The Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford Magazine

New Pitt Rivers Director

Climbing the ladder of swords

Africa in Berlin

KK fund

Cook-voyage collection returns

Egypt’s Sherlock Holmes

Photography exposed

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BAfM Award 2015
Editorial
In an extended Museum News (opposite) the Pitt Rivers’ newly-appointed Director Laura van Broekhoven introduces herself and her vision for the future development of the Museum. Laura’s enthusiasm is infectious and she will inspire staff and Friends over the coming months as well as orchestrating the move of the Reserve Collection to a new home.

Turn the page for a spread on Kenneth Kirkwood. On p5 his daughter Nicky Moeran and her photographer husband Jerry (Studio Edmark) cover our sell-out KK Memorial Lecture Day; on p4 Navigator Ndhlolou revisits his Zimbabwean homeland with the help of a KK Fund grant.

We have a postponed pleasure on p7 where Curator and Joint Head of Collections Jeremy Coote introduces the new Cook-voyage collection returns. This follows his history of the display which featured on the cover of issue 83 last summer.

Continuing the international theme we hear of Tullio Lobetti’s gruelling climb up Japan’s ladder of swords (p6); meet a key member of the Tutankhamun team, forensic chemist Alfred Lucas (p8); and pay a visit to the Berlin Museum (p9). A new addition is the competition (p10) where we ask readers under 18 to identify six objects in the Museum.

The VERVE: Need/Make/Use project has now completed its work on the west wall of the Lower Gallery with an eclectic display of stonework from around the world. The selections emphasise the use of local stone resources and methods of production, from volcanic moai figures from Rapa Nui (Easter Island) to Suffolk flint-workers’ tools and materials, and soapstone cooking pots from the Valtellina valley in northern Italy. We are now busy selecting material for the run of Upper Gallery desktop cases devoted to world archaeology, planned for 2016-17.

Staff news
Meanwhile there are changes afoot in the team; we welcome Miriam Orsini from the Royal College of Surgeons as VERVE Conservator and Beth McDougall from Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation as VERVE Activity and Outreach Officer. Project Curator Helen Adams is on maternity leave until March 2017.

Helen Adams, Verge Project Curator/Engagement Officer

News from the Museum
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Between Friends
In the last issue I mentioned that we had found three new volunteers for various roles. I would now like to introduce them.

Conor Pickering (top left) is our new Membership Development Officer. He is already well known to many visitors to the PRM, having served both as a volunteer and a part-time gallery staff member. His professional background is in corporate communications and government relations in the UK and internationally. He is currently studying with Oxford University Continuing Education Department, and also works in developing cultural programmes for an Oxford language school.

Inga Ristau (centre) is our new Secretary. She is studying for a BA in Theatre and Drama Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London. She has undergone training and active volunteer positions in object handling, public engagement and exhibition planning for Oxford University Museums, and has an NVQ Diploma in Customer Service with training in manual handling, fire awareness and child protection.

Ziyue (Emily) Wu (bottom) has joined the team to assist with Events. Emily comes from Guangdong, China and is currently a first-year Mathematics and Statistics undergraduate at Worcester College. She worked as an intern at the Guangdong Provincial Museum, where she organised and hosted educational events for children and families. At the PRM, she worked closely with the exhibition ‘Smile of Khmer: Cambodian cultural relics’.

We are incredibly fortunate to have recruited three such well-qualified and gifted people; they will be a great asset to the Friends. Welcome, Inga, Emily and Conor.

Gillian Morriss-Kay, Chair of the Friends

Travelling with the Alumni
Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum are now eligible to participate in the Oxford Alumni Travellers Programme (excluding trips organised jointly with Cambridge). For details, see www.alumni.ox.ac.uk/friends-university-travel or contact Denise Gogarty denise.gogarty@alumni.ox.ac.uk

Cover image: Hand sewn cloak made of intestine with embroidered decoration, Aleutian Islands, USA 1886.1.871 © Pitt Rivers Museum
Laura van Broekhoven: Pitt Rivers Museum’s new Director

It’s a great pleasure to welcome our new Director to these pages. She took up the reins on 1 March and shares with us here her passionate vision for the Museum’s future direction and the many challenges ahead. Laura was previously Head of the Curatorial Department at the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen in the Netherlands.

What should a new Director bring to an institution already ranked among the best of its kind? A world-class museum of anthropology and archaeology; a centre for object-based teaching and research that is so loved by its visitors that on TripAdvisor – where it features as the second finest attraction in Oxford – people urge others to donate generously.

To strengthen the Museum’s present and future relevance and impact we need to formulate a clear vision on what should drive it as an ethnographic resource in a city that is rapidly diversifying. We must find a focus that suits the contemporary, acknowledges our pasts and imagines new futures. Through collaborative strategic planning, we need to critically rethink what research, public engagement and conservation should look like in the 21st century and how we can secure the Museum’s financial sustainability.

With 36.4% of Oxford City’s population being of non-white British descent, how do we ensure that the stories we tell are relevant to all our future visitors? How do we engage with stimulating on-going discussions regarding pressing matters such as equal access to opportunity, mobility and representation? What is the best way to connect to other collections, to the University at large and internationally, so that multiple voices can tell the manifold stories our collections hold? We must ensure that these stories resonate with our intended audiences and at the same time question and challenge us.

Down-to-earth logistical matters also keep us occupied. Over 100,000 objects currently stored off site are being catalogued, photographed, packed and transported to a new home; this will hold much of the University Museums’ reserve collections, and, in time (we must allow ourselves to dream) will become a joint Oxford University Collections Research Centre. As there is great pressure for this daunting project to move forward swiftly, its management requires a unique combination of imaginative thinking and focused efficiency. At the same time, the move is an amazing opportunity to give this part of our collections the attention it deserves and make it accessible.

I feel honoured and privileged to be part of shaping the future of this beloved Museum. Thanks in particular to the outstanding leadership of Professor Michael O’Hanlon, the building is able to fulfil its core functions as a space for research, teaching, display and conservation. I also want to thank Laura Peers for acting as Interim Director at an especially challenging time. Finally, I know I can count on the highly valued support and expertise of the Friends, their Council and Patrons, to ensure our continued relevance in the 21st century.

Laura van Broekhoven, Museum Director

Laura’s favourite things include the intestine cloak (cover) and those shown here.
Zimbabwe: Navigator Ndhlovu visits his home country

Navigator worked as a gallery assistant at the PRM while studying for a degree at Ruskin College. He visited Zimbabwe last year with the aid of a grant from the Friends’ Kenneth Kirkwood Memorial Fund. As told to Gillian Morriss-Kay

The name “Zimbabwe” is derived from Dzimba-dzemabwe, houses of stone, referring to the ruins of ‘Great Zimbabwe’, the administrative centre constructed under the rule of King Mutapa in the 11th century for the Shona-speaking area between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers. I visited as a schoolboy – it is much the best preserved of the stone cities scattered around the country. Its decline during the 15th century was due to environmental degradation and administrative mismanagement. The Mutapa tribespeople migrated north towards the Zambezi river; the Kalanga west to Khami where their own city, built of elaborately decorated multi-coloured stonework, became their capital from 1483. The country exported copper, gold and ivory via Arab traders on the coast. These riches were very attractive to the Portuguese, who established a colony in neighbouring Mozambique in the 16th century. They also came to Khami, where a stone cross inset into the ground is thought to have been constructed by their missionaries. In 1684 the Rozvi, a group formed from several Shona states under the leadership of Changamire Dumbo, split off from the Mutapa and came south to Khami. In 1693 they drove out the Portuguese and ousted the Khami leader, Mambo (chief or king in Shona) Chibundule. They dominated a large area, the Rozvi empire, until 1834. Meanwhile, to the south, in what is now Kwazulu (Natal), Shaka Zulu, the founder of the Zulu nation, fell out with his chief general, Mzilikazi, who fled north with his Ndebele followers. He invaded Zimbabwe from the west, spreading out on three fronts to conquer the Rozvi empire. As a result, the land to the north and south of Bulawayo is now the mainly Ndebele-speaking area, Matabeleland. The Shona-speaking north-east of Zimbabwe is Mashonaland.

Mzilikazi died in 1868; he was succeeded by his son Lobengula, who became king of both Matabeleland and Mashonaland. Both father and son were tolerant of white missionaries, hunters and prospectors. One of the Europeans, Doctor Leander Starr Jameson, relieved Lobengula from the pain of gout. Unfortunately Jameson’s friend Cecil Rhodes induced Lobengula to sign treaties he didn’t fully understand, thereby, losing his whole kingdom.

My visit to Khami last year was not my first. On a trip there as a ten-year-old I also visited Cecil Rhodes’ grave, and was told: “Here lies the man who took our kindness and welcoming nature as a weakness to be exploited and our people [presumably the Ndebele and Shona] have been at loggerheads ever since, leading us open to colonisation.”

My extended family came together for a special occasion during my visit: my maternal grandmother’s 80th birthday. She was a teacher in my first school, and retired as headmistress. She died three months after my visit.

Navigator in many ways encompasses the history of his country. He grew up in a multi-ethnic area of Bulawayo, and is able to communicate in Ndebele, Shona and English. His first name derives from the Portuguese navigators who colonised Mozambique, where his paternal grandfather came from. His paternal grandmother was Kalanga, and maternal grandmother was Ngumi. Navigator was born shortly before independence, in what was then Southern Rhodesia, named after Cecil Rhodes. GMK

KK bursaries awarded in 2016

Beth Asbury (Assistant to the Director and Administration Team) to attend a one-day workshop on handling museum objects at the V&A; Philip Grover (Curator and Acting Head of Photograph and Manuscript Collections) to help develop an exhibition catalogue to accompany the Pitt Rivers Museum’s forthcoming exhibition of photographs by Sheila Paine, planned for late autumn 2016.
Tricks of the trade – a magical KK Day

Magic in an array of intriguing guises was the subject of this year’s sell-out Kenneth Kirkwood Memorial Lecture Day. Four guest speakers took the audience on a bewitching journey from the dark streets of Victorian England to tribal India, via Fiji and a thought-provoking digression into the playful minds of some of the world’s greatest artists. There was even a genuine magic trick, of which more later...

The Day’s theme was ‘Magic and its Role in Human Society’ and Dr Karl Bell, a Senior Lecturer in History at Portsmouth University, began by exploring magical practices and beliefs in the Victorian city. It was during this era that the urban population outnumbered that of the countryside for the first time, and the first two generations of city dwellers found the experience an unsettling one. The previous dependable rhythms of rural life were displaced by crowds of strangers and cramped, unsanitary conditions. “The role of magic was to gain influence over this uncontrollable environment”, particularly on matters such as health.

People used charms to ward off everything from a nose bleed to smallpox. Blue necklaces were worn for bronchitis and there was even a theory that rubbing part of a recently executed corpse could provide some immunity from disease. Even as the industrial revolution gathered pace, fortune-telling and astrological readings administered by ‘Wise Women’ and ‘Cunning Men’ remained a feature of life for many. Alongside the scientific and engineering breakthroughs “a mass of superstition” persisted.

Thousands of miles away in Fiji, magic – in the form of the power of ancestors – remains a potent force. Christina Toren, Professor of Social Anthropology at St Andrews University, who studies Fijian ethnography, said: “I am told that witches exist in all the villages of Fiji.” They are thought to have great knowledge of herbs and medicines and the ability to call on the aid of long-dead ancestors whose mana (effectiveness or power) remains important in their descendants’ lives.

Surprisingly, these beliefs co-exist with Fiji’s strong adherence to Methodism. “Fijians are very good Christians... but if a natural calamity occurs that is a sign that living humans have done something that displeases their ancestors who really own the place. The living then do things to assuage the anger, such as offer up whales’ teeth.”

Among the Sora of tribal India, Professor Piers Vitebsky, Head of Anthropology at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, said the dead are thought to speak through female shamans (people regarded as having access to the spirit world). The shamans fall into speaking trances in which living family members can talk to relatives who have died and even settle matters of inheritance and kinship.

When a death is recent these exchanges can be both noisy and lively as the shaman relays information between the two sides. But over time this “joint psychotherapy” becomes softer and calmer and: “There are parallels with some processes of Freudian psychoanalysis.”

Dr Alexander Sturgis, Director of the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology at Oxford, cited how illusion is sometimes powerfully deployed in works of art. Using a range of paintings, objects and sculpture from both the recent and distant past he demonstrated how the eye can frequently be ‘fooled’, and also how a viewer can be persuaded that a mundane object is a work of art simply because the artist says so.

And just for good measure he began his lecture with a magic trick of his own, by tearing a newspaper into shreds and then, with what appeared to be a mere flick of the hand, miraculously reassembling it!

Nicky Moeran
Friend and Kenneth Kirkwood’s daughter

I’d like to thank the Friends who prepared our delicious lunch and helped with the event which raised a record £900 after expenses. We enjoyed several dishes from the Pitt Rivers Cookbook and sold 13 copies as a result. As Shahin Bekhradnia, who organised this magical programme, joked: “some people just come for the lunch!” Ed
Climbing the ladder of swords

OBJECTS in the Pitt Rivers associated with Japanese spiritual practices include a charm from a Shinto shrine (1976.10.5), and Netsuke figurines of Daruma (Bodhidharma). Yet, it is the katana – blades associated with samurai – from the Museum’s collection of Japanese Arms and Armour, which sometimes feature in one of Japan’s more popular ascetic practices: the hawatari (climbing the ladder of swords). Illustrating Tullio Lobetti’s personal account of the hawatari, the katana on the cover of his book Ascetic Practices in Japanese Religion make up the lower rungs of the ladder. It is one of several ascetic acts the author undertook in the course of his doctoral research. As he notes, practical considerations supersedes symbolism here and the older, less sharp katana from the Edo period are placed where one is still finding one’s feet.

Lobetti’s wonderfully accessible, if occasionally alarming, narrative – melding anthropology, philosophy, religion, and spirituality – recognises the three areas within which studies of asceticism largely rest: autobiography/biography; monographs; and the study of Japanese popular religion. His opening

scrutiny of the concepts ‘human body’ and ‘asceticism’, in traditions ranging from Judaic Christianity to both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, is key. Lobetti’s critique of the notions of self-denial and self-mortification serves as a foil to Japanese ascetics’ own understanding of ‘empowerment’ through their practices; while his unpacking of the distinctions body/matter and mind/soul allows him to scan the term ‘ascetic/askesis’ back to its original meaning of ‘training’. The ground

prepared, the rest of the book examines the varying levels of training Japanese asceticism exacts, the individuals involved and their personal searches, the contexts they perform within, and finally Lobetti’s engagement with what is gained.

However, the ascetic tradition being an embodied tradition requiring physical scrutiny in order to experience the “feelings, bodily sensations and... nonverbal traits of the ascetic discourse”, it is Lobetti’s firsthand, body-breaking fieldwork that undergirds the book. While he considers it “an essay in philosophical anthropology”, his direct participation in several of the arduous rituals allows him to assess the declarations of his fellow practitioners. When they are not nodding off from exhaustion, that is, author included.

The catalogue of Japanese ascetic practices astounds: water ablutions (mizugori), even when bitterly cold; walking barefoot on embers of a spent

cold practice (samugyō) under a waterfall, sometimes in minus five degrees; the nine-day-long Haguro mountain-entry (akinomine) practice, with three days of incessant fasting and practices (more than 400 prostrations one morning); and the seven-day zazen retreat (Rōhatsu sesshin). Here the combination of continuous sitting meditation with incessant shouting of the koan ‘mu’ to focus the mind – a senior lay member constantly hitting each practitioner’s right shoulder with a wooden stick, to ‘help’ in the effort, causing in the author and others copious bleeding from the third day onwards – is aimed at pushing the body to ‘breaking point’. Not to mention other, more potentially fatal practices Lobetti faced. The ultimate purpose of all ascetic practices, he says, is “[the creation of] a fluid space between... life and death where the practitioner can look at both from some sort of middle point”.

The body, thus empowered, becomes a tool with which to ‘manage death’. ‘Corporis ascensus’ being the germane title to his conclusion, Lobetti closes with an account of the ‘perfect bodies’ of the self-mummified Buddhas, who, through entering ‘perpetual samādhi’ (meditative absorption), undergo self-mummification. A lineage going back first to a mythical legend and, historically, to Japan’s greatest esoteric master Kûkai, the founder of Shingon Buddhism, known posthumously as Kôbô Daishi, of whom the Museum possesses a figure (1884.59.126).

Dipli Saikia, Friend
In late February, Chris Wilkinson and Alan Cooke made the final additions and adjustments to the new display on the Lower Gallery devoted to the objects in the Museum’s collection traceable to Captain Cook’s voyages. The old display was dismantled in 2009 and it has taken longer than planned to get the collection back on exhibition, but it is worth the wait. First, the new case contains far more than was on display before: including 172 objects from the Forsters’ collection during Cook’s second voyage, along with 24 objects from the first-voyage collection that Joseph Banks gave to Christ Church. This has been in the Museum’s care since the mid-1880s, but only discovered in 2004. Secondly, all the collection has been thoroughly conserved and is presented in the best possible condition. This is most noticeable with the Tahitian mourner’s dress, which looks truly magnificent, especially when approached from the far end of the gallery.

We could have organised the items typologically with all the weapons and ornaments together or, more interestingly, could have followed the approach adopted very successfully in the *Pacific Encounters* exhibition held at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in 2006 (and then at the *Musée du quai Branly* in Paris in 2008); that is, according to the Pacific-inspired themes of Sea, Land, and Marae/Temple. Unlike the curators of *Pacific Encounters*, however, we could not start with a theme and then choose the objects to illustrate it. Rather, we had a set of objects and had to find a way of exhibiting to suit them and make sense to the Museum’s varied visitors.

Instead, we let the collections lead the way, drawing on the categories the Forsters themselves used in their *Catalogue of Curiosities sent to Oxford* – by island and island group. The division of the case into ‘Tahiti and the Society Islands’, ‘Marquesas Islands’, ‘Rapa Nui / Easter Island’, ‘Tonga’, ‘Vanuatu’, ‘New Caledonia / Nouvelle Calédonie’, and ‘New Zealand’ worked for the Forster and the Banks collection with its objects from Tahiti and New Zealand. Presenting the collections by island also allows references to the voyages and to say at least something about what the voyagers were up to.

We did not want the display to be about Cook or Banks or the Forsters. They need mentioning as the source of the collections, of course, but the emphasis is on the objects themselves. As much as possible, we want them to do the work with the help of their mounting, arrangement and juxtaposition. Thus a key element of the display is the way in which the positioning of each object is determined by its function in relation to the human body and how it would have been used. This is not followed through pedantically, but it informs the whole display and is complemented by reproductions of imagery from the voyage. I am particularly glad that we are able to include reproductions of some of William Hodges’s second-voyage portraits in chalk of Islanders, like Honu, the chief of Tahuata in the Marquesas Islands, to humanise the display.

Now that the redisplay is complete, it would be nice for us all to rest on our laurels. Unfortunately, that is not possible. Work to update and enhance the related website continues, and work has also begun on producing a ‘Souvenir Guide’ for the shop, as well as preparing for the special Friends evening on 19 October (see back page). In the meantime, I am taking every opportunity I can to stroll over to the north-east corner of the lower gallery to eavesdrop on what visitors have to say about the Museum’s latest redisplay of one of the University’s greatest collections. 

[web.prm.ox.ac.uk/cookvoyages/index.php/en/index.html]

Jeremy Coote, Curator and Joint Head of Collections
Alfred Lucas: Egypt’s Sherlock Holmes

In the Pottery Decoration case, C151.A in the Court, are a few items from ancient Egypt. Two vials modestly labelled ‘d.d. A. Lucas, 1926’, contain frit, a mixture of lapis lazuli, malachite, silica, lime and perhaps natron (a type of salt). Frit was used to make pottery glazes and possibly also in the manufacture of faience, an early form of glass. Their donor was Alfred Lucas, dubbed ‘Egypt’s Sherlock Holmes’ by the Egyptian Gazette in April 1922. Lucas was the chemist on Howard Carter’s excavation of Tutankhamun’s tomb. He consolidated and conserved objects from the tomb as well as testing the materials they were made of.

Lucas (1867-1945) trained at the Royal College of Science (now Imperial College) as an analytical chemist and then spent eight years working for the Inland Revenue Laboratory. After contracting TB he moved to Egypt in 1897 where he held several positions in chemistry labs, including that of the Geological Survey Department. In 1912 Lucas worked on legal cases in the Government Analytical Laboratory and Assay Office, and was awarded an OBE for assisting in forensic cases during WW1.

After opening Tutankhamun’s tomb in November 1922, Carter went to Cairo to put a team together to excavate it. Lucas was supposed to retire in 1923, but agreed to join him and worked on the tomb for nine seasons. The team included Harry Burton of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) in New York, whose photos are held in duplicate there and in the Griffith Institute in Oxford. Lucas worked with Arthur Mace, also from the Met, in the tomb of Sety II. This ‘laboratory tomb’ was chosen because it was tucked away off the tourist route, but visitors could still smell the chemicals as they walked up the path!

Lucas also helped interpret the mess left by the tomb’s ancient robbers as, not only was he a chemist, but an expert in crime scene investigation too**. His textbook, Forensic Chemistry (1921), was the first on the subject and his Ancient Egyptian Materials and Industries (1926) is still relevant today. In comparison, Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology by Ian Shaw and Paul T Nicholson was not published until 2000 and needed over 30 contributors. Nicholson claims that, until then, everyone considered Egyptological science to have ‘been done’ by Lucas! In the Oxford Dictionary of Forensic Science (2013) Suzanne Bell even says he could rightfully claim to be the father of forensic chemistry.

To give an idea of the scope of Lucas’ job with Carter, 150 bits of jewellery were found on Tutankhamun’s body, the Antechamber contained 600-700 objects, the Burial Chamber 300 objects and the Treasury over 500 objects. Before going by barge to Cairo, they had to be taken five miles to the river using a hand-powered train.

The team was only given ten lengths of train track, however, so had to pick up the rails from the back and move them to the front in temperatures that made the metal almost too hot to touch. It took 15 hours, plus an overnight stop. In The Complete Tutankhamun (1990), Nicholas Reeves says Carter estimated that without conservation barely 10% of the objects would have reached Cairo in a state fit for exhibition. Thanks to Lucas’ skills, only 0.25% of them were lost.

Beth Asbury
Assistant to the Director and Administration Team

Lucas’ Register of Samples is held at the Griffith Institute***. Frit from sources other than Tutankhamun’s tomb and from before December 1926 is mentioned on pages 2/3, 12/13 and 48/49. Perhaps some of it had already made its way to the PRM!

*griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/carter/gallery/ **griffith.ox.ac.uk/gri/4robbery.html ***griffith.ox.ac.uk/discoveringTut/conservation/4lucas_samples.html
Africa in Berlin

The New York Times of 30 January 1911 carried an article from its correspondent in Berlin headed ‘German Discovers Atlantis in Africa’. This remarkable announcement was based on a report from the ethnographer Leo Frobenius of an extraordinary find in West Africa – a copper alloy head “of faultless mold, finely traced... there is no doubt that it cannot have been of local casting.” Such technical mastery was assumed to be beyond the capability of any African people. An immaculately-crafted object of this quality must therefore have a European source, even if it was necessary to rummage through the mythology of a lost continent to explain its origin. We now know that the metal head was made in Ife (part of modern Nigeria) by a culture producing masterpieces of refined sculpture at a time not much later than the Norman Conquest of Britain.

In this respect, political support and strong financial backing in Berlin enabled Germany to set the pace. According to one of his counterparts, who was collecting in the Congo at the same time for the British Museum, Frobenius claimed that “he had got everything still obtainable and left nothing for people to come after him.” International rivalry evidently got a bit of edge from personal animosities.

Whether or not Frobenius had cleaned up to such an extent, the German ethnological collections from Africa and elsewhere in the early years of the 20th century were larger and more impressive than their British equivalents. Berlin had even acquired more of the bronze heads and ivories which had been spectacularly looted by the British from Benin in 1897. As British collections from Africa and elsewhere lagged behind, there was much chagrin and talk of ‘humiliation’ amongst the specialists in London.

African artefacts scooped up by Frobenius are now in great collections in Frankfurt and Pennsylvania – happily there is even at least one piece at the BM. But it is the Berlin Ethnological Museum where many of the great pieces garnered by him and his contemporaries are magnificently displayed, with outstanding sculpture from across the continent. African sculpture is capable of immense power and vitality, inventiveness, sheer beauty and technical mastery, and the galleries in Berlin do justice to it all. Along with the aesthetic impact the museum draws attention to the functions of sculpture in its local communities – often a very significant dimension, whether in establishing social identity and responsibilities, or in reinforcing spiritual and religious belief. There’s an implied question here for us.

Once it is securely under lock, key and museum accession number, does a carved figure retain its power to communicate with ancestral spirits, or to deliver punishment (for example, at the lighter end of things, nightmares, diarrhoea and fever)? And how should we approach a mask created to inspire fear and awe in its traditional setting? In the museum an African village elder uses a video interview to caution us about the hazards of interfering with objects of spiritual power.

Whatever the answer to this, it’s sure that a visit to the Africa galleries of the Ethnological Museum will spread enthusiasm for traditional African sculpture. Go there soon, because in 2017 they will be closed for the move to join the wonderful collections from other continents already on their way to new accommodation in the centre of Berlin.

Adam Butcher
Friend
Photography exposed

The behind-the-scenes area of the Pitt Rivers’ photograph collections is – literally – calm, cool and collected. The walls are an austere but soothing pale grey, the temperature (in the storeroom for photographic negatives anyway) is 14°C, and the holdings currently comprise some 250,000 items.

The visiting group of Friends was welcomed by Philip Grover (Acting Head of Photograph and Manuscript Collections) and then split up for seeing the three store-rooms where negatives, slides, prints and albums are housed. Custom-made containers and purpose-built storage facilities ensure the longest possible life for this rare material, making it accessible to future generations.

Then it was back to the main study room, where Philip, and Katherine Clough (Assistant Curator), had laid out a range of items. Particularly striking was the Woodthorpe album, which had been conserved with help from the Friends. This album contains both black and white studio photographs and delightful watercolours, painted by Lieutenant-Colonel R. G. Woodthorpe in Nagaland in the 1870s. The Wilfred Thesiger collection was exemplary in organisation: here are preserved all of his 38,000 negatives, from which were made the large format prints for his personal albums. Thesiger sent back his films to his mother in London, so she also played a role in the preservation of this extraordinary collection. Another highlight was the remarkable Tibetan photographic material, testimony to life in Lhasa almost a century ago.

Old technology and new came together in stereoscopy. There were 19th century stereoscopic slides, cards and period viewers. We were also able to use the latest equipment to view the stereoscopic images: digitised versions downloaded to one’s mobile phone were viewable in a folding cardboard box with eyepieces (soon available to buy in the Museum Shop). This replicated the Victorian viewing experience, making one realise the value of applying current technologies to rare and significant images such as these which the Pitt Rivers is privileged to hold for the benefit of present and future users.

Clemence Shultze and Martin Rush, Friends

Friends’ object competition for under 18s

To increase the fun of family visits, the Friends of the Museum are holding a competition with a prize for Friends’ children, grandchildren and other young family members under 18. The prize is a £10 gift voucher for the shop. Here are six pictures of PRM objects for you to find. Fill in the answers on the questionnaire that came with the Magazine, fold it in half and leave in the box in the shop next to the FPRM magazine stand. The competition will close on 27 June 2016.

The winner will be contacted and announced in the next issue. If there is more than one correct entry, it will be drawn from a hat.

Example of a traditional Underwood & Underwood hand-held binocular viewer (right) for viewing stereographic cards such as those seen here – including a photograph captioned ‘Inflating bullock-skin boats’ (top) from a set on India – with a modern equivalent designed for mobile phones (left) 1998.472.35, 1998.472.52, 1998.472.66, 2012.32.100

All images © Pitt Rivers Museum
A younger view

Tibetan keys: beauty, utility, and security

 Tibetan traditional keys (Case 72) are made with a very intricate design which makes them look beautiful and makes the locks harder to pick. Originally these keys were used on gers. These are hut-like structures – in Russia they are called yurts – and can be described as a portable felt tent which can be moved and transported. However, in Mongolia they are still used in workplaces and apartment buildings.

The keys are also an art form, because in everyday life we all need some beauty and wonder to brighten our day. As an additional security measure Mongolians may also put a string over the lock and use any putty-like substance to hold it in place with a unique seal. This is to check if anyone has been in their house while they were out because, if so, the string would be broken.

These keys show that although they are used for personal safety, and security of possessions, they can be incredibly ornate. I decided to write about this exquisite item, because while my parents were living in Mongolia they used a similar key on the apartment where they lived. We now keep the key as a memento.

Michael Gogarty, aged 12

A French book of hours

When the Friends visited the Weston Library last November book conservator Julie Sommerfeldt showed us the beautiful MS. Douce 39 Book of Hours. Dating from 1308, it was part of the extensive collection of illuminated manuscripts bequeathed to the Bodleian Library by Francis Douce on his death in 1834. He acquired it for £4 in 1830 at a Sotheby’s auction of the library of William Simonds Higgs, but nothing further is known of its previous ownership. Prior to conservation it had an early 19th century binding in red velvet. However, the sewing structure had broken down putting the gilding, pigments, and inks at risk of abrasion. A new, conservation binding was applied providing a stable, strong, and supportive structure allowing the manuscript to be handled and used safely now and into the future.

Left: Before treatment, with broken 19th century sewing; Right: After treatment, the rebound manuscript

New Friends

We are delighted to welcome Rosemary Napper as a new life member. Other new Friends are Shannon Coles and Alex Eve (Otley, W Yorkshire); Anthony Flemming and Laura Barter (nr Reading); Fiona Gourley (Bath); Clare Hoskin (Lewes); David King, Christine Narramore, Abigail and Jessica (Guildford); Daisy Kirkwood and Kevin Moran (London); Sam Kirkwood and Jessie Potts (London); Jenna Laney (Croydon); James Norris and family (Buckingham); David and Sally Pollock (Charlbury); Andreas Rost and Alexandra Gibbs (North Berwick); and from Oxford: Pauline Battigelli, Denise Gogarty, Brenda Jerman, Conan Pickering, our new Membership Development Officer, Angela Radcliffe, Elizabeth Taylor, and Jeff and Maggie Tearle.

To learn more about becoming a Friend, or if your details change, please contact Membership Secretary Rosemary King: rhking17@gmail.com or 01367 242433

Please consider making a donation to the Museum today! The easiest way to do so is to click on www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/pitt-rivers and give via the University fundraising campaign for the Museum.

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FAMILY EVENTS

Come and enjoy a wide variety of free family friendly events, activities and workshops. All children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

Friday 3 & Saturday 4 June 13.00-16.00
May Half Term: Totally Totem

Discover the stories behind the carved figures of the Haida totem pole. Make your own family crest pole

Sunday 10 July
12.00-17.00
Cowley Road Carnival
Visit the Museum’s stall for lots of making and object handling fun

Friday 22 July-Friday 2 September during opening hours
Trail: World Explorer Treasure Hunt
Let our treasure hunt lead you on a journey of discovery exploring the high seas

27 July, 10 August,
24 August 11.00
Pop-Up Puppet Show
Come along and watch this shadow puppet show and find out about the epic Hindu story of the Ramayana.

Every Friday from 29 July-26 August
11.30 & 13.00
Around the World Family Tours
Join us on this family tour to look at some fascinating and exciting objects from around the world

Object handling, Saturdays 10.30-12.30; Family Friendly Fun, Sundays 14.00-16.00

PRM Heart Campaign

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The Magazine of the Friends of the Pitt Rivers Museum is produced termly

INFORMATION

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Annual Subscription: £22 (Joint: £30)
Family: £30; Over 60: £15 (Joint: £22)
Student: (18-25): £10
Life Membership: (for 65+): £125
Subscription year from 1 May.
First subscription paid after 1 January valid to 30 April of following year.

President of Friends of Pitt Rivers:
Professor Chris Gosden
Patrons of Friends of Pitt Rivers:
Alexander Armstrong, Sir David Attenborough, Danby Bloch, Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe, Dame Penelope Lively, Michael Palin CBE, Philip Pullman CBE.

Museum
Pitt Rivers Museum, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PP
prm.ox.ac.uk
01865 270927
Email: www.prm@prm.ox.ac.uk
Open: Tuesday-Sunday 10.00-16.30
Monday 12.00-16.30
Admission FREE.

Highlights tours
Wednesdays 14.30 and 15.15
Volunteer-led introduction to the Museum. Approximately 20 mins. No booking required.

Saturday Spotlight
Third Saturday of the month 14.30
A programme of general interest events, FREE.

After Hours
Occasional themed evening events
Family events: see www.prm.ox.ac.uk/family-friendly-events-activities-and-workshops

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The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Museum. All contributors to the Magazine are Friends unless otherwise stated.

MUSEUM DIARY DATES

Exhibitions and case displays
Long Gallery: A Procession
Until 29 May 2016
This exhibition by Turner Prize winner Elizabeth Price is a series of photographs, etchings and screen prints made in response to the Pitt Rivers Museum's collection of photography.

Case display, Lower Gallery
Adaptation
Until 16 May
New work inspired by Museum objects – and the Museum itself – designed and made by second-year foundation degree students at Rycotewood Furniture Centre, City of Oxford College.

Archive Case, Lower Gallery
‘Dressed as a New Zealander’
Until 3 July
See FPRM Magazine 84, p.7
Followed by:
Encounters with the Inuit: The British Arctic Air Route Expedition, 1930-31
18 July to 6 November 2016

Events
May Late: Pitt Rivers After Hours
13 May, 19.00-22.00 (ticketed*)
Enter the Museum after hours to see the collections in a new light. A joint event with the Museum of Natural History, part of the international Museums at Night celebrations.

Ceremonies, Repatriation, and Shrunken Heads: Curating the Americas collection
9 June 18.00-19.30 (ticketed*)
Talk and tour by Laura Peers, Curator for the Americas Collection and Professor of Museum Anthropology.

Pitt Fest
3 September, 11.00-18.00 (FREE)
This year, PRM’s annual day-festival will explore all things archaeological, offering hands-on activities, family fun, expert demonstrations and workshops.

* book online
For further information about the displays listed above and also about other PRM What’s On information eg Saturday Spotlight and After Hours Tours (twice monthly, check times online, £10*) and other events see: www.prm.ox.ac.uk/whatson

FRIENDS’ DIARY DATES

Summer Away Day to Newbury
Monday 9 May
Visit to Sandham Memorial Chapel and West Berks Museum (Newbury)
Booking required. Contact Rosemary Lee rosemarylee143@btinternet.com 01491 873276

The Hanging Garden of ‘Babylon’ at Nineveh
*Wednesday 18 May 18.00 for 18.30
Stephanie Dalley, Assyriologist, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford.

Art, Animism and Power: Celtic Art in Europe & Asia
*Wednesday 15 June 18.00 for 18.30
Prof. Chris Gosden, Chair of European Archaeology, Institute of Archaeology, University of Oxford and Friends’ President, explores the history of Celtic Art across Eurasia and its cultural roots and power.

This lecture will be followed by the Friends’ AGM

Redisplaying the Museum’s Cook-voyage Collection
Wednesday 19 October 2016
A very special evening just for Friends. An opportunity to learn more about the new Cook-voyage Collection case, and to celebrate the Friends’ £15,000 contribution towards this project. See flyer/booking form enclosed. Entrance via PRM’s South Door.
Booking essential: contact Rosemary Lee: rosemarylee143@btinternet.com 01491 873276

*Pitt Rivers Lecture Room, access via Robinson Close, South Parks Road, OX1 3PP
Visitors most welcome. £2. No parking available. Tea from 18.00
Enquiries to Terry Bremble: g.bremble@gmail.com 01865 390489

See www.prm.ox.ac.uk/friends-museum-events-programme for more information about these Friends’ events.