

14 October 2009

# A Lifetime of Connoisseurship Graham Pollard and the Study of the Medal

27 October 2009 – 31 January 2010

A new exhibition brings together over seventy medals spanning six centuries, in celebration of a key figure in the life and collections of the Fitzwilliam Museum – Graham Pollard (1929–2007).

From examples of fifteenth-century Italian craftsmanship to contemporary art medals, *A Lifetime of Connoisseurship: Graham Pollard and the Study of the Medal* tells the story of the life and work of this scholar and curator through two superb collections of medals – the Museum's own, and Pollard's private compilation. This is the first time that many of these medals – some extremely rare – have been on public display.



Ian Rank-Broadley (b.1952), Silver Portrait Medal of Graham Pollard, 1990

The medal itself is a product of the Italian Renaissance, when sculptors and painters, inspired by classical coins, found a new way of marking events and people by combining images and words in bronze. Undoubtedly the leading authority on Renaissance medals in the post-War period, Graham Pollard's entire career was dedicated to The Fitzwilliam Museum. Invited to become a gallery attendant as a young man after being seen visiting so often by Museum staff, Pollard rose to work to become Keeper of Coins and Medals before assuming the role of Deputy Director in 1969.

Pollard's own passion for medals was a long-standing one, and during his forty-one years at the Fitzwilliam the Museum's collection of these fascinating objects was greatly enriched through his scholarship and skill. *A Lifetime of Connoisseurship* now unites a choice selection of the Fitzwilliam's medals with exceptional items from the Graham Pollard Collection, and highlights of the exhibition include:

- A bold portrait medal of the Sienna academic and civic leader Borghese Borghesi, cast in bronze to celebrate the city's success in its war against Florence in 1479
- A 1519 bronze portrait medal of Renaissance scholar, humanist and satirist Desiderius Erasmus – the finest surviving specimen of its kind
- A silver portrait medal of Graham Pollard, presented by his friends in 1990 following his retirement and sixtieth birthday; its allegorical reverse depicts a youth reclining by a stream as the figure of Time dances in the background.

*A Lifetime of Connoisseurship* will present an insight into the creation of such medals, displaying wax models alongside trial strikings for medals. The exhibition will also explore the modern medal, presenting fine 20<sup>th</sup>-century specimens from the art nouveau to contemporary art medals, honouring Pollard's role as a founder of the British Art Medal Society.

Showcasing an intriguingly diverse range of medals, *A Lifetime of Connoisseurship* is a fitting and fascinating tribute to an important figure in the history of The Fitzwilliam Museum and its collections.

Trumpington Street  
Cambridge CB2 1RB  
England

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01223 332900  
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

Press enquiries: email  
fitzmuseum-press@lists.cam.ac.uk

## Details for publication:

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**Graham Pollard and the Study of the Medal**  
27 October 2009 - 31 January 2010

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Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00

ADMISSION FREE

## Further information and images from:

Marketing and Press Office  
The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB  
Telephone: +44 (0)1223 332941/332900; FAX: +44 (0)1223 332923  
Email: [fitzmuseum-press@lists.cam.ac.uk](mailto:fitzmuseum-press@lists.cam.ac.uk)

## Notes for Editors The Fitzwilliam Museum

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

The Fitzwilliam's treasures range from Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities to the arts of the 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. Free admission.  
Website: [www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

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