

A photograph of a garden path. In the foreground, a large, fluted stone column stands on the left, supporting a stone archway. The path leads through a lush green garden with various trees and plants. In the background, a pergola structure is visible, and a stone bench sits on the path. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Newsletter
SPRING 2016

THE
HOLBURNE
MUSEUM
FRIENDS

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Our front cover shows a view of the gardens designed by Harold Peto at Iford Manor, visited by the Friends in October. Do read Sidney Blackmore's report on the Iford visit on page 14.

Further horticultural events are being planned, details on pages 7, 8 and 9. More garden visits during the summer will be announced in the next Newsletter.

Cover photograph © Jonathan Davis

Chairman's letter

Dear Friends

What a treat to be able to follow the last Newsletter's appeal with a thank you – many Friends supported the purchase of young Arthur Atherley with great generosity, and I know you will all be pleased that he is to join the Collection permanently.

Such an illustrious purchase is a fitting beginning to the Museum's anniversary year – 100 Years Here – which the Friends are looking forward to celebrating. We have not quite the same milestone (for the record, the Friends were [re]established in 1952) but we might say ... 'faithful for forty'? Sidney Blackmore held his first secondhand book sale at the Holburne in June 1976, and will do so again this June, and we are going to theme a whole day of celebration around it. **Sunday June 26th** is the date – see inside for hints of what we have planned – more detail in the May Newsletter.

The Holburne is thriving, but needs more money to ensure that it continues doing all that is now celebrated for. I am constantly told that it is impossible to raise money for running costs, that only capital projects attract support, but we are more long-sighted than that, aren't we? Who plants a tree without expecting to look after it for years afterwards? Well, the great



achievement of the Museum's Development needs further nurturing. So our other big goal for 2016 is to increase the Friends' numbers to two thousand and sixteen. We have a challenge for all Friends, to persuade at least one friend each to join us. We are including herein appropriate forms; this is the year to get them to support the Holburne. We will reward those who succeed (see inside) and there is a bit of urgency, as we will be raising the subscriptions at the next AGM.

Bring them to one of our events – Trish's tours, the famous Quiz, on a tree walk, to a garden, to hear the Holburne Ensemble, perhaps to Spain ... and do give us email addresses, so we can keep you up to date with anything planned beyond the Newsletter's timing.

I look forward to seeing many of you soon – with a new Friend.

Antonia Johnson

Friends' Private View

Friends are invited to a Private View of

Impressionism: *capturing life*

Friday 12th February 2016 6:30-8:00pm



please RSVP to holburnefriends@gmail.com
by Friday 5th February 2016
Exhibition dates: 13th February 2016 to 5th June 2016

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)
Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood,
1885, Oil on canvas
© Tate, London 2016

Walcot: history and craftsmanship

Tuesday 23 February 2016 2-5pm

Again we are taking a closer look at places of interest on our doorstep. Walcot is an area of Bath with a fascinating history, from Roman times up to the present day when it provides a home for a variety of independent, small workshops and studios.

We start by looking at the work of a weaver, Katherine Fraser, who produces contemporary fabrics using traditional methods and natural fibres. She also offers a bespoke design service, and runs workshops for novices and more experienced weavers. Working her loom in the front of her shop, surrounded by wool in beautiful colours, Katherine will take us through the various stages of producing hand-loom fabrics.

Calling in at the Framing Workshop, we shall hear more about Walcot today, the range of independent businesses there, and the community spirit which supports, for example, the installation of the intriguing stone faces within the high wall opposite, and the recently restored Ladymeade fountain (pictured, right).

Down in the narrow cul-de-sac of Orchard Street lie more tiny studios, and here we visit Bronwyn Williams-Ellis, tile-maker and ceramic sculptor. Her work has been featured

in the British Museum publication “5000 Years of Tiles”, and her many commissions show her skilled handling of colour, shape and texture. She will tell us about her work, and also about the history of Walcot over the centuries.

Our final call will be at Meticulous Ink, producers of fine stationery. Their work is indeed meticulous, as shown on their excellent website, working with a variety of techniques and materials to produce results which combine the traditional and the contemporary to great effect. They work in full view in their shop, so that we can watch their presses in action.

Since we shall be in small spaces within the various venues, the group will also be small - so book early, to ensure a place on this walk through a fascinating corner of Bath. The cost is £15 per head, the booking form to be found in the middle of the Newsletter. Trish Tassis



Photograph courtesy of BANES Council

The Holburne Quiz

Thursday 3rd March 2016

For five years our Quizmaster has been Simon Johnson, and he is back for a sixth year only because there was an outcry when he said he was hanging up his quizzing hat. Those of you who have come before know that the questions range from the learned to the daft (see at right), by way of tangential topicality and some beautiful images.

Doors open at **6.15pm** and the Quiz will start **promptly at 6.30pm**. Tickets are £12.50 each, to include a glass of prosecco or white wine during the quiz, or £25 to include a special two-course supper (not including wine). We are again offering supper in the Clore Room, catered by the Friends.

Tables of 6, ideally, for the Quiz, but we can accommodate everybody, and

it is a very good opportunity to meet other Friends or introduce potential new Friends. Please be aware that although we can seat 60-70 Friends up in the Gallery for the Quiz, we can't fit as many into the supper room, so book promptly – complete the form in the middle of this Newsletter. The first Friend who applies will get a **free** ticket, just for the quiz, worth £12.50!

The Quizmaster offers a taster: 2016 has been designated 'The International Year of Pulses' by the United Nations General Assembly.

- 1** Botanically speaking, what is a pulse?
- 2** Name five pulses
- 3** Like other legumes, pulses are important in crop rotation because they help fix *what* in the soil?
- 4** Which country is the world's largest producer, and consumer, of pulses?
- 5** Like other plant-based foods, pulses contain no *what*?

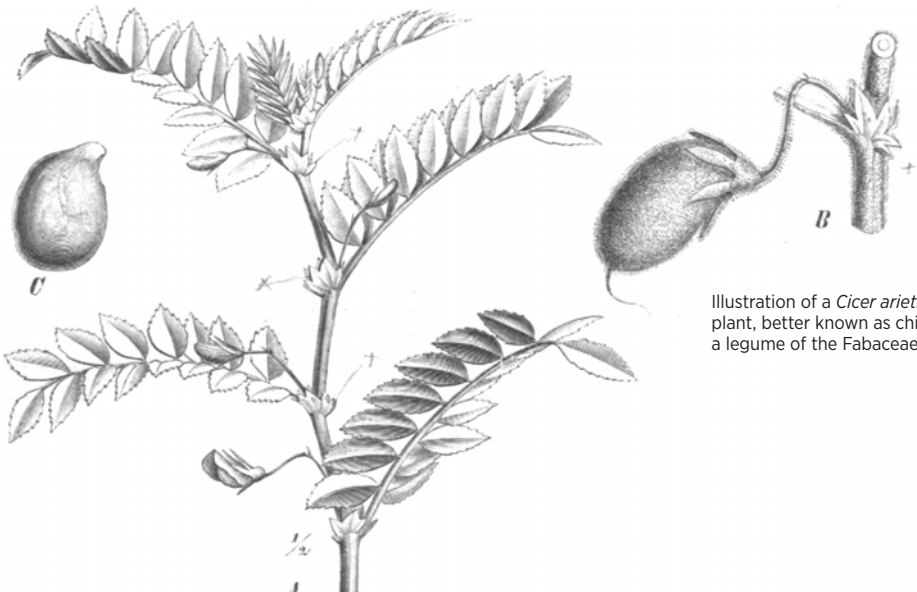


Illustration of a *Cicer arietinum* plant, better known as chickpea, a legume of the Fabaceae family.

The Holburne Plant Sale

Sunday 8 May 10.30-2pm

Our regular plant sale will be held on the second Sunday in May, a perfect time to be planting out for the summer. We hope for a fine day for the stallholders – regulars and a couple of newcomers to be welcomed – and I send out a plea now not only for visitors and plant buyers, but also for those who might have extra seedlings and divisions in their garden, if not quite now then shortly, as work begins for the year. The Friends will have their own stall, and as a number of the committee have moved recently or are moving shortly we are praying that others will produce a trayful or two of spare plants.

We will once again offer nearly new gardening and cookery books for sale, there will be expert gardeners able to answer questions, and there will be refreshments, home made cakes and biscuits, tea and coffee. Again, any bakers with spare cakes that day?

If you can help with any contributions of plants or cakes, or perhaps washing-up skills (!) please get in touch with Antonia Johnson either via holburnefriends@gmail.com or on 01225 469525. As long as it is not blowing a gale or deluging, it is a fun few hours, a very good way to make new Friends.



Tree Walks

**Tuesday 12th April 2-4pm and
Tuesday 17th May, 2-4pm,
Royal Victoria Park, Bath**

Victoria Park and the Botanical Gardens are packed with champion trees, and here is a chance to learn something about some of them.

Two circular walks with a dendrologist. Our scheduled walk last autumn was cancelled due to heavy rain – this time I hope we will go ahead whatever the weather!

Tickets are £15 each for one walk or £25 per person if you'd like to go on both walks, please complete and return the form in the middle of this Newsletter.



Detail of *Fothergilla major*.
Photograph © Antonia Johnson



Champion *Fagus sylvatica* 'Aspleniifolia'
in the Botanical Gardens.
Photograph © Antonia Johnson

Garden visit to Oxfordshire

Wednesday 1st June 2016

The Friends of the Holburne have been given special permission by Ashley Hicks to visit the gardens at The Grove in Oxfordshire, the home of his father the renowned designer David Hicks, who lived there in the last eighteen years of his life.

Taking inspiration from Anglo-French style, he completely re-designed

his garden to reflect his delight in formal avenues and wonderful vistas which form a delightful sequence of 'green rooms'.

The result is a stunning blend of both both formal and romantic style. As a taster to the garden, you can watch a fascinating interview, available on YouTube, between David Hicks and Rosemary Verey recorded when she visited him at The Grove many years ago.

Minnie Tatham

Please note:

We are hoping to visit a second garden on this day trip, but currently waiting confirmation. For more details, costs, timings and transport, please register your interest; contact Minnie Tatham directly by emailing her at minnietatham@hotmail.co.uk or complete the form in the centre of this Newsletter. Please include a stamped self-addressed envelope for the details to be sent to you.



Celebrating Frank Brown, an evening with The Holburne Ensemble

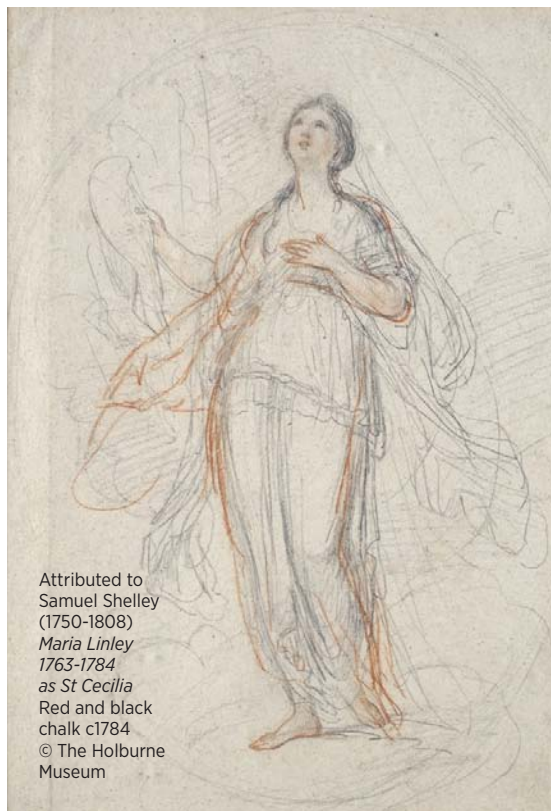
Friday 24th June 2016 at 7:00pm

It is now two years since Christopher Hogwood introduced us to Nathaniel Mander and the Holburne Ensemble. They are to return to play at the celebrations following the AGM and Friends' Private View. Those who have attended before will tell you that the evening gives us wonderful music followed by a really friendly party. Please put the date in your diary and encourage potential Friends to join you.

As we are fortunate enough to have seven Gainsborough portraits in the Brownsword Gallery, it seems appropriate to attempt a link between Gainsborough's work and that of some of his contemporaries in the City. Gainsborough painted portraits of members of two famous Bath artistic families: the Linleys and the Sheridans. Sadly Fathers Thomas Linley (the elder) and Thomas Sheridan were deeply antipathetic and their antagonism led to great scandal. Despite their parents' animosity, the younger generation of Linleys and Sheridans were good friends. Elizabeth Linley was not only a great beauty but had one of the glorious voices of her generation, singing at Covent Garden at the age of twelve, making a lot of money for her controlling father. Richard Sheridan, later the great playwright, was then a penniless young blade with little prospect of advancement. But when Elizabeth

found herself forced by her father to accept the offer of marriage to an old aristocrat with plenty of money, she escaped to France accompanied by Richard. Returning later, their secret marriage was discovered and a great scandal erupted in Bath and beyond. Come to the Frank Brown evening, and hear more of this late 18th-century romance!

Tickets are £25 each, to include the party afterwards, please complete and return the form in the middle of this Newsletter.



Friends' book sale and 100 Years Here celebration

Sunday 26th June 2016

'I have measured out my life with coffee spoons', T.S. Eliot famously wrote. I feel my own life has been measured out, not with coffee spoons, but by books, books, books!

On a glorious summer afternoon in June forty years ago, I organised the Friends' first book sale. Books were spread out on stalls on the Holburne's lawns and beneath the portico. The sale was a success. Our example was followed by other friends' groups, including the Friends of Norwich Castle Museum who were visiting Bath on the day of that first sale. In time, a book stall was to become a regular and popular feature of the Friends' annual summer fairs. In more recent years, I've organised more book sales, initially to help raise funds to support the Friends' appeal for the Museum's development project. There have also been smaller sales – 'pop-up shops' almost – beneath the portico, starting in 2007. The second portico sale, 'Penguin and other Paperbacks', was at the time of the Museum's exhibition *Penguin Books Design*.



We hope this summer's book sale, forty years on from that very first sale, will be something special. There will be supporting events, including an expert giving valuations of your precious volumes, and also stalls displaying various paper-related crafts.



Further details on the 100 Years Here celebrations will follow in the next Newsletter ... put 26th June in your diary and watch this space!

Over the years the members of the Friends have been incredibly generous in donating books for these sales.

Our Chairman, in searching through the records, has discovered that we made £570 at that first sale. This converts to almost £2,700 in present day terms, so it would be marvellous if this year we could equal that amount. Please, do let us know if you have any books you are able to offer for the sale, from paperback fiction to learned tomes.

We are happy to collect, whether it's an entire library or just a few volumes, from early May onwards. Please contact David Wiltshire and Sidney Blackmore, tel 01985 213195 or via email: sidney.blackmore@btinternet.com

Holburne Friends' trip to Madrid and Segovia

9th- 13th October 2016

People still remember the excellent guide of previous Holburne trips to Spain – Mauricio Larumbe. We've managed to book him again for 4 days next October when he'll introduce us to the treasures of Madrid, Segovia and El Escorial.

We fly from Bristol airport and arrive on Sunday evening to stay in the Hotel Liabeny (4 star) in Madrid. Monday morning will include a visit to the Ermita de San Antonio de la Florida (the church famed for its Goya frescoes), a walking tour of the old town and a visit to the Palacio Real. The afternoon will be spent at the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum housing the renowned art collection spanning the 14th-20th centuries.

On Tuesday we travel to Segovia with its celebrated Roman aqueduct, imposing Alcazar and Cathedral dating from 1520, one of the last great Gothic churches to be built in Spain. After lunch we continue to La Granja de San Idelfonso – an eighteenth-century Versailles-style palace 5 miles outside Segovia.

Wednesday morning is devoted to the Prado, housing some of the world's most famous paintings from the Spanish royal collections of the sixteenth century onwards. For modern and contemporary art (including Picasso's *Guernica*) we will

visit the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia during the afternoon.

The last day will include a journey to the Valle de Los Caidos with its memorial to the casualties of the Civil War and Franco's extraordinary tomb. Then we continue to El Escorial, the vast mausoleum, monastery and royal palace built for Philip II in 1562. Our return flight leaves Madrid airport that evening.

Throughout the trip there will be a certain amount of free time within the schedule and we make our own arrangements for lunch and dinner on 2 evenings, otherwise all **except the airfare** is included in the overall price: £825 per person sharing a double or twin room (£155 single supplement)

Flight times and prices are yet to be confirmed which is why airfares are not included. Flights can be booked on your behalf at cost, plus an administration fee of £10. For all further information and details please contact Heritage Group Travel on **01225 466620** or email **heritage@grouptavel.co.uk** quoting the Friends of the Holburne Museum/Madrid. This promises to be a very popular trip and numbers are limited. After Heritage has sent you a booking form, places are reserved on receipt of the completed form and deposit. **The closing date is 19th February 2016.**

Holburne Friends' trip to Madrid and Segovia continued

The impressive Plaza Mayor in the old centre of Madrid, steeped in history and lined with colonnades of fine shops and restaurants.

Photograph © Jonathan Davis



Iford Manor and gardens

Although only a few miles from Bath, Iford, set in the valley of the River Frome, seems like a secret place. There are historic connections with the nearby monks of Hinton Charterhouse, the powerful Hungerford family and the woollen trade which once dominated this corner of Somerset and Wiltshire. Iford today is very much the creation of the architect and garden designer Harold Peto who purchased the estate in 1899 and lived here until 1933.

To be guided around a garden or house by its owner always makes for a very special visit and we were doubly fortunate to be shown Iford by John and Elizabeth Cartwright-Hignett, whose insightful guidance was illuminating.

Peto's garden is one of steps and terraces rising up the valley hillside. On his European travels he found sculptures and architectural fragments to place amongst the trees and walks. He believed that 'Old buildings or fragments carry one's mind back to the past in a way that a garden of flowers only cannot do'. His garden is not a museum of ancient pieces, it is much more a composition by an artist, a capriccio which magically

juxtaposes sculpture in a garden setting. In recent years, much restoration work has been undertaken, terraces have been rebuilt and Peto's rose garden recreated. Plant labels rediscovered in the borders have given clues about the original planting.

There are also the garden buildings including the Casita, with its pink Verona marble columns. At the end of the Great Terrace, an 18th-century garden house and beyond it, the Cloisters. The exterior of this building, with a doorway guarded by two ancient stone lions, give no hint of what is within: a cloister with arches supported on twin columns, and interior walls decorated with antique fragments. Iford is full of surprises. Peto travelled as far as Japan, and at Iford there is a reminder of his journey, a Japanese garden with a pool and a small pagoda.

We were privileged to be shown the interior of Iford Manor. Behind the elegant but restrained façade are some of Peto's romantic interiors, and also pictures and furniture brought from Elizabeth Cartwright-Hignett's family home, Aynhoe Park in Northamptonshire.

Our visit included tea which gave time to chat and relax. A perfect afternoon in an extraordinary place, so close to home yet through Peto's magic, we were transported to a very special world. Our thanks go to Undine Concannon for organising so enjoyable an excursion. Sidney Blackmore



Visit to York

Our visit to York coincided with three days of rain and mist after a long spell of sunshine. Fate had other tricks to play on us too. The hotel, amid building works, could not provide the promised welcome meal; a lecture at the Art Gallery was cancelled due to indisposition of the speaker; and we arrived at the gallery ten minutes after closure caused by electronic failures. But our cool organisers, Olivia & Simon Eliot, unfazed by every hiccup, gave us a triumph.

An introductory talk, delivered with quiet passion by Darrell Buttery, chairman of the York Civic Trust, surveyed some of the less obvious aspects of the city's heritage. Our first visit was to the Minster – the largest gothic church north of the Alps, with more medieval glass than the rest of the country put together. Richard Shephard, former Chamberlain of the Minster, took us to the stoneyard, where repair and replacement of the fabric never stops. Then to the York Glaziers Trust, currently completing the refurbishment of the great east window. We were stunned to see the painstaking process of restoration – and heard horror stories of how it had been botched in the past. Returning to the cathedral, we were led around the chancel with its array of monuments, and into the Chapter House, before time to explore for ourselves.

Our first afternoon was spent in Coxwold, where Laurence Sterne wrote *Tristram Shandy*. Sterne's parsonage, Shandy Hall, is now owned by a trust set up in his



The Holburne group at
Burton Agnes Hall.
Photo courtesy of
Kevin Marris

memory, and we were given an inspired tour by the curator, Patrick Wildgust, who's keen advocacy of Sterne's work left us wanting to rediscover it.

The next day took us to Burton Agnes, one of the most beautiful Jacobean houses, furnished with four centuries of outstanding art works. We were welcomed by the present owner, Simon Cunliffe-Lister, before the head guide led us on an informative tour.

We visited York City Art Gallery, recently reopened after years of refurbishment. A curator took us through the history of this ambitious project, enabling us to draw comparisons with the challenges which the Holburne had to overcome. York's collection of outstanding artworks is extensive, and the gallery has acquired an exciting range of new spaces to display it. It also houses one of the best ceramic collections in the country, now properly accessible for the first time. The whole visit to York, which was fascinating throughout, made us realise how much more there would still be to explore and discover another time.

William Doyle

Robertson Lecture

This year's Robertson Lecture was given by Venice in Peril Fund Chairman, Jonathan Keates, who spoke about the origins of the charity, its work and aims. In a witty and informative talk, he drew historical connections between Venice's declining status as a naval power in the 18th and 19th centuries with Britain's corresponding rise, and how this made Venice a *must see* destination for any self-respecting young gentleman on his *Grand Tour*.

The Fund dates back to the dreadful 1966 floods which badly impacted Venice, prompting many individuals to donate money to the British-Italian Society, then chaired by Sir Ashley Clarke. From these origins the Venice in Peril Fund has grown and is now the largest and arguably most successful of the many charities working to preserve this unique city. Since it was established, the charity has funded over 50 small to medium projects,

mostly on public view but usually off the beaten path. Two specific projects are worth highlighting: first, a recently launched appeal to repair the magnificent Antonio Canova tomb, in the Frari church, visibly suffering from the effects of damp and salt penetration. The second project is the urgent restoration of a 19th-century Armstrong-Mitchell crane, a fine example of British engineering, at the Arsenale docks.

The lecture demonstrated the importance of Venice in Peril's work, and the Fund's positive role in the wider environmental and conservation debate that surrounds discussions on Venice's future. While Venice clearly needs no further publicity, it is hoped that the lecture will encourage additional donations to assist the Fund in its much-needed work.

Mark Hake

www.veniceinperil.org



St John's Trust visit

On a wet day in October a group of us visited St John's Hospital, in the heart of the city, just behind the Cross Bath, where we were met with warmth and enthusiasm – initially by Sharon Stevenson, with coffee and biscuits, and then by Liz Brooks, the first woman Chairman of the Trustees. There is also the first woman Chief Executive in place, part of a tight-knit team, handling a vast portfolio of assets, and administering a large staff.

St Michael's Within, the Chapel where we initially sat to hear about St John's is open to the public, and holds services regularly. There has been a place of worship on the site since its foundation. The present chapel was much altered by the Victorians, whose traditional pews are now replaced by chairs, so the space can be used for events and concerts.

Sharon then spoke to us about the Trust, its work, and its history. There are four buildings on this site, housing around 50 residents, which provide up-to-date accommodation suitable for older people. Another building, near the RUH, provides accommodation and social facilities for over 50 more residents.

St John's Hospital was founded around 1174 by Bishop Reginald Fitzjocelyn de Bohun. It is among the oldest almshouses in England, originally providing hospitality, food and refuge for the large numbers of poorer travellers who came to the city.

Over the centuries the Trust has gathered other almshouses under its umbrella, including St Catherine's, next to the Thermae Spa building, Bellott's, next to the Gainsborough Hotel, and the Magdalen Chapel, up on Bear Flat.

Happily, the weather changed, and we were able to walk around the site. The present buildings replaced the original, low gabled houses, two having been designed and built by John Wood in 1727. Their principal entrances and facades are arranged around an open courtyard displaying a simple elegance and style, and there are several small gardens, designed and cared for by an award-winning gardener. This quiet, charming corner of the city is definitely somewhere to be included on a walking tour of Bath, and the chapel provides a calm refuge from shoppers and tourists – if you've never visited, be sure to take the opportunity soon. Nicky Hanscombe (with additional material from Trish Tassis)



A visit to Oxford

In December, Friends visited the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, primarily to see a major exhibition *Titian to Canaletto: Drawing in Venice* but also to catch up with former Holburne Director Dr Xa Sturgis and curator Matthew Winterbottom.

The exhibition itself was a wonderful selection of drawings in a variety of media - pen and ink, chalk, colourwash and charcoal on loan from Florence's Uffizi, Christ Church Picture Gallery as well as the Ashmolean's extensive collection. Artists such as Titian, Tiepolo, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Canaletto were represented in drawings religious, mythological and secular; by their nature many, if not most, of the works were preparatory drawings or studies for canvasses, but despite their relatively small size, their beauty and draughtsmanship shone through. Among the many figure studies were several landscapes; four by Canaletto of Venetian views stood out in particular.

The last gallery in the exhibition displayed drawings of figures and groups by contemporary artist Jenny Saville, which by her own admission are more visceral in their nature and execution, but still showed continuity with her Venetian forebears. Her work provided an intriguing contrast.

Xa Sturgis and Matthew Winterbottom met with the Holburne group in the beautiful Mallett Gallery. Xa provided some interesting comparisons between his experiences in Bath and Oxford, and also touched on the differences and similarities between the Ashmolean and the Holburne. He talked about his plans and ambitions and was asked about his achievements so far. Matthew conducted three short but fascinating tours of the newly opened Wellby bequest gallery of 16th-17th century works in silver and silver gilt (pictured below left). Some of these beautiful pieces were made by aspiring apprentices seeking to impress various guilds, entry to which would secure their future as craftsmen.

There was time to admire some of the Ashmolean's many treasures - a small but choice collection of paintings by Camille and Lucien Pissarro; a gallery works by Sickert and the Camden Town Group; fabulous Greco-Roman sculpture; ceramics, paintings and artefacts from Asia; and of course Uccello's famous *The Hunt in the Forest*.
Mark Hake



Christmas workshop

Michael Bishop 1926-2015



Photograph
courtesy of
Margy Cockburn

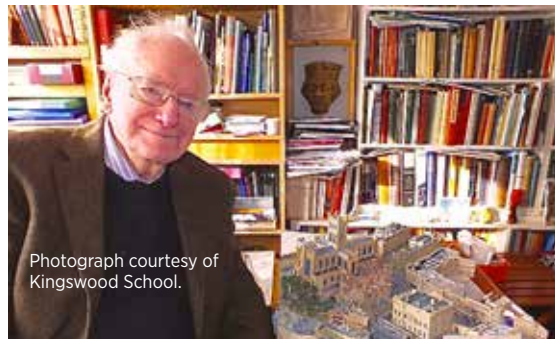
The Gardener's Lodge was transformed into a hive of industry for a day in late November when, amidst piles of festive greenery and berries, the scent of mulled wine, and probably the best mince pies in the world, 24 of the Friends armed themselves with secateurs and attended workshops organised by Minnie Tatham and led by Margy of Margy Cockburn Flowers. With a bit of encouragement, a few insider tips and a huge selection of mosses, flowers and foliage to play with, even the most artistically unconfident produced a really beautiful wreath.

"It was completely empowering and I absolutely loved it. Can we have more of you in 2016?" With a good time had by all, some lasting skills acquired and money raised for the Museum, that could be very much on the cards. See future Newsletters for details of more workshops.

Margy Cockburn

Many Friends will be saddened to learn of the death of Michael Bishop, husband of Philippa, who was Curator of the Holburne in the 1960s and has been associated with the Museum for many years. The focus of Michael's life was Kingswood School. He was a pupil there, returned as a teacher 1950-87, and in retirement was School Archivist. Michael had a passion for and great skill in model making, which he used in set design for many school productions. His skills were called upon as illustrator and model-maker for several Holburne exhibitions.

Michael made watercolour drawings of the interiors of Lansdown Tower for the Beckford exhibition (1966), models of Saxon churches for *The World of the Saxon Kings* (1973), Queen Square for *Circle, Square and Crescent* (1973), Piero's *Ideal City* for *A Girdle round about the Earth* (1974), and Cavendish Crescent, the Savings Bank and Sydney Hotel for *Holburne One Hundred* (1993). With Philippa, he led the Friends' first foreign tour, a visit to northern Italian cities, in 1982. Shortly before his death, Michael was at work on a complex model showing Bath Abbey and its surroundings in about 1800. Sidney Blackmore



Photograph courtesy of
Kingswood School.

Storeroom visit

We had often considered applying to make the thrice-yearly visit to the picture store and library and finally did so this autumn. Carolyn and I accepted the kind offer from Amina Wright, Senior Curator, to act as our guide.

Unlocking two unprepossessing doors, she took us into the picture store, a room much smaller than we expected, but the racks contain two thirds of the Museum's painting collection, enough work to cover the walls of the galleries twice over. A handle was turned to reveal a passage from which our guide retrieved a curious theatrical scene: three actors stood there on stage. Part of the Somerset Maugham Collection, the painting was clearly an eighteenth-century work but, not wishing to demonstrate the degree of my ignorance, I simply expressed

delight at the quality of the painting and wondered about the lack of colour. The technique we were informed is 'grisaille'. It was a copy of a Zoffany, made by the great printmaker Finlayson who used this common technique to help bridge the gap between the original and the engraving. It made us realise that many of these craftsmen were themselves highly skilled painters. It was a discovery that opened our eyes to a whole area of printmaking we had never considered before. In picking that painting, Amina had made a clever choice. She knows that I am a singer and that I have sung the tenor solos in *Messiah* many times. John Beard, the figure in the centre, was tenor soloist in the first performance of *Messiah* which took place in Dublin in 1742. After further discoveries we moved to the library.



Probably by
John Finlayson
(c.1730 - c.1776)
after Johan Zoffany
(1733-1810)
Edward Shuter,
John Beard and
John Dunstall in
'Love in a Village' by
Isaac Bickerstaffe
Oil on canvas c.1767
© The Holburne
Museum

Storeroom visit continued

I was curious to see some of Frank Brown's collection of paintings, drawings and photos but otherwise our library visit reminded me of nosing around at an antiquarian book dealers. There is Sir William Holburne's book collection, a wide range of work with no particular focus that I could ascertain. Amina brought out an early book on the history of Bath by The Rev. Richard Warner (1763-1859) and Carolyn found mention of the 676AD grant of a hundred holding of land made by King Osric which she has been researching. The mention of Kentwine was a puzzle: can anyone help? Carolyn particularly enjoyed finding the Huth collection on swordsmanship and combat sports because it contained two copies of Huth's Equestrian Bibliography. How many of us know about Huth's collection? It was quite new to us.

After more 'grazing', I returned to Frank Brown's collection, much of it presently stored in boxes. Undine Concannon has been cataloguing it and she tells me that the quantity of material is astonishing; it ranges from photos of musicians, prints and concert bills to paintings and drawings, many are framed suggesting that Frank's house on Claverton Down must have had walls covered with pictures!

While admiring various frames on a shelf, I found two high quality prints of great composers. Bartolozzi's engraving of Dr. Thomas Arne may

be a caricature but it is beautifully worked and expresses Arne's serious musicianship. The other frame contained an etching of a delicate line drawing of Franz Liszt, by Ingres. It presents a calm handsome young man surely incapable of the powerful music on which his reputation stands. Of added interest, Frank's note tells us that the drawing was made for the Countess of Agout, the mother of Liszt's children, and it was given by her to Wagner's daughter Cosima. It is now in the Villa Wahnfried at Bayreuth.

Richard and Carolyn Frewer

An opportunity for you: if you would like to have a look in the Museum's storerooms then please buy a ticket - we sell just a few, at £5 each, so your chances of winning are high - send in the form in the centre of the Newsletter.

It will be your choice whether you have a chance to see decorative art with Curator Catrin Jones, or pictures with Senior Curator Amina Wright. Our only request is that you report back (no need for a long essay) to the Newsletter Editor so other Friends can share your discoveries.

Thank you and good luck!

Holburne Insights: loans in and out

As the Holburne's profile rises, so the number of requests to borrow works for exhibitions grows. At the same time, more private collectors are offering the Museum long-term loans, so the 'goings-out' are matched by some fine 'comings-in'. This November we welcomed two loans of beautiful 18th-century British pictures; a drawing by Thomas Gainsborough and a portrait by George Romney.

The drawing by Gainsborough, *Wooded Landscape with travelling Figures* (late 1770s), will be on display in the Fletcher Gallery until November 2016. During the twentieth century, this fine chalk and wash drawing belonged to Sir Trenchard Cox (1905-1995), Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum. It is a variation on one of Gainsborough's favourite themes, a group of figures travelling along a country track. While living in Bath between 1758 and 1774, the artist often rode through the hills surrounding the city, where he met and observed many travellers and agricultural labourers in search of work.

The portraits in the Picture Gallery have been joined by a lovely painting by George Romney on loan from a local family. In the 1780s, Romney was London's most fashionable and talented portrait painter after Reynolds and Gainsborough. His subject, Ann Bowes, sat to him four times in 1781 before her marriage to Colonel Thomas Thoroton (1753-1813). In coming to the

Holburne, she will be re-united with her husband's first cousin Elizabeth Gould (Mrs Balguy) whose portrait by Joseph Wright of Derby was generously donated to the Holburne last year by David Posnett via HM Government. There are other Holburne links: her son-in-law inherited the house outside Ross-on-Wye once owned by Alicia and Jane Clarke, the ladies in our portrait by Devis. Another son-in-law, the Archbishop of Canterbury Charles Manners-Sutton, has his portrait miniature in a drawer in the Posnett Gallery.

The Stubbs conversation piece of Robert Carter Thelwall, his wife Charlotte Nelthorpe and their daughter has returned to the gallery from its loan to Lincoln last summer. Charlotte's distant Yorkshire cousin, James Nelthorpe, travelled to Constantinople with the Swiss artist Jean-Etienne Liotard in the late 1730s. Liotard's pastel portrait of Nelthorpe in a red coat, fur collar and exotic turban has been in the Holburne's collection since 1955. It is believed to be the only portrait of a British sitter made by Liotard whilst in Constantinople, and will return this month from the Royal Academy's wonderful exhibition *Jean-Etienne Liotard*. On his return, James Nelthorpe will star in the Holburne's own little display of the excellent pastels in our works on paper collection, *A Handful of Dust*, which will take over the Wirth Gallery from February.

Holburne Insights: continued

Sadly, the loan of *Admiral Holburne* has come to an end, and Reynolds's fascinating portrait will be returning to Greenwich in January, for display in the Queen's House from May. Although the Admiral's portrait belonged to his grandson Sir Thomas William Holburne, Sir William chose to leave it to the Royal Naval Hospital in Greenwich rather than keep it in Bath as part of the future Holburne Museum. Admiral Holburne had been a governor of Greenwich Hospital and died there.

We will be lending paintings to three exhibitions in 2016:

20 March to 24 July 2016:

Gainsborough in his Own Words at Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede, Netherlands. The exhibition will include two loans from the Holburne: a letter from Gainsborough to James Unwin and his portrait of Lady Clarges, normally on long-term loan to the Holburne from the Victoria Art Gallery.

14 May to 25 Sept 2016:

English Rose – Feminine Beauty from Van Dyck to Sargent at the Bowes Museum, County Durham. The exhibition will include Thomas Barker's portrait of his wife Priscilla Jones, on loan from the Holburne.



Mrs Thorton by George Romney
photographed after conservation in November 2014
© Private Collection, on long-term loan to
The Holburne Museum

5 May 2016 to 20 May 2016:

Royal Society of Portrait Painters Annual Exhibition 2016 at the Mall Galleries, London SW1. The exhibition will include the Holburne's 2014 portrait of legendary photographer Don McCullin by our 2012 Portrait Prize winner, Charlotte Sorapure. We are delighted that Don McCullin has chosen Charlotte's portrait (commissioned by the Holburne) as the cover illustration for the new edition of his book *Unreasonable Behaviour: The Updated Autobiography*.

Amina Wright

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THE HOLBURNE MUSEUM

FRIENDS

The Holburne Museum

Great Pulteney Street
Bath BA2 4DB

The Museum is open daily

10am to 5pm

(Sunday and Bank Holidays

11am to 5pm)

Closed 24th to 26th December
and 1st January

www.holburne.org/friends

Contact us at:

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