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Griff Rhys Jones champions Fitzwilliam Museum's bid for Gulbenkian Prize for Museum of the Year 2005

Comedian, writer, presenter and broadcaster Griff Rhys Jones has lent his support to the Fitzwilliam Museum's bid for the Gulbenkian Prize for Museum of the Year and marks this with a special visit to the Museum on Saturday 5 March. The Fitzwilliam's Courtyard Development, which opened to the public last summer, has been short-listed for this prestigious award, the largest arts prize in the UK worth £100,000.

Griff - who went to Emmanuel College in the early 1970s - is a frequent visitor to Cambridge and to the Fitzwilliam, of which he is a keen supporter. "If only all towns could have such an accessible cultural treat as the Fitzwilliam," he said. "I head straight there; I love the eclectic collection of collections. The obsessions of personal choice keep popping up and I always find something new to appreciate."

Museum Director Duncan Robinson said "We are delighted that Griff has honoured the Fitzwilliam with his support in its bid for the prestigious Gulbenkian Prize and are very pleased to welcome him today. Many visitors tell us that the Courtyard Development, with its new spaces, facilities and public programmes, has greatly enhanced their experience of the Museum. We hope that many others share their views and may be encouraged to get involved in choosing the winner of the UK's largest arts prize."

The Gulbenkian Prize for Museum of the Year is the largest arts prize in the UK. Its purpose to promote public awareness and appreciation of the role of all museums and galleries by highlighting excellent new work being undertaken in the sector. A single award of £100,000 will be presented to a museum or gallery, large or small, anywhere in the UK whose entry, in the opinion of the judges, best demonstrates a track record of imagination, innovation and excellence through work mainly undertaken during the calendar year 2004.

Judging is now underway, with the four finalists being announced on 18 March, and the interest, involvement and comments of the public are actively encouraged: go online at www.thegulbenkianprize.org.uk for further details. For more information about the Fitzwilliam Museum visit www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

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For information about the Gulbenkian Prize for Museum of the Year visit www.thegulbenkianprize.org.uk or email info@thegulbenkianprize.org.uk

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