 27 per cent. It has been very encouraging to note that Ashmolean-published titles have featured consistently in the top 100 bestselling products.

Filming

Given the building works and the number of objects held off site at this time, filming work has slowed down this year. However, ITV returned to shoot scenes for the second series of the popular television show *Lewis*, filming in the Western Art galleries in September, followed by the Randolph Sculpture Gallery in November.

Events Office

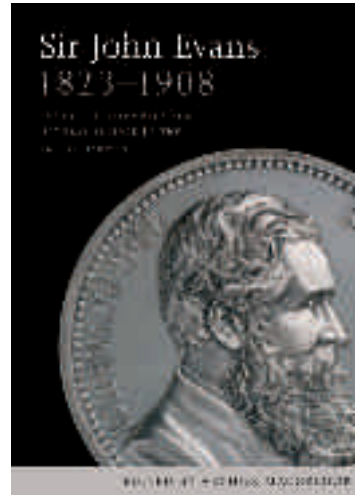
This was a busy and successful year for the Events Office, whose two members of staff increased the revenue from events to £122,000 this year (compared with £56,400 for 2006/7 with one member of staff). With support from the café, the team welcomed 7,500 guests to 118 external events over the year, playing a significant role in marketing the Ashmolean beyond its usual audience. Internally, the University bookings included 296 events in the Headley Lecture Theatre, and 26 within the galleries. The Events Team looks forward to the opportunities presented by the new building, which is set to be a premier Oxford venue for 2009 and beyond.

Photographic Department

The Photographic Department continues to go from strength to strength. Working closely with the Picture Library and Publications Department, we are producing images, making a considerable contribution towards many new publications, and servicing public-order requests to a high level of quality and efficiency.

Design Office

The redevelopment has continued to be the main priority for the Design Office. Four new temporary full-time members of staff were employed in January 2008 to manage the high volume of design work required. Two are dedicated to 3D exhibition display work and the other two to graphic design. Working together with the curators, the Education Department and Metaphor, they are producing detailed designs for each gallery, which will be implemented during the installation period of the project.



In addition to the project, the Design Office has supported the following departments: Press and Publicity, Education, Exhibitions, Development, and Front of House. We have also been designing and producing graphics for the Western Art refurbishment project. The redevelopment has influenced the approach to graphics for these refurbished galleries, and a close working knowledge of what is happening in both areas has been crucial. Work has commenced on the wayfinding and branding of the new Ashmolean.

ICT

The ICT Department provides essential support throughout the Museum, and the arrival of a new member of staff has allowed the department to allocate tasks more effectively.

From taking a lead role in looking after the MuseumPlus server to developing an online searchable database for the John Evans archive website (<http://johnevans.ashmolean.org/>), the Department is also responsible for the Museum's network infrastructure, and has successfully implemented wireless accessibility at the Radcliffe Infirmary site. We have completed the implementation of a Single Sign-On system, so that users now generally have to remember only two passwords, and have developed AGATHA (Ashmolean Gallery Text Handling Application), which is an online system that allows curatorial staff efficiently to write, store, view, and edit gallery label text for the displays in the new galleries.

Documentation

The last year has seen the Documentation Department focusing on the needs of the redisplay project and on the finalization of the Museum's collections management system, MuseumPlus. A long-term project has been established to plan the work required to ensure that MuseumPlus meets the Museum's requirements.

We have also rationalized the treatment of loans in, imported a significant batch of data from the decant database, and established procedures to deal with support collections and other non-accessioned objects.

Human Resources

The Department has seen many changes this year, including an appointment to the new post of Head of HR, Gillian Morris. The HR team now consists of three staff. It has been a very busy year for recruitment activities within the Museum. Over thirty-three campaigns have been managed in partnership with our line managers to meet their recruitment needs and the needs of a Museum in the middle of a major transition.

Visitor Services

The Visitor Services Team has had a very successful year under the supervision of George Earle and his deputy, Marianne Dodson. For the first time we have some statistical evidence to back up our success, as, according to the Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council's visitors exit polls, between October 2007 and June 2008 the number of visitors who were 'very satisfied' with their visit has risen from 92.4 per cent to 99.3 per cent! Almost half the visitors told us that we exceeded their expectations, while 94.7 per cent 'agreed strongly' that they were made to feel welcome and comfortable by the staff.

Building Services

Our Building Services Team has had another extremely busy year. A lot of time and effort have gone into making the second-floor galleries, Walter Sickert and the Camden Town Group, Nineteenth-Century French and English Art and The Pre-Raphaelites, look as splendid as they do now. While this refurbishment project work was going on, so was regular maintenance work. Several plinths were built for the Mallett Gallery stairs and 50 works were framed to travel to Japan for the exhibition 'Camille Pissarro and his family: Masterworks from the Ashmolean Museum'.



Details from the Chinese festive hanging celebrating 'long life' that formed the centrepiece of the 2007 Fellows Dinner

Funding and Support

We must pay tribute to the generosity of all our supporters, not least the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Renaissance in the Regions, and the Portable Antiquities Scheme, for their continuing support of the Museum's core activities.

Special acknowledgement must also be made of a number of transformative gifts towards the redevelopment over the year. As well as those who wish to remain anonymous, these include the Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation's pledge to name the new Ancient World Gallery, Mr and Mrs Ian Laing's pledge to name the new temporary exhibition galleries, and the Fidelity UK Foundation's gift towards the collections redisplay strategy. Other major gifts and pledges came from the Headley Trust towards the Ceramics Gallery, the Elizabeth Cayzer Charitable Trust in support of the Chantrey Wall, CHK Charities Ltd for the Mughal India Gallery, as well as from the Berlin Charitable Trust, the Brain Trust, the Catherine Lewis Foundation, Lord and Lady Heseltine, the John Swire (1989) Charitable Trust, the Sammermar Trust, Mr and Mrs Timothy Sanderson, the Staples Trust, and the Swire Charitable Trust. Special mention must be made of the Linbury Trust and HLF, without whose continued support the project would not be possible.

Our volunteers have worked tirelessly to assist the Museum in meeting its goal for the new galleries, and we would like to thank the members of the Fundraising Steering Committee, the Capital Campaign Advisory Board and the Board of Visitors for their help and advice.

The Fellows of the Ashmolean continued to grow in number this year. In late 2007 we were honoured to admit as Fellows His Royal Highness Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Mr Yousef Abdul Latif Jameel, Mr Neil Kreitman, Dr Angelita Trinidad Reyes, the Rt Hon. the Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover KG, and Mr Carl Subak. In spring 2008 Lord Rothschild generously hosted the annual Fellows meeting at Spencer House. This provided excellent opportunities to tell our greatest benefactors more about our plans for the Museum and for us to hear their views. We are grateful to our Fellows for their ongoing support.

In March 2008 the Ashmolean's second Annual Fund appeal was sent to over 8,000 friends and supporters to raise funds for the Museum's key activities, including education, conservation, and exhibitions. The response was extremely generous, taking the total raised during the financial year to over £130,000. We would like to thank the many supporters of this appeal, who are listed at the end of this report.

Once again a number of trusts and foundations have generously supported the Ashmolean, making a significant difference to a variety of projects and activities. Grateful thanks, in particular, go to the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund for its grant towards the refurbishment of the Cast Gallery, the John Ellerman Foundation for supporting the Ashmolean's running costs over two years, the Helen Roll Charity for a grant

towards the ongoing conservation of our extensive collection of works of art on paper, the Scouloudi Foundation for its contribution to the John Evans Centenary Project publication, and the John S. Cohen Foundation for supporting the work of the Print Room supervisor.

We were pleased to develop new and existing partnerships with a number of companies over the year, all of whom we would like to thank for their commitment to the Museum. Carter Jonas extended its support for the Tradescant Patrons Group for a second year, and also provided sponsorship for the banner on St Giles'. The Oxford Bus Company and local solicitors Henmans LLP continued to support the Museum, while local architects Gray, Baynes and Shew LLP agreed to sponsor the Ashmolean Floor Plan leaflet from autumn 2008.

We received a number of generous legacies during the year, and, as ever, we are deeply grateful to those who choose to support the Museum in this way.

Friends and Patrons

This was another successful year for our Friends and Patrons groups, who continue to provide invaluable support for the Museum – support that is ever more vital as we prepare for reopening in 2009. As well as offering members a varied calendar of events, the groups pledged grants to the Museum worth almost £90,000 for a broad range of projects this year, and we extend our thanks to all our Friends and Patrons for making this possible. Members of the Elias Ashmole Group and the Tradescant Patrons Group are listed in full at the end of this report.

THE ELIAS ASHMOLE GROUP

We are extremely grateful to the Elias Ashmole Group for its grants totalling £37,897 this year, including £5,000 towards the acquisition of the Wilshere Glass Collection, £5,000 towards the acquisition of the Japanese Lacquer Boxes, £15,197 towards the post of Individual Giving Officer, and £12,700 towards the refurbishment of the Western Art galleries.

The Group enjoyed a number of events and trips during the year, beginning in October 2007 with its annual dinner, which included the introduction of the prototype gallery, giving guests a foretaste of the Ashmolean's new displays. This year's Spring Trip saw Dr Christopher Brown and Tim Wilson, Keeper of Western Art, accompanying twenty patrons to Ferrara, where highlights included a visit to the Palazzo di Ludovico il Moro, with its newly restored sixteenth-



Lord and Lady Sainsbury of Preston Candover and guests at the 2007 Fellows' Dinner

Members of the Elias Ashmole Group on their Spring Trip to Ferrara





Elias Ashmole Group patrons admire the frescoes at the Palazzo di Ludovico il Moro, Ferrara

century frescoes by Garofolo, and a gala dinner at the Castello Estense. Meanwhile (and closer to home), members were privileged to be invited for a tour of Burghley House, hosted by Miranda Rock, which included access to the private rooms as well as the House's outstanding collections.

THE TRADESCANT PATRONS GROUP

Our thanks go to the Tradescants for their £20,000 worth of grants to the Museum made during the year. These included £10,000 towards a case in the new Art to Ashmolean Gallery, £2,500 towards the conservation of Tradescant portraits, and £7,500 towards the publication of a Medieval and Renaissance sculpture catalogue.

Tradescant events included the Group's annual Director's Study Day, whose subject was Pre-Dynastic Egypt and to which the Group welcomed the British Museum's Dr Joanne Rowland as guest lecturer. Other highlights of the year's programme were an evening devoted to the redevelopment, a private view of the exhibition 'Chinese Prints 1950–2006', and a preview of the newly refurbished second-floor Western Art galleries, at which patrons had the opportunity to handle recent acquisitions of silver and ceramics.

THE FRIENDS OF THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

The Friends have once again shown generous support to the Museum over the year, allocating £30,000 in grants, including £15,000 for widening access to the Ashmolean's loans programme, £6,500 towards new exhibitions, £6,000 towards the Western Art refurbishment, and £2,500 towards the

acquisition of Chinese prints. The group has also pledged significant support for a range of forthcoming Museum projects, and we look forward to listing these grants in next year's report. For the second year running, the Friends led by example in their response to the Annual Fund, with 183 donors giving an impressive £45,000 towards the Museum's running costs.

The number of Friends during the year remained at around 2,200, many of whom took part in the group's varied programme of events, private views, and day trips. The success of the programme, and the smooth running of the membership administration, are testament to the skill and devotion of the small group of Friends volunteers, led by the Chairman David Boyle, which oversees every aspect of the group's activities. Thanks go to them, and to all the Friends, for their support during the year.

Appendices

Finance

| Income | 2007-2008 | Expenditure | 2007-2008 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--|------------------|
| AHRC | 2,157,792 | Curatorial and Research | 1,808,924 |
| University Funding | 922,655 | Conservation | 308,892 |
| Trust Funds and Investments | 295,556 | Education | 223,733 |
| Donations | 662,102 | Development and Marketing | 209,867 |
| Renaissance in the Regions | 289,106 | Administration | 667,535 |
| Sales, Services and Trading | 697,506 | Building Services, Infrastructure Charges & IT | 839,963 |
| Acquisitions | 617,879 | Visitor Services | 529,406 |
| Research | 192,624 | Trading | 469,523 |
| Other | 116,543 | Acquisitions | 617,879 |
| TOTAL | 5,951,763 | Research | 192,410 |
| | | Other | 94,371 |
| | | TOTAL | 5,962,503 |

Visitor Statistics

In total the Museum has received 357,346 visitors this year, and 451,608 virtual visitors via our website (www.ashmolean.org).

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| Barrett, Jude | Debenham, Sarah | Green, Dr Jack | Kitchen, Alan |
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 Mrs J. L. Wilson
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 Mrs L. B. Winkelman
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 Mr and Mrs C. Yapp
 Mr Paul C. Zakary and
 Mrs K. Rees-Zakary

The Museum is open from Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 5pm, on Sundays from 12 noon to 5pm and on Bank Holidays from 10am to 5pm. The Museum and café will temporarily close from 23 December 2008 until the opening of the new galleries in November 2009. The shop will remain open. To find out more please visit www.ashmolean.org.

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