Bird-spotting in the Museum
Sculpting the collection
Kenya’s mobile banking

Migration: the challenge of affluence
Buddhas in Battersea Park
Out in Oxford: LGBTQ+ trail
Editorial
I was immensely proud to collect another first prize for the Magazine at the British Association of Friends of Museums conference last October. You can read some of the judges’ comments on p4. For issue 88 we travel the world looking at different cultures. On the centre spread (pps 6/7) John Grimley Evans explains how ‘thifty genes’ can cause obesity in migrating Polynesians, and Dorothy Walker shows how the developing world can sometimes pioneer technological innovation with her look at Kenya’s mobile banking phenomenon (see our striking cover.) Closer to home there is Buddhism in Battersea Park (see our cover) and Dorothy Walker shows how the developing world can sometimes pioneer technological innovation with her look at Kenya’s mobile banking phenomenon (see our striking cover.)

Finally, Anna Petre, Assistant Keeper of the University Archives, got in touch about cataloguing the Magazine. I gathered all but three of the issues from 2005 to 2016 which are now listed in the catalogue of papers held for the Pitt Rivers (Special Collections, Bodleian Library enquiries@oua.ox.ac.uk). If you happen to have any older issues please let me know, julesgammon@outlook.com

Friends can view bound volumes covering 1992 to 2012 in the Balfour Library to the left of the Museum’s South Door.

Juliette Gammon, Editor

A Roman-Egyptian ‘Panama Hat’

In planning the VERVE archaeology displays, we wondered whether to include this “flexible hat of grass-work resembling a Panama hat”. Donated to PRM by famed Egyptologist Flinders Petrie in 1902, the hat captivated attention, described by American Hatter magazine as “a rakish tilt to the brim”. Some suggested that the hat was a joke. At the height of the 1902 Panama hat craze, perhaps it was Petrie’s own excavation headwear? Nevertheless Dan Hicks, PRM’s lecturer-curator for archaeology, sent a sample for radiocarbon dating at the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit. The result: 427-557 AD. This remarkably well-preserved Roman-Egyptian object will go on permanent display on the Upper Gallery next year.

Laura Peers, Interim VERVE Project Manager

Cover Image: A Maasai pastoralist checks his mobile phone in Southern Kenya. © Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures

News from the Museum

Over the past months all staff have worked intensively on the creation of the PRM Strategic Plan. This document sets out a vision that will guide all the Museum’s activities from 2016 to 2021. It provides a series of action plans around our main objectives and a set of key guiding principles to direct us. One component will be jointly working with the Friends on plans to increase our membership.

We are pleased to welcome new permanent Head of Administration and Finance Karrine Sanders who joined the Museum mid-October after a long career in managing administrative and operational change for large organisations. She previously worked for the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the British Council and Save the Children Fund UK. We are sad to see long-time staff leaving, either due to retirement or a move to other parts of the country. Head of Conservation Heather Richardson, Photographer Malcolm Osman and Database Officer Alison Petch will all be sorely missed.

Last November the new Long Gallery exhibition, ‘Embroidered Visions: Photographs of Central Asia and the Middle East by Sheila Paine’ opened*. It features colour photographs by traveller, writer and collector of textiles Sheila Paine, one of the world’s leading authorities on embroidery, author of Thames and Hudson’s Embroidered Textiles, and long-standing Friend of the Museum. This runs alongside the Didcot case exhibition, ‘Stitch of a Symbol: Insights into the Textile Journeys of Sheila Paine’*, featuring her collections from East and Central Asia.

Laura van Broekhoven, Museum Director

*See back page

Between Friends

We live in an era in which increasing globalisation has, counter-intuitively, led to the rise of a narrow nationalism and an intolerance of racial, religious and gender diversity in an increasing number of countries. Our Museum is a beacon of light in this darkening world, since the displays are organised so as to demonstrate our common humanity. They show the many different ways in which the same problems have been solved, whether they concern daily needs, social cohesion, lifetime events, safe-guarding memory and tradition, musical and artistic creativity, or simply having fun. The Friends are in the special position of being able to attend events related to these multifaceted aspects of humanity and at the same time to be directly involved by financially supporting some of the Museum’s special projects.

This important relationship between the Museum and the Friends is being strengthened by the outlook of the new Director, who convened a meeting in early November attended by herself, Curator Laura Peers and Commercial Manager Yvonne Cawkwell from the Museum, together with Juliette Gammon (Magazine editor), Claudette Sherlock (Events Co-ordinator) and myself from the Friends, and the Development Office’s PRM representative Heidi Kurtz. We discussed plans to increase awareness and membership of the Friends including asking the gallery staff to mention us to visitors and by printing information about us on the back of the gallery plan. Leaflets about the future plans of the Museum were available to Friends and their guests at the Christmas party.

Gillian Morriss-Kay, Chair of the Friends
Sculpting the collection

For the last few years I have been working as the Pitt Rivers Museum’s unofficial ‘artist not-in-residence’. I studied 3D design at university and first discovered the Museum during a drawing week, the art school equivalent of a reading week. Latterly, I decided to carry on the drawing week tradition and spend time in the PRM improving my skills. The Museum is an amazing resource for artists and designers and when I visit I am not the only person scribbling in sketchbooks in dark corners.

Pitt-Rivers himself was an enthusiastic advocate of drawing and its part in what he called “eye training”. Not only was he quite demanding of the skills of the draughtsmen illustrating his collection’s catalogue, he believed that drawing played a crucial part of understanding the world. He wrote that “no one can take in an accurate impression of the things he sees in the world until he has acquired the power of drawing them correctly.” His interest in the “evolution of design”, a central theme in his vision for the PRM, is best illustrated by his Drawing Game. This was a graphic version of the parlour game Chinese Whispers intended to mimic, in a short period of time, the way design evolves through copying and reinterpretation by successive generations of makers.

Inspired by his theories I start my work making detailed observational drawings which record the objects’ forms and manner of construction. From these, and photographs, I make line drawings of individual artefacts or whole group displays. Equal importance is given to the objects, interstitial spaces, shadows, reflections, labelling and display paraphernalia. The resulting interlocking and overlapping forms generate new ones which become the basis for ‘constructed’ drawings using collage. These drawing exercises are a process of abstracting or evolving the forms of the original objects into small-scale sculptures.

I use a variety of materials including steel wire, fabric, acrylic, ivory, antler and horn with the main body of each piece being carved from wood. I work mostly with hand tools and the objects are precisely constructed and highly-finished, right down to the acrylic inlays. One of the things that fascinates me about the PRM collection is the resourcefulness in the use and reuse of materials. I try to continue that resourcefulness and the great majority of my materials are off-cuts or reclaimed, taking great care the resulting sculptures do not appear crude or rustic. I am always on the lookout in junk shops for broken or unwanted items made of horn, bone or ivory and have a bizarre collection of walking stick handles, drinking horns and bone knitting needles ready for use.

Colour is never applied to a surface but exists as part of the solid material. This includes the wire elements of the sculptures that are bound in red, black or cream upholstery thread. I avoid artificial colours and try to use natural materials and colours that reflect my favourite PRM objects. The pieces are of a ‘hand-held’ scale and, although no longer concerned with the original objects’ function or cultural significance, they have a certain quality that suggests a function or meaning.

When you love the collection and individual objects you are working from it is easy to merely create or copy artefacts. I try to evolve my objects though my own cultural response and eye-training within the collection. To ground the sculptures in the context of the Museum they are titled with the accession number of the artefact that most inspired them. I hope this also serves as a way to pay thanks to the Museum and all its contributing makers.

Claire Hoskin, Friend
For more information clairehoskin.co.uk

Photos: Claire Hoskin
Clockwise top left: Sequence from object, sketch, collage to sculpture 1960.3.23
Digital microscope

The Conservation Department recently bought a digital microscope using just over £1,000 kindly donated by the Friends from the proceeds of the 2015 Christmas Party Auction. The microscope, a hand-held Dino-lite model with stand, can be used like a digital camera. Although the range of magnification is not as great as a standard microscope, the advantage is that the digital model is very portable. Without the stand, it can be used to examine the centre of, for example, a large textile – something that has previously been very difficult for us to achieve. It can be used (carefully!) directly on the surface of an object, being designed to focus within the focal length of the plastic cap.

The microscope gives a maximum of 220x magnification, and enables us to take an image of the area under investigation at high enough resolution to be useful for publication. The software automatically stacks images at different focus levels (useful for uneven surfaces) to improve the quality of the result. Another bonus is the ability to show the magnified image to larger groups of people whether students, visiting researchers or originating communities, and is a valuable teaching tool. We used the microscope recently to show a group of Visual, Material, and Museum Anthropology (VMMA) students how leather made from different sorts of animal can be identified by looking at the characteristic patterns the hair follicles make.

The Friends money (with the help of IT Services at the Museum) also allowed us to buy a dedicated laptop to run the microscope and its software, which means we can use it in the Museum or the stores – this useful tool is not just restricted to the conservation lab.

Jeremy Uden, Acting Head of Conservation
For more information: dinolite-uk.com

Another prize!

Issue 85 of the Magazine won first prize in the 2016 British Association of Friends of Museums (BAfM) Newsletter Awards last October. This was the first with a full cover image and the decision to change our appearance was fully vindicated. The judges wrote: “Love, love, LOVE the front cover!”; “Very professional with immediate pick up appeal”; “Striking front cover picture.” So, all credit to our talented designer Alan Hughes for his inspiring redesign.

BAfM also praised the content from Friends: “How encouraging for an Editor to be able to publish at least 6 articles by Friends and one by a 10 year old”; “Overall a very professional production, but still retaining the element of friendliness – no pomposity or stuffiness. A good example of Friendship combined with input from curatorial staff.” It was our fourth win since 2005.

I hope these comments, and the prestige the publication enjoys, will encourage more of you to write articles so we can widen our pool of regular contributors. It’s your Magazine and your opportunity to tell us about your particular passion for the Museum by describing a favourite object, a case or a relevant traveller’s tale. We’d also like to hear what prompted you to become a Friend as it would be an excellent way to attract new members.

Our children’s column (now ‘A Younger View’) also impressed the judges: “What a great idea.” However, it’s proving difficult to attract contributors and I urge you again to ask young people up to 18 to submit articles. Apart from the joy of seeing their names in print, for the older age group it’s a useful addition to a CV or Personal Statement. Please email julesgammon@outlook.com for details.

I received the award at BAfM’s 43rd annual conference hosted by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust; more on that in the next issue.

Juliette Gammon, Editor

“Really enjoyed reading this – easily my choice for first place as it was outstanding in multiple areas!” – Judge

Left: Juliette with BAfM Chair, Bernard Rostron
Take a case: Use of birds and feathers

There are many ornithological items to discover in the Pitt Rivers Museum. I soon found out just how many while helping to organise a student evening event, ‘Birds in the PRM’, while studying for a master’s degree in 2014. Here, my focus is on just six items displayed in Case 29a on the Lower Gallery which forms part of a series of eight cases on the use of birds and feathers. These were recently moved from the corner of the Lower Gallery to further along the gallery wall to facilitate the new case displaying the Cook-voyage collections (which also includes many examples of the use of feathers).

A coil of tens of thousands of tiny feathers of the red male cardinal honeyeater (myzomela cardinalis) occupies almost half the display case (1954.4.15). This is a form of currency collected in 1914 from the Santa Cruz Islands in the Pacific. The feathers are so small and layered so closely together that they give the coil a velvety appearance. The labour, processes and large number of birds required to make these coils contributed to their high value and use as currency, while the redness of the feathers, and the signs of wear affected their exchange rate.

In the front left of the case is a string of red and white feathers from Vanuatu (1920.100.376), known as a wetapup. Its display label also describes its occasional use as currency but that it is more commonly: “worn by men on the ankles to demonstrate their status”. The use of birds, and especially feathers, is often associated with body ornamentation, as demonstrated in the brightly-coloured feather ear ornaments from Nagaland and jewellery with iridescent blue kingfisher feathers from China displayed above the case.

A small jar of yellow fluid (1931.62.4), a blackish-brown bird with a white stripe across its tail (1932.88.160), and an eagle’s foot (1932.88.1050) sit in the left-back row of the case. This eclectic trio shows how birds were used to provide light in northern Europe – perhaps a less obvious use in our society today. The almost luminous yellow oil in the jar has been extracted from a fulmar, a tube-nosed seabird that looks a bit like a gull. It was collected from St Kilda in the Scottish Outer Hebrides in 1889 and was historically burnt in cruise-lamps to produce light. A closer look at the small bird – a stormy petrel (P. Procellaria pelagica) – reveals a dark, tarred wick coming out of its beak. Fishermen in the Scottish Shetland Islands (where it was collected in 1892) reportedly lit this wick to use the bird as a candle. The eagle’s foot (1932.88.1050) has a more decorative function in providing light, fashioned into a supporting candlestick holder. Originating in Norway, it was collected by the Museum’s first curator Henry Balfour in 1932.

Finally, a narrow quill pen made from a goose feather, bound with blueish-green silk, and ending in a tassel, sits near the front of the case (1949.9.464). This writing implement from Essex could easily have found itself in another case in the Museum, such as ‘Writing and Communication’ in the Court. Similarly the ‘bird lights’ could be housed in the lighting case in the Court, and another Santa Cruz feather coil can be found in the currency case on the opposite side of the Lower Gallery. This small case demonstrates the many links that can be made across the displays and hopefully this article will encourage readers to enjoy further bird-spotting in the Pitt Rivers.

Katherine Clough, VERVE Interpretation and Display Project Assistant

1. vimeo.com/album/3012331/video/86998609
Migration and the challenge of affluence

*Homo sapiens* is a restless beast and throughout its existence has been migrating into new environments. All the peoples represented in the Pitt Rivers Museum except, possibly, some African tribes, are the survivors of migration. That survival has depended on adaptability. Successful migrants adopt new behaviours and learn new skills, while in the longer term, natural selection adapts the genetic makeup of the tribe.

Health problems can arise while behaviour and genes adapted to a previous environment do not meet the demands of a new one. The plentiful availability of food in a rich country often present an unexpected challenge to people migrating from poorer parts of the world. In the 1960s, the New Zealand Government was concerned that Polynesian settlers in the country suffered higher rates of illness and lower life expectancy than were typical of New Zealanders of European descent. Research led by Dr Ian Prior from Wellington indicated ‘thrifty genes’ as among the culprits.

Populations that have survived periods of famine have undergone natural selection for genes that store body fat when food is plentiful, enabling their bearers to survive during periods of starvation. The ancestors of Polynesians survived canoe voyages of hundreds of miles and those who started out fat had a better chance than their skinnier colleagues of survival and reproduction. Bearers of active thrifty genes who migrate to countries where food is more plentiful than they are used to, and heavy physical activity less necessary in obtaining it, are liable to become obese. Obesity can lead to the ‘metabolic syndrome’, a predisposition to diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.

The young men of the 1968 Tokelau atolls shown in the photograph were waiting, assembled in their ‘age sets’, for the womenfolk to cook the daily meal consisting almost entirely of fish. The atolls were soil-less shelves of coral rubble providing only coconuts and a small mount of *taro* as land-based food. The energy output of the young men was enormous. On every day except Sunday they rose at dawn to swim out catching bait fish. They would then haul their heavy outrigger canoes over the reef into deep water hunting tuna and swordfish. The fishing had to be done every day as it was *tapu* to leave any remains of fish on the island overnight lest fishy spirits ready to wreak revenge came looking for their lost companions. Shark spirits were especially dangerous; when a shark was caught everyone on the island (including visiting research teams) had to eat some so that the vengeful spirits could not distinguish the guilty fishermen by their smelling differently.

When Tokelauans moved to New Zealand they kept their hearty appetites but did not have to work so hard to satisfy them. Within months many were putting on body fat with its threat of later metabolic complications. The problem was clear, but so were the difficulties for Government health policy. Thrifty genes will survive as their deleterious effects on individuals appear after the age of reproduction, so natural selection kicks in too late to reduce transmission to offspring.

Therapeutic technology for switching off genes may emerge but is well away in the future. Dietary habits are slow to change and eating too much is a behaviour that is desperately difficult for individuals to unlearn. It is also passed down the generations – we all start life enjoying our mother’s cooking. In the long term, if norms of personal attractiveness were ‘nudged’ in advertisements and television to favour slimmer people, sexual selection might increase the transmission of non-thrifty genes. But when, in a free democracy, does well-intended public health policy become too oppressive for cultural and personal autonomy?

John Grimley Evans,
Friend and Professor Emeritus of Clinical Geratology, University of Oxford
Since Apple Pay’s debut in the UK in 2015 many of us have considered using mobile phone payments and have possibly postponed or dismissed the idea due to technology timidity. However, some people might be surprised to learn that in Kenya, even among the most remote communities, mobile phone banking and payments have been enthusiastically adopted, and increasingly widely used, since 2007. In fact, today in Nairobi you are now more likely to pay for your taxi ride by mobile than you are in London or New York. This ground-breaking development has taken place thanks to the phenomenal popularity of the mobile money service M-Pesa (the name is composed of ‘M’ for mobile and ‘pesa’, Swahili for ‘money’). Kenya is now a world leader in mobile money uptake. Over 19 million of its population of 44 million, and more than two-thirds of all adults, use M-Pesa and a quarter of the country’s economy flows through the service. The impact on the economy and on society has been immense. A worker in Nairobi can credit money to his mobile at an M-Pesa agent, then send it home to the countryside with a couple of taps on his phone. His wife can withdraw the cash at the increasingly ubiquitous shops which are also M-Pesa agents (the number of these agents across the country increased by 40 percent in 2013 to more than 65,000) or she can leave the money on her device to make digital payments with the hundreds of businesses who accept them. M-Pesa users can pay bills to organisations and even be paid wages via the service. Enabling the easy, secure transfer of cash to rural areas saves people time and increases incomes and productivity. It is also easier for women to establish small businesses. Unlike other mobile payment systems, M-Pesa does not operate with a bank account — many Kenyans regard it as a safer place to store their money than banks. The service has enabled millions of unbanked people to have access to the country’s formal financial system.

Pastoral communities like the Maasai have benefited hugely from the service. M-Pesa has played an important role in facilitating their livestock marketing and social life. Since colonialisation, and subsequent post-colonial land dispossession, the Maasai have gone from being among the wealthiest peoples in Kenya to a situation where many face problems sustaining their traditional livelihoods. The mobile phone – and M-Pesa – have made a marked difference in this community by reducing the problems of distance and money security when transacting livestock sales. Farmers save on travel costs and avoid paying middlemen, increasing their profits per animal.

M-Pesa was originally designed with the help of a small UK aid grant as a system to allow individuals to make their microfinance loan repayments by phone. After initial piloting it was widened to become a general money-transfer scheme. With very low landline provision in Kenya, mobile phone usage was widespread among the population and there was little commercial banking on offer. Other off-shoot services are being introduced, such as credit facilities and international money transfers, which enable Kenyans living abroad to send money home. Since 2011 M-Pesa has spread outside Africa and has launched in some Asian countries including India and Afghanistan.

The emergence of M-Pesa challenges two commonly held notions: firstly, that technological innovation is adopted initially in developed countries and then gradually percolates through to developing ones, and secondly, that technological progress necessarily weakens traditional ways of life.

Dorothy Walker, Friend
Out in Oxford and APP packs

Beth Asbury and Carly Smith-Huggins received Oxford University Museums Partnership Innovation Fund Awards for two new projects. We asked how they were progressing.

OUT IN OXFORD: At a lecture I attended in February 2016, Professor Richard Parkinson emphasised the need for more LGBTQ+ representation in museums.¹ The acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (a reclaimed, collective word), together with other non-binary or non-‘hetero-normative’ individuals, such as intersex people or cross-dressers. With encouragement from Helen Adams, VERVE Project Curator and Engagement Officer, and inspired by Professor Parkinson’s own trail at the British Museum, in April I successfully applied for funding from the Innovation Fund to create the University’s first cross-collections trail.

We are now working with almost 50 volunteers to compile this trail, named ‘Out in Oxford’ following an introductory workshop in August 2016.² This pilot project aims to increase inclusivity and ‘multi-vocality’ within the collections by engaging with LGBTQ+ people in and around Oxford, a group not previously explicitly represented. Multi-vocality gives people outside the museums the opportunity to voice their ideas and add their own interpretations to promote a wider understanding of the objects’ meanings. Curators and others across the University have sent lists of objects and specimens to be ‘queered’ (interpreted alternatively) by our volunteers, who have researched and written 150-word pieces about their favourites from the lists for a printed booklet and longer pieces for a webpage. Objects from the PRM include the Noh mask illustrated here and prehistoric bone pendants excavated by Francis Turville-Petre (1901-41), who was openly gay in the 1930s. Funds raised at the Friends’ Christmas Party (see p11) will be used to commission a drum by a First Nation LGBTQ+ artist.

The project has been so successful that all the members of the Gardens, Libraries and Museums group, as well as the Bate Collection, have asked to be represented in the trail. Our volunteers, together with local groups, such as Oxford Pride and My Normal, will also co-curate the trail’s launch events, which start on Saturday 11 February 2017.

Beth Asbury,
Assistant to the Director /Administration Team
1. podcasts.ox.ac.uk/great-unrecorded-history-lgbt-heritage-and-world-cultures
2. pitttivers-verve.blogspot.co.uk/2016/08/outinoxford-new-cross-museums-lgbtq.html

APP PACKS is a joint project between the Pitt Rivers and the Museum of Natural History. At the start of the year we submitted an application to the Innovation Fund to run a research project focusing on how, or if, families use digital devices or content in the museums. Currently the Pitt Rivers has no Museum-based digital platform specifically for families to use.

Digital technology is a prominent aspect of our visitors’ everyday lives with many people having access to a mobile phone or tablet, including children. We wanted to explore different ways of engaging families with the Museum’s collection using mobile technology but creating our own apps would be expensive and extremely time-consuming and is something most museums cannot commit to. Instead we decided to trial free third-party pre-existing apps with families. During the project we undertook a visitor survey asking family groups if they had ever downloaded any apps as part of a museum visit, many had not. We then asked them to use one of our suggested apps to explore the PRM. The apps chosen were all free and focused on certain types of activity including drawing, collage, and story-making. Families were asked to use the Museum as inspiration to complete one of these three activities.

An interesting finding from this survey was that most families had just not thought to use an app as part of a museum visit, but would now consider doing so. From observation, the children really engaged with the collection using the apps as a tool. The activity worked most effectively with 7-13 year-olds and allowed them to create their personal story about the Museum and to share this with others, something our regular family activities may not offer this particular age group. We now aim to create resources to promote the use of these apps within the Museum to families.

Carly Smith-Huggins,
Families Education Officer
Witnessing peace in Battersea Park

One morning in 2013, visiting London’s Battersea Park Peace Pagoda, I came upon a man kneeling in discoloured whites, picking moss from stone. I enquired if he was a volunteer. He rose to his feet and, bowing low before me, said: “I monk”. His circumambulatory chanting at the pagoda done with, he had left his yellow robes at his temple and returned for matters mundane. The ‘No climbing’ sign on the upper level of the pagoda is, for some, forbidden fruit. Old-fashioned print albums record the detritus he clears up: smashed bottles and glasses, leftovers, sleeping bags, even faeces, not to mention stickers or paint on the gilded Buddhas.

The Thameside pagoda was built in 1985 by the Nipponzan Myohoji Order, at the invitation of the Greater London Council. The Reverend Gyoro Nagase has almost single-handedly maintained it since then. Housed originally in the Children’s Zoo, he was later given a ‘bothy’ in a nook of the park, overhung by trees, which now serves as his temple. Here, in the shrine room with its gleaming Buddhas, he receives the occasional visitor who brings offerings; a Chinese wholesaler supplies vegetables.

When not at the pagoda, or marking interfaith events elsewhere like Hiroshima Day and Gandhi’s memorial days, or hosting the Nagasaki Day lantern-floating ceremony, he undertakes peace walks chanting to the beat of his hand-drum. He walked and chanted the route from Buchenwald to Gotha, paying his respects before the ashes of Nobel Prize-winning pacifist Bertha von Suttner; undertook a three-day-long trek to the birthplace of Quaker founder George Fox; and walked across the border from Ukraine to Russia in 1994, commemorating Tolstoy. At other times, he registers protest: in 2014, he chanted outside the nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in Normandy, followed by policemen; in 2016, he walked across Anglesey in protest against the planned new nuclear power station at Wylfa Newydd.

By far the most compelling journey, however, is that of an unschooled young man of humble beginnings. Originally from Aichi Prefecture in Japan, he was moved “somewhere in heart” by a book of Tolstoy’s folk tales. Years later, he walked into a travel office in Kenya, enquiring: “How travel aircraft, please?” The executive looked at him. How had he made it from Japan to Kenya if he didn’t know that? Taking the Trans-Siberian Railway from Yokohama to Moscow and Helsinki, Nagase had then crossed Europe and the Sahara, continuing onwards to Kenya. Impoverished and hungry, he visited the Sikh temple in Nakuru. It was their New Year, Vaisakhi, and, “Suddenly, beggar felt like king”. Not for long. He moved on to London, Sweden (washing dishes to survive), and the Eastern Bloc.

In 1974, Nagase arrived in India. His parents followed the Nichiren School, for whom Rajgir (in Bihar) holds the most sacred Buddhist site: Gridhakuta. At the Nipponzan Myohoji temple there, he met the founder of the Order, Nichidatsu Fuji – or ‘Fuji Guruji’ as he had been named by Gandhi – and later underwent ordination. Nichidatsu Fuji had begun the construction of Peace Pagodas after World War II as pacifist foundations.

In 1980, finding himself in Moscow where drumming was forbidden in Red Square, Nagase would slip out at dawn and chant. On the morning of 9 December 1980, he returned to where he was staying, hearing to his surprise a Beatles song on Moscow radio. Enquiring why (this music was allowed) he discovered John Lennon had been shot dead the previous night.

That December, Reverend Nagase returned to Sweden. Where once he had washed dishes, he was now received by the Nobel laureates Alva and Gunnar Myrdal in their home. Philip Noel-Baker, winner of the 1959 Peace Prize and a supporter of Fuji Guruji, proved a fortuitous link.

Dipli Saikia, Friend
Good mourning!

Last October Friends enjoyed a special evening to celebrate the PRM’s re-housing and display of 196 out of 220 objects from the first two Cook voyages to the Pacific. Curator Jeremy Coote gave us the background story and Acting Head of Conservation Jeremy Uden explained the careful conservation process. However, it was Deputy Head of Technical Services Chris Wilkinson and Museum Technician Alan Cooke, who brought alive the delicate process of relighting and displaying the objects. We then moved into the Museum to marvel at the new case and hear more on its contents.

The focus was on the Tahitian mourner’s costume, discoveries made when it was dismantled and steps taken in its conservation. On the headdress bindings, metres of insect-damaged, plaited human hair wound around a core of coconut fibre and barkcloth have been secured in place. They now form a ‘turban’ which can be lifted on and off without unravelling. The feather cape, with bundles of split feathers (so that they would move and shimmer) tied like rungs of a ladder between coconut fibre cords, has now been painstakingly preserved for the future after being subject to insect attack when it was part of the Ashmolean collection before PRM acquisition. The two extensions either side are thought to have been secured at the wrist. Tears in the barkcloth ponchos forming the underlayers of the costume have been infilled with Japanese tissue paper which can be removed later if desired. The apron of barkcloth and pandanus is decorated on the lower half with carved coconut shell discs thought to represent turtles.

Mounting the costume for display led to practical discoveries. The wooden breastplate, decorated with large shells, was worn just below the mask and the new presentation of the costume is now closer to contemporary images of Chief Mourners illustrated on the voyages.

Dawn Osborne, Friend

Thank you to Rosemary Lee for organising the evening, to Rumi and Nick Ringshall for looking after the bar, and to all who brought food

Good mourning!

Visiting Oxford College gardens

Our tour began at Lady Margaret Hall with a complete surprise. In front of a college building Head Gardener Ben Pritchard showed us a large flower meadow sown with annuals including cornflowers, poppies and larkspurs mixed with a variety of grasses. Walking down some steps we emerged into the main garden landscaped with many fine specimen trees and lawns surrounded by herbaceous borders. Large yews clipped in a conical shape added interest. A small garden dedicated to Iris Murdoch with a ginkgo tree encircled by a wooden seat was a delightful spot for contemplation. I loved this garden of which Ben was justifiably proud.

On to Rhodes House whose two-acre garden was designed by Sir Hubert Baker, the architect, in 1927. Neil Wigfield who looks after the garden single-handed showed us the spectacular herbaceous border. At 170ft by 14ft it is said to be one of the finest in Oxford. Influenced by horticulturist Gertrude Jekyll, it has a planting scheme with cool colours either end including cosmos, phlox and asters shading into the deeper colours of poppies, hollyhocks and salvias. In the middle are the bright yellows, oranges and reds of dahlias, zinnias and rudbeckia. This lovely garden won the 2016 Oxford in Bloom Competition.

At Wadham College Andrew Little, one of a team of three, took us round the immaculate formal and informal gardens. In the style of a miniature arboretum, its many fine trees include lime, mulberry, cedars of Lebanon, copper beach, monkey puzzle, tulip, Judas and a Japanese pagoda. There is a bamboo grove, some lovely herbaceous beds and a kitchen garden with a glasshouse (of grapes) said to be 200 years old. Walking through a labyrinth of buildings, interspaced with small gardens – a small white one with cyclamen hederifolium and roses and a roof garden interested me particularly – we eventually emerged into Holywell Street. An extremely interesting and informative day.

Margaret Webb-Johnson, Friend

Thank you to Barbara Topley for arranging this visit in September 2016
New Friends
Welcome to Andrew Sheaf from Little Gaddesden, who becomes a new Life Member and also to new Friends: David Darbyshire (Ripon, North Yorkshire); Janet Phillips (Exeter) and from Oxford: Priscilla Church; Susan Goodale; Steuart and Margaret Webb-Johnson and Polly Woolstone. To learn more about the benefits of becoming a Friend, or if your details change, please contact Membership Secretary Rosemary King: rhking17@gmail.com or 01367 242433

Friends’ Treasurer required
We are looking for a replacement for Terri Costain, who will step down at the AGM in June 2017 after many years of service. Further details from gillian.morriss-kay@dpag.ox.ac.uk or terri.costain@btinternet.com

Christmas party
Friends, their guests and PRM director Laura van Broekhoven partied among the case displays in December. We had a quiz, a “who am I game?” to get people talking, and an enticing spread of food from the Friends. Our regular performers the Meadow Lane Quartet set the mood, followed by the stunning Senegalese master musician, Jali Fily Cissokho, whose 21-stringed kora fascinated the guests.

The Silent Auction raised £1,150 which will be used to commission a drum by a First Nation LGBTQ+ artist for that Museum trail (see p8). Many thanks to our generous donors who made this possible: Brasserie Blanc, the Cherwell Boathouse; Oxford Playhouse; Phoenix Picturehouse; Randolph Hotel, Maggie White of Burford; the Pitt Rivers and a number of kind Friends.
**INFORMATION**

**Friends**  
prm.ox.ac.uk/friends

**General Information:** 07415 622072  
missingarista@gmail.com

**Programme:** 01865 390489  
g.bremble@gmail.com

**Membership:** 01367 242433  
rhkings17@gmail.com

**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

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

**EXHIBITIONS AND CASE DISPLAYS**

**Long Gallery**  
**Embroidered Visions: Photographs of Central Asia and the Middle East by Sheila Paine**  
Until 30 April 2017  
Photographs from the 1980s to the 1990s.

**Lower Gallery, case display**  
**Case display Stitch of a Symbol – Insights into the textile journeys of Sheila Paine**  
Until 12 February 2017  
Featuring material assembled by Sheila Paine during her fieldwork in East and Central Asia.

**Archive case, first floor landing**  
**The Leverhulme project: photographic material relating to Emil Holub’s South African Exposition 1892.**  
19 Dec 2016 – 9 April 2017  
Material relating to Emil Holub’s South African Exposition 1892.

**Events**

**Museum Takeover**  
3 February, 19.00-21.00  
University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University students ‘takeover’ the Museum with an event inspired by the collection and a trail uncovering alternative stories.

**Blow your own Barkhorns**  
**Blackwood Seminar Room**  
**6 May 11.00-13.00 and 14.00-16.00**  
See examples of English folk whithorns collected by Percy Manning before having a go at making and blowing your own. Workshop sponsored by the English Folklore Society.

**Saturday Spotlights**

**John Gillow**  
21 January 14.30-15.15  
Textiles specialist talks about Sheila Paine and her textile collection.

**Percy Manning**  
**Barkhorns and Folk in Oxfordshire**  
**18 March 14.30-15.15**  
Chris Park from Acorn Education on his folk craft practice and research.

**Out in Oxford**  
**18 February 14.30-15.15**  
An LGBTQ+ trail of the University’s collections. Learn about the cross-museums trail and the people behind it (see p8).

**Altered States of Consciousness**

**Wednesday 5 April 18.30**  
Psychiatrist Clive Sherlock explores how Zen can relieve the suffering and stigma of so-called mental illnesses.

**The Legacy of Disappearing World**

**Wednesday 15 March 18.30**  
André Singer, President of Royal Anthropological Institute and filmmaker, on the 1970-1993 TV series, looks at the impact and legacy of these documentaries depicting societies facing dramatic change. (Singer Archive, issue 87).

**Heart and Mind: the relevance of Zen practice today**

**Wednesday 5 April 18.30**  
Psychiatrist Clive Sherlock explores how Zen can relieve the suffering and stigma of so-called mental illnesses.

**Beatrice Blackwood Lecture**

**Friday 5 May (see p11)**

Talks in Pitt Rivers Lecture Room, access via Robinson Close, South Parks Road, OX1 3PP  
Visitors welcome, £2. No parking.  
Tea from 18.00. Unless otherwise indicated, contact: Terry Bremble, g.bremble@gmail.com or 01865 390489

See prm.ox.ac.uk/friendsevents for more information about these Friends’ events.

*Flyer enclosed.

**FRIENDS’ DIARY DATES**

**Embroidered Visions event**  
**Wednesday 25 January 18.30-20.00**  
A special event for Friends (and guests) to acknowledge their support of the Sheila Paine exhibition. Curators Philip Grover and Katherine Clough illustrate Sheila’s work including a film of her in Yemen.  
Contact: Claudette Sherlock on: cashelock@gmail.com or 07964752070  
**Murder most foul: the St John’s College Massacre**  
**Wednesday 15 Feb 18.30**  
Mark Pollard, Archaeology School, University of Oxford.

**Spring Away Day**  
**Tuesday 21 February 11.00 (or Wednesday 22 February 17.30 if 21st fully booked)**  
A visit to Jeremy Montagu’s collection of musical instruments. Bookings by 8 February.

Contact Felicity Wood on: felicitywood@gmail.com or 01865 554281

*Kenneth Kirkwood Memorial Lecture Day*  
**Saturday 11 March 10.00-16.30**

Tickets: £30 (guests)/£20 (Friends)  
Contact: shahinbekhradnia@hotmail.com

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