A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

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Introduction

The Fitzwilliam Museum is the principal museum of the University of Cambridge. It is named after its founder, Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion (1745–1816), who bequeathed his art collection and library to the University ‘for the increase of learning and other objects of that noble foundation’. It leads the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) Major Partner Museum consortium, one of only 21 Arts Council funded Major Partner Museums in England. The Museum’s mission is to contribute to society through the pursuit of research, education and learning at the highest international levels of excellence, by preserving and extending its world-class collections and by offering exhibitions and public programmes to engage the widest possible audiences.

The collections are preserved and researched in the Museum’s five curatorial departments: (1) Antiquities; (2) Applied Arts; (3) Coins & Medals; (4) Manuscripts & Printed Books; and (5) Paintings, Drawings & Prints. The Museum shares its collections and expertise through its permanent gallery displays, temporary exhibitions, loans to other museums, publications, teaching and learning programmes, while a variety of digital and online resources are used by a worldwide audience. Access to the collections and exhibitions is free to all. The Museum received a Sandford Award for its ‘outstanding contribution to heritage education’, and was re-awarded the ‘Learning Outside the Classroom’ quality badge. In 2016/7 the Fitzwilliam welcomed c.450,000 visitors and
was named the most popular free visitor attraction in the East of England by Visit England.
The Founder

Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam (1745–1816) came from Anglo-Irish and Anglo-Dutch roots, and grew up dividing his time between the family homes in Richmond, Surrey, and Mount Merrion on the south side of Dublin Bay, Ireland. He attended Charterhouse before studying at Cambridge: he was admitted to Trinity Hall as a nobleman fellow commoner in 1761, and graduated with an MA degree in 1764. His tutor, Samuel Hallifax, commissioned Joseph Wright of Derby to paint the fine graduation portrait of Fitzwilliam reproduced on the cover of this booklet.

Following his graduation until the early 1790s, Fitzwilliam spent a great deal of time in Paris, initially to study the harpsichord. He was to become a talented amateur harpsichord player and composer, and his lifelong love of music took him to Spain, Italy and France in search of manuscripts and early printed musical scores. Perhaps his most significant musical acquisition was the Virginal Book, which he obtained from Robert Bremner, an Edinburgh bookseller. It is the richest anthology of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English keyboard music in existence.

It was in Paris in 1784 that he met his future mistress Marie Anne Bernard, a dancer at the Opéra, whose stage name was ‘Zacherie’. Having succeeded to his father’s title in 1776, the affair was kept secret and they never married. They had two surviving sons: ‘Fitz’ born in 1786,
who eventually came to live in London and was mentioned in his father’s will, and ‘Bily’ (sic) in 1788, about whom little is known. Zacharie’s fate is also unknown after late 1790, but she may well have died in the early 1790s due to poor health.

From 1790 to 1806, Fitzwilliam served as the second Member of Parliament for Wilton in Wiltshire (when it still had two representatives) and oversaw the development of parts of south-east Dublin in the Georgian style. He also spent a great deal of time and money promoting musical events in London (often for charitable causes) and building up his art and bibliographic collections. From his maternal grandfather, Sir Matthew Decker, a successful Dutch banker, merchant and political adviser, he inherited a substantial collection of between 60 and 80 paintings, the majority of which were 17th-century Dutch and Flemish pictures, to which he added other fine examples. The most important opportunity that Fitzwilliam had as a collector of French and Italian paintings was at the sale of the collection of the late Duc d’Orléans that took place in London in 1798. He was frustrated in his attempt to buy them all privately, but he did succeed in purchasing several Italian Renaissance masterpieces including Titian’s Venus, Cupid and the Lute-player and Veronese’s Hermes, Herse and Aglauros (both on view in Gallery 7).

In addition to paintings and music, Fitzwilliam also collected printed books and illuminated manuscripts: by the time of his death, his library consisted of some 10,000 items, which are now housed in the Founder’s Library. He also owned well over 40,000 Old Master prints, which he
had pasted into some 300 large folio format leather-bound albums: these are carefully stored in the print-room reserves, with examples shown regularly in temporary exhibitions housed in the Charrington Print Room (Gallery 16). Fitzwilliam also had a few pieces of sculpture (antique and post-Classical) and a number of death masks.

At his death in 1816, Fitzwilliam bequeathed his wide-ranging collection to the University together with the sum of £100,000 to provide ‘a good substantial Museum repository’. Why he chose to leave his vast collections in their entirety to Cambridge remains something of a mystery but part of the reason may well have been because he had no direct legitimate heirs. It was also a way of ensuring that his collection was kept together and the generous bequest may have been in response to the wider contemporary movement to establish public art galleries in England.

A committee was set up to decide on the location and also the architectural style and plan of the new museum. The commission was eventually awarded to a young architect George Basevi (1794–1845) who chose the Neoclassical style with a portico that emulated the grandiose temples of ancient Greece and Rome. Following various setbacks, including the unfortunate death of Basevi in 1845, the Fitzwilliam Museum first opened to the public in 1848. (For further information on the building, see the separate booklet).
The growing collections

Throughout the nineteenth century, the collections grew by gift, bequest and purchase with antiquities arriving in great numbers. In 1823, for example, the scholar adventurer Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823) presented the lid from the granite sarcophagus of Ramesses III (1184–1153 BCE), while in 1850, John Disney (1779–1857) donated 83 Roman marble statues (many of which can be seen in Gallery 21, while a marble portrait-bust of Disney is in Gallery 26). In 1864, the University purchased the Greek vases, sculptures, coins and gems that had been collected by Lt Col. William Martin Leake (1777–1860), whose portrait bust is displayed on the Founder’s Landing (no. 16).

This interest in classical civilisation was further emphasised by Sir Sidney Colvin, the University’s Slade Professor of Fine Art, who became the first Director in 1876. In the following year, the Syndicate (governing body) allocated £200 for the purchase of plaster casts to assist him and others in their teaching; by the time of Colvin’s resignation in 1883, the cast collection had grown so large that plans were under way to build a separate Museum of Classical Archaeology. This is now located on Sidgwick Avenue and is open to the public.

By the late nineteenth century, lack of space had become a problem throughout the Museum. The photograph of the staff taken at the time reveals just how cramped the hang of paintings was in the first floor galleries (see image on p.
10), while a Guidebook of 1868 describes a similarly crowded and jumbled display in the ground floor rooms. Next to the cast of ‘the Diana of Versailles’ were an idol from the sacred grove near Ava in Burma, a Roman hand-mill found in Coveney Fen, a Japanese umbrella, an Egyptian tombstone, a marble inscription in Armenian and two plaster casts of medallions by the Danish Neoclassical sculptor Bertel Thorwaldsen.

New galleries built

It fell to Sir Sydney Cockerell, who became Director in 1908, to tackle the Museum’s problems, which he did with relish to judge from his famous boast that ‘I found it a pigsty; I turned it into a palace’. He was helped by the bequest received in 1912 from Charles Brinsley Marlay (1831–1912) which, like that of the founder a century before, combined an important art collection with a generous endowment. In 1915, Cockerell unveiled his master plan, drawn up by the architects A. Dunbar Smith and Cecil C. Brewer, to attach a vast courtyard to the Founder’s Building. The first phase, the Marlay Wing, opened in 1924, allowing Cockerell to demonstrate his flair for display in which different types of artworks are shown together in order to help re-contextualise them. The Upper Marlay (Gallery 6) has changed little since Cockerell set it out (see image on p. 10): its combination of fine and decorative arts introduced what was to become the Museum’s characteristic house-style. The building of the Courtauld Galleries followed in 1931 and the Henderson Galleries
and the Charrington Print Room in 1936, before the Smith and Brewer plan was abandoned as unrealistic.

Diversification of the collections

Meanwhile the collections continued to grow, reflecting changes of taste as they did so. Fitzwilliam’s generation at the end of the Georgian period was the last to be dominated by the Grand Tour, with its profound respect for the classical principles underlying the art and architecture of Renaissance Italy. In contrast, Marlay and his contemporaries witnessed a renewed interest in the Middle Ages which stimulated the Gothic Revival in Victorian art and architecture. Marlay’s collection included numerous works from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, including hundreds of ‘cuttings’ (leaves) removed from medieval manuscripts.

Marlay was the first in a remarkable succession of generous twentieth- and twenty-first-century benefactors, many of whom had studied at Cambridge. Whilst some collected in a specific area, others collected widely. Their gifts, bequests and loans are the reason why the Fitzwilliam Museum is often referred to as ‘a collection of collections’ and it also accounts in part for its particular strengths (and weaknesses). Some key early twentieth-century donors include: Charles Fairfax Murray (1849–1919) who gave many medieval manuscripts and other works of art to the Museum from 1904 onwards, and who marked the
Museum’s centenary in 1918 by giving Titian’s late masterpiece of Tarquin and Lucretia.
Frederick Leverton Harris (1864–1926) whose bequest in 1926 included Italian maiolica together with Italian and French medieval and Renaissance works of art.
Dr J.W.L. Glaisher who bequeathed over 4,000 pieces of British and continental pottery together with many samplers and valentine’s cards.
Thomas Henry Riches (1865–1935) who supported the museum from 1913 onwards when he gave Japanese prints and illustrated books until his death, when he bequeathed medieval manuscripts, Turkish pottery, English silver and works by William Blake.
Charles Ricketts RA (1866–1931) and Charles Shannon (1863–1937), aesthetes par excellence whose lives were described by the French painter Jacques-Emile Blanche (1861–1942) as ‘all for art’, their apartments ‘filled with exquisite things, Persian miniatures, Tanagra figures, Egyptian antiques, jewels and medals, which millionaires overlooked.’ The Museum received the Ricketts and Shannon Bequest in 1937.
Frank Hindley Smith (1863–1939) whose bequest in 1939 added the first Impressionist paintings to the collection, including Renoir’s Gust of wind and Degas’ At the café, as well as a Cézanne landscape of c.1900.

Changes in taste and the popularity of certain types of art are naturally reflected in the Museum’s acquisition history. This is true, for example, in the case of Impressionist art. In 1960, when the catalogue of French paintings was published, the Fitzwilliam had only a handful of works by the Impressionists; but by 2004, Jane Munro was able to
include sixty-four works, in a wide variety of media, in her French Impressionists handbook. Of particular note are the drawings by Degas included in A.S.F. Gow’s bequest of 1978, the three wax dancer sculptures by the same artist given by Paul Mellon in 1990, and the long-term loan of works by Cézanne and Seurat, in addition to those by Matisse, Braque and Picasso, from the bequest of John Maynard Keynes to King’s College. In 1998, two late landscapes by Monet from the Parker collection were accepted in lieu of inheritance tax by H.M. Treasury and allocated to the Museum in accordance with the testator’s wishes. Another growing area is contemporary art and craft: for the past two decades Nicholas and Judith Goodison have been actively collecting and donating the best examples of contemporary British craft to the Museum, via The Art Fund. A selection of their gifts can be seen in Galleries 11 (furniture) and 27 (ceramics).

Like the collections it preserves, the Museum itself has grown in response to both cultural and social changes. The extensions designed by David Roberts which opened in 1966 and 1975 respectively, reflected both a renewed commitment to ‘the increase of learning’ within the context of a university museum and, with the addition of a temporary exhibition venue (Gallery 13), a growing interest in widening participation. The Hamilton Kerr Institute at Whittlesford was set up as a department of the Museum in 1976 in direct response to a need perceived nationally for training and research in the area of paintings conservation. At the same time the Museum began a partnership with the local education authority which led, eventually, to the establishment of the Museum’s own Learning Department.
with a commitment to all forms of lifelong learning, outreach and widening participation.

In common with all museums, the Fitzwilliam has experienced growing visitor numbers from 100,000 in 1970 to over 300,000 in 1996 and since 2015 up to 450,000 every year. The increase in footfall and visitor expectations were the catalyst for the most recent extension: the Courtyard Building was completed in 2004 to plans of John Miller and Partners, adding nearly 3,000 square metres of new and renovated space to the existing buildings. Although several galleries were lost, it permitted a shop, café, lecture room, art studio, schools’ room and enlarged washroom facilities, as well as a public lift, to be built on site — all essential in a museum today. In 2016, the Museum proudly celebrated the bi-centenary of its foundation with some spectacular new acquisitions including the Castle Howard cabinets and the Russell frame (on view in Gallery 17).

As the collections continue to grow, space is yet again an issue. A good proportion of the Museum’s holdings are on view at any one time, with the displays in the galleries frequently changing and other parts of the collections brought out for temporary exhibitions. Items not on show are stored in the reserves and may be viewed by prior appointment with the relevant curatorial department. Further information about specific items in the collections is available on the Museum’s website via the Collections Explorer database.
Further information about the history of the Museum, its buildings, collections and key figures, can be found on relevant pages on the Fitzwilliam’s website, and in the specially commissioned bicentenary volume — Lucilla Burn, The Fitzwilliam Museum: A History (2016) — available for purchase in the shop.
Upper Marlay gallery 1934
A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE FOUNDER’S BUILDING AND ENTRANCE HALL

Please do not remove from the entrance Hall
History of the design

In 1823, the University acquired a plot of land from Peterhouse (the oldest College in Cambridge) on which to build the Fitzwilliam Museum. Eleven years later, in 1834, it held a competition to select the architect to design the new building. Many different designs, plans and models were submitted in a variety of architectural styles and debates ensued as to which was the best and most appropriate. In late 1835, a design in the Neoclassical style by George Basevi (1794–1845), a pupil of Sir John Soane, was selected as the winner. Although he did not live to see the building completed, it is generally reckoned to be his masterpiece, and perhaps the fullest realisation of Soane’s ideal of the creation of contemporary public architecture inspired by that of ancient Rome. A plaster bust of Basevi is displayed on the Founder’s Landing (no. 1). The foundation stone of the new Museum was laid on 2 November 1837.

Basevi’s grandiose design envisaged the Fitzwilliam Museum as a place dedicated to the arts and learning and was therefore based on the temples of ancient Greece and Rome: a building with a great Corinthian portico set on a high plinth approached by a flight of steps. Whilst the elevated nature of the building made it as monumental and visible as possible, it led to serious problems in planning the Entrance Hall, which was placed in effect at a mezzanine level, requiring steps up to the first floor and down to the ground floor.
In Basevi’s first solution the space occupied by the present Entrance Hall would have incorporated a Keeper’s Office on one side and a Porter’s Room on the other. The Hall itself was much smaller than the executed scheme, and had two flights of ascending stairs, with a central descending flight which split three ways at a landing in the centre of the present Greek and Roman Gallery. Before his tragic death by a fall through an opening in the floor of the west tower of Ely Cathedral in 1845, Basevi had changed his mind more than once about the design of the staircases, being tempted by the alternative of a central ascending stair flanked by two descending flights. When the Museum was first opened to the public in 1848, the Entrance Hall was unfinished and undecorated and visitors entered through the basement.

Following Basevi’s death, Charles Robert Cockerell (1788–1863) was appointed as the new architect to see the complex project through: he had recently completed the construction of the new University Library building (now the library of Gonville and Caius College). Cockerell similarly proposed a central ascending staircase flanked by two descending staircases. He also conceived the central dome and the treatment of the ceiling, replacing Basevi’s relatively austere treatment with richly modelled ornament and his rectilinear coffers with arched vaults. In 1870, Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820–77) who in 1865 had designed Addenbrooke’s Hospital opposite (now the Judge Institute of Business Studies), and was in 1869 the first Slade Professor of Art, proposed an apse extending under the portico as a means of extending the cramped
Basevi/Cockerell Entrance Hall, which was still unfinished. This suggestion was not approved.

Finally Edward Middleton Barry (1830–80) — son of Sir Charles Barry (1795–1860) who designed both the Reform Club and the Palace of Westminster — was called in. His solution, completed in 1875, was to sacrifice the Keeper’s Office and the Porter’s Room, putting in their place twin stairs to the lower galleries, and thus opening out the centre of the Entrance Hall.

The Entrance Hall as we see it today is therefore an amalgam of Basevi’s original scheme (from which the principal survivals are the plan and the Corinthian columns and pilasters of the landing, and the doorway into Gallery 3); Cockerell’s reworking of Basevi’s scheme in the late 1840s (which produced the dome, the elaborate plaster ornaments, and the barrel-vaults in the ceiling); and finally E.M. Barry’s radical planning solution of the early 1870s (which increased the amount of light and space, saw the laying of the mosaic pavements, and the more elaborate door surrounds).

Architectural and sculptural decorations and use of colour Barry’s use of lavish, costly materials and bright colours (polychromy) is very much in keeping with both Cockerell’s and Wyatt’s earlier suggestions. The combination of mosaic floors, marble and granite columns and revetments — yellow Siena for the handrails, pinkish Devon for balustrades and panels, green Genoa for the lower pillars and Aberdeen granite for the great columns above — painted and gilded plaster, and painted glass
produces a breathtakingly rich and colourful effect. For further information about the marbles and stones employed in the Founder’s Landing, please see the illustrated guide by Prof. Walkden at the back of this booklet.

In addition to the columns, pilasters and capitals, the architectural space is enriched by a great deal of sculpture. The majestic doorway into Gallery 3 is flanked by a pair of classically-inspired caryatids, the one on the left holding a pitcher in her outer hand, the one on the right a wreath. These are copies of the Caryatids of the Erechtheion, an ancient Greek temple on the north side of the Acropolis of Athens; they were carved in white Tuscan marble by Edward William Wyon (1811–85) in 1874. Above this central door is a magnificent representation of the coat-of-arms of Viscount Fitzwilliam crowned by a coronet and set within a luxuriant laurel wreath, surmounted by plumes. The arms stand on the Fitzwilliam family’s Latin motto ‘DEO ADJUVANTE NON TIMENDUM’ (which may be translated as ‘With God assisting we must not fear’) and are flanked by two vivacious ostriches with golden horseshoes in their beaks. This is a common convention in heraldry: according to Guy Cadogan Rothery in his Concise Encyclopedia of Heraldry, ‘The ostrich came to us early from the East, being brought back by the Crusaders. It was regarded as a symbol of endurance and martial ardour, partly no doubt owing to its swiftness of foot and combativeness at certain seasons, but more particularly because of its hardiness and power of long abstinence, combined with healthy digestive powers. This latter peculiarity gave rise to the legend that
it could live on iron, hence the practice of heralds of showing it bearing a Passion nail (emblem of the Church Militant), a horseshoe (itself an old symbol of religion, but more particularly assumed as a reminder of knightly prowess on horseback), or a key (a symbol at once of religious and temporal power).’

Above the side doorways are the arms of Cambridge University decorated with large cornucopia that spill forth abundant fruit; and above the entrance door is a Latin inscription commemorating Richard, Viscount Fitzwilliam’s foundation of the Museum in 1816. The central dome is supported on the heads of bearded and muscular male herms (a type of classical sculpture with a torso or head attached to a square or tapering base) with gilded laurel wreaths. Over the decades, accumulated dust and dirt had obscured much of the colour and quality of the sculptural and architectural details but the recent conservation project (summer 2017 to summer 2018) has revealed the original polychromy and crispness of the tooling. In its pristine state, the Entrance Hall at the Fitzwilliam Museum is one of the finest and best preserved Victorian interiors anywhere in the world.

The Marble Sculptures of Royalty

The Entrance Hall was always designed to serve as a sculpture gallery. From 1877 until 1956, an over life-size marble statue of Prince Albert shown wearing the robes of the Chancellor of the University of Cambridge (a position
he had occupied from 1847 until his death in 1861), carved by John Henry Foley (1818–74) in 1866, dominated the centre of the entrance hall (where the Visitor Services Welcome Desk is currently located). This statue had been commissioned and offered to the University by the Duke of Devonshire and other subscribers, and accepted by the Senate in 1870. It was transferred to the grounds of Madingley Hall in 1956, and in 2004, post-conservation, to the foyer of the Chancellor’s Centre, Wolfson College, Cambridge.

George I and George II

Since 2012, the main entrance has once again been graced by over life-size royal portrait-statues in the form of pendant statues of George I (1660–1727, ruled from 1714) to the left of the main entrance, and his son, George II (1683–1760), ruled from 1727), to the right. These are on loan from the University Library.

The impressive, over life-size, full-length, marble statue of George I is a posthumous image, carved by the Flemish sculptor John Michael Rysbrack c.1737–39, over a decade after George I had died. It shows the king in Roman armour and cloak, and wearing a laurel wreath. It is signed on the base of the column, ‘RYSBRACK. Fecit’. In 1736, the University resolved to erect a marble statue of the late George I ‘by a sculptor of note’ to be placed in the University Library ‘in perpetual memory’ of the king’s great benefaction in 1715 of the library of John Moore, Bishop of Ely. This consisted of some 30,000 volumes and cost
the king 6,000 guineas to acquire. The University also wanted to commemorate the king’s contribution of £2,000 towards the building of the Senate House, which had been constructed in the 1720s to the Neoclassical designs of James Gibbs, and recently completed in 1730.

The king’s gifts to the University may have been motivated by the fact that, unlike Oxford which had supported the Tories and Jacobites, Cambridge had supported the Whigs and the Hanoverian dynasty. The commemorative purpose of the sculpture is recorded in the long Latin inscription on the front of the pedestal, which states: ‘To the most excellent Prince, George, King of Great Britain, for his outstanding favours to this University, the Senate of Cambridge, as perpetual witness to their gratitude, decreed the setting up of this statue after his death.’

Almost immediately after the 1736 vote, Charles, second Viscount Townshend, K.G. (1674–1738) offered to pay for the statue himself. This was because, as Secretary of State from 1714 to 1716, he had been instrumental in procuring the royal gift. The University accepted and the commission was awarded to Rysbrack. Sadly, Viscount Townshend died in 1738 whilst the sculpture was still in progress; the finished statue was presented in 1739 by his son, Charles, third Viscount Townshend, and erected seemingly at his behest inside the Senate House (not the Library), on its north wall. The involvement of the Townshends is recorded in the two Latin inscriptions on both sides of the pedestal. The one on the left states: ‘Charles, Viscount Townshend, supreme glory both of the University and of the State, for the distinguished loyalty
with which he served the King and the singular affection with which he cherished the University, at his own expense caused to be fashioned in marble the statue decreed by the University Senate.’ The inscription on the right side records how, ‘Charles the Younger, Viscount Townshend, heir alike to his father’s virtues and titles, caused the statue which his father had left uncompleted when snatched away by sudden death, to be completed and erected in this place of highest honour in the University.’

The full-length, marble statue of George II is also posthumous: it was carved by Joseph Wilton RA, c. 1765, a few years after George II had died, and some thirty years after the Rysbrack portrait of George I. It was commissioned by Thomas Pelham-Holles, first Duke of Newcastle, K.G. and Chancellor of the University, to commemorate the fact that George II had contributed £3,000 towards the cost of the Senate House. Designed as a pendant to Rysbrack’s George I, it is similar in size, style and costume, but rather than holding a military baton, George II holds a scroll. Moreover, his column is no longer plain but is slung round with a number of medallions celebrating British land and sea victories in the Seven Years War (‘Guadalupe Capta. MDCCLIX’, ‘Quiberon’, ‘Senegal’, ‘Lagos’, ‘Minden’ and ‘Victoria in Oriente’). The column is surmounted by a sphere engraved with a map of Canada. It is signed on the base of the column, ‘I:WILTON,sculp’.

Its presentation by Holles to the University in 1766 is proudly recorded in the Latin inscription on the front of the
pedestal: ‘To George II, his most beneficent patron, ever to be revered, inasmuch as he ruled prosperously with all justice and humanity, in peace and war, over a willing people, and, moreover, cherished, strengthened and adorned the University of Cambridge, this statue was erected at his own expense, to be, God willing, an everlasting memorial of his gratitude to his King, his devotion to his country and his affection for his University, by Thomas Holles, Duke of Newcastle, Chancellor of the University, A.D. 1766.’

Wilton’s George II was originally placed directly opposite the statue of George I, in the middle of the south side of the Senate House, but this position was not ideal as it blocked the south door. In 1884, both statues were moved from the Senate House to the University Library in the Cockerell Building (subsequently the Squire Law Library and now the library of Gonville and Caius College), which had been opened in 1842. The statues remained in situ for over a century (despite the fact that the University Library had transferred to a much bigger purpose-built building in 1934), only moving there in 1995. In 2010, the Library decided to clear the foyer for temporary exhibitions and so offered the statues on long-term loan to the Fitzwilliam. They were installed in their present positions in 2012, and have been seen and admired by several million visitors since then.
The Plaster Casts

The upper part of the walls of the Founder’s Landing is dominated by twelve niches, which were part of Basevi’s original conception. These are filled with reproductions in cast plaster of eleven famous antique statues and one by the Italian Neoclassical sculptor, Antonio Canova (1757–1822). Plaster casts are created using piece-moulds: individual moulds taken from each part of the original sculpture are filled with liquid plaster and allowed to set, and are then conjoined to recreate the original. These piece-moulds could be re-used, permitting multiple copies of the same sculpture to be cast. With the aid of a ‘reducing machine’ it was possible to make casts in a range of sizes and to reproduce details of the original. Casts of the most admired masterpieces of antique and post-Classical sculpture had been collected since the mid-16th century all over Europe. The collecting of plaster reproductions reached its height during the second half of the 19th century. It became customary for museums to display casts, often alongside original pieces, as the best examples of good design and taste to be studied, drawn and admired.

Market demand resulted in the establishment of many specialist cast manufacturers, the majority in Italy, such as the Florence-based firm of Oronzio Lelli. Other Italians established businesses in London, most notably Giovanni Franchi and Domenico Bruciani (1815–80), a native of Lucca, Italy, whose firm is responsible for eight of the casts here. Bruciani had established his Gallery of Casts
in Covent Garden by 1837 and from 1841 he supplied many casts for the Cast Courts of the Victoria and Albert Museum (then known as the Architectural Courts of the South Kensington Museum), which took over the Brucciani business in 1922, when it was close to collapse due to decline in demand. Regrettably, many museum collections of plaster casts were destroyed or broken up in the first half of the 20th century, when their value was questioned and they were regarded as inferior substitutes for the originals. Nowadays they are properly understood as excellent examples of the artistic taste of Victorian curators and audiences.

Although the Fitzwilliam Museum gave away many of its casts to the University’s Museum of Classical Archaeology, it did retain the twelve plaster reproductions in the Founder’s Entrance. Four of these were presented in 1849 — three by P. Maud and one by P.B. Duncan, about whom nothing is known — and the remaining eight, all produced by the Brucciani firm, were presented in 1891 by Samuel Sanders, of Trinity College. Sanders, who died in 1894, was a great benefactor of the Fitzwilliam Museum and of the University Library. He left £2,000 to the University to found a Readership in Bibliography. He also paid to have sculptures made in the early 1890s to fill the niches on the outside of the Old Divinity School, opposite St John’s College.

The plaster casts are as follows (starting from the right of the main door, and working clockwise around the Landing):
1) After Antonio Canova (1757–1822), Venus Italica (or Italian Venus). Canova’s marble original of 1819, now in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, was commissioned as a replacement for the famous Medici Venus (itself a 1st-century BCE Roman copy of a Greek work by Cleomenes of Athens), which had been seized by Napoleon in 1802 and removed to the Louvre. The cast, made by an unknown firm, was presented by P. Maud in 1849 (as recorded by an inscription on the base).

2) After the Doryphoros (or Spear Bearer). This plaster cast is taken from a well-preserved Roman marble copy (itself a copy of a lost bronze original by the ancient Greek sculptor, Polyclitus, of c.440 BCE), discovered in 1797 in the Palaestra at Pompeii. The marble original is now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. The sculpture was originally designed to hold a spear. The cast, presented by Samuel Sanders in 1891, was supplied by D. Bruciani & Co. of London at a cost of £6.0.0.

3) After the ‘Antinous’, reputedly excavated at Hadrian’s Villa, Tivoli, in the early 18th century and considered at the time to be one of the most beautiful Roman copies of a Greek statue in the world. It was sold by Cardinal Albani to Pope Clement XII in 1733, forming the nucleus of the Capitoline Museums, Rome, where it remains to this day. The marble statue’s left leg and the left arm, with its rhetorical hand gesture, are restorations provided by Pietro Bracci (1700–73). Although it was originally thought to represent Hadrian’s lover, Antinous, since the early twentieth century it has been considered to be a Roman
Imperial era copy of an early 4th-century BCE Greek statue of Hermes. Provenance and maker as (2) above: cost £5.0.0.

4) After the Townley Venus, a 1st- or 2nd-century CE Roman marble statue (adapted from a lost Greek original of the 4th-century BCE). The marble was discovered by the art-dealer Gavin Hamilton at Ostia in 1776, and sold by him to Charles Townley (1737–1805), a wealthy English collector and antiquarian, for £1,050. The arms were restored in the 18th century in a pose reminiscent of the Venus de Milo, and like them she may originally have held a mirror. Townley’s heirs sold the marble to the British Museum in 1805, together with the rest of his collection of marbles, larger bronzes and terracottas for £20,000. The cast, made by an unknown firm, was presented by P.B. Duncan in 1849 (as recorded by an inscription on the base).

5) After the ‘Germanicus’, a marble statue acquired by Louis XIV of France in 1685 and brought from Rome to Versailles. Originally thought to portray Germanicus (16/15 BCE–19 CE; the nephew and adopted son of Tiberius and a hugely popular Roman army general), it is now considered to be a posthumous portrait of Marcellus (nephew and first son-in-law of the Emperor Augustus, who died prematurely in 23 BCE), shown in the manner of earlier Greek statues of Hermes the Orator. The marble original is now in the Louvre, Paris. Provenance and maker as (2) above: cost £6.6.0.
6) After the Standing Diskophoros (or Discus Thrower), a composite 1st-century CE Roman marble statue found in the ruins of a Roman villa on the Appian Way by the art-dealer Gavin Hamilton in 1771; now in the Vatican Collections. The head does not belong with the body, but was found with it. It is a copy of an original sculpture attributed to the Greek sculptor Naukydes of Argos (active c.420–390 BCE) and dated c.420–400 BCE. Provenance and maker as (2), above, cost £5.0.0.

7) After the Artemis, also known as Diana of Gabii, a marble statue excavated in 1792 by Gavin Hamilton on Prince Borghese’s property at Gabii outside Rome, and purchased by Napoleon in 1807, who gave it to the Louvre, Paris, in 1820. It was long considered to be a Roman copy of the Artemis Brauronia, a marble statue carved by the Greek sculptor Praxiteles about 330 BCE for the Acropolis in Athens, but it may in fact be a copy of a later sculpture done in his style. The statue, which shows the goddess of the hunt in the act of fastening her cloak onto her right shoulder, became very popular in the 19th century; it was reproduced in marble, cast iron and plaster and on a reduced scale in terracotta and porcelain. The cast, made by an unknown firm, was presented by P. Maud in 1849 (as recorded by an inscription on the base).

8) After the Venus Genitrix (Aphrodite), a marble statue discovered at Fréjus, Southern France, in 1650. This work, originally owned by Louis XIV of France and the jewel in his collection of antiquities, is now in the Louvre. It is one of the finest Roman copies known of a lost Greek bronze
masterpiece created in Athens c.400 BCE by the sculptor and jeweller Callimachus. Provenance and maker as (2) above, cost £6.6.0.

9) After the Aeschines, a marble statue found at Herculaneum in 1779. Aeschines (389–314 BCE) was a Greek statesman and orator. The marble original (itself a copy made before 79 CE of a lost Greek bronze of the 4th century BCE) is in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. This portrait became particularly popular in the first half of the 19th century and was particularly admired by Canova. Brucciani’s catalogue of 1864 listed this reproduction among items for sale. Provenance and maker as (2) above: cost £10.0.0.

10) After the Diadumenos (or Diadem-bearer), a marble statue found at Vaison-la-Roumaine, South of France, in 1869. It represents a victorious athlete, still nude after the contest, in the act of tying on the ‘diadem’, a ribbon headband awarded to the winner. The marble original (now in the British Museum) was recognised in 1878 to be a copy after a lost bronze original by the Greek sculptor Polyclitus, made c.420 BCE. Provenance and maker as (2) above: cost £6.6.0.

11) After the Farnese Hermes, a marble statue acquired in 1546 by the powerful Farnese family, whose collection of antiquities was one of the finest in Renaissance Rome. Together with a statue of Apollo, it once framed the central doorway of the gallery in the Palazzo Farnese in Rome. It was later acquired by the King of Naples, who sold it to the British Museum in 1864. It is a 1st-century
CE Roman copy of a famous type created c.325 BCE by the Greek sculptor Praxiteles. It shows Hermes, the Greek messenger god, identified by his winged sandals and staff (caduceus) in his left hand. An identical plaster cast was purchased from Brucciani in 1884 and is now in the Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge. Provenance and maker as (2) above: cost £10.0.0.

12) After the Aphrodite (or Celestial Venus), a marble statue acquired by the Medici in 1658 from the Palmieri family of Bologna. Consisting at that time of only the head and torso, the Medici commissioned the famous Baroque sculptor, Alessandro Algardi (1598–1654) to make the missing arms and lower draped half of the torso. The restored sculpture was a highlight of the Medici’s collection of antiquities and was proudly displayed in the Tribuna nearby the Medici Venus.

The cast, made by an unknown firm, was presented by P. Maud in 1849 (as recorded by an inscription on the base).
SCULPTURE AND FURNITURE ON THE FOUNDER’S LANDING

Please do not touch any of the exhibits

Please do not remove from the Founder’s Landing
This guide discusses the works of art to be found on the Founder’s Landing, in clockwise order, beginning with the plaster bust of Basevi on the large table with green marble top (on the Gallery 5 side), and ending with the marble bust of Lady Augusta Stanley atop the yellow marble column (on the Gallery 1 side).

The marble busts have been arranged into three distinct groups: (1) statesmen and politicians (nos. 2-5); (2) arbiters of taste and collectors of antiquities (nos. 14-16); and (3) aristocratic women (nos. 17 and 19).

There is a separate guide for the plaster casts in the upper niches, which also gives a potted history of the construction of the Founder’s Building.

We hope you enjoy your visit.
1. Attributed to Charles Andrew Nosotti (c.1800-54)
Bust of George Basevi (1794–1845)
Painted plaster, c.1827

George Basevi was the architect who designed the Fitzwilliam Museum and dreamed up its spectacular entrance hall. He chose the Neoclassical style (which had its roots in the buildings of ancient Greece and Rome), drawing inspiration from his teacher, the great Neoclassical architect, Sir John Soane (1753–1837).
Basevi won the architectural competition for the design of the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1834, and supervised its construction from 1837 until his premature death in 1845, when he fell from a scaffold at Ely Cathedral. The Fitzwilliam is reckoned to be Basevi’s masterpiece, and the fullest realisation of Soane’s ideal of contemporary public architecture inspired by that of ancient Rome.

This bust was probably made using a cast of Basevi’s head from the life. According to the Museum’s 1853 Handbook to the Pictures, it was made by a ‘Mr Nosotti’, likely to be Charles Andrew Nosotti from Milan who was in the decorative art business in London by 1822. Several other identical casts are known, including one in the Royal Institute of British Architects, reputedly delivered in 1827 to Painswick House, Gloucestershire, when Basevi was making additions to the house for his brother-in-law, W.H. Hyett MP. If true, this provides a date by which the life cast of Basevi’s head must have been made.
Given by Mr Smith in 1853 (M.1-1853)
2. William Kent (1685–1748)
Side table with later modifications
Mahogany frame with green antico verde marble top

This table was designed by the eminent English architect, garden designer and furniture designer, William Kent, who introduced the Palladian style of architecture into England in the 1720s. Palladian architecture is a European style based on the designs of the Italian architect Andrea Palladio (1508–80), who drew his inspiration from the buildings of ancient Rome, especially temples. Palladianism, characterised by symmetry and balance, remained fashionable in England until the 1760s.

This type of large sturdy table with a smooth flat top is known as a pier table or console table. Designed to be placed against a wall, either between two windows or two columns, they were often used to display choice pieces of sculpture or vases. With their tops often created from a single slab of beautiful marble or stone, they were very expensive and meant to impress, recalling the tables found in Italian Renaissance palaces as well as those of ancient Rome. Verde antico (Italian for ‘antique green’) or Ophite is a dull dark green white-veined mineral known as serpentine (due to its resemblance to a serpent) which takes a high polish. It has been popular since ancient times as a decorative facing stone especially for interiors, as well as for use in furniture.

Bought with the Miss Grace Clarke Fund  (M/F.2-1944)
3. Joseph Wilton (1722–1803)
Bust of William Pitt the Elder (1708–78)
White marble, c.1745 – before 1778, probably 1766

William Pitt was a politician of the Whig party who actively encouraged the expansion of British territories overseas in direct competition with France and Spain. Called ‘The Great Commoner’ because of his refusal to accept an aristocratic title until 1766, he is best known as the informal political leader of Britain during the Seven Years' War, a global conflict fought between 1756 and 1763. Victory for Britain altered the balance of power in Europe and ended French dominance over world affairs.

This portrait, in a style inspired by the busts of ancient Greece and Rome, is undated but may have been made in 1766, the year when Pitt became first Earl of Chatham and the Stamp Act (a direct tax on the American colonies) was repealed. This made Pitt popular in the American colonies in the run-up to the American War of Independence (1775–83). A similar bust in terracotta, which may be the model for this, was given to Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts) in 1769 by Benjamin Franklin (1706–90), one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Pitt was the father of William Pitt the Younger, the Prime Minister, whose bust by Joseph Nollekens is on display nearby (5).

For the sculptor of the bust, Joseph Wilton, see the information sheet on his over life-size statue of George II (displayed downstairs in the Founder’s Hall, to the right of the main entrance as you exit).

Given by The Friends of the Fitzwilliam in 1937 (M.65-1937)
4. Joseph Nollekens (1737–1823)
Bust of Sir George Savile (1726–84)
White marble, c.1784–86
Inscribed at the back: ‘Nollekens / F[eci]t’

Sir George Savile, 8th Baronet of Thornhill, was a leading Whig politician with very liberal views. Born into an ancient Yorkshire family, he was MP for the county between 1759 and 1783.
The German novellist, Sophie von la Roche (1730–1807) visited Nollekens’ studio in 1786 and recorded, ‘Mr Nollekens had over six bust portraits of the estimable Savile to complete for his friends, two of whom sent for him with great dispatch on the death of Savile, so as to have an immediate cast of his features. He showed us this mould, from which it is evident that the good man had passed beyond all feeling … the veins were still pulsing with the last beats of his charitable heart; pensiveness and spiritual suffering still left their mark on the tender, manly features.’ The Fitzwilliam’s bust must be one of these six semi-completed busts, and may have been commissioned by John Savile, 2nd Earl of Mexborough (1761–1830), presumably a relative of the sitter, as he is the first known owner.
For further information about Nollekens, see the following entry for the bust of William Pitt the Younger, which he carved some twenty years after this bust. Both busts were given to the Museum in 1947 by Lord Fairhaven.

Given by Lord Fairhaven in 1947 (M.19-1947)
5. Joseph Nollekens (1737–1823)
Bust of William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806)
White marble, 1806
Inscribed at the back: ‘Nollekens F[eci]t/1806’

Son of Pitt the Elder (no. 3), William Pitt the Younger was a prominent British statesman of the Tory party. Educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, he entered Parliament in 1781 and was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1782. He served as Prime Minister between 1783–1801 (the youngest in British history) and 1804–06. His death mask was the basis for this posthumous bust as well as for the full-length statue in the Senate House, Cambridge. Trained in London by Peter Scheemakers, Nollekens then spent eight years in Rome (1762–70) working with Bartolomeo Cavaceppi restoring and copying antique marbles. On his return to England, he quickly gained a reputation for classicising portrait busts, monuments, and architectural sculpture. He became a Royal Academician in 1772 and continued to exhibit there until 1816. Nollekens was extremely prolific and successful but lived meanly, and was described unflatteringly as a miser by his biographer J.T. Smith. Smith stated that Nollekens and his workshop produced 74 marble versions of this particular bust which were sold at 120 guineas each, and 600 plaster casts sold at 6 guineas each. Given that the Fitzwilliam’s version is signed and dated 1806, it is likely to be amongst the first carved.
Given by Lord Fairhaven in 1947 (M.18-1947)
6. Sir Francis Chantrey, RA (1781–1841)
Bust of John Horne Tooke (1736–1812)
White marble; 1818/19 after a model of 1811
Inscribed at the back: ‘F. Chantrey. Sc.’

Horne studied law at Cambridge before becoming a priest, and receiving a curacy in Brentford. In 1782 he adopted the surname of his friend and mentor William Tooke. A radical reformer in politics, he founded the Constitutional Society, and favoured American independence. Having expressed support for the French Revolution in 1790, he was arrested in 1794 for high treason but found not guilty.

Chantrey’s bust is a sympathetic portrait of a man already suffering from his last illness. The informality of Tooke’s dress, and his natural unaffected gaze are reminiscent of portraits by Louis-François Roubiliac. When Chantrey exhibited his plaster model for this bust at the Royal Academy in 1811, Joseph Nollekens described it as ‘the best bust of all busts’ and moved one of his own pieces to give it greater prominence. Public acclaim followed, and Chantrey’s career as a sculptor was thus assured.

This marble bust, made from the 1811 plaster, was commissioned in 1818 by George Watson Taylor MP, and was completed in 1819. However, it was never paid for, and thus remained in Chantrey’s possession until his death. It was inherited by his widow who presented it to the Museum in 1861, describing it ‘as one of my husband’s best works’.
Given by Lady Chantrey in 1861 (M.1-1861)
7. Edward Hodges Baily, RA (1788–1867)

Maternal Affection

White marble; 1841
London/1841’

Baily exhibited a plaster group of a mother and child entitled ‘Affection etc.’ at the Royal Academy in 1823 and subsequently carved several variants in marble. One of these is dated 1837, and is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum: it is thought to be the work called ‘Group, Maternal Affection’ that he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1837. The Fitzwilliam’s marble is a copy of this, carved four years later.

Maternal Affection was so popular that it was also reproduced on a reduced scale in Parian ware, a newly invented type of porcelain. This made the composition available to aspiring middle class collectors.

The son of a ship’s carver, Baily began his career as a modeller in wax. He spent seven years in John Flaxman’s studio, acknowledged as his favourite and most devoted pupil. He came to fame in 1818 with his statue, Eve at the Fountain, but his most famous work is the portrait of Lord Nelson atop Nelson’s Column in Trafalgar Square.

Given anonymously in 1974 (M.3-1974)
8. Pompeo Marchesi (1783–1858)
Venus Pudica
White marble; 1829
Inscribed on the mattress:
‘P. MARCHESI.F./MILANO 1829’

This partially draped Venus reclining seductively on luxurious matresses and pillows draws its inspiration from the great Italian Neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova’s famous marble portrait of Pauline Bonaparte as Venus Victrix, carved in 1808. Marchesi’s homage was commissioned by Duke Pompeo Litta Visconti Arese (1785–1835) and by 1840, it had been installed in one of the garden grottoes of his spectacular residence in Lainate (near Milan), the Villa Borromeo Visconti Litta, together with Marchesi’s Penitent Magdalene (on display nearby: no. 12).

The composition proved popular and Marchesi produced variants such as that dated 1838, which shows Venus with Cupid (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna); and that dated 1855, which shows Venus entirely naked and lying on a net (Galleria d’arte moderna, Milan).

Marchesi was the leading Neoclassical sculptor in Milan during the first half of the nineteenth century, whose output was influenced by the work of Canova, under whom he had studied between 1804 and 1809. He established a large and prolific studio, and was Professor of Sculpture at Milan’s fine art academy between 1838 and 1852.
Purchased in 1974 from the Heim Gallery with the Cunliffe, Perceval and Webb Funds, aided by contributions from the Friends of The Fitzwilliam Museum, the Pilgrim Trust, and a Grant-in-Aid from the Victoria and Albert Museum (M.6-1974)
9. Henry Wiles (1838–1930)
The Expulsion
White marble; 1871
Inscribed on back right corner of base: ‘Henry Wiles/Sculptor/LONDON 1871’; and on the front and back of the socle: ‘They hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow, Through Eden took their solitary way.’

This figure group shows a remorseful Adam and Eve making their way out of the Garden of Eden, having disobeyed God and been expelled from paradise. The quotation on the base is the very final sentence of John Milton’s epic poem Paradise Lost. First published in 1667, it is an ambitious rewriting of the Fall of Man and is one of the most influential poems ever written in the English language.
Henry Wiles was the son of a Cambridge-based stonemason. Having attended the Perse School in Cambridge, Wiles subsequently trained at the Royal Academy and was awarded a two-year travelling studentship in 1869, which he used to study sculpture in Rome and Naples.
This sculpture is dated 1871, and so must have been produced immediately after Wiles’ return from Italy. It was bequeathed to the Museum by the Reverend Blore in 1885, just 14 years after it was made, so it is likely that he was the first owner and perhaps commissioned the work.

Bequeathed by Rev. E.W. Blore, Senior Fellow of Trinity College, in 1885 (M.2-1885)
10. Giacomo Raffaelli (1753–1836)
Specimen Table
White figured Carrara marble with pietra dura top and scalloped edge, c.1828–29

Tables of this type are known as ‘specimen tables’ and were sometimes accompanied by a diagram and key identifying the marbles and stones. This stunning example has approximately 150 different types of marbles and semi-precious stones from Italy, Europe and beyond carefully cut and inlaid in a complex geometric pattern without a single straight line. For the identification of some of the stones used in this table by Prof. Gordon Walkden, a geologist from the University of Aberdeen, see the annotated image opposite.

It was purchased by the Reverend Daniel Pettiward, MA (1765–1833), vicar of Great Finborough and rector of Onehouse, both in Suffolk, on 18 April 1829 from the great Italian mosaic artist Giacomo Rafaelli in Rome. The Raffaelli workshop (located at 92 Via del Babuino, Rome) was best known for its micromosaics.

Bequeathed by Pettiward to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1833, it offers a complete contrast to the locally sourced Devon marble specimen table of radial design displayed nearby (no. 18), made by one of Britain’s greatest mosaic artists.

Lent by the Master and Fellows of Trinity College (AAL.1-1971)
11. John Gibson (1790–1866)
Venus Verticordia
White marble; c.1833–38
Inscribed on the tortoise’s shell: ‘OPVS IOANNIS GIBSON ROMAE’

Gibson recorded how the wealthy MP Joseph Neeld (1789–1856) had visited his studio in Rome several times before asking him to carve a ‘Venus, nude, but with some drapery modestly arranged without sacrificing too much of the form’. Inspired by Classical prototypes, Gibson showed the Roman goddess of love as an idealised female nude with elegant curves and soft modelling, holding the golden apple, awarded by Paris for her beauty. Although apples are often associated with carnal love, Gibson called his statue Venus Verticordia, or ‘the turner of men's hearts’ and later recalled how he had ‘endeavoured to give my Venus that spiritual elevation of character which results from purity and sweetness’. The Romans venerated Venus Verticordia on 1 April as a goddess of chastity. This accounts for the tortoise under her foot: since ancient times, the docile creature who keeps silent and never leaves its house had been a symbol of ‘ideal’ female domesticity. Phidias’ famous lost mid-5th-century BCE ivory and gold statue of Aphrodite at Elis (Greece) rested one foot on a tortoise, and this became a standard way for artists to show the chaste side of the love goddess’ complex character.

Gibson’s composition was so popular that he produced several other versions, including the highly controversial
Tinted Venus for the International Exhibition of 1862 (now Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool), which he brightly painted to imitate the original appearance of many ancient statues.

Given by the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1975 (M.4-1975) (Image taken in a previous display arrangement)
12. Pompeo Marchesi (1783–1858)
La Pia Contrita, also known as Maddalena
White marble; 1832
Inscribed: ‘P. MARCHESI.F./MILANO 1832’

Like the nearby Venus Pudica (no. 8), this sculpture of ‘The Pious Penitent’ or ‘Magdalene’ was commissioned by Duke Pompeo Litta Visconti Arese for his residence in Lainate (Milan). A finished model was shown in the Brera, Milan, in 1831, described as ‘la bella convertita’ (‘the beautiful convert’) with the explanation that Marchesi was attempting to portray the moment of conversion.

In 1831, the Genoese poet Felice Romani composed a grandiose poem featuring Marchesi’s statues of Venus and Magdalene as two contrasting muses, one joyful (love), the other serious (religion), in conversation. Marchesi was the leading Neoclassical sculptor in Milan during the first half of the 19th century. Born at Saltrio near Como, he studied sculpture at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Milan, and from 1804 spent five years in Rome studying under Canova. He returned to Milan where he produced statuary for a large number of public and private commissions. Many of his models, including the full-scale gesso model for this work, are preserved in the Galleria d’Arte Moderna in Milan.

Purchased with the Cunliffe, Perceval and Webb Funds, aided by the Friends of The Fitzwilliam Museum, the Pilgrim Trust and Grant-in-Aid from the Victoria and Albert Museum (M.7-1974)
13. Richard James Wyatt (1795–1850)
The Nymph Ino and the Infant Bacchus
White marble; 1834–36
Inscribed at left side of base: ‘R.J. WYATT Fecit/ROME’

In Greek mythology, Ino and her husband Athamas, King of Orchomenus, took in the infant Dionysus, the orphaned son of Zeus and Semele. In order to conceal him from Hera (who was jealous of Zeus’s love children) they dressed Dionysus as a girl, but Hera discovered their deceit and punished them by making them insane. Dionysus was the Greek god of the grape harvest, winemaking and wine, and this explains the presence of the bunch of grapes, the kylix (wine-drinking cup) and over-turned amphora (storage jar for wine and oil).

Having studied sculpture in London, Wyatt moved to Rome in 1821 to work in the studios of the Neoclassical sculptors Canova and Thorvaldsen before establishing his own workshop. By the 1830s, he was renowned for his virtuoso carving of large-scale marble figures and harmoniously-composed groups, and gained many commissions from English visitors in Rome.

This group was commissioned by Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850) when he was in Rome in 1834, shortly before he became Prime Minister. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1836, its critical success resulted in several other versions being commissioned.

Purchased with the Leverton Harris Fund and L.D. Cunliffe Fund with assistance from the University Purchase and Duplicate Objects Fund (M.1-1975)
14. Sir Francis Chantrey RA (1781–1841)
Bust of Edward Daniel Clarke, LL.B (1769-1822)
White marble; 1824
Inscribed at the back ‘E.D. CLARKE, LL.D/ NAT. 1769. MOR. 1822/CHANTREY. SC. 1824.’

Clarke was a clergyman, traveller, chemist and mineralogist who was a key figure in the life of the University of Cambridge. In 1808, he became the first Professor of Mineralogy, in 1817 he was appointed University Librarian in 1817, and in 1819, he was one of the founders of the Cambridge Philosophical Society.

Clarke was also an avid collector of Greek marbles. In 1803, he presented his large collection to the University where it was kept at the University Library until 1865, when it was formally transferred to the Museum. This was the year after the Museum had purchased the large antiquities collection of Lt Col. Leake (no. 16). The Clarke collection further extended the scope of the Museum’s holdings and permitted a display that suggested some of the chief chronological and cultural developments of classical antiquity for the first time. Some of Clarke’s objects are on display in the Greek and Roman Gallery, including a beautiful fragmentary marble statue of Aphrodite, made in Asia Minor (Turkey) around 100 BCE. (illustrated opposite).

Given to the University by the subscribers in 1824 and placed in the University Library. Transferred to the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1865 (M.2-1865)
Clarke’s Aphrodite
GR.2.1865
15. Samuel Joseph (1791–1850)
Bust of the Rev. Archibald Alison, MA, LL.B (1757–1839)
White marble; 1825
Inscribed at the back: ‘S. JOSEPH Sculpt/1825.’

This portrait bust shows the Reverend Archibald Alison at the age of 68. Educated at Glasgow University and Balliol College Oxford, Alison took holy orders in 1784, and held several livings in England before returning to Edinburgh in 1800 to be minister of the Episcopal Chapel in the Cowgate. He is remembered chiefly for his influential Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste (1791; second edition 1811).

Samuel Joseph was a pupil of the eminent London-based sculptor, Peter Rouw II (1771–1852). Joseph went to Edinburgh in 1823, and in 1826 was a founder member of the Scottish Royal Academy. He returned to London in 1828 where he remained for the rest of his life. His best-known work is his monument to William Wilberforce erected in Westminster Abbey in 1838; a plaster copy of this exists in St John’s College, Cambridge.

Given by the Friends of The Fitzwilliam Museum (M.4-1974)
Bust of Lt Col. William Martin Leake, LL.D, FRS (1777–1860)
White marble; 1840
Inscribed at the back: ‘W. BEHNES./SCULP.LOND./1840’
English, dated 1840

Founder of the Royal Geographical Society, Leake is acknowledged as one of the greatest authorities on the topography of Ancient Greece. He was commissioned in the Royal Artillery in 1794 and between 1798 and 1810 spent most of his time on missions to Ottoman Turkey and Greece. After 1815 he lived in England working on his notes, and publishing numerous papers and ten books, including the Topography of Athens (1821) and Travels in Northern Greece (1835). He presented his collection of classical marbles to the British Museum in 1839, the year before this bust was made.

In 1864, four years after Leake’s death, the Fitzwilliam Museum purchased his collection of ancient coins, Greek vases, gems, and bronzes for £5,000. This was the Museum’s first major purchase and was hotly debated. Many objects from the Leake Collection are on view in the Greek and Roman Gallery, including a black-figure Amphora made in Athens, c.520-510 BCE, portraying a warrior’s departure (illustrated opposite).

Dublin-born and Royal Academy-trained Behnes was a highly successful and sought-after portrait sculptor, considered by many the equal of Chantrey, the sculptor.
responsible for the portrait bust of Clarke displayed nearby (no. 14). Clarke’s collection of antiquities entered the Museum in 1865.

Given by Lt Col. W.M. Leake, LLD, FRS (M.1-1865)

Leake’s Amphora
GR.31.1864
17. William II Theed (1804–91)
Bust of an Unknown Young Woman
White marble; Rome, 1839
Inscribed at the back: ‘W. THEED / Jet – Rome. 1839’

This portrait shows a fashionably dressed young woman with her hair tied in two side ringlets and coiled into a knot at the back. Her identity is unknown but she may have been an English aristocrat visiting Rome on the Grand Tour.

Theed worked for several years in the studio of E.H. Baily (whose Maternal Affection is on display nearby), before attending the Royal Academy Schools. In 1826 he went to Rome where he studied under several sculptors including John Gibson and Richard James Wyatt (whose works can also be found on the Landing). Having established his reputation, especially as a portrait sculptor, he returned to London in 1848. He received many prestigious commissions from the Royal family and members of the court, such as his bust of Lady Augusta Stanley, secretary and confidante of Queen Victoria displayed nearby (no. 19).

Presented by Louis Colville Gray Clarke, M.A., Trinity Hall and former Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, in 1939 (M.3-1939)
18. John Woodley (1815–62)
The Devonshire Marble Specimen Table

Tables of this type are known as ‘specimen tables’ and were designed to show off different types of marble and stone. Pieces were cut into different shapes and carefully fitted together in a technique known as ‘pietra dura’, which literally means ‘hard stone’. Such tables were sometimes accompanied by a diagram and key identifying the stones. For the identification of some of the stones used in this table by Prof. Gordon Walkden, a geologist from the University of Aberdeen, see the annotated image opposite.

This table was made by John Woodley, one of Britain’s greatest mosaic artists, who operated a large and successful marble workshop in Torquay, Devon. It is designed to showcase the geology of Devonshire, and comprises stones mainly from the fossil reefs of Babbacombe and St Mary-church, Torquay, Devon. It was recognised as coming from Woodley’s Royal Marble Works by Prof. Walkden based on comparisons with other similar specimen tables documented as coming from Woodley’s manufactury.

With its perfectly straight lines and locally sourced materials, it forms the perfect contrast to the large flamboyant specimen table with scalloped edges made by Giacomo Raffaelli in the late 1820s from marbles sourced from around the globe (no. 10).

Lent by the Master and Fellows of Trinity College (AAL.2-1971)
Identification of the marbles in The Devonshire Specimen Table (no. 18)

01. "Fossil Petitor" Coral and stony sponge gravel, "Shark's rock", Pettit Tor
02. "Red Petitor" mud rock, reef cavity or pocket, Pettit Tor
03. "Yellow Petitor" altered reef fabric, Pettit Tor
04. Coral and stony sponge reef debris, St Marychurch area
05. "Grey Clouded Petitor" reef rock with hand-sized seafloor precipitates in cavities (similar to Red Ogre)
06. Stony sponge (Amphipora) reef flank deposit
07. Shell bed (Stringocephalus), Babbacombe beach
08. Unknown muddy rock with gastropods
09. Unknown muddy rock with spar filled cavities
11. "Pink Petitor" reef rock with coralloid segments
12. Green Kidney Marble, Yealmpton, Plymouth
13. "Dove Petitor" mud rock, reef cavity or pocket, Pettit Tor
14. Stalactite flowstone of Kent's Cavern type - Net Devonian
15. "Black marble" mud rock from Derbyshire or Belgium
16. Fossil coral fossils from St Marychurch area
17. White marble from Tuscany
18. The circular insects are small fossil specimens, mainly coral
19. The geologists "Pink Petitor" reef rock, Pettit Tor

The table is a mosaic of stones mainly from the fossil reefs of Babbacombe/St Marychurch, Torquay, Devon. It comes from John Woodlay’s Royal Marble Works, c. 1850
19. William II Theed (1804–91)
Bust of Lady Augusta Stanley (1822–76)
Marble; 1877
Inscribed at back: ‘LADY AUGUSTA BRUCE,/B: 1822; / M: ARTHUR STANLEY,/ DEAN OF WESTMINSTER,/ 1863:/ D: 1876./ W THEED SC,/ LONDON 1877.’

Lady Stanley (born Lady Augusta Bruce) was a daughter of the Earl of Elgin of the ‘Elgin Marbles’. Having served as lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria’s mother from 1846 until 1861, she became Victoria’s live-in secretary and friend. In December 1863, much to the Queen’s annoyance, she married Arthur Stanley, future Dean of Westminster. Appointed ‘extra woman of the bedchamber’ upon her marriage, Augusta retained close connections with the Queen for the rest of her life, connecting Victoria (then in the depths of her secluded widowhood) to the world.

This sensitive posthumous portrait, carved the year after Augusta’s death, was originally in the Royal Collection. It may have been a royal commission given how devastated Queen Victoria was by Augusta’s death, recalling: ‘she was such a help in so many ways, so sympathising, loving and kind, so attached to me and mine, so clever and agreeable, known to so many … It was always a treat to me when she came.’

Purchased with the Butler Fund in 1977 (M.6-1977)
The Founder’s Entrance Hall Stairway

- White Tuscan marble bases
- Lintels in English Alabaster
- Polished Peterhead granite (Corinthian) pillars
- Scagliola fluted Corinthian pilasters after Peterhead granite
- Scagliola fluted pillars after Siena
- Dado pillars, plinths, panel surrounds, dado rails and architraves in Green Genoa
- Balusters, newels, panels and architrave in Red Ogwell
- Stringer in Rouge Languedoc, France

The entrance hall went through several design stages before the twin stairway with open central vestibule and balustraded gallery were finalised. The hall is dominated by the elegant marble stairway flowing upwards from bold drum newels, whilst six great granite pillars intersect the gallery balustrade and rise to support a dramatic barrel roofed arcade and central dome.
The Founder’s Entrance Hall: Left Staircase

The massive newels and unusually large Red Ogwell dado panels, all cut vertical to bedding, provide an exceptional opportunity to study Devonian reef facies at a level of detail unavailable at outcrop.

The technically advanced Sienna baluster rails and carved buffers/butresses.

Masterpieces in measurement, modelling and machining.
Central doorway, first floor

- Arms and ostrich supporters of Viscount Fitzwilliam
- Alabaster architrave
- Corinthian pillars in pink Peterhead granite
- Mirror – imaged caryatids in white Tuscan marble

The panels are mirror images and were cut vertical to bedding from the same block

Dado panel, left stairway
Dado panel, right stairway
The panels are mirror images and were cut vertical to bedding from the same block.

In both panels a sharp change in angle of bedding coincides with an upward change in sediment type (facies) from mud-dominated (pink) to cavity-dominated (grey).

Approximate way up (vertical, see arrows) can be determined from shells and spaces partly filled by reef mud (geopetal infills). The lower pink sediment unit seems to have been deposited on a slope.

The upper grey sediment unit may have been deposited at a time of greater turbulence around the reef. Spaces between corals and shells were swept clear of mud and a mineral deposit (grey) precipitated directly from seawater (radial fibrous calcite) to fill the spaces.

The lower muddy sediment unit contains many flat plate-like coral colonies (cream colour). Some of these were underlain by a cavity that became filled with a mineral deposit (grey) precipitated directly from seawater (radial fibrous calcite). The cavities may be the spaces left behind by a decomposed organism such as a sponge, or they might have been excavated as a burrow for protection by a more active animal.

Dado panel, right stairway: some of the fossil contents

- Pink/beige muddy sediment
- Coral
- Brachiopod
- Stony sponge
- Dark and light grey limestone precipitation

Dado panel, left stairway

- 25°
- Approximate way up (vertical, see arrows) can be determined from shells and spaces partly filled by reef mud (geopetal infills).
- The lower pink sediment unit seems to have been deposited on a slope.
Dado panel, right stairway: detail of fossil reef characters

Left side of Hall: some prominent fossils

Curved section through an orthoceras cephalopod, left stair left side, second baluster.

Rugose coral, first floor left, doorway to gallery 5, on the front face of the tile right Ogwell plater.
The Scagliola: Pilasters in Gallery 1

Scagliola is an artificial marble made using plaster, pigment and glue. Unlike faux marble, which is painted on, it has depth, so it looks three dimensional around edges or mouldings. Scagliola can contain real rock fragments but it usually lacks the strength and density of rock, so it can be detected by its warmer touch, its hollow sound beneath a knuckle and its vulnerability to impact damage. Broken areas sometimes reveal wire reinforcement. Brecciated and veined textures are realistically reproduced, but pressure dissolution effects such as stylolites, the effects of light such as transparency or translucency and the geometry of freely grown or interlocking crystals, as in granite, are hard to reproduce.
The 12 large pilasters/pilaster clusters around the Founder’s Landing are made in fluted scagliola in imitation of pink or red granite.

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