

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM AND
THE HAMILTON KERR INSTITUTE
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FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM NEWS

THE COURTYARD DEVELOPMENT: COUNTDOWN TO RELAUNCH




Nearing completion: The Fitzwilliam Museum Courtyard Development, John J. Cain, © The Fitzwilliam Museum.

The building phase of The Fitzwilliam Museum Courtyard Development drew to a close at the end of 2003, on schedule and on budget. The emphasis of the project is very much on making the Museum more accessible, with a new, spacious reception area for groups and a lift to all floors, refurbished galleries and redisplayed collections. A total space gain of approximately 3,000 square metres over four floors, based on the ingenious design of architects John Miller + Partners, will not only improve visitor circulation but will also provide enhanced facilities including new galleries for temporary exhibitions, medieval and renaissance and 20th and 21st century art, a Ceramics study centre, new IT resources and new education spaces, seminar room and studio. In addition there will be a larger shop and café located in the new Courtyard at the heart of the Museum – a light and airy space where visitors may sit to plan

their visit or gather for special evening events such as recitals or receptions.

Main contractor Amec handed back the site in December and the final stage of the Museum's £12m development is now underway. This will involve not only fitting out a new gallery for temporary exhibitions with state-of-the-art environmental control and lighting, the installation of kitchen, servery and seating area for the new café and display stands for the shop, but also the refurbishment, redecorating and relighting of numerous other galleries and, most importantly, the reinstallation, relabelling and redisplay of around 60% of the Museum's designated collections of around half a million objects. Small wonder, then, that in order to accomplish all this in time for the Museum's planned relaunch next summer, the Fitzwilliam is reluctantly having to close its doors to the public until 31 May 2004. During that period, dedicated teams of craftsmen, curators and technicians will be systematically restoring galleries to their former glory, returning collections currently on loan or in storage, refreshing existing displays and installing new ones – all in readiness

to welcome visitors from June onwards. In July, the Museum plans a series of relaunch events including *Lasting Impressions* – an exhibition on Impressionism, drawn largely from the Museum's extensive collections and including works by Boudin, Cézanne, Gauguin, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro, Seurat, Signac, and a particularly important group of paintings, drawings and sculpture by Degas. There will also be special displays of contemporary prints and Goya's *Tauromaquia*, new public and schools programmes and specially developed resources to enable families to make the most of their visit. Meanwhile, the Museum's website www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk will continue to provide access to works of art through its on-line catalogue of the collections and will also carry the latest information about relaunch plans, events and activities at the new-look Fitzwilliam.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

At five o'clock sharp on the afternoon of Sunday, 21st December the door of the Founder's Building closed as usual behind the last of the visitors as they made their way out on to the portico, down the steps and through the gates on to Trumpington Street. With their usual care and attention to detail, the staff on duty went through the familiar routine of securing the building for the night, as it happened the longest night of the year, an appropriate metaphor perhaps for the period of extended closure it ushered in. It will be five months before that door opens again to admit visitors; in the meantime the galleries will remain closed while we complete the most extensive renovation in the history of the museum. The decision to close was a difficult one to take, knowing just how many people come to the museum, many on a regular basis, to derive pleasure from the objects on display and to participate in its activities. But as we reviewed the list of works to be carried out over the next few months, from refitting and relighting the entrance hall to rehangings all of the galleries on the upper floor and re-installing the majority of those on the lower floor, it became painfully obvious that it would be impossible to accommodate visitors satisfactorily and safely. And although we shall try to maintain access by appointment to the curatorial departments, their staff will be working flat out behind closed doors to reinstall the displays and to reorganise the reserves and study areas in the museum. Small wonder that we have to remind ourselves from time to time why we are going through a period of such disruption and what differences it is going to make.



From June you will be our judges, from your first steps into the museum onwards. As before, you will have a choice between two entrances, but whichever one you choose, you will be aware of the changes; appropriately more subtle in the case of the Founder's Building, where a new reception desk in the centre of the entrance hall, between the stairs and facing the door, will replace the existing counters and coat racks, with their distinctly improvised appearance. More dramatically at the newly canopied southern entrance, to which all tour groups and parties of visitors will be directed, there will be an entirely new reception area, designed to provide far more adequate facilities for large numbers of people. From there it is only a few paces into the Courtyard which on the ground floor joins the Armoury at one end of the building to the Korean Gallery at the other and provides access by lift and stairs to all other levels. Our cover illustration gives an impression only of the new space which has been created, but as I have discovered during the past few weeks as the new building has begun to emerge from the final stages of construction, there is no substitute for walking around it to experience with a mounting sense of excitement the effectiveness of the changes it has brought about. As you will see, John Miller + Partners have succeeded brilliantly in creating a building within the existing perimeter which combines elegance with amenity. Even at this stage, before the racks are filled with postcards in the new shop and the scent of freshly brewed coffee wafts from the server, it is easy to sense the contribution this entire area will make to the pleasure of visiting the museum.



In a host of different ways it also opens fresh possibilities for the museum in the twenty-first century. Although our Education Department takes great pride in its gallery-based activities, the Courtyard provides a suite of rooms downstairs for lectures and classes, studio sessions and school groups with their back-packs

and packed lunches. With the new entrance comes greater flexibility in the use we make of the building; imagine coming to an evening class afterhours, or a special event at which refreshments can be served in the Courtyard. What about meeting friends for brunch on Sundays, when the museum will open two hours earlier than before, at 12 noon? The Reference Library, adjacent to the Courtyard, will be more accessible than it has been in the past and its resources will be complemented by electronic access to information about the collections, available on monitors in the Islamic Gallery nearby.



Which brings me to the heart of the matter. From the outset the aim of the entire Courtyard Development has been to improve access both physically and intellectually to the collections. By extension it has enabled us to look critically at existing installations and to begin that process of refreshment and renewal which keeps an institution like this alive. Take the Glaisher Gallery for instance. It runs the length of the Courtyard, its windows overlooking it. It also contains one of the finest collections of English pottery and porcelain, together with examples of Delftware, anywhere in the country. For decades its ill-lit and overcrowded cases have made no concessions to the non-specialist visitor who might want to know something about the technology of pottery-making or the influence of Dutch blue-and-white wares on English manufacturers. Spectacular though its contents were, it provided a classic example of the old take-it-or-leave-it approach to museum displays to which the specialist brought his or her own fund of knowledge and everyone else was left in the dark. Thanks to a grant from the Wolfson Foundation, the cases are being reconfigured and rebuilt, allowing us to introduce a new display of Arts and Crafts products into their midst. The new Rothschild Gallery, off the Armoury, is another new installation in which a wide range of medieval artefacts will be shown; illuminated manuscripts, ivories, glass, silver and textiles, coins and medals and portrait miniatures, all carefully selected to give a vivid impression of life in the Middle Ages, with its rich combination of religious and secular culture. A final instance; the Adeane Gallery on the upper floor, completely transformed by Miller + Partners to provide a gallery for the arts of the twentieth century; white walls punctuated by large vitrines to show ceramics and glass, sculpture and other three-dimensional objects.



With a museum the size of ours, there will always be something more to be done. When we open in June the former twentieth-century gallery in the 1966 extension will remain closed until we can find a sponsor willing to return it to its original appearance. This is likely to be an expensive project, for it entails removing false walls and air-handling units which have been installed behind them, but the opportunity to restore the integrity of the space, and to fill it with the art of the period in which it was designed, is one we must not miss.



Next autumn we hope to begin the renovation of the Egyptian galleries (see page 5) as the process of renewal continues. But in the meantime the efforts of everyone behind the closed door will be concentrated on next summer and the reopening of the entire museum. At this stage, all I can promise is that it will be worth the wait.

Duncan Robinson

ART INTO LITERACY

Frances Sword, Head of Education, writes about an inspirational course with a remarkable outcome

Words we hear, words we speak and words we read create an ongoing picture-show for our inner eye. Words and pictures fit together and are a couple hard to prize apart. If we reverse the situation, if we focus on a picture and listen to the inner dialogue it stimulates, in that process is the core of an important new stream of activity now taking place in the galleries of The Fitzwilliam Museum.

For many years people of all ages have written at the Museum; poetry and prose, dramas and descriptions have flowed from the pens of children and adults alike. All the staff who have worked in these writing sessions have noticed time and again that a particular type of energy and a new found confidence of verbal expression is created when people work together and focus on a painting.

Last year, for the first time, we extended this work to adults enrolled on Basic Skills courses. Working in collaboration with the Cambridge Regional College Academy for Basic Education, the education staff of the Museum ran a pilot course lasting five weeks. During each session we concentrated on two



Inspired by art: (from left, holding copies of their book) Sue Goodjohn, Virginia Divall, Jayne Brown and Gill Metcalfe, participants on the first Basic Skills course, with (centre) Sue Street, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

or three paintings which stimulated an aspect of writing such as description or narrative, which form the core of the adult literacy curriculum. Writing, started in the galleries and completed at home, astounded the participants and staff in its immediacy, concentration and style. As one participant said having just read her piece of writing aloud, "I didn't know I could do that". Any of us could have said the same. The pilot course was such a revelation we could not let the

transformed and extended. We will be able to move smoothly from the stimulation of the galleries to a quiet and private space where people can develop their ideas and receive teaching away from the public gaze. The new building will be more than bricks and mortar: these new spaces will create new opportunities and new experiences. The space will be active, allowing new pathways to the Museum's collections to be created for the whole community.

results stay hidden and so, with generous support from Fitzwilliam Museum Enterprises, the writing has been published in a book: *Art into Literacy*. This significant achievement was marked on 18 November when Sue Street, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, visited the Museum to present the book to its authors.

Our second Basic Skills course is now underway. This time we have extended the course to ten sessions and we are experimenting with different teaching approaches. When the Museum relaunches in summer 2004 and we have the use of our new education rooms, work such as this will be

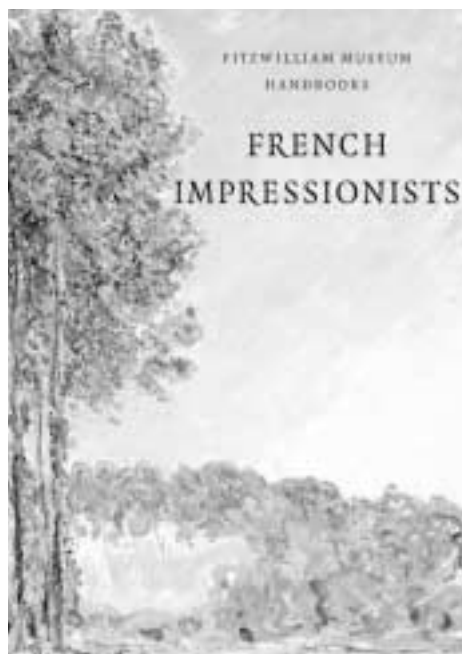
FRENCH IMPRESSIONISM AT THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

On Tuesday 9 December, Cambridge University Press Bookshop hosted the launch of the latest publication in the Fitzwilliam Museum handbook series: *French Impressionists* by Jane Munro, Senior Assistant Keeper of Paintings, Drawings and Prints.

This book presents a selection of paintings and drawings by French Impressionist painters in the Museum, including works by Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Renoir, Gauguin, Seurat, Boudin, Cézanne and Signac and a splendid group of works by Degas. Of these, some are acknowledged masterpieces; others are published here for the first time. The introduction gives a lively account of what an 'Impressionist' painter was, and came to mean, explaining how these works came to be in Cambridge collections against the background of the growing popularity of Impressionist paintings in Britain.

The specific strengths of The Fitzwilliam Museum's collection of Impressionist works are due in part to the personal preferences of those collectors who have given or bequeathed works, but also to the cumulative

acquisition of chronologically or thematically-related works. Notable in this last respect



are pairs of paintings which show Pissarro's extraordinary skill as a painter of snow, Monet's as a painter of sea, and contrasting views of Brittany by Renoir and Monet, both painted in 1886, the year which saw the last group exhibition of the Impressionists. A range of new acquisitions and relatively little known works by familiar artists aim to invite the reader to look afresh at their work.

Lasting Impressions – an exhibition of Impressionist paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture – will mark the relaunch of the Museum in July 2004 after major refurbishment. It will assemble and present together to the public for the first time the Museum's entire collection of Impressionist works and will be accompanied by a series of gallery talks and evening lectures. While the book is not a catalogue for the exhibition, it does cover the majority of the works that will be included and as the Museum will be closed until 31 May for the refurbishment of galleries and reinstallation of collections, this book is an ideal way to view these works until the exhibition opens in July.

LEONARD GRAY

27 April 1912 – 30 June 2003



Photo: Dusha Bateson

“Well”, said Leonard Gray in the Spring of 1977, “when you need help – actually printing – let me know”. He was just about to retire, after over 50 years, from the Cambridge University Press. Taken on in 1926 as a 14 year old apprentice, he had risen to the position of Works Director. He was the “great man” to whom the University Printer, Brooke Crutchley, had sent me when the rollers of my press had deteriorated so much that they no longer inked properly. Leonard Gray took every problem, cycled up Shaftesbury Road in my unsmart bicycle basket, firmly in hand. He was to become, for the next quarter of a century, the greatest volunteer worker the Museum has probably ever known.

When, in 1973, Michael came to the Fitzwilliam as Director, he allowed me to bring a printing press, an 1873 miniature Albion. To this the Friends of the Fitzwilliam added, in the summer of 1975, a Crown Folio Arab treadle platten once belonging to the Printing House of Stanbrook Abbey in Worcestershire whose nuns had produced so much for Sydney Cockerell, the most celebrated former Director of the Museum. With these presses I produced posters, fliers and announcements – things for which the Museum had no funds. I struggled. The task was almost impossible, and everything looked sadly amateur or even crude.

Len’s proposal had been made. Yet who would take seriously an offer of hard slog from one of the most prestigious typographers of his generation? I was foolishly diffident. Leonard Gray had worked at the Cambridge University Press with Walter Lewis and Stanley Morison. They became a triumvirate of mutual admiration and

dependence. Morison used to scribble lay-outs on scraps of paper saying “Give this to Gray; he’ll get the spacing right.” Gray was particularly brilliant with Biblical and Liturgical works. Having served in the Royal Air Force during the 1939–45 war, he had taken the opportunity of a university bursary when demobilised, and gone to Durham to read Theology. Back at the University Press an increasing number of their Church publications came his way. His spacing, type size and page divisions so delighted Morison that ultimately, in 1953, he was given responsibility for the setting and lay-out of the Queen’s Coronation Service. I was in awe of him.

Fate, however, forced matters. Setting posters, programmes and tickets for recitals given *gratis* to raise money for the repair of the Fitzwilliam collection of music manuscripts, a crisis arose. An artist, at only two weeks’ notice, had to cancel and, although the magnificent Elizabeth Harwood stepped into the breach, all the printed material had to be redone instantly. I ‘phoned Len Gray. He came at once. We worked frantically for three days and, miraculously, everything was completed by Friday afternoon. “Well”, said the great compositor “there’s plenty more to do. I shall come on Monday, but only for the morning”. Thereafter he came every weekday morning until, I believe, about a month before he died. He would be there between 8.30 and 9.00am; work; go for lunch to Churchill College where he was a happy Honorary Fellow; then return home to his lovely wife, Gladys, for the rest of the day. Gladys, a tailor by profession, had such a sense of enduring style and of the quality of cloth that Len always looked immensely smart in his suits, and frequently complained that nothing ever wore out or became unfashionable. Gladys died in August last year: they had been married for 62 years. They were a devoted, striking couple and although my family, among many, were sad that the Grays never had children, our two youngest benefited from supplementary grandparental indulgence, taken out as they so often were to buy fancy buns at Fitzbillies.

As time went on we got through the Museum printing requirements much more rapidly. There was opportunity to design, for a fee, work for outsiders. All profits went into the Friends of the Fitzwilliam’s account. Most important was work for King’s College – the termly calendars for the Chapel Services, as well as circulars for Choral Trials, special service sheets for Memorials, and the Christmas Eve Services. We printed booklets for Sir John Plumb – recording the annual Cricket Match between Christ’s College and the staff at Althorp; several special lectures; and a poem written to Baroness Elie de Rothschild by one of her favourite grand-children. Through Len’s connections at Churchill College came a pamphlet on the history of Kurt Haan and the foundation of Gordonstoun. For me it was a steep learning curve; for Len it was a continuation of real life.

Len was good to work with. He had a dry, waspish sense of humour and no pomposity. In 1988, believing him to be 75 the Museum arranged a small exhibition outside the Charrington Print Room, to display some of the printing achieved or designed by the Friends’ Press. Asked to suggest a title he said, turning on his heel, “Some pickle!” – and was subsequently a little shocked to see the title in print. Moreover, at the opening party, Gladys revealed that the dates were wrong: Len had reached 75 a whole year earlier. That means that when Michael retired in 1990 and our family left Cambridge, Len was 78. The Stanbrook Abbey Crown Folio Platten and Len Gray remained, and the good work continued unabated. Few can have had such a productive retirement as Len Gray, and the Friends of the Fitzwilliam, on whose Committee he enjoyed sitting for so many years, owe him much.

Pat Jaffé
November 2003

REFURBISHING THE EGYPTIAN GALLERIES

The Courtyard Development complete, the Museum is now embarking on a major project to conserve and display its world-class Egyptian antiquities for the 21st century and beyond.

This important and remarkably comprehensive collection spans the full range of Egyptian history, from the earliest traces of civilisation in the Nile Valley through the Dynastic, Classical, Christian and Islamic periods. It offers an exciting opportunity to chart and explain the development of Egyptian civilisation through time. The Egyptian Galleries are extremely popular with visitors from the UK and abroad and are heavily used by school groups, the local community, and all who share a fascination for ancient Egypt. The collections, acquired through excavation, bequest and purchase, are also used extensively for research and teaching.

The current displays present a wide range of objects, from painted wooden coffins to linen tunics, pottery and glass, graffiti and sculpture in stone, bronze, wood and terracotta. Such objects could illuminate many aspects of Egyptian life, from religion and politics to food, technology and writing but the current layout of the galleries does not allow the Museum to maximise their potential impact.

An ambitious £1.25 million project to improve display and interpretation during 2004/5 will ensure the collection is preserved and presented in optimum conditions for the benefit of present and future visitors through a major conservation programme, complete renewal of the display cases and enhanced information provision.

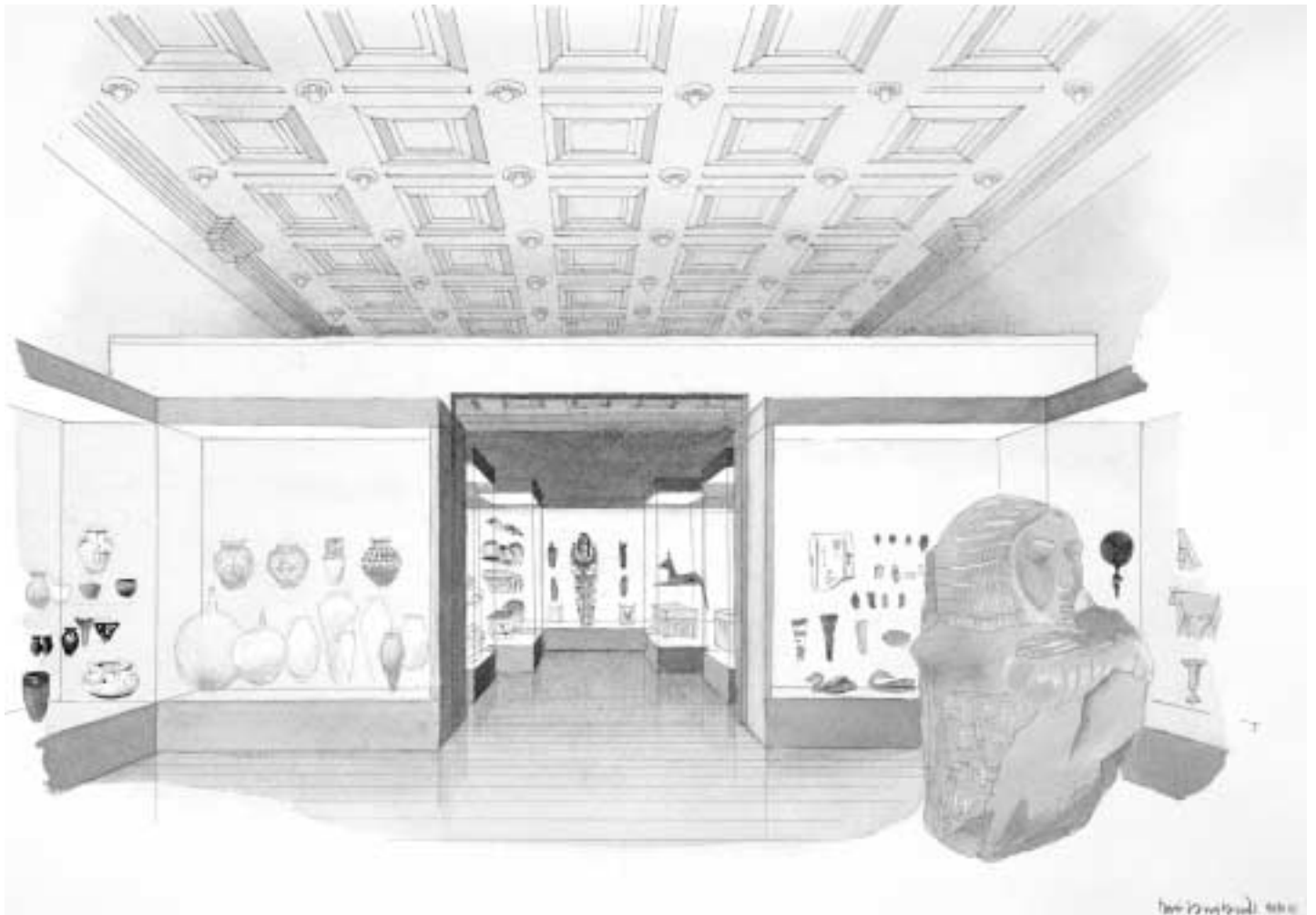
Conservation is a major element of the project, enabling us to halt the deterioration of vulnerable material. Detailed study of the objects will also enable us to advance our understanding of ancient materials and technologies. New display units, with appropriate environmental conditions and purpose-built mounts, will enable us to put more objects on display than ever before.

New information provision will consist of clear information panels and labels complemented by electronic information.

The new arrangement of the galleries will be thematic rather than strictly chronological, with greater emphasis on context and function. Extra gallery space will be created out of redundant storage areas and visitor circulation will be greatly improved by relocating large coffin assemblages. This will form the climax of a visit: a darkened area with atmospheric lighting that will evoke the atmosphere of a tomb as well as protecting the fragile painted surfaces of the coffins.

The total cost of the project is **£1.25 million** and last September the Museum launched its appeal to raise this sum. To date we have raised £487,000, which includes grants of £250,000 from the DCMS/Wolfson Galleries Improvement Fund and £100,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation. This has been pivotal to getting the appeal under way and we are extremely grateful to them for their generous support. We have also had support from the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art, the Estate Management and Building Services Department of the University of Cambridge and generous donations from individual supporters. As part of the fundraising effort, Superbase Developers plc sponsored a lecture by Dr Zahi Hawass, Secretary General of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, at Churchill College, Cambridge, on 21 November and proceeds were generously donated to the Appeal. We still need to raise £700,000 in order to move forward on this project to transform the galleries for present visitors and future generations to enjoy.

If you would like further information or wish to make a donation, contact Sharon Maurice, Development Officer at the Museum, on 01223 332939 or email sdm25@cam.ac.uk.



The refurbished Egyptian Galleries at The Fitzwilliam Museum, Iain Langlands, © The Fitzwilliam Museum.

FRIENDS OF THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

Dusha Bateson, Chairman, reports on Friends' activities and events

There have been some changes to the Executive Committee of the Friends. We note with sadness the death of Len Gray on 30 June 2003. He was for decades a staunch supporter, served on the Committee and produced a series of elegant and stylish printed invitations and programmes for Friends' events. For Len only the highest standards were acceptable – both in printing and in life. We shall miss him. A tribute to Len by his close friend and fellow printer Patricia Jaffé, appears on page 4 of this issue of *Fitzwilliam Museum News*.

The Friends have a new Secretary: Penny Cleobury. She takes over from Alice Fleet with whom she has been working for the past few months. Hers is an important job as she is usually the first point of contact for the membership, dealing with all manner of queries and crises. In Alice we had a wonderful person full of charm and patience! I am sure that we are most fortunate in her successor who comes with great experience of working with various charitable organisations.

Also new to the Committee is Henrietta Ryan. Born and brought up in Cambridge, she has for the last 19 years been the Deputy Keeper of the Print Room at the Royal Library in Windsor Castle. Last autumn she moved back to Cambridge on the appointment of her husband as the Dean of King's College. She now works as an independent art historian and is engaged in freelance editing and working on two catalogues of drawings in the Royal Collection.

Finally, of course we are very aware that the closing of the Museum until the end of May will be a great loss to all Friends. We hope to make up for this a little with an even better than usual programme of events and expeditions – both in Cambridge and further afield. I hope you enjoy them while we look forward to the excitements of the reopening in summer 2004.



Incoming Friends' Secretary Penny Cleobury in the new Friends' Room as it nears completion.

New Horizons

Great news is that the new Courtyard Development will have a dedicated space for the Friends. Many members will remember the old Museum café, located just above the Museum's southern entrance containing the former shop. This light and airy space, just one floor up from the new entrance and easily accessible by both stairs and a new lift, will be completely refurbished and furnished with comfortable chairs and tables and transformed into a place in central Cambridge for Friends to meet, relax and read during their visit to the Fitzwilliam. It will also serve as a space for Information Volunteers to have a break during their sessions. With so many changes at the Fitzwilliam, it will be a wonderful addition to the benefits of being a Friend.

PATRICIA JAFFÉ REMEMBERS LEN GRAY

We are particularly grateful to Patricia Jaffé for her tribute to Len Gray which appears on page 4. As many readers know, Pat is a graduate and former Research Fellow of Newnham College who taught in the History of Art Department at Cambridge. Her publications include *Women Engravers* and *The Drawings of George Romney*. An accomplished wood engraver in her own right, she established the Friends' Press shortly after her late husband, Professor Michael Jaffé, became Director of the Museum in 1973, and ran it until he retired seventeen years later.

JOIN THE FRIENDS

For full information on Friends' activities and how to join contact the Secretary, Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB, telephone 01223 332933, email: fitzmuseum-friends@cam.ac.uk.

Some Key Diary Dates from Summer 2004

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| Tuesday 1 June | Museum reopens to the public |
| Tuesday 29 June | Friends' Annual Summer Party to be held in the Museum Courtyard |
| Tuesday 6 July | <i>Lasting Impressions: Collecting Impressionism for Cambridge</i> opens to the public in new Mellon Gallery for temporary exhibitions |
| Thursday 8 July | First lecture in <i>Lasting Impressions</i> lecture series to be given by Degas scholar Richard Kendall |
| 14, 16, 21 & 23 September | Lectures in the <i>Lasting Impressions</i> lecture series by leading Degas scholars |
| Friday 15 October | <i>Lucien Freud</i> exhibition opens in Mellon Gallery |
| Thursday 18 November | First Sue Purdy Memorial Lecture to be given by John Julius Norwich |
| Thursday 9 December | Friends' Annual Christmas Party in the Museum |

In addition there will be a programme of Friends trips and events, 'Art in Context' lunchtime talks, promenade and evening concerts, new family activities and courses for adults. Full details will be available in May.

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