The totem pole is often the first thing that catches visitors’ attention when they enter the Pitt Rivers, but it’s just part of the important collection of Haida historical objects in the Museum. Behind it we have redisplayed two Haida masterpieces: the ‘Raven Travelling’ mask and the ‘Great Box’. This large, densely-carved and painted chest was part of General Pitt-Rivers’ founding collection here in Oxford. The artist has taken standard elements displayed on Haida boxes and turned them into something very complex and elegant.

In 2009, when a delegation of Haida people visited the Museum, the carvers among the group were overwhelmed by this piece. They said, “To understand what the artist has done, we’ll have to actually make the box again, but we must have the historic one alongside us to refer to.” In September, two experienced Haida artists, brothers Gwaai and Jaalen Edenshaw, came to Oxford to do just that. But, first, they made a blank bentwood box and shipped it to the Museum. You can see the process at vimeo.com/pittriversmuseum/greatbox

Using photographs the exact size of the historic box, Gwaai and Jaalen traced the designs on the two carved sides and transferred them to the new one. They looked again at the carving strokes on the old box, took a deep breath, and began carving. I had the privilege of sitting with them – in theory to mind the old box, but in reality to admire their skill and dedication – as they respectfully duplicated the direction and angles of cuts and evaluated the artist’s ‘signatures’ in order to take this information home in the new box.

The new box has gone back to Haida Gwaii where it will be used in workshops with young people and established artists, as a way of bringing masterpieces home to inspire and support Haida people. The box has already been shown to classes of very excited high school students in Masset, where the totem pole in the Museum is from. Their school teachers have planks available for students to make their own boxes. The project is a partnership with the Haida Gwaii Museum, where we will also have events. More information will be posted on the project website at www.prm.ox.ac.uk/haida.html

Many thanks to our funders – the Economic and Social Research Council, Canada Council for the Arts, and British Columbia Council for the Arts – for making the Great Box Project possible.

Laura Peers, Professor of Museum Anthropology and Curator (Americas)
The second summer of the VERVE: Need, Make, Use project brought outreach activity large and small: from teaming up with Salisbury Museum (home to some of the General’s second collection) at the Larmer Tree Festival on the Pitt-Rivers family estate, to a pop-up presence at a shopping centre in Witney. Rounding off in September with an unprecedented 3,000 visitors to our ‘Pitt Fest’ (report p10), the project has so far delivered 100+ unique events to over 28,000 people. Such figures are helping us really make an impact among new audiences, part of the pledge to our major sponsor, the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The top-tier cases in the Court are now furnished with bespoke case titles, while the new display of leatherwork on the Lower Gallery – featuring shoes, saddles, fire buckets, and even a violin – will be complete by year end.

**Helen Adams, VERVE Project Curator/ Engagement Officer**

**Between Friends**

I have enormously enjoyed my first few months as Chair of the Friends and thank all who have welcomed me so warmly, both PRM staff and the Friends’ Council. At the invitation of Helen Adams I recently joined the VERVE Steering Committee, and have been learning about the educational role of the Museum. I already had some experience of their outreach programme when I helped children to make pecking bird toys at the Pitt Fest on a beautiful sunny day in September – great fun, and a great atmosphere (p10).

Planning for 2015 FPRM events is well advanced. The Kenneth Kirkwood Lecture Day theme will be cultural contexts of transgender communities (7 March). The Beatrice Blackwood Evening, usually a biennial lecture, will be a very special event this time – it’s a year early and not a lecture! See p4 and back page for details.

Council news: we welcomed Pat Millard as our new Secretary; Jonathan Bard has taken on the new role of Membership Development, responsible for increasing both the number of Friends and our income. Other Council members must also have been actively promoting the benefits, since Membership Secretary Rosemary King reports that we have already doubled the number of new Friends in this subscription year compared to 2013-14. I look forward to meeting many Friends, both new and old, at the impressive variety of events of the 2015 programme.

**Gillian Morriss-Kay, Chair of the Friends**
“I’m primarily a maker of things and that’s what the Pitt Rivers is all about”, says local woodcarver and sculptor Simon Clements. “You can make a canoe in four days, take it out on the river and go.” And, last summer in Port Meadow a group of eager enthusiasts from Simon’s PRM canoe building course did just that.

Simon started out as a potter and then, after a period as a professional mast, spar and oar maker, trained as a woodcarver. He built his first nessmuk canoe from plans in his pottery workshop. “You take an 8x4 sheet of ply, cut a series of darts in it, then stitch and glue it together to form a monocoque shell. It’s very like making clothes. The canoe weighs 10 kilos and you can carry it like a tortoise shell!”

Simon’s connection with the PRM dates from 2013 when he started improvising stringed ukuleles out of cans (tincaleles) for the VERVE Need Make Use project; they then suggested he do something with wood. “I was inspired by the Algonquin birch bark canoe (1921.22.1) hanging at the back of the Court and wanted to run a course making a modern plywood version which used this one as a reference. Like the Algonquin canoe, the nessmuk has a cultural and social history which I found fascinating.” The tortured ply technique using epoxy resin and fibre glass tape was developed towards the end of WWII to strengthen wooden joints but by the 50s was being used for recreational canoes.

Last autumn Simon was back in the Museum to carve a handle for a Stone Age axe head and copy an Inuit kayak paddle for the Education Department’s handling collection. They will be joined this January by a highly ornate replica of a ceremonial paddle from the Solomon Islands. We’ll learn more on 15 April when Simon gives a talk to the Friends entitled “Meeting the Makers; a personal look at the importance of the PRM to my practice as an artist.”

Juliette Gammon, Editor
A ‘formidable’ exercise for a professor!

Samuel Johnson would, I am sure, have agreed that indexing matches lexicography as suitable work for a harmless drudge. Two formidable ladies* (FPRM seems rather well endowed with formidable ladies) decreed that the best way for a new member like me to find out about the Friends’ activities was from a detailed reading (twice) of eight years of the Magazine. Happily, the really difficult bit, settling on format and design, had been excellently done by my predecessor Janet Sharpe.

Some philosophising is called for in structuring the content; in our ethnographic context there has to be a focus on cultural groups rather than nations – to lump Ainu artefacts with netsuke under ‘Japan’ would not make sense.

But my ancient O level geography did not equip me to map tribal lands across African frontiers more determined by 19th century European rivalries than by sensitivity to local cultures. Cautious recourse to the internet complements the family atlas in identifying necessary cross references.

We also have to think what the index might be used for: school projects seem more likely than DPhil dissertations, so the occasional redundancy can be excused as kindly rather than sloppy.

The first eight years were all new and interesting and educational, and as TS Eliot said, old men ought to be explorers. The only problem is that the two formidable ladies* now decree that as I have done it once...

John Grimley Evans, Friend and Professor Emeritus of Clinical Geratology, University of Oxford

*The two formidable ladies (Felicity Wood and Juliette Gammon) would like to thank the author for his sterling endeavours in compiling a new index – and agreeing to keep it up to date

The three indexed bound volumes of the Magazine are available in the Balfour Library

Indexes 51-75 and 76-80 have been emailed to all Friends for whom we have an address. If you’re not on email and would like to receive a print-out, or back numbers of the Magazine, please contact: Felicity Wood, 93 Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HL Tel: 01865 7554281

Director Michael O’Hanlon’s splendid new book, The Pitt Rivers Museum, a World Within*, is available in the Museum Shop. Packed with a magnificent selection of PRM images, it covers the Museum’s history from its founding to the present day.

*Scala Arts and Heritage Publishers Ltd, 2014. £16.99
Beatrice Blackwood: an intrepid lady of letters

You might know Beatrice Blackwood as the ‘cat lady’ in the collection box on the Court. An iconic figure in the Museum’s history, Blackwood took a Diploma in Anthropology in 1918 and started working in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History as an assistant to Professor Arthur Thomson. In 1924 she undertook three years of fieldwork in North America and on her return became the Demonstrator in Ethnology. She was transferred to the PRM in 1935 when Thomson died and stayed there until her retirement in 1975.

One of Blackwood’s most significant contributions was cataloguing the Museum’s collection by creating an enormous index card catalogue in duplicate, by region and object type. This still exists in the Researchers’ Room in the Museum’s extension. She worked with Tom Penniman, her friend and then Curator (Director), during WWII, when the Museum was only partially open. Her approach was so popular that visitors from the Smithsonian encouraged her to publish it, which she did in 1970.

Another significant achievement was Blackwood’s fieldwork in the Solomon Islands, sponsored by Yale University in 1929 and 1930. She worked on the islands of Buka and Bougainville, which became part of Papua New Guinea in 1975. *Both Sides of Buka Passage: An Ethnographic Study of Social, Sexual and Economic Questions in the North-Western Solomon Islands* was published in 1938.

While in the Solomon Islands, Blackwood frequently corresponded with Arthur Thomson. We have 30 letters to him from August 1929 to December 1930. They seem to have been her way of letting off steam and show she disliked boat travel, the local government, her white neighbours and the local missionaries whom she felt made people ashamed of their culture. However, she was fond of one neighbour, a plantation owner called Archer, who promised her a puppy, but gave her a Siamese cat instead! Felicia travelled with Blackwood in her rucksack as she walked from village to village.

In 1936, Blackwood went to mainland New Guinea, ‘cannibal country’, sponsored by the PRM. Accompanied by a new cat, Sally – who proved to be an excellent ice-breaker for her research – she gained a reputation for being small, but fearless. She published *The Technology of a Modern Stone Age People in New Guinea* in 1950.

Thomson seems to have been worried for Blackwood’s safety, but the government anthropologist, Ernest Chinnery, lent her a revolver which she wrote was far too heavy for her to shoot straight. She believed that it was “intended for moral effect rather than for practical action”! She also acquired a shotgun for her ‘cook-boy’ to use to shoot pigeons. Blackwood visited Hortense Powdemark, an American anthropologist and ex-student of the anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski, who was in New Ireland for her PhD. Powdemark’s cook-boy taught her how to make coconut yeast bread, in case her own cook-boy could not.

Blackwood shipped 19 cases of objects home from Papua New Guinea in 1931 and is credited on the Museum’s database as the source of 6,315 objects from all over the world. She is one of the Museum’s largest donors as well as providing our largest manuscript collection. In 2012, the William Delafield Charitable Trust funded a project to catalogue the archive of her papers. Mike Peckett and I have been compiling a summary to go on the website for future researchers.

One of my favourite quotes from her correspondence is Blackwood’s response to Thomson’s comparison of her adventures to those of Amy Johnson, the first woman to fly from Britain to Australia in May 1930. Blackwood indicates it was not the first time she had heard this as “one of the Soraken people told her: ‘Amy Johnson has nothing on you’”.

Beth Asbury, Project Researcher and Assistant to the Director

Don’t miss William Dalrymple and Vidya Shah at the Beatrice Blackwood Evening on Friday, 5 June (see flyer and poster opposite)
The mandolin that went to war

They say that every object tells a story and I start my World War I tour with one that has a particularly poignant narrative behind it. It is the mandolin (1940.9.21) in the ‘Lutes’ case owned by a local man called Arthur A Kennedy. A music teacher by profession, Kennedy signed up as a soldier when war broke out in 1914 and headed off to fight. But he took his mandolin with him and both he and the instrument survived all four years of the War and returned home to tell the tale. Literally, as it turns out, as Arthur Kennedy had the names of the battles at which he’d fought (among them Ypres and the Somme) painted down the side.

One can only speculate about why Kennedy’s delicate instrument went with him (and how it survived). Maybe it was played in the trenches and provided solace in quiet moments. It’s clearly been well used: you can see how worn the neck is in places. This was a tool of his trade, as well as possibly a talisman. It represented who he was when he was not a soldier.

The story of the mandolin doesn’t end in 1918, however. When he returned home, Kennedy also pasted a small scrap of newspaper inside which reads: “Arthur A Kennedy Mandolin, Banjo and Guitar Teacher was Minstrel to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry: England 1913, France 1916, Belgium 1917, Italy 1918”. It feels as though the working instrument has been made into a souvenir, a testament to the War.

The story ends with Kennedy donating the mandolin to the Pitt Rivers in 1940. Did the outbreak of World War II make him anxious to rid himself of a reminder of the horror of the First or did he want other people to realise that, even amid the mud and the killing, there had still been music and beauty?

Lizzy Rowe, Friend and Adult Tour Guide

Building strong culture in Melbourne

Last September, with some generous help from the Friends’ Kenneth Kirkwood Memorial Fund, the Oxford ASPIRE consortium and the Clothworkers’ Foundation, I attended the 17th triennial conference of the International Council of Museums’ Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC). More than 700 conservators from all over the world assembled in Melbourne for this important event which looked at ‘Building Strong Culture through Conservation’ – that is preserving cultural materials essential to sustaining collective memory after wars or natural disasters.

Papers were split amongst the various ICOM-CC working groups, with five or six sessions occurring at once, so it was sometimes hard to make a choice. My paper was part of a joint session of the Ethnographic and Natural History collections groups, with the general theme of pesticide residues on museum collections. The session was full, and my presentation on the analysis of pesticide residues on the Cook-voyage collections at the Pitt Rivers was well received.

I also presented a poster on the conservation of an Ainu quiver by Misa Tamura, a previous Pitt Rivers conservation intern, now working at the British Museum.

As part of the conference, delegates could go on a technical visit to a museum or workshop and I chose the Australian Print Workshop, Australia’s leading not-for-profit printmaking organisation. The workshop engages in creative partnerships with indigenous artists from Australia and the Pacific Islands and a group will visit Cambridge early in 2015 to produce responses to ‘first contact’ material in the Museum of Art and Archaeology. We were given demonstrations of various printing techniques, and had a chance to look at prints from the archives.

Attendance at the conference was a great opportunity, and I’m very grateful that the Friends are able to support members of Museum staff in such a way.

Jeremy Uden, Deputy Head of Conservation
Guest museum: 
National Gallery of Australia 
Australian indigenous art

The National Gallery of Australia (NGA), Canberra, began purchasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art in 1972, a decade before it opened. The Pitt Rivers Museum, in contrast, has collected Aboriginal art since the end of the 19th century, much of it displayed in the Lower Gallery.

The NGA has the world’s largest art collection and in 2010 opened 11 new galleries reflecting the range and diversity of artistic practice across Australia’s remote, regional and urban areas. The main regions represented are Arnhem Land, the Central deserts, The Kimberley, Cape York, the Tiwi and Torres Strait islands and urban Australia.

Arnhem Land is well known for its isolation, its art and the strong continuing traditions of its people. They use natural pigments (red, yellow, white and black, from ochres, pipe clay, charcoal and manganese) on flattened eucalyptus bark. Bark painting, once regarded as the only traditional form of Aboriginal art, was first collected from western Arnhem Land in the late 19th century. Many pieces were cut from the walls of bark shelters and taken to museums or abroad. Cross-hatching (raark) and x-ray painting depict designs ranging from figurative to intricate geometric clan patterning. Styles vary across West, Central and East Arnhem Land and the PRM’s collection includes examples from all three.

Desert art, another major element of the Museum’s collection, features works by two women artists, Nakamarra and Napangardi. Traditionally, desert art was executed on the body, weapons, sacred objects and the ground. These spectacular ritual ground paintings, covering up to a hectare, comprised clusters of ochres, feather down, rocks and balls of cotton-like pulped vegetable matter laid in small clumps to form the lines of the designs. After ceremonial dancing, they disappeared. The PRM copies by Spencer and Gillen (1901) of ground drawings from the Arrenta people are an especially important historical record. More recently, these designs have been depicted on portable surfaces, using painted dots.

Modern Aboriginal art’s great revolution started in the western desert during the 1970s in the government settlement of Papunya, 200 miles west of Alice Springs. Desert art moved from the closed ceremonial context to the public domain when Geoffrey Barden, an art teacher, encouraged the Aboriginal people to put their ‘Dreamings’, using painted dots, onto boards and canvas. This inspired indigenous communities all over Australia.

The Tiwi living off the northwest coast of Darwin in social and cultural isolation from the mainland, generated a distinctive art tradition with an emphasis on sculpture. The PRM has a stunning Tutini (grave post) from 1915, used in the Pukumani burial ceremony.

The Kimberley (northwest Australia) is a major art region not currently covered in our Museum. The NGA collection began in earnest in 1984 when it acquired paintings by the ground-breaking artist, Rover Thomas. Traditionally, this art was created on rock walls using bold, flat blocks of natural earth pigment outlined by white dots which formed a bird's-eye or side profile of the landscape. Modern painting grew from a combination of rock art and painting on bodies and cultural artefacts at ceremonial dances. The West Kimberley is the home of the cave paintings of the Wandjina – the spirit that created the world and left its image on the rock walls.

The Urban Art gallery at the NGA is contemporary, political and often provocative. These artists make statements about ‘identity’ rather than land or dreamtime. Living outside traditional environments, they create unique perspectives based on emotional experience. They are sometimes described as ‘cultural freedom fighters’, drawing on European and aboriginal artistic influences to address the historical and contemporary issues of Aboriginal people such as dispossession and social injustice. Julie Gough and Christian Thompson are such artists and have recently presented at the PRM.

Mary Kelly, 
PRM Friend and NGA guide
A favourite thing: the thorny oyster

HALF-HIDDEN among other Peruvian pots in the ‘Pottery and Pottery Making’ case is a black stirrup-spouted Chimú (c AD 1100-1470) vessel in the form of two conjoined thorny oysters (Spondylus princeps). This pot is a realistic model of the seashells, with their seven rows of large spines separated by two parallel rows of much smaller ones. The actual shells are coral-red on the outside and white inside with a red margin. They were highly prized in ancient Peru as a symbol of fertility, status and power.

Thorny oysters are not native to Peru but are found at some depth in the warmer water of Ecuador north to Panama. The pristine condition of shells found in archaeological deposits suggests they were collected live. This is corroborated by Chimú architectural reliefs showing shell-collecting divers suspended by ropes from balsa rafts. The flesh is seasonally toxic due to contamination with red-tide organisms and it has been suggested that it has hallucinogenic properties, enhancing its use in rituals.

Some early representations of the shell show it associated with crop plants which emphasise its role in fertility. Over time it increasingly symbolised power and prestige, and demand grew. Pizarro’s second expedition encountered a balsa raft laden with a rich cargo of gold, silver, elaborate textiles – and a great quantity of thorny oyster shells: “which the natives valued more highly than gold”.

The shells were traded far and wide, but the Chimú on the north coast of Peru treasured them most of all. They are found entire, carved into figurines, made into beads, used in inlays and even ground into powder. Red shell dust was scattered before the feet of the king and when he died he was buried with hundreds of thorny oyster shells. Lesser mortals were sent into the afterlife with thorny oyster-shaped pots instead.

Janet Ridout Sharpe, Friend

A snaphaunce from Savoy

The unique snaphaunce sporting gun of about 1580 is the oldest complete firearm in the Pitt Rivers Museum. It was formerly owned by Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick (1786-1848), a pioneer of the study of arms and armour, and is illustrated in Joseph Skelton’s Engraved Illustrations of Antient Arms and Armour from the Collection at Goodrich Court (1830). The inlaid stock is in the German style, held over the shoulder rather than against it.

Its distinctive lock is closely related to those on four almost identical military muskets (dated 1571 and 1572) preserved in Danish and German museums. Both it and the barrel bear a maker’s mark of a & within a shield – probably that of Jacques Robert, who was court gunmaker to Carlo Emanuele I, Duke of Savoy (1580-1630). A weapon with an identical lock is depicted in a 1591 painting of Filippo Emanuele, Prince of Piedmont, in the Prado, Madrid. Three other guns with the & mark are in the Capodimonte Museum, Naples. One has a German-type wheel-lock and a stock almost identical to that of the Pitt Rivers piece; the other two have characteristically French wheel-locks. The white inlay on 16th and 17th century gun stocks is usually referred to as staghorn, but recent histological analysis has shown it to be bone.

‘Snaphaunce’ or ‘snaphance’ is a 16th century term of Dutch origin for any firearm whose powder charge was ignited by a spring-actuated snapping mechanism that imitated striking sparks with a flint from a domestic fire steel. However, the word is now applied specifically to those (generally earlier) lock mechanisms in which the steel and flash-pan cover are separate components; when they are combined into a single unit, the term ‘flintlock’ is used.

Michael Spencer, Friend

Welcome to new Friends

I’m delighted to welcome the General’s great-grandson Anthony Pitt-Rivers who becomes a life member. Other new Friends are Fiona French (Goring-on-Thames); David Cook (Haverfordwest); Liz and Andy Softley (Chilton) and from Oxford: Walaa Al-Noori; Helen Cadoux-Hudson; Matthew Cadoux-Hudson; Jennifer Gurd; Angus and Becky Nicholson and family; Karenleigh Overmann; Andrew and Joanna Steele and family; Howard Thomas; Theresa Thompson, Veronica Walker Vadillo and Sarah Wookey. We plan to hold a special evening for Life Members, Honorary Friends and Patrons later in the year and hope you enjoy the many talks, outings and events FPRM offers. For details about becoming a Friend, please contact Rosemary King: rhking17@gmail.com

Erratum issue 81
In New Friends, issue 81, p15, Harriet Impey’s book was wrongly referred to as Bowl of Happiness, the correct title is Bowlful of Happiness.
West African Queens

Any other museum in possession of such an iconic sculpture as the PRM’s Queen Victoria would probably show her off in splendid isolation, using an exclusive state-of-the-art display. This being the very democratic Pitt Rivers, the Queen occupies the corner of a case shared with about 170 other figures under the heading of ‘Human Form in Art’. She is certainly not amused, but stands out from the crowd through force of personality and the superb quality of the carving.

She was the gift of Mrs de Montmorency of Torquay, no less, the widow of a colonial official in Nigeria, and has been in Oxford since 1965, apart from a spell appropriately enough at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2001. The regal ornaments and accessories are presumably taken from celebratory portraits distributed over the British Empire at the time of the 1887 Golden Jubilee. Such images of the great Queen would have been available to sculptors in West Africa, where British influence was consolidating in what is now Nigeria. Her conventional veil and the fan are included in the PRM Victoria, while the crown and the necklace are exuberantly enlarged, in keeping with the extravagant beaded regalia of traditional Yoruba kingdoms.

The Queen’s front shows a ‘prominent but monocentric bosom’ (this term from the PRM’s notes carefully tended by Jeremy Coote). Whether this anatomical quirk results from respect for the subject, or is due to ignorance or other reasons is unclear, as Yoruba representation of the female form is usually generous and uninhibited to a fault. However, what makes this piece so outstanding is the way the imperial presence is wonderfully conveyed in the stance and the features, to project an austere dignity just the right side of caricature. The unknown African artist achieves far more expression than many stolid conventional portraits produced closer to home.

The PRM example is arguably the pick of a number of fine Victoria sculptures now in museums from London to Hamburg, Paris and Los Angeles. But in spite of the remarkable quality of these works, their origins are generally undocumented, so we don’t know who made them, or who wanted them in the first place. The style is that of Yoruba artists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but they do not seem to have been made for European traders or officials, and they avoid suggestions of parody which is sometimes part of ‘colonial’ carvings.

So who might have wanted such competent and respectful representations of the British Queen? It’s most likely to have been West Africans whose forebears settled in Sierra Leone after being released from illegal slave ships on the way from Nigeria; and this experience, followed by mission-school education, produced a distinct social class which adopted some kind of affinity with the manners and institutions of the colonising elite. Some of this resettled group found their way back to the Yoruba-speaking lands of their ancestry in Nigeria, often as traders along the coast. It’s entirely plausible that craftsmen in Lagos, for example, were commissioned to produce Victorias as indications of status for such a community.*

And so these striking figures illuminate strands of the complex social and cultural history of the region. Carved in masterly fashion, and exhibited proudly in households along the coast of West Africa, the sculptures would have commanded as much admiration then as they do now in some of the world’s great ethnological museums.

Adam Butcher, Friend

*Background research – see Zachary Kingdon: The Queen as an Aku Woman, African arts 47, No. 3 Autumn 2014
Vim, vigour and VERVE!

“What have I been doing all my life?”

“There’s nowt so queer as folk!” “I was blown away!” One terrible cliché after another came into my head as I walked around VERVE’s second annual Pitt Fest last September. And I meant them all! That Saturday was fun, activity, enjoyment, belonging and interest all rolled into one for the many parents and children who came out, all ready to be engaged in the way the Need Make Use Team had intended. The weather was perfect, not too hot or cold or rainy or windy (the last might have created quite some havoc!).

There were over 30 stalls on the lawn in the University Museum forecourt, and it took me more than an hour and a half to chat my way round them all. It would be invidious to single out any one of the tents that were set up with such vigour so early in the morning, but I’m going to all the same, since one or two truly epitomised the Team’s intent. ‘Life’s A Beach’ was the one that really stopped me in my tracks, from its genial producer who lives on a narrow boat and whose workshop is an old railway carriage, to the wonderful stuff – chests, mirrors, tables – he made from driftwood.

But I found so many of them fascinating; Harriet Addyman’s jewellery on her ‘Metal Press’ stall was exquisite, all made from natural forms – lilies, limpets, seaweed, whelks, ferns – in pewter finished off with silver electro-plating, echoing some of our PRM Animal Form in Art. It wasn’t difficult to see the world through a child’s eyes when I came to Sue Pearl’s ‘Felt Better’ display. Everything one could think of made from unspun wool. Especially gorgeous were the animals dressed in beautifully tailored clothes, some of which were lined, and with every buttonhole done by hand. Anathema to my clumsy fingers, but just the kind of products that might engage many a child for hours on end.

The Salisbury Museum, an early recipient of many of General Pitt-Rivers’ artefacts, displayed objects from the Stone Age to the Romans. It’s always exciting to feel the imprints on a hand axe and there was one digging object that fitted my hand perfectly. Then on to the Oxfordshire Museum Service’s ‘Design and Make a Bell’ stall to see an iron bell, over 1,000 years old, possibly Irish monastic. They had a prison theme showing early photos of children who were briefly (I’m glad to say) incarcerated for stealing.

But it wasn’t all just looking. The PRM had an Aunt Sally; a highly popular activity making recorders out of large carrots, and The Friends, led by Felicity Wood with changing volunteers, helped children make and decorate pecking birds from coloured spatulas, feathers and split pins. They use the same mechanism as a feeding bird toy from Greenland in the Museum’s Ivory, Bone and Horn case. I was glad my job was just to write the day up!

I had a good time – and so did everyone else. Thank you VERVE!

Barbara Topley, Friend
Children’s choice: Totem pole

This totem pole is from the Haida community of Masset. I like it because it is so big and really stands out in the gallery. I imagine what it must have looked like when it was used for their tribal village events.

The top of it is carved from figures that remind people of how their ancestors gave things to their families. Carving the wood so carefully must have been quite hard work. Sometimes I help my father to work in wood so I know what it might feel like to work on such a large sculpture for a long time. Words to describe this item are tall, wonderful and powerful.

Rory Nicholson, age 8

Christmas party

The Friends’ Christmas Party is a popular social highlight of the season in Oxford, and the 2014 event was a huge success. The unique combination of live music, cheerful discourse, gorgeous food, unusual gifts, fund-raising, a treasure hunt and over 100 happy people filled the Court area of the Museum on 5 December.

The £1,100 raised by the Silent Auction will be used for the improved storage of mats and plant fibre clothing that are currently stacked in crushed and overcrowded conditions in the PRM’s Reserve Collection. Cataloguing and caring for these fragile objects properly will enable lost treasures to be available for research and potential display.

Guests at the party could escape the crush around the table of fabulous Silent Auction items by exploring the Museum. Gay Sturt had created an intriguing Picture Quiz of vibrantly colourful objects, which sent people scurrying from case to case discovering, among other things, the golden painted ear on an Egyptian coffin lid, a shimmering mother-of-pearl ornament on a Maori war canoe and a scarlet beaded doll from Cameroon.

The Museum shop was bustling with people buying Christmas gifts, and enjoying the live music. The Meadow Lane String Quartet from Iffley performed chamber ensemble works, and guitarist Anne L. Ryan from Eynsham sang contemporary songs.

Throughout the evening guests enjoyed mouth-watering and deliciously memorable morsels, made and supplied by members of the Friends’ Council – thank you so much – what a wonderful way to start the Christmas party season!

Wendy Tobitt, Friend

Silent Auction donors

We’d like to thank all those who generously donated to our Christmas party’s Silent Auction: Al Shami; Shirley Ardener (shawl); Terry Bremble (Morse walking tour); Salma Caller and volunteer guides (PRM tour); Cherwell Boathouse; Laury Conn (Morocco flat); Terri Costain (African masks); Jaalen Edenshaw (Haida print); Rosemary Lee (Iranian copper pans); Gillian Morriss-Kay (Michael O’Hanlon book); Phoenix Picturehouse; Standard Indian Restaurant and staff and Friends who contributed to the basket of goodies.

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.

Every Sunday 14.00-16.00
Family Friendly Fun: Activity backpacks, trails, colouring sheets, sorting boxes, and craft activities

Programme of other family events:

Thursday 8 January, 10.30-12.30, 14.00-16.00
Under 5 event: Feathered Friends
Make a feathered crown and have feathery fun in the Museum!

Saturday 7 February, 13.00—16.00
Pitt Stop: World Explorers
Go on a journey of discovery with intrepid travellers and create your own explorer hat!

Thursday 12 February, 10.30-12.30, 14.00-16.00
Under 5 event: Dance to the Ditty
Grab a Javanese dance scarf and get dancing.

Monday 16 February/Wednesday 18 February, 13.00-16.00
February Half-Term Activities:
Home Sweet Habitat. Explore how animals and humans make themselves at home, and build your own little den. Crafts, object handling and a family friendly talk at 15.00 image tepee.

Saturday 7 March, 13.00-16.00
Pitt Stop: Giddy Up
Saddle up and learn all about leatherwork in the Museum.

Thursday 12 March, 10.30-12.30, 14.00-16.00
Under 5 event: Singing Around the World
Learn catchy traditional tunes from around the world, and make a noisy instrument to practise them at home!

Saturday 14 March, 10.00-16.00
Wow!How?
Make, test, explore and explode with excitement at our annual bonanza of experiments and hands-on fun.

FPRM Membership

We’re including an application form with this edition of the Magazine. Please encourage your own friends to join us.
Friends of The Pitt Rivers Museum

INFORMATION SHEET
Spring 2015

INFORMATION

Friends
prm.ox.ac.uk/friends

General Information: 01865 373918
patmillard@live.co.uk
Programme: 01865 390489
g.bremble@virgin.net
Membership: 01367 242433
rhking17@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:
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
01865 270927
Email: 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

After Hours
Occasional themed evening events

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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

Travellers’ Stories
Until 18 January
Case display (Lower Gallery) capturing the stories of four local Traveller communities

A Well-Documented Life: James Arthur Harley (1873–1943)
Until 8 February
Archive Case display featuring Antiguan-born Harley, the first black student to take the University of Oxford's Diploma in Anthropology in 1909

My Siberian Year, 1914–1915
Until 31 March
Show case display to mark the centenary of the Oxford and Pennsylvania expedition to Siberia

Scarred/Sacred Water
Until 3 May. Long Gallery
Photographic artist Tanya Harnett, explores indigenous experiences of the environmental degradation and water contamination of First Nations land in Alberta

For further information about the displays listed above and also for other PRM What’s On information eg Saturday Spotlight and After Hours events see:
prm.ox.ac.uk/whatson

FRIENDS’ DIARY DATES

Friends’ Lectures
The talks listed below will be held in the PRM’s Lecture Room, access via Robinson Close, South Parks Road, OX1 3PP. Visitors most welcome. Refreshments served. No parking

Saturday 17 January 18.00
Menno Fitski, Curator of East Asian Art, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
This will be followed by the launch of The Temple Guardians, a children’s book by Harriet Impey and Katie Pickwood

Wednesday 18 February 18.30*
Edith and I: on the trail of an Edwardian traveller in Kosovo
Elizabeth Gowing is working on education and cultural heritage projects in Kosovo

Wednesday 15 April 18.30*
Meeting the Makers
Simon Clements, wood carver and sculptor

Wednesday 13 May 18.30*
How we came to be human
Robin Dunbar, Professor of Evolutionary Psychology, University of Oxford
*Visitors very welcome but £2 contribution towards costs appreciated. Tea served 18.00
Enquiries: g.bremble@virgin.net 01865 390489

Summer Away Day
Thursday 21 May
Hunterian Museum + Sir John Soane’s Museum, Lincoln’s Inn Fields, London
Enquiries: rosemarylee143@btinternet.com

Kenneth Kirkwood Lecture Day
Saturday 7 March 10.00–16.30
To be He or She?
A look at some transgender questions
In many ancient and pre-modern cultures, individuals or groups with ambiguous gender identities were accorded rights. Today in many countries such people are marginalised and rejected. The talks will touch on ethnographic, biological and political questions of identity and societal responses to transgender people
Enquiries: shahinbekhradnia@hotmail.com

Beatrice Blackwood Evening
Friday 5 June 18.15
The Last Mughal
William Dalrymple, writer and historian
Enquiries: guiaotopley@gmail.com
See flyers and booking forms enclosed
prm.ox.ac.uk/friendssevents