

23 May 2008

Anglo-Saxon Art in the Round

23 May – 7 September 2008

A rarely-seen world of Anglo-Saxon artistry is on display in a new exhibition opening today at The Fitzwilliam Museum.

Anglo-Saxon Art in the Round explores the rich inventiveness of early Medieval Art through the medium of coins and ornamental metalwork. It features pieces from the De Wit collection which is here on public display for the first time, following its recent acquisition by The Fitzwilliam Museum with major support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Art Fund, the UK's leading independent art charity.

The gold shillings and silver pennies of the 7th and 8th centuries feature a diverse range of innovative designs, drawn from Classical and Germanic sources. Their bold images of people, animals, and plants, alongside geometric motifs, are both rich in detail and sophisticated in concept, providing a captivating insight into the Anglo-Saxon imagination.

These pieces testify to the artistic vibrancy of the era in which they were manufactured, a period which also produced such treasures as the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Franks Casket and the High Crosses. The exhibition will also feature a selection of contemporary ornamental metalwork drawn from other museums in the region, illuminating the previously lost treasures of a creatively rich period of history.

Mark Blackburn, Keeper of Coins and Medals, The Fitzwilliam Museum, said "Famous Anglo-Saxon works such as the Lindisfarne Gospels really only provide glimpses of a much larger body of lost art from the 7th and 8th centuries. New finds of coinage and ornamental metalwork from this era are now providing us with an alternative source of images from the period, which are both artistically and intellectually outstanding."

Anglo-Saxon Art in the Round will be accompanied by a programme of talks by experts exploring life, art and money in Anglo-Saxon times and by a podcast, which provides an introduction to the exhibition as well as an illustrated tour of its particular highlights. The exhibition will also provide the venue for a series of interactive handling sessions led by curators and education staff, accessible for blind or partially-sighted visitors.

The exhibition will also be shown at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery (20 September 2008 – 18 January 2009) and Ipswich Town Hall Galleries (6 March – 5 September 2009).

- ends -
- ... / Further information -

Press | The Fitzwilliam Museum

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Exhibition details for publication:

Anglo-Saxon Art in the Round

23 May - 7 September 2008
Octagon Gallery (Gallery 10)

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00
Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00

ADMISSION FREE

Further information and images from:

Marketing and Press Office
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Notes for Editors

The Fitzwilliam Museum

The Fitzwilliam Museum houses the University of Cambridge's art collection and is a public museum and art gallery with an international reputation. More than half a million objects and works of art are held in five curatorial departments: Antiquities, Applied Arts, Coins and Medals, Manuscripts and Printed Books and Paintings, Drawings and Prints.

The Fitzwilliam's treasures range from Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities to the arts of the 21st century and include masterpieces by Titian, Canaletto, Stubbs, Constable, Monet, Renoir and Picasso, one of the world's foremost Rembrandt print collections, Handel music manuscripts and the famous Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, one of the most significant collections of Korean ceramics outside South-East Asia, medieval illuminated manuscripts and outstanding collections of pottery, porcelain and medieval coins.

The Fitzwilliam Museum welcomes over 300,000 visitors a year, offers a wide-ranging programme of temporary exhibitions and events, and has an award-winning Education Service. The Museum is open Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00, Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00.

Admission to the permanent collections and to temporary exhibitions is free.

www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

The Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, it invests in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 26,000 projects, allocating over £4 billion across the UK. For more information contact Roland Smith in the HLF Press Office on 020 7591 6047; www.hlf.org.uk

The Art Fund

The Art Fund is the UK's leading independent art charity. It offers grants to help UK museums and galleries enrich their collections, campaigns on behalf of museums and their visitors, and promotes the enjoyment of art. It is entirely funded from public donations and has 80,000 members. Since 1903 the charity has helped museums and galleries all over the UK secure 860,000 works of art for their collections. For more information contact the Press Office on 020 7225 4888 or visit www.artfund.org

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