

Fitzwilliam Museum News

Number 23 Autumn | Winter 2004

Open for business!

After five months of sustained and highly focused activity refurbishing and relighting the galleries and reinstalling the collections following the completion of the Courtyard Development, the Museum opened to the public again on 1 June. From the first, visitors' impressions were favourable.

'The modern additions are superb, exciting and filled with light.'

'Wonderful new spaces!'

'..... a triumph of reorganisation!'

Lloyd Grossman launched the Fitzwilliam's new web resource *Pharos* at a press event on 28 June, attended also by numerous funders, supporters and stakeholders of the Museum's education programme. The Fitzwilliam thanked the major benefactors of the building development at a



The Courtyard

private reception and dinner for 120 in the Courtyard on 1 July, hosted by University of Cambridge Vice-Chancellor Professor Alison Richard and Museum Director Duncan Robinson, with Charles Saumarez Smith, the director of the National Gallery, as guest speaker. On 5 July, 1,200 guests celebrated the Museum's relaunch at a party with champagne, jazz, Mozart, French Impressionism and hundreds of helium balloons released at dusk by Heritage Lottery Fund Chair Liz Forgan and Anne Lonsdale, Chairman of the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum.

And so, after a summer when over 100,000 visitors came to experience the Museum's new spaces, facilities and displays and nearly 54,000 enjoyed *Lasting Impressions: Collecting French Impressionism for Cambridge* in the new Mellon Gallery, the Museum is settling down to 'business as usual'. Teaching of all types continues in the galleries, but school groups can now use the cloakroom and lunchroom in the new education suite on the lower ground floor and learners of all ages can participate in studio sessions which extend their experience in and of the Fitzwilliam. With improved reception areas and facilities, new exhibition galleries, better access and orientation with new



Left to right: Anne Lonsdale, Chairman of the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Duncan Robinson, Director, and Liz Forgan, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund toast the relaunch

lift, better signage and simplified floorplans, new public IT and reference library resources and the Courtyard Shop and Café, the visitor experience has been summed up as: "Really wonderful especially all the information and the education events. Keep up the good work!" With the enthusiasm and commitment of all staff, this we shall certainly aim to do.

The
Fitzwilliam
Museum

The Macclesfield Psalter

Help the Fitzwilliam save this spectacular 14th-century illuminated manuscript from export

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Mellon Gallery, to 23 December
A stunning show which includes the latest prints

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From the Director

First and foremost, THANKS, to everyone who contributed in all kinds of ways to the successful completion of the Courtyard Development. By all accounts I have heard or read, the re-opening of the Museum in the summer was a resounding success; John Miller + Partners' extension, along with their remodelling of existing spaces, has been widely and justly acclaimed.

It not only fulfils the difficult and exacting brief, it does so with elegance and ingenuity. Floor by floor it has augmented and transformed our spaces, for education and exhibitions, for care of the collections and visitors' services. So now the rest is up to us, to demonstrate the value of the project by the best possible use of our enhanced facilities.

The publication in June of the Chancellor's Spending Review included three items of potential benefit to this and other museums. For the East of England, the news that the Department for Culture Media and Sport gives the highest priority to full funding for all of its regional hubs is particularly encouraging; for three years we and our partners in Colchester, Luton and Norwich have been capacity building with the initial allocations we received as 'hubs-in-waiting.' A green light from 2006 onwards would allow us to fulfil the high expectations we share with

government for museums for all. There are several references in the Spending Review to the Report which the Treasury commissioned from Sir Nicholas Goodison. For museums like ours, with an active acquisitions policy, the pledge to augment the meagre resources of the National Heritage Memorial Fund is most welcome, especially at a time when the Heritage Lottery Fund seems to be more interested in issues of access than the primacy of works of art *per se*. Finally, for University Museums, after four years of campaigning by sympathisers across the political spectrum, the government has signalled its intention of extending to us the same concessions over VAT that apply to national and local authority museums.

Thanks principally to the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund and to the Heritage Lottery Fund in the East of England, work

has begun on the renovation of the Egyptian galleries this autumn. Behind the scenes, work continues to return many thousands of objects in the departments of Antiquities and Applied Arts to the reserves and accessible storage. Meanwhile, plans to restore the twentieth century gallery, which occupies the top floor of the 1966 extension next to the Adeane and Mellon Galleries, are under discussion together with the conversion of the Graham Robertson Room into a study room for prints, drawings and manuscripts. In other words, we have no intention of resting on our Courtyard laurels; far from it, the success of the Courtyard is directly responsible for the ambitious programme of improvements which will keep us busy for some considerable time to come.

Duncan Robinson

Innovative eGuide puts Museum's collections into visitors' hands

eGuide – the Fitzwilliam's new interactive, multimedia guide, designed to inform and entertain visitors of all ages and interests – was launched for public use in the galleries in October. Information is provided on hand-held computers with a touch screen and triggered by electronic tags positioned around the Museum.

As well as audio commentaries, eGuide offers the user supplementary images, interactive animations, video and music. Through the hand-held computer, comparisons and contrasts are made between objects from different areas of the collections and different locations within the museum, including works that are rarely on display.

eGuides are available to visitors, free of charge for an initial trial period, from the desk at the Museum's main entrance, where staff are on hand to advise on use. Initially, twenty features have been developed to give a broad overview of the Fitzwilliam's collections. These can be

taken as a whole tour or as two mini tours, covering the museum's upper and lower floors. Each feature is, however, self-contained and the visitor need not follow a set route. The next set of thirty features is currently being created, and it is hoped that future developments will include provision for non-English speakers, families and visitors with disabilities.

The project has been funded by NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts), Toshiba kindly donated the hardware: 15 Pocket PC e800s and Cambridge-based company Hypertag developed the "point and click" electronic tag technology.



eGuide in use in front of Domenico Veneziano, *Annunciation*



Julia Hedgecoe

Searching the stairs for oysters

Frances Sword, Head of Education, writes about new facilities and new opportunities

Next time you are enjoying a coffee in the Museum café, or are browsing in the shop, look across the Courtyard space and you will see an elegant spiral glass staircase. Go down and you will find yourself in the lobby of the Museum's new education suite: a brand new studio, seminar room and schools' lunch room which are transforming all we can offer to everyone we work with.

In the Education Department we have one overarching aim: to involve and excite the broadest span of people in the delights of the collections. Before the opening of the Courtyard Development the type of activities we could offer were severely limited as everything had to take place in the galleries. With our new spaces come new potential, new opportunities, new directions and we are working towards an active programme which is as varied as our audiences.

The studio was launched by filling it with music. Alison Nichols (harp) and Philippe

Honoré (violin) performed and discussed Impressionist music during our first day-course *More Than Pretty Pictures*. Then it was filled with children attending the Museum's summer holiday workshops. Led by Denise Casanova, they learned clay modelling techniques that enabled them to reinterpret stories expertly told in the galleries. This autumn has seen drawing day-courses, combining life drawing taught from the model with teaching in the galleries from drawings on display in the exhibitions *Lasting Impressions: Collecting French Impressionism for Cambridge* and *Lucian Freud: Etchings 1946-2004*.

This combination of looking and doing was also the driving force behind our new Family Fitz Kits which contain attractive, child-centred activities that encourage children and adults to explore many areas of the museum. Any visiting family can pick up a Fitz Kit free at either entrance for use during their visit. The kits, which were made possible by funding from South

Cambridgeshire District Council, have proved to be very popular. As one child wrote: "It's a fab idea, I liked it very much. It was fun finding things in the pictures and searching the stairs for oysters."

Fossils in the stairs are just a tiny part of the wonderful breadth this museum has to offer and we are working ever harder to encourage involvement with every aspect of it.



Frances Sword

Life drawing class in the studio

'The Macclesfield Psalter is destined to play a central role in re-shaping our picture of medieval English art. ... It opens wider than ever before a window into the real and imaginary worlds of late medieval England.'

Prof. Lucy Sandler, Gould Sheppard Professor of Art History
Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Museum committed to saving The Macclesfield Psalter for the nation

With the generous support of the National Art Collections Fund (Art Fund), the Fitzwilliam Museum is embarking on a campaign to save for the nation the Macclesfield Psalter, the most distinctively English of all medieval illuminated manuscripts to be discovered in living memory. Completely unknown until earlier this year, this extraordinarily rich 14th-century manuscript, containing full-page miniatures, exquisite scenery and hundreds of borders decorated in gold and precious pigments, is one of the most lavishly illuminated manuscripts in existence. Produced in the 1320s for Gorleston, Suffolk, the Macclesfield Psalter is an example of the most characteristic late medieval manuscript: the private prayer book. The 252-leaf volume measures just 170 x 108 mm and combines devotional images with an unparalleled array of humorous marginal scenes. It is an outstanding example of East Anglian illumination and the content, techniques and materials used are all vital to the study, understanding and appreciation of medieval English art.

'The Macclesfield Psalter is one of the richest and most beautiful examples of an early English illustrated book. It is a rare and very special insight into our medieval cultural life, and if anything deserves to stay in the country of its origin, this is it.'

Michael Palin, writer and broadcaster

The Psalter was sold at Sotheby's in June 2004 as part of the library of the Earls of Macclesfield. Despite a generous pledge of £400,000 from the Art Fund, the Fitzwilliam Museum was outbid by the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, which purchased the manuscript

for £1,685,600. In August, the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art awarded a starred rating to the Psalter, signalling it to be a heritage object of extraordinary beauty and importance and recommended that every effort should be made to keep it in this country. Following the Committee's advice, and with the hope that a major UK institution would raise sufficient funds to acquire the manuscript, the Arts Minister placed a temporary export bar on it, recently extended until 10 February 2005.

'I do not automatically support campaigns to keep works of art in England. But for the Macclesfield Psalter the case is open and shut: the Psalter was created in East Anglia and it will lose half its meaning if it is torn from its native roots.'

Dr David Starkey, author, historian and broadcaster

The Fitzwilliam is committed to acquiring the Macclesfield Psalter and is delighted that the Art Fund has pledged £500,000 towards its purchase and launched a public appeal. The Museum has been able to commit £100,000 from its exiguous acquisition funds and the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum have pledged £50,000. The Fitzwilliam has also applied to the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which gives grants to protect items of outstanding importance to the nation's heritage, acting as a 'fund of last resort'. In addition, donations from members of the public to support the acquisition of this outstanding manuscript will be vital to the success of the campaign to save the Macclesfield Psalter for the nation.

What future for the Macclesfield Psalter at The Fitzwilliam Museum?

While in private hands, the Macclesfield Psalter has suffered from heavy use and neglect. If acquired by the Fitzwilliam, its broken eighteenth-century binding would be replaced with a new one, providing the necessary support, flexibility and protection to preserve it in an optimal condition. While disbound for conservation, the manuscript would be digitised for future research, teaching and a wide range of printed and electronic publications, and sample-free pigment analysis carried out.

From July to December 2005, the Macclesfield Psalter would be the centrepiece of *The Cambridge Illuminations*, a major exhibition of some 200 of Cambridge's most celebrated manuscripts representing ten centuries of medieval and renaissance art. The Macclesfield Psalter would represent the East Anglian school at its zenith, its leaves mounted and displayed individually in a gallery of its own offering visitors the intimate experience of the manuscript enjoyed by its original owners. The Psalter would then feature prominently in the permanent display of the Fitzwilliam's Medieval and Renaissance gallery and in the Museum's educational programmes.

Stop Press...

On 19 November, the National Heritage Memorial Fund announced the award of a generous grant of £860,000 towards the purchase of the Macclesfield Psalter.



Sotheby's

How you can help

If you would like to support the campaign to save the Macclesfield Psalter for the nation for the benefit of present and future generations, donations may be sent to:

Sharon Maurice, Development Officer, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB; telephone: 01223 332939; email: sdm25@cam.ac.uk. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Fitzwilliam Museum'.



Lucian Freud, *Ill in Paris*, 1948 © Lucian Freud

Lucian Freud: Etchings 1946-2004 to 23 December | Mellon Gallery

Lucian Freud: Etchings 1946-2004, the Museum's major exhibition this autumn, presents for the first time to a wide UK public a full survey of Lucian Freud's etchings.

There have been major shows in the USA, Japan and continental Europe, but there has until now been no full retrospective of Freud's etchings in the UK. Although less well known than his paintings, Freud's prints are on a similar level of achievement and demonstrate his essential strengths as an artist.

The exhibition has been organised by the Fitzwilliam – by Craig Hartley, the Museum's Senior Assistant Keeper in charge of prints and a leading authority on Freud's prints – and Marlborough Graphics in association with the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. Hartley is also the author of the exhibition catalogue, which aims to introduce Freud's printmaking to a general public who know Freud primarily as a painter and may well be unfamiliar with his prints. The catalogue is available from the Museum's shops, price £6.99.

Exhibition supported by

The Marlay Group



The Cambridge showing of the exhibition is special in a number of ways, including the first public display of Freud's very latest prints. *Before the Fourth*, a study of a pregnant woman lying naked, is Freud's first etching of a full-length nude in nearly ten years. A new small painting of the same subject is also displayed for the first time, allowing a comparison of Freud's approach in painting and print.

Another new print on display is *The Painter's Garden 2003-2004*, a large and impressive view down Freud's garden and a compelling follow-up to the extraordinary *Garden in Winter* of 1997-9. This is also the first chance for many to see Freud's very rare early etchings, which were sometimes printed in editions as small as three impressions, not all of which survive; these are all from private collections otherwise inaccessible to the public.

In addition to the new work on display, Freud's published prints are complemented by additional loans of stage proofs and pre-publication proofs to shed further light on Freud's printmaking process. Also included in the exhibition is the copper plate for the magnificent portrait of *Lord Goodman in his Yellow Pyjamas* of 1987.

Meet the Antiquities

As you passed through the Leventis (Cyprus) Gallery this summer, you might have noticed an enthralled group around a table enjoying a chance to learn about ancient objects. This was part of the 'Meet the Antiquities' scheme which the Antiquities Department successfully introduced last year, providing visitors with the opportunity of seeing close-up objects from the Museum's collection and asking questions about them.

The sessions this summer were run by pairs of Friends Volunteers and the objects they used were two Egyptian funerary figurines (shabtis), two small Greek pots and some fragments of Greek pottery. They were provided with detailed notes about the objects and received training from members of the department, who were on hand as necessary to provide support.

The public response was overwhelming and more sessions are intended in the future.

'What an excellent idea. I came in for a brief visit and found meeting the experts very informative and also very enjoyable. Looking at the exhibits now in a different way.'

'...It was good to be shown something specific in detail – it was fascinating to hear how much could be told about the pieces' purpose and construction from close scrutiny. We all enjoyed it.'

'Fascinating. Brought the experience to life – good to be able to ask questions, then go back for another look.'



Up close and personal: Volunteer, visitor and ancient Greek pot

Julia Hedgecoe

Fitzwilliam launches Big Draw 2004



Drawing Breath – the Fitzwilliam's drawing event on Saturday 2 October – launched the fifth annual nationwide *Big Draw* in the east of England. Over 2,500 visitors of all ages enjoyed a range of drawing activities throughout the galleries, and many joined illustrator Ian Beck to take part in the 'Story Draw' in the Museum's new studio.

Refurbishment of the Egyptian Galleries

Following the award of a grant of £586,500 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and with support from the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, the Friends of the Fitzwilliam and many other organisations and private individuals, the refurbishment of the Egyptian galleries is finally underway. The galleries closed to the public on 5 October to allow staff of the Department of Antiquities to move the collections out in preparation for building work to commence.

The project also includes the conservation of parts of the collection and the three-year appointment of an Outreach Officer to plan and implement programmes of activities to extend access to, and enjoyment of, Ancient Egypt.

Until 8 May, highlights of the Romano-Egyptian collections will be on display in *Roman Egyptomania* in the Octagon.

Working with the business community

Sharon Maurice, Development Officer, reports on recent business support for the Museum

We would especially like to acknowledge the support that members of the local business community have given the Fitzwilliam Museum during 2004, particularly for the re-launch activities that took place during the summer. Waitrose was outstandingly generous, supplying champagne and canapés for 1,200 guests at the Museum's re-launch party on 5 July – so we extend grateful thanks to the Manager and staff at the Cambridge store and the Marketing team at Waitrose Head Office in Bracknell. We are delighted that Waitrose hosted its own exclusive customer wine-tasting event at the Museum on 25 October.

Thanks are due, too, to the other local businesses who supported the Museum's re-launch: Barclays Bank plc, Deloitte, Cambridge University Press, Cheffins, Marshall of Cambridge Ltd, Prentis & Co and the TTP Group plc, all of whom have helped us to celebrate the opening of the Courtyard development in fitting style.

The Museum benefited too from corporate support for *Lasting Impressions: Collecting French Impressionism for Cambridge*, the exhibition of French Impressionist art which inaugurated the Mellon Gallery – the Museum's splendid new temporary exhibitions gallery. Dazzle* and the Zio Corporation, the John Lewis Partnership and Schlumberger all contributed to help bring the exhibition to the widest possible audience, including specially devised education events and family activities and a lecture series given by internationally renowned scholars of French Impressionism.

The exhibition *Lucian Freud: Etchings 1946 – 2004*, running from 15 October – 23 December, is supported not only by the Marlay Group but also by Taylor Vinters Solicitors who have once again demonstrated in a very tangible way their commitment to supporting the Fitzwilliam Museum and its activities.

The development of *Pharos* and the eGuide has been supported by Toshiba in Europe and Toshiba UK whose generous donation enabled the 'virtual' process of Japanese woodblock printing to be included in *Pharos*, and who

also gave the Museum 15 PDAs to launch the eGuide, an interactive guided tour of key items in the Museum's collections.

The Fitzwilliam Museum has also been the venue for two events organised by Arts & Business East; their Development Forum on 3 June was the first event to be held in the Museum's brand new Seminar Room and was attended by representatives from arts organisations and businesses throughout the eastern region including Tim Bishop, Regional Director of BBC East. On 15 July Arts & Business East hosted a breakfast in the Courtyard Café with a Private View of *Lasting Impressions*. This was followed by a seminar on *Arts, Business and the Built Environment: putting art at the heart of property development*. Both events were well attended and proved to be extremely popular with delegates.



Waitrose wine-tasting event in the Courtyard

The Museum has benefited from specialist expertise from the Arts & Business Skills Bank Scheme most recently in the form of Simon Gillings from Ernst & Young who has helped to develop a business plan for the Museum.

The Fitzwilliam Museum can offer businesses a range of benefits from corporate hospitality and networking events to marketing opportunities and specially devised activities for employees. To find out more and for details of how your company can support the Fitzwilliam Museum please contact:

**Sharon Maurice, Development Officer,
The Fitzwilliam Museum,
Cambridge CB2 1RB. Tel: 01223 332939;
email: sdm25@cam.ac.uk**

Friends of The Fitzwilliam Museum

Dusha Bateson, Chairman of the Friends, reports on recent activities and events

The reopening of the Museum and the unveiling of the new Courtyard have been the great events of the past few months. The Friends were fortunate to have been able to enjoy their summer party in the new Courtyard and they celebrated the stunning architecture with glasses of Cava and delicious canapés provided by a stalwart catering committee. For the Friends there is the added bonus that we now have our own Friends' room at mezzanine level, above the new Courtyard Entrance to the Museum. We hope that it will serve as an attractive place to meet and relax. It is your room, so please do use it.

The Information Volunteers are pleased to be even more involved with the "new" Museum. Ten instruction sessions were held in the Cypriot Gallery where they were thrilled to handle Egyptian shabtis and Greek vases prior to showing them to the public (see page 6). As before, among their duties are manning the Friends' desk, helping visitors to enjoy the Museum, locating the work of specific artists and advising on routes to the new galleries and facilities - and, we hope, enrolling new Friends.

While the Museum was in the final throes of building and reorganisation, we felt we should make a special effort to arrange some

additional attractions to make up for the closure. Two series of visits were arranged. In early spring, several of the great College libraries in Cambridge welcomed groups of Friends and this was followed by guided visits to College chapels. Both proved very successful and were oversubscribed.

Travelling further afield, a small party visited the Lord Chancellor's apartments in the Palace of Westminster and later went on to visit the exhibition at the Royal Academy of Andrew Lloyd Webber's outstanding collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. In March, Friends visited Southwell Minster with its spectacular stone carvings and then continued on to Upton Hall and the British Horological Institute.

The curious career of Catherine Parr proved a fascinating subject for a day-long event held, as usual, in Gonville and Caius College. These events have become a regular feature of the Friends' calendar giving, as they do, an opportunity to enjoy good company, learn about something new and have a delicious lunch and glass of wine. We owe Sally Sandys-Renton a great debt of gratitude for her work in organising these occasions. She is retiring from the Friends' Committee and we shall miss her. We hope to continue her work; it will be a hard act to follow.

Also retiring from our Committee are Alice Fleet and Julia Boyd, both of whom gave generously of their time and effort and we extend to them our grateful thanks and wish them well.

Sadly, we have to report the demise of the Friends' Press. For nearly fifty years, from a tiny room in Grove Lodge Cottage, has come a regular stream of elegant printing - not only posters, tickets and programmes for Friends' activities but also private (and, for the Friends, lucrative) work. Patricia Jaffé was the initial inspiration for this but she was very soon glad to accept help from Len Gray - particularly after he retired from a distinguished career with Cambridge University Press, and who continued almost until his death last year. His little Press room has now metamorphosed into the Museum's computer room. Len - who was a true craftsman and lovingly set every letter by hand - would not have approved!

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@lists.cam.ac.uk

Christmas Concert

Welcome Yule! - a concert of seasonal favourites performed by the renowned **New Cambridge Singers** - will take place in Gallery 3 of the Museum on Thursday 16 December at 7.30 pm. Tickets £12 (£10 Friends of the Fitzwilliam and concessions) are available from Cambridge Arts Box Office, telephone 01223 503333. Ticket price includes a glass of wine in the interval.

Guided Tours for Groups: A New Approach

The Fitzwilliam is working in partnership with the Blue and Green Badge Guided Tours service at Cambridge Tourist Information Centre to provide pre-booked guided tours of the Museum for groups from next spring. Taking into account the needs of our visitors as well as the new displays in many of the Museum's galleries following the Courtyard Development, a new training course for Fitzwilliam guides has

been developed. Training will be provided in the Museum between January and March for Blue Badge guide applicants accepted on to the course, with those successfully completing it qualifying to offer guided tours from 1 April 2005. All tours will be booked through the Guided Tours Department at the Cambridge Tourist Information Centre and details will be available in the spring.

The Fitzwilliam Museum is supported by

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