

Acquisitions 2013 - 2014

The Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum funds remain a vital source for acquisitions. In 2012, the Friends Fund contributed a significant sum towards the acquisition of Nicolas Poussin's sublime picture, *Extreme Unction*, and also made a major contribution towards securing five works by Stanley Spencer from the collection of Gwen Raverat. The Poussin and the Spencers were major acquisitions, but the Friends can also help with lesser – but no less desirable – additions to the collection. Craig Harley, Keeper of the Museum's Print Room regularly asks for help – in 2013-14 the Friends supported the purchase of no less than five separate groups of prints for the collection. These range from a set of engravings of curious fish and sea creatures by the sixteenth-century engraver Adriano Collardo, to choice examples of modern printmaking by George Shaw, Jane Dixon and Jane Stobart. A group of Japanese woodcuts by Utagawa Kunisada (1784-1864) attest to the virtuoso techniques of this master, and join the Museum's rich collection of Japanese works on paper. Several of the works acquired via the Friends' Fund were deliberately acquired to compliment planned exhibitions – a luxurious 'pillow book' of erotic prints by Kunisada was bought to add an extra, friskier, dimension to our recent exhibition, *The Night of Longing* – a demonstration of how the Friends help the Museum intelligently improve its collections.

Applied Art, especially ceramics, is another collections area the Friends regularly support. Last year we acquired at auction a Staffordshire stoneware tureen in the form of an oven-ready trussed chicken. Made by John Turner of the Lane End manufactory in about 1800, it came from the celebrated collection of Professor Sir Albert Richardson at Avenue House, Amptill, and we bid for it at the dispersal of that remarkable ensemble last September. Most of the funds needed came from a generous gift by the disbanded Cambridge Antiques Society, but the Friends made up the shortfall. The new Chicken tureen will eventually take its place on display alongside our other English eighteenth-century tureens in the form of birds and fish in the Lower Marlay Gallery. A current acquisition where the Friends Fund will play a part is a group of deliciously decadent *Art Nouveau* ceramics – a chocolate pot and two vases in eggshell porcelain, decorated with birds and flowers, made by the Dutch Rozenburg factory between 1909 and 1914. As Vicky Avery, our Keeper of Applied Arts points out, our seemingly encyclopaedic collections of ceramics currently have little to represent this most flamboyant and original style, and nothing from this famous factory. The Friends will also make a contribution towards the purchase of our major acquisition at the moment - seventeenth-century Spanish sculptor, Pedro de Mena's, polychrome wood bust of the *Virgin of Sorrows*. Anyone who went to the National Gallery's *Sacred made Real* exhibition, will know of the powerful presence that these extraordinary devotional sculptures exert, and they are virtually unrepresented in British public collections. This remarkable and moving example, dateable to about 1673, combines realistically painted carved wood with glass eyes and tears, and 'real' eyelashes, and will be placed on view in the Museum over the Summer to drum up extra support.

So what next? The Fitzwilliam Museum is constantly being offered opportunities to purchase works of art, although can only comparatively rarely take them up. Although we from time to time acquire works to strengthen existing groups of works of art, or fill gaps in the collection, you can never predict what

might turn up. This is why the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Funds are so important – regularly replenished, they enable us to seize opportunities when they crop up.

The other question that is often asked is what do I want to acquire? Well, to start with, I like gifts and bequests more than odd purchases, for that is how the Fitzwilliam Museum's collection has historically been formed. The great collections that together comprise the Museum – Fitzwilliam, McLean, Marlay, Ricketts and Shannon, Glasher – give it a special character, so what I hope is that in time other great collections will come our way. But that doesn't mean we just sit back and wait – donors need attention and encouragement, and they also need reassurance that it will be properly cared for and displayed – which is why there is a major focus on this in our future plans. I also think it important to pay attention to all aspects of our collection – recent purchases the Friends have assisted with have been of pictures, sculpture, ceramics and prints, but we should also be ready to spring into action when opportunities arise, with antiquities (appropriately provenanced, of course!), manuscripts and rare books, and coins and medals (which actually acquire more than any Department in the Museum, thanks to a number of generous private donors). But I suppose when I make decisions about acquisitions, I generally go for strange and thought-provoking objects, things that amuse, astonish, disturb or tell stories, and have interesting provenances, rather than merely beautiful things.

Tim Knox

Tim Knox
August 2014



The Big Fitz Book Sale

Friday 31 October and Saturday 1 November • 11.00 to 16.00

The funds raised will go towards paying for coaches for children from rural schools to visit the Museum and benefit from the Education Department's inspiring tuition. Please clear out the books you do not need to make room for the new books that you will buy at the sale!

There will be 2 open mornings at No 20 Trumpington Street for Penny to receive books for the sale on Thursday 9 October or Saturday 18 October from 09.00-12.00.

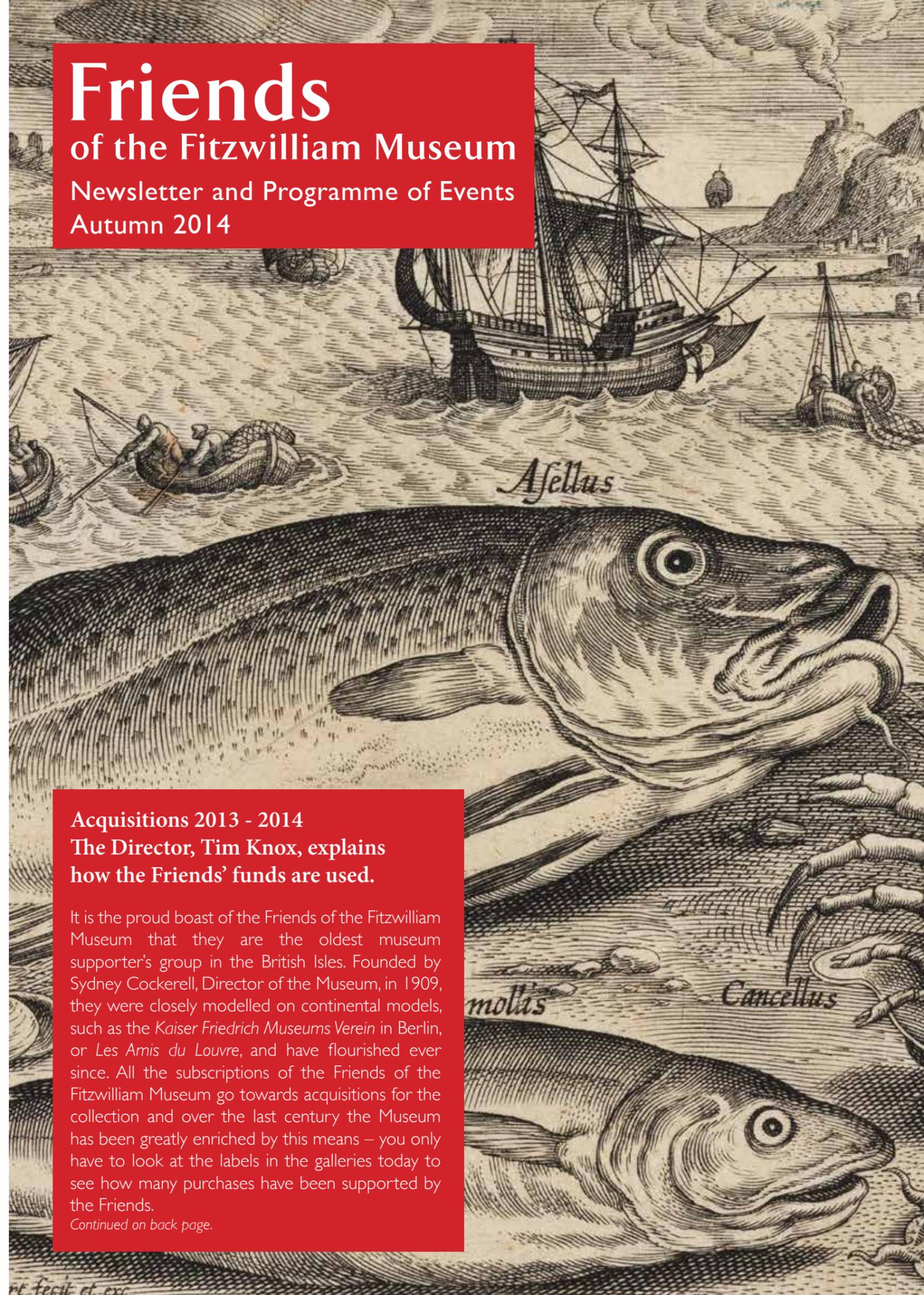
Thank you in anticipation and we look forward to seeing you at the sale.

Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum Newsletter and Programme of Events Autumn 2014

Acquisitions 2013 - 2014 The Director, Tim Knox, explains how the Friends' funds are used.

It is the proud boast of the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum that they are the oldest museum supporter's group in the British Isles. Founded by Sydney Cockerell, Director of the Museum, in 1909, they were closely modelled on continental models, such as the *Kaiser Friedrich Museums Verein* in Berlin, or *Les Amis du Louvre*, and have flourished ever since. All the subscriptions of the Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum go towards acquisitions for the collection and over the last century the Museum has been greatly enriched by this means – you only have to look at the labels in the galleries today to see how many purchases have been supported by the Friends.

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Events



Gainsborough's House & Garden, Sudbury and Melford Hall

Friday 10 October

Depart Trumpington Park & Ride at 09.00 returning to Cambridge about 18.00

After arriving at Gainsborough's House, over coffee and biscuits we will have a private talk from the Director, Mark Bills, before having an opportunity to explore the art displayed in Gainsborough's beautiful home and gardens. There will also be time to view a special exhibition of 'Rembrandt the Printmaker' in the house. After lunch at The Bull Hotel, Long Melford, we will have a guided tour of Melford Hall, a National Trust property built in the 16th century – previously visited by Elizabeth I in 1578. A cream tea will be served at the Hall before we leave.

Places: 50 • Guests welcome
£55 to include coffee on arrival, 2 course lunch with coffee, cream tea, talks and entrance
Organiser: Jane Helliwell



Sherlock Holmes Exhibition Museum of London

Friday 24 October

Depart Trumpington Park & Ride 08.15, returning at approximately 17.30

Sherlock Holmes has an enduring quality and has enthralled readers and audiences for years. This new exhibition, the first in London since 1951, questions who he is and why he endures. On arrival there will be time for coffee, followed at 11.00 by a private talk by the curator. Timed entry at 12.30/13.00 will follow, and after lunch there will be time to visit other areas of the Museum of London.

Places: 48 • Guests welcome
£40.00 to include travel, talk and admission to Exhibition
Please note that ticket price does not include refreshments, but there are cafés in the museum.
Organiser: Sarah Bradfield



Gwen Raverat at Darwin

Tuesday 21 October • 14.00-16.00
Tuesday 4 November • 14.00-16.00

Gwen Raverat's account of her upbringing at Newnham Grange, is told in her book 'Period Piece'. It brings vividly alive the events of that small corner of Silver Street at the end of the nineteenth century. Born a Darwin, her family were central in the rich intellectual and artistic life of the time. Gwen herself was an artist and the Fitzwilliam Museum has a large collection of her woodcuts.

The tour will start at the Museum where there will be a small sample of her work from the archive on display, including one of her notebooks. Nancy Gregory, Blue Badge guide, will then take us on the short walk over to Darwin College and talk about some of the scenes described in 'Period Piece'. The College Archivist will show us the traces of Newnham Grange and the views that Gwen grew up with, and which she drew on in her work.

Places: 18 • Friends only
£18
Organiser: Gillian Harrison



Behind the Scenes: The Chinese Gallery Highlights of the Chinese Collection

Wednesday 26 November

10.30 - 12.00

After coffee and biscuits in the Friends' Room, James Lin, Senior Assistant Keeper of Applied Arts, who has a particular interest and expertise in Chinese jade and archaeology, will take us to the Chinese Gallery. There he will give a general introduction to the museum's Chinese collection and highlight some of the important objects, including those that have particularly interesting stories attached. Some of the objects in the collection at the Fitzwilliam Museum are unique and some of them were originally from the Forbidden City

Places: 16 • Friends only
£12 • Meet in the Friends' Room
Organiser: Margaret Mair

Annual Lecture In memory of Sue Purdy

Matisse - A Second Life Alastair Sooke, critic and broadcaster

Tuesday 28th October 2014
18.00 Howard Theatre, Downing College



Photo: Richard Cook

Towards the end of his life, the French artist Henri Matisse was certain about one thing: the Chapel of the Rosary that he designed for a community of Dominican nuns in the ancient hill town of Vence, a few miles west of Nice, was his masterpiece – 'the culmination of a lifetime of work'. In the wake of Tate Modern's blockbuster exhibition *Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs*, Alastair Sooke will explain why Matisse was so enamoured with the chapel – and situate it within the wider context of the final decade of the artist's life, when, in an astonishing blaze of creativity he pioneered a radical new way of making art using nothing but coloured paper and scissors.

Alastair Sooke is art critic of the Daily Telegraph and has written and presented documentaries on television and radio for the BBC, including *Modern Masters*, *The World's Most Expensive Paintings*, *Treasures of Ancient Rome* and, most recently, *Treasures of Ancient Egypt*, an acclaimed three-part series about Egyptian sculpture, painting and design. He is a regular reporter for *The Culture Show* on BBC Two, and has presented a number of full-length *Culture Show* programmes about artists including Leonardo da Vinci and Henri Matisse. He is the author of *Henri Matisse: A Second Life*, published by Penguin.

Places: 160 • Guests welcome
£7.50, with wine reception after the lecture
Organiser: Margaret Mair

NB: We have moved the lecture to the very comfortable Howard Theatre at Downing and the post lecture reception will be in the Grace Howard Room which is just below the theatre.

Booking for all events opens
Wednesday 27 August

Tickets for all Friends events available through the Cambridge Corn Exchange online, by phone or in person.

To book online go to
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/support/friends/events

To book by phone call 01223 357851

History of Art Graduate Talks

An opportunity to hear graduate students in the History of Art Department talk about their research.

Wednesday 29 October 12.00-13.00

Nicola Kozicharow
Representations of Women in Early Twentieth-Century British Art

Wednesday 26 November • 12.00-13.00

Zuzanna Sarnecka
The Depiction of the Virgin in Italian Renaissance Painting

Places: 16 • Friends only • Free, but booking essential
Please meet at the Courtyard Entrance at 11.50

Tea on Tuesday

7 October • 4 November • 9 December • 14.15 for 14.30

Our informal drop-in meetings will resume in the Michaelmas Term. Do come and join us.

7 Oct: Sally Sandys-Renton will explain to us "the symbolism in flower painting"
4 Nov: Dr David Evans will show us some 20C prints
9 Dec: Elisabeth Everitt will talk about "musical instruments in the Fitzwilliam Museum"

Friends only • Free
Friends Room



Friends' Christmas Party - Save the Date

December 16th in Gallery 3
18.30 - 20.30

Invitations will be posted in October

Take advantage of the Friend's concession for tours of the Silent Partners exhibition and the mini lecture series on East Anglian glass collections. Don't forget your 10% discount in the Courtyard Shop in November & December.