

16 March 2007

## Paul Mellon: A Cambridge Tribute

12 June – 23 September 2007

To mark the centenary of one of its greatest benefactors, the American philanthropist and art collector Paul Mellon, the Fitzwilliam Museum is mounting this summer an exhibition which illustrates his many ties to the United Kingdom and to Cambridge in particular.

Son of the prominent Pittsburgh industrialist Andrew Mellon and his English wife Nora McMullen, Paul Mellon was a dedicated Anglophile who from his childhood years in Britain and time at Cambridge University in the early 1930s developed a life-long love of English culture. He went on to create one of the greatest collections of British art outside this country with which he founded the Yale Center for British Art in 1977, and his generosity to the many English institutions with which he had long-standing ties is of equal renown.

***Paul Mellon: A Cambridge Tribute*** traces his love of British art and sport to the formative years he spent as a post-graduate at Clare College, Cambridge, from 1929 to 1931. 'It was while I was at Cambridge that I embarked on the dangerous seas of collecting,' Paul Mellon once said - a statement that has had profound implications not only for the Fitzwilliam Museum but also for other major beneficiaries, both in this country and in the US, of the man who described himself as 'the incurable collector.'

Comprising works from the Museum and from Mr Mellon's own collection lent by the Yale Center for British Art, the exhibition focuses both on his personal taste and on the reasons that led to the formation of his definitive collection of British art. On display will be paintings, drawings, prints, books, applied arts and memorabilia that are connected to Paul Mellon's British interests. From the Fitzwilliam Museum's own collection, these will include major eighteenth and nineteenth-century paintings such as George Stubbs' *Gimcrack* and John Constable's *Hampstead Heath*, as well as works on paper by William Blake and Thomas Rowlandson. Loans from the Yale Center for British Art will include biographical material such as William Orpen's *Portrait of Paul Mellon* and relevant subjects such as Stubbs' *Newmarket Heath with a Rubbing-down House*. Sir Alfred Munnings' specially commissioned portrait of *Paul Mellon on Dublin* will form the centrepiece of the exhibition alongside Tessa Pullan's bronze bust of Paul Mellon on loan from Clare College, Cambridge.

Duncan Robinson, Director of The Fitzwilliam Museum, said: "In Cambridge, both personally and through the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, Paul Mellon generously supported the Fitzwilliam Museum and several Faculties of the University of Cambridge, Clare College and Clare Hall from its foundation in 1966 onwards. We are honoured to have this opportunity, one hundred years after his birth, to pay tribute to one of Cambridge's major twentieth-century benefactors."

The Yale Center for British Art will commemorate the centennial of its founder's birth with the special exhibition ***Paul Mellon's Legacy: A Passion for British Art*** (18 April - 29 July) which will also be shown at the Royal Academy of Arts, London (20 October 2007 - 27 January 2008). Other centenary celebrations are planned in this country and abroad.

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[.../Exhibitions details; Further information and images](#)

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## Exhibition details (for publication):

### Paul Mellon: A Cambridge Tribute

12 June to 23 September 2007

Octagon Gallery, The Fitzwilliam Museum

Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB

Tel: +44 (0)1223 332900

[www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

Open: Tuesday – Saturday: 10.00 – 17.00

Sundays and Bank Holiday Monday, 27 August: 12.00 – 17.00

Admission FREE

The exhibition will be accompanied by the commemorative publication *Paul Mellon: A Cambridge Tribute* by Duncan Robinson

## Further information and images from:

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## Notes for Editors

### Paul Mellon's bequest

In 1999, Paul Mellon bequeathed \$8 million to the University of Cambridge for the Fitzwilliam Museum. During his lifetime he agreed that £1 million of that sum could be allocated to the Museum's Courtyard Development, and under the terms of his Will his Executors subsequently allocated a further \$12.5 million to complete the renovations associated with the Courtyard, including the re-lighting of all of the Museum's galleries. The remaining balance has been added to the Paul Mellon Fund which was established as a trust fund for the Museum at the time of the bequest, the income from which will be used to support education, exhibitions and publications.

### 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

Website: [www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk).

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