



Newsletter

SPRING 2017

THE
HOLBURNE
MUSEUM
FRIENDS

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Front cover image:
David Teniers the Younger,
Boy Blowing Bubbles (detail),
c.1640, oil on panel, 22 x 22cm,
© Holburne Museum

Chairman's letter

Dear Friends and supporters of the Holburne

In my last letter to you I talked of how we would be able to give more than our usual level of support to the Museum in 2016, thanks to our centenary celebration efforts. This past year the Friends have given a total of £35,000, and the surplus has been allocated to the conservation of the painting you see on the Newsletter cover. This evocation of the transience of life, David Teniers' *Boy Blowing Bubbles*, is one of the works at the core of the Bruegel exhibition soon to open at the Holburne; I hope many of you will come to the Preview on February 10th and laud both the show and our collective contribution.

This Spring issue offers a number of opportunities to listen to fine music or visit great houses and gardens in the company of Friends. I'd like to stress that Patrons or Contemporaries are all considered Friends, and are always welcome to join us. Likewise at the risk of diminishing the Friends' subscription income I would encourage those of you who wish to be more generous to the Museum, and to share in the commensurate benefits and insights, to consider upgrading to being Patrons (just ask the Development team; Jane or Ollie will be happy to tell you more).

The Museum is fulfilling its core mission of '*changing lives through art*' with

great flair and professionalism, but it all costs money, and we have yet to reach the endowment level necessary to make it altogether sustainable. Any of you with ideas and energy that might help us raise more funds, please do talk to any member of the committee. Unfortunately we failed to reach our professed target of 2,016 Friends last year - not a huge surprise, it was a big ask - but we are a decent cohort and I know that amongst us are those who have large hearts and deep pockets. Might anyone out there be prepared, say, to double our takings at a one-off event? Just a thought.

You will have heard that very sadly our Director Jenny Scott is leaving the Holburne in March to run the Dulwich Picture Gallery. Jenny has done great things in her short time at the Museum and leaves us with our star riding high; we must resign ourselves to being the perfect springboard to higher rungs in the art world. We can be very confident that as when Jennifer was appointed we will get an equally fine calibre of applicant, and look forward to welcoming a new face.

Thank you all for supporting the Holburne, and I hope to see you soon.

Antonia Johnson



Important Membership Matters

If you pay by Standing Order, please read the following:

Many of you will now know that rising costs have forced us to raise the subscription rate, starting last July. We are grateful to those who upgraded their Standing Orders when requested; but unfortunately they are in the minority, and those who did not do this are no longer eligible for Friends' benefits. So this is an additional advance warning to those whose subscriptions will become due between now and June. You will get the usual reminder by email or letter in good time. *Please do not ignore it.*

We cannot change or cancel Standing Orders for you, so it is up to you to take the necessary action if you wish to continue as a Friend. If current Orders are not cancelled or changed before your bank makes its payment, we will advise you again and ask for an additional sum to make up the difference, but we would really appreciate not having this extra administrative burden.

Can Friends bring a guest to exhibitions?

Unfortunately the answer is no; this is a benefit which applies only to Patrons. But the Museum does (unofficially) admit a Friend with a guest to Private Views.

Update on the new database

Work on the new database is progressing more slowly than anticipated, but we hope to have it completed and tested by Easter. In the meantime please contact me via holburnefriends@gmail.com if you have any queries about your membership, as the Front Desk no longer holds complete details about you on their system.

*Undine Concannon,
Honorary Membership Secretary*

In Memoriam

We record with sadness the passing of the following Holburne Friends:

Pauline Beck
(a Holburne Friend for 45 years)

Miss E. Booker
(a Holburne Friend for 36 years)

Philip Bryant

George Cacas

Alastair Cowan

Mrs Rachel Hayden
(a Holburne Friend for 41 years)

Friends' Private View

Friends are invited to a Private View of the exhibition

Bruegel

Defining a Dynasty

Friday 10th February 2017
5:30-7:00pm

Jan Brueghel the Elder,
A Stoneware Vase of Flowers (detail),
c. 1607-1608, oil on panel, 56 × 89.5 cm,
© The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Craft beer tasting and cheese pairing

Thursday 23rd February 2017
6:00-7:30pm, at Hunter and Sons,
Milsom Place, Bath

Come and taste the finest beers in the UK, featuring a specially selected range from the Traditional Lagers to the new styles of India Pale Ale to Imperial Stouts, paired with carefully chosen local cheeses.

Learn about the different flavour notes and brewing processes and the craft beer movement.

If you have never tasted craft beer before, you are in for a surprise and an education!

- * Learn where beer originated
- * Take a journey through the history of beer, including the emergence of India Pale Ale and Colonial Britain and the Porter-London connection.
- * Enjoy 5 different craft beers with cheese pairing and expert commentary with James Hunter.



Spaces are limited to just 15, tickets will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

To reserve your place, email Kim De Morgan at: **kdemorgan@me.com** and send in your £25 cheque, along with a completed booking form to: Kim De Morgan, Holburne Friends, c/o The Holburne Museum, Great Pulteney Street, Bath BA2 4DB.

NB Please make cheques payable to the *'Friends of the Holburne Museum'*.



Celebrating Frank Brown: The Holburne Ensemble

**Thursday 27th April 2017,
7:00pm
Brownsword Picture Gallery,
Holburne Museum, Bath**

*An evening with
The Holburne Ensemble.*



In 2001 Frank Brown (portrait, above) left the Holburne a very generous legacy which made a huge difference in directing the Museum toward being the successful and vibrant place it is today. He also helped the Holburne acquire both the Rachmaninov piano and Schantz fortepiano, which we will hear being played this evening.

Although not a musician himself, Frank was a passionate music lover, founding Bath University's Concert Society, and organising many musical events over twenty years until his retirement in 1989. Frank organised many Friday evening concerts at the Holburne, and in 1982 staged an exhibition to commemorate the 250th anniversary of Haydn's birth.

Richard Frewer writes:
When I was introduced to Nathaniel Mander by Christopher Hogwood I knew we were in safe hands with his recommendation and so it proved. Over the past few years those who have been to hear the Holburne Ensemble have realised that we were listening to a unique talent, who is now in demand worldwide. He and his partner Sam Scott were so taken with Bath during their visits to the Holburne that they now live here and are creating contacts for teaching and concert work.

Sam and Nat have a range of their own programmes and arrangements for lute, guitar and harpsichord, which, with a bit of interruption by a mystery singer, will form the Holburne Ensemble for this year's celebration.

The music will be followed by a convivial party in the cafe downstairs. This will be an opportunity to relax, enjoy drinks and tasty homemade food and meet the performers. Please put this date in your diary and join us for what promises to be a very special evening at the Holburne.

Tickets are £25 each to include the concert and party afterwards. Please complete and return the booking form in the centre of this Newsletter.

Nathaniel Mander, harpsichord player (left) with Sam Scott, guitarist (right).



The Holburne Friends Plant Sale

If you can help with any contributions of plants, please contact Antonia Johnson either via holburnefriends@gmail.com or on 07402 102001.

Why not come along to help serve refreshments, or help on the Friends Stall? It's a great way to meet other Friends, and learn more of our work. Also, if you can offer a cake or biscuits please contact Sally Roche on 01225 315706 or email sallyenroche@btinternet.com

Sunday 7th May 11-2pm

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 – our regulars, and exciting new ones too.

Antonia Johnson will be coordinating our own Friends Stall, so please plant up extra seeds or cuttings which you can donate to be sold. Label with any helpful information and bring along on the day, or contact Antonia in advance. Expert gardeners will be available to answer questions. Sidney Blackmore will once again be selling nearly new gardening and cookery books.

There will be refreshments, home made cakes and biscuits, tea and coffee. Please can you make us a cake or a plate of biscuits, since your home made bakes are always so popular? Please check the contact details top right if you are able to help us out in any way...thank you!

Photograph © Jonathan Davis

A day trip to Sezincote House and Owlpen Manor

Tuesday 9th May 2017

Coach departs Holburne Museum at **8:30am sharp**, returning approx 6:30pm

This full day trip promises a rare opportunity to enjoy a private visit to these unique properties. First we shall visit **Sezincote House** (below, left), a 200 year old Mughal style palace, set in a romantic landscape of temples, grottoes, waterfalls and canals. The house is the centrepiece of a thriving family-run estate covering 4,500 acres of rolling Cotswold countryside, and was the inspiration for the rather more famous Brighton Pavilion, after the Prince Regent visited here in 1807.

The House is designed in a unique combination of Hindu and Muslim architecture with a weathered copper onion dome, minarets, peacock-tail windows and a dramatic curved orangery, unfurling over a Repton landscape which has remained largely unchanged since the mid 19th-century.



Lunch will be taken at nearby Stow-on-the-Wold, before we drive to **Owlpen Manor** (below, right), a medieval house with 800 years of history, set in its own picturesque wooded valley. We will be personally guided by the owner, Sir Nicholas Mander. Owlpen dates from 1450 and was carefully repaired in Arts and Crafts style in 1926 when the house was rescued after nearly a century of dereliction. The interiors include a magnificent Tudor Great Hall of 1523, an elegant early Georgian parlour and a Great Chamber with unique painted cloth wall-hangings.

The gardens range from a charming hillside terraced garden with yew topiary, old roses and box parterres, a walled kitchen garden to an “Old English” garden which was greatly admired by Gertrude Jekyll. We shall be served a cream tea before heading back to Bath.

Tickets are £68 each to include coach travel, 1-course lunch (drinks charged extra), entry fees, guides and a cream tea. **NB** no refreshments available at Sezincote. Please complete and return the booking form in the Newsletter.



Spring Tree Walk

Tuesday 23rd May 2017 2-4pm
Royal Victoria Park and
Bath Botanical Gardens

Come and admire some of the beautiful 'Champion' trees in their spring magnificence in these two lovely parks near the centre of Bath, in the company of our expert dendrologist, Antonia Johnson. This is a rare opportunity to learn more about the fascinating topic of trees in general, on a circular walk with many different and fine examples of trees to discover.

Tickets are £15 each, on a "get yourself there" basis. Please complete and return the booking form in the Newsletter.

Detail of a champion
 Caucasian elm,
Zelkova carpinifolia

Garden visit & afternoon tea

Sunday 11th June 2:30-5:00pm

Pound Hill House, Smith Street,
 West Kington, Wiltshire SN14 7JG

The garden at Pound Hill was originally created by garden designer Barbara Stockitt, and is a magical corner of the Cotswolds; featuring a series of 'rooms' including a rose garden, wisteria walk, a chestnut and silver birch walk, pond, herbaceous borders, an ancient orchard and a kitchen garden. Simon and Minnie Tatham bought the house in October 2015 and are continuing to preserve the spirit of the garden as Barbara imagined it.

Wander around the gardens at your leisure and why not finish the afternoon with a cream tea in the orchard? Tickets in advance £5 cheque or £6.50 on the door in cash. Children 16 or younger free. Additional charge for afternoon tea. Parking available. For advance booking and directions email: minnietatham@hotmail.co.uk

The gardens at
 Pound Hill House,
 Wiltshire

Day trip: Poulton Gardens and West Woodhay House & Gardens

Thursday 15th June 2017 Depart Holburne Museum 9:15am, return approx 6-6:30pm

Poulton House Gardens, Marlborough - visit to garden only

Martin and Eugenie Ephson, owners of Poulton House, have offered us a rare opportunity to see their wonderful private gardens (below, left). The house is Queen Anne, dating from 1706, clad in wisteria and magnolia, at the end of a drive winding through lawns shaded by mature trees. The gardens feature formal and informal areas; a double perennial border lined with Irish yews leading to a philadelphus avenue, a wild flower meadow and bog garden.

The walled garden is more formal with tightly clipped *Quercus ilex*, trailing roses and lavender hedges. A large kitchen garden is at the rear of the house, enclosed by a hornbeam hedge. Other features include a rill, large pond and the river Og. Lunch will be at the Three Tuns at Great Bedwyn.



West Woodhay House, Newbury, visit to house and garden

Built in 1635 for the MP Sir Benjamin Rudyard, the design of the house was heavily influenced by his friend Inigo Jones. The beautiful gardens (below, right) have rolling lawns reaching down to three lakes each with their own waterfall. There are rose gardens, a walled kitchen garden, dovecotes and sublime views of the Chalk Downs. Other treats include a blue and white garden, glass and steel sculptures and an arboretum. There is also a 2012 Jubilee garden, and five circles of weeping willows to mark the London Olympics. We will have tea and biscuits before departing at 5pm.

Tickets are £55 each, including garden entrance, coach travel, morning coffee and afternoon tea. **Lunch is not included** in the ticket price but can be ordered through Minnie Tatham. For further info or booking tickets, email: minnietatham@hotmail.co.uk or request a booking form by sending an stamped addressed envelope to: Pound Hill House, Smith Street, West Kingon, Wiltshire SN14 7JG.



Holburne Friends Summer book sale

Sunday 25th June 11:00am - 4:00pm

Once again we are holding our popular summer second hand Book Sale.

There will be the opportunity to stock up for your summer reading, search for old favourites and have the pleasure of browsing. There will be paperback fiction, and a range of books on many subjects including literature, history, biography, travel, gardening and the arts.

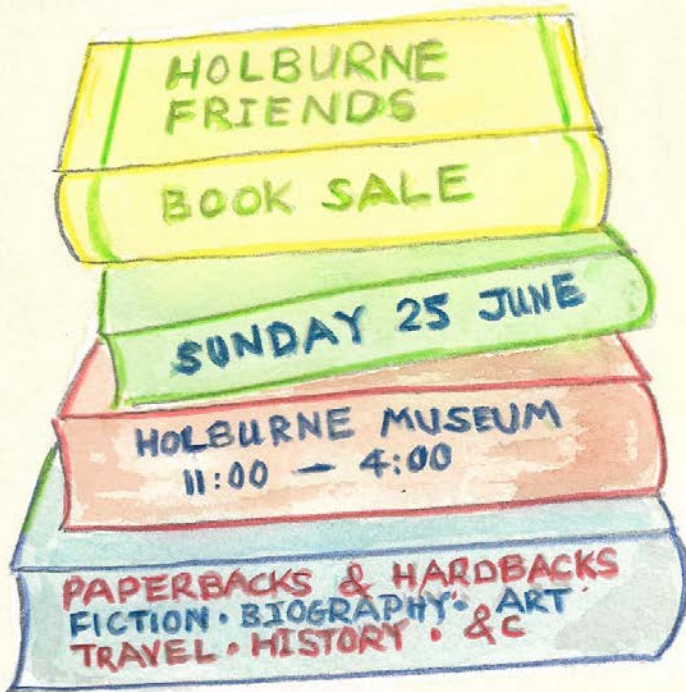
In fact there will be something for readers of every persuasion.

If you have any books to offer for the sale, please contact David Wiltshire and Sidney Blackmore, who will happily collect during May and June.

Telephone 01985 213195 or email:

sidney.blackmore@btinternet.com.

Thank you in advance for your kind donations of good quality books!



Garden visit: Laskett Gardens and Hellens Manor

Thursday 13th July 2017

Depart Holburne Museum **08:45am sharp**,
return approx 6:00pm

The Laskett Gardens, Much Birch, Herefordshire - visit to garden only

The Laskett Garden (top, left) is the celebrated creation of Sir Roy Strong and his late wife Julia Trevelyan Oman, and is a 'must see' for garden lovers. The garden is quirky and imaginative, dramatic and playful and is very much a reflection of the spirit of its owners. It's a garden that has courted much debate among visitors and no doubt a lively discussion will ensue among the Friends on the return coach journey, but it is an opportunity not to be missed for those who have never seen it.



Purchased in 1973, Sir Roy and his wife created the garden from a field.

Now covering four acres, it is divided into twenty different gardens, which include rose, knot, orchard, parterres, herbaceous borders and a pleached lime avenue.

Hellens Manor, Much Markle, Herefordshire - visit to house and garden

We will arrive at Hellens Manor (bottom, left) at 1pm where we will have lunch in their cafe, after which we will be free to tour the house and garden. Hellens is one of the oldest dwellings in England with its foundations dating back to the 12th-century, and is an absolute treasure trove of historical delights. The house, which still serves partly as a family home, is primarily Tudor with Jacobean and Georgian additions and is full of interesting antiques, books and paintings. The gardens predominantly follow Tudor style which include a yew labyrinth, a walled knot garden, a physic garden and a 17th-century octagonal dovecote. There are also restored 16th-century tithe and wain barns as well as an original cider mill which is still in use today.

£55 per ticket including coach travel and entrance to both properties. A light lunch at Hellens Manor for £11 can be ordered through Minnie. For further info or to book a place, please email Minnie direct: minnietatham@hotmail.co.uk or request a booking form by enclosing a stamped addressed envelope sent to:
Pound Hill House, Smith Street,
West Kington, Wiltshire SN14 7JG.

Visit to Farris and Parnham House

John Makepeace welcomed us to Farris most generously and first explained about his wonderful store of English woods, that were seasoning in a special barn. These trunks came from managed woodlands that had in some cases been looked after for 10 generations and included American walnut felled in Kent during the 'Great Storm' of October 1987, and oak from Longleat, 22 feet long, planted in 1760 and harvested in 1980.

John explained that he had been designing furniture since his childhood, and that he was passionate about creating pieces rather than just making a profit. His aim as a designer and maker is to achieve freer, lighter, stronger and more sculptural

forms better suited to their function, and to create masterpieces that enrich peoples lives. In the hall and other rooms we visited were beautiful and original prototypes of chairs, tables and chests, commissioned by clients across the world, including an amazing Sycamore chest with a 'ripple' effect which caught our attention (see photo, below left).

Adorning the walls of the rooms were wonderful contemporary artworks, including a painting by Terry Frost, a large print by William Scott, and spectacular ceramics by Pippa Drysdale and Kate Malhorne. We particularly admired a stunning chest, with zebra markings created by using Holly which is almost white with Bog Oak which is very dark. Unashamedly, the interior is MDF, spray painted with many layers of deep red lacquer. We came away full of admiration that a man of 77 years was constantly adapting his designs to the future yet keeping past traditions and workmanship uppermost; as he succinctly commented: *"Why would we go back when we can go forward?"*

After coffee and tea, Jennie Makepeace, John's wife, gave us a tour of the lovely gardens surrounding Farris, which have two distinctive styles; John's calming water garden, with its 1840 yew hedges weaving through, contrasting with Jennie's 'cottage garden' - a riot of colour complete with a greenhouse with a yellow fig growing through the roof!

Ann de La Grange Sury



Photograph © Jonathan Davis

Visit to Farris and Parnham House continued

The Gardens at Parnham House

How fortunate to visit the enchanting gardens that surround Parnham House in Dorset with the very man who, since 2000, has rescued and developed them and the parkland for and with the present owners, Michael and Emma Treichl. We were with landscape and garden designer (and Holburne Friend) Simon Johnson who, on a perfect late summer afternoon, introduced us to the history as well as the delights of this green mini-paradise.

The house has managed to survive with very few owners. The current house was built by the Strode family in the 16th century. It was then extended over the centuries as fashion and need dictated and finances allowed. Since 2000 when the Treichls bought the house this has continued alongside the expansion and restoration of the parkland and gardens. It is lush throughout, reflecting both Simon's planting choices and an abundance of water from the surrounding hills. A spring is the source for a gushing lion's head and there are

stepped rills, pools and ponds, a fully restored lake and the river. The walk to the lake has been extended with limes and conical yews (see photo, below) leading the walker and the eye to the hills on the horizon.

On the other side of the house there is a large walled garden with terraces and beds filled with roses and perennials whose bright colour sang out to us in the sunshine. Big enough for a bed of cutting flowers, vegetables, a large greenhouse and the compost heaps. Our return to the house took us past grassy banks designed for the children to roll down and a delightful, cool courtyard with another pool, more running water and green planting, so typical of Simon's work here which allows the flowering plants to star.

Two visits in one day that delighted the senses. Good company and perfect weather. What more could we want? Many thanks to Minnie Tatham for organising such a wonderful day.

Judy Marris



Holburne Friends visit Madrid

With much enthusiasm, we signed up for the Friends trip to Madrid and Segovia. When it came to it, the enthusiasm was tempered with apprehension. Would we know anyone? Would the Friends be friendly? Of course, we need not have worried as we were invariably made very welcome and, by the end of the week, we had made some good friends.

The four-night trip was undeniably, yet very happily, hectic in this city of art and tapas. We were extremely fortunate that the organisers had secured the services of Mauricio Macarron, who was, quite simply, the best specialist art history guide we have ever encountered – galleries, museums, castles or just Spain's history, Mauricio knew it all, without any notes, and shared his knowledge with clarity and authority in perfect English.

Also making the trip special was access to locations and venues one might not find if travelling alone or unguided. The Goya frescoes, for example, at the Ermita de San Antonio de la Florida - two small churches sitting side-by-side in a suburb some way behind the magnificent Palacio Real. One, the original, built between 1792-98, now a National Monument, and the other an exact replica, built in 1928 by the local congregation for their regular worship, to better protect the fabulous, yet slightly sinister, frescoes around the inner face of the cupola, and the interred remains of the artist, Francisco de Goya.

The 1st-century Roman double-height stone aqueduct, spanning the valley at the entrance to Segovia, was the highlight of our walking tour of this magical small town. The beautiful fan-vaulting of the cathedral led us to wonder about the mediaeval timber scaffolding needed to build such a tall, elegant structure. The town's castle, Alcazar de Segovia, gave us wonderful views of the surrounding countryside from the romantic battlements.

Of course, the art at Museo del Prado was magnificent. Almost everyone has heard of the Prado, but we were fortunate indeed to have Mauricio share his insights into the art of his personal specialism, Diego Velazquez.



The Holburne Friends gather
in front of the stone cross
at Valle de los Caidos.
Photograph © Barry Gilbertson

Holburne Friends visit Madrid continued

Whereas, at the Museo Reina Sofia, we learnt about the history and intricacies of Picasso's massive monochrome painting, *Guernica*, painted in 1937. At one point, our party was adjacent to a group of loudly chattering French schoolchildren. Mauricio soon silenced them in a way that made them appreciate the quality of the artwork before them, rather than on their iPhones. Impressive.

One of our friends had been delighted when told we would be visiting El Escorial, exuberantly describing this much-adored historic town. We were not disappointed, not least because en route we visited the silent and surreal Valle de Los Caidos, the imposing memorial created by General Franco to the Fallen of both sides of the Spanish Civil War.

As we drove along the tree-lined valley floor, the 490ft high stone cross emerged, shrouded in the morning mist, high on the skyline. Chilling, yet thrilling. Whatever one may think about war, or this war specifically, there can be no doubt that the valley, now the last resting place of more than thirty thousand fallen and two unknown warriors, was a wonderfully peaceful setting for the vast, sombre, memorial basilica built, to honour their memory, underneath the hill supporting the cross. Awe-inspiring.

However, it was not all about culture. We stayed in the very smart, well-positioned Hotel Liabeny, we ate superb tapas, and sampled a range of wines in the evening vitality of the bustling Mercado de San Miguel, just as the sun went down near the Plaza Mayor where, earlier, a lazy lunch had provided an excellent opportunity for people-watching.

We were not alone in our enjoyment, as Liz Brooks says "Outstanding art and palace interiors, excellent company and culinary delights - many wonderful memories of Madrid!"

Finally, just before we left Madrid for the airport, we were fortunate to visit the Thyssen-Bornemisza gallery, where the entrance is dominated by two superb life-size paintings of King Juan-Carlos and Queen Sofia. The artist? Ricardo Macarron, Mauricio's uncle. There was also a special exhibition of works by the impressionist painter and gardener, Gustave Caillebotte, whose life's work had recently been featured at a NADFAS talk in Bath. The circle seemed complete. With our grateful thanks to Simon and Olivia Eliot for their expert organising skills.

Von and Barry Gilbertson

The 2016 Robertson Lecture: *Silver* by Vanessa Brett

The evening began with Friends meeting for drinks in the Museum's lovely Ballroom, while upstairs, the Friends' Private View of the Holburne's latest exhibition "*Silver: Light & Shade*" awaited. This glittering array of works of art in silver and silver gilt, comes from many illustrious sources including The Royal Collection Trust, and the Ashmolean Museum.

The gallery's partitions have been removed, revealing at once the full impact of the exhibition's title. This also enabled co-curator Catrin Jones to lead us round the exhibits, with a commentary on each. A rare French drinking bottle dating from c.1400 rubs shoulders with the enamelled silver Millennium Dish of 1999. Two fabulous pieces of silver-gilt, an elaborate soup tureen and stand by Paul Storr and the Shield of Achilles, created by John Flaxman for

George IV's coronation banquet, contrast with the simple elegance of silver from the 20th and 21st centuries.

Back in the Picture Gallery, Vanessa Brett, Catrin's co-curator gave us a scholarly talk in a delightfully informal way. The effects produced by the techniques employed in the making of silver objects were discussed and illustrated by slides of details from famous pieces by masters such as Paul de Lamerie and Matthew Boulton. Vanessa contrasted the candlelit rooms of the 18th and 19th centuries, sparkling with reflections from elaborate candle-holders, with the pure white of newly crafted designs, which have yet to acquire a patina.

Links with Bath were also mentioned. We were told how the famous London jewellers Rundell Bridge & Rundell, who originally supplied several of the opulent pieces in the exhibition, was the brainchild of Philip Rundell, who was born in Bath.

A fascinating subject, allied to a wonderful exhibition, ensured a most enjoyable and well-attended evening.

Mary Jane Wilkinson



left: Water Beaker, 2013
Rod Kelly (b.1956)
Silver, Sterling standard, partly gilt
Collection: The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths

November Tree Walk

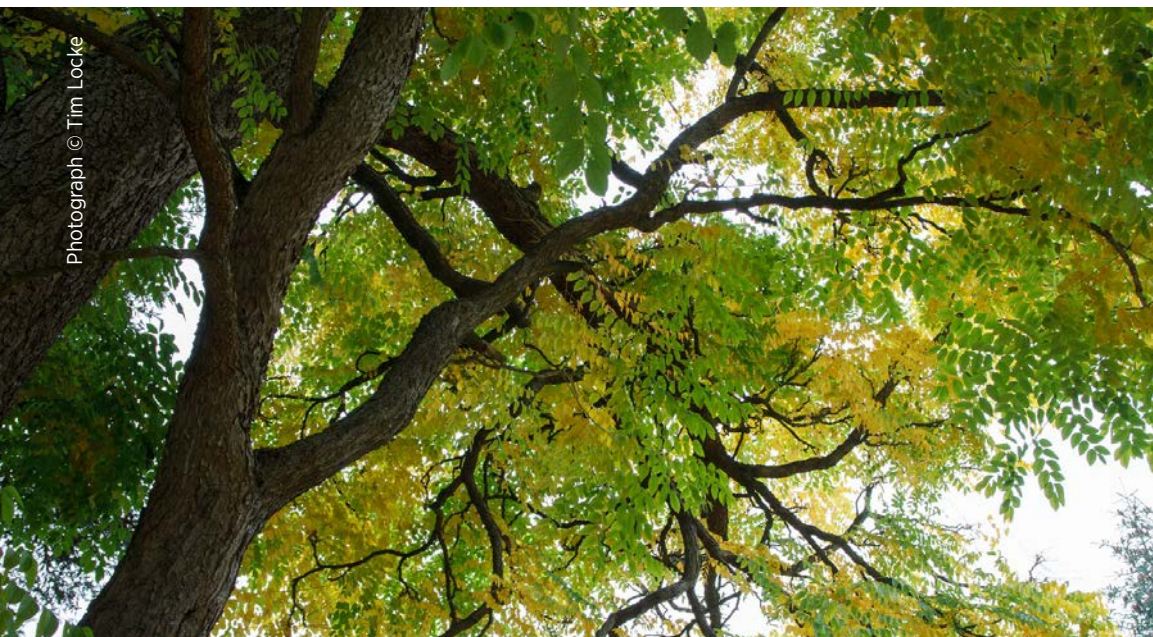
A misty then drizzly afternoon saw Antonia Johnson reprising her Bath tree walk in Victoria Park and Botanical Gardens. The Friends enjoyed a wide-ranging couple of hours packed with information about some very interesting specimens.

These included the largest leaved tree in the UK, the Kentucky coffee tree (shown below) with its long double pinnate leaf structure. We also scented the rather unappealing odour of the female ginko (which our noses confirmed as being "like vomit or worse" - though the tree redeems itself with great autumn colour!) We saw the layered Western red cedar in the Dell with an incredible 17 stems and the fern- or cut-leaved beech.

This "chimaera" is usually stable, but when branches are damaged, the new growth may revert to core, so leaves of common beech form amongst the cut type.

We heard fascinating insights into the functioning of trees as we went along, from why leaves turn yellow in autumn – as chlorophyll disappears with diminishing light, carotene dominates giving off shades of yellow instead of green – to internal plant transport systems - the xylem taking water upwards from roots and phloem bringing food down from the leaves. All in all a thoroughly entertaining and instructive afternoon and a good walk too, despite the indifferent weather.

Tim Locke



Celebrating long-term Friends: Arnold Wilson

This is the first in a new series of articles, written specially for us by Sidney Blackmore, to celebrate some of the individual Friends who have supported the Holburne Museum in many different ways over the decades. Gifts and legacies, both large and small, in cash and in kind, are vital to keep the Museum's work going. In this series we pay tribute to those people who have made a real difference.

Profile: Arnold Wilson, Friend



Paintings are in Arnold Wilson's blood. The son of Robert Arthur Wilson, an artist passionate about colour, he spent his childhood in London just a short cycle ride away from the V&A.

After Cambridge and studies at the Courtauld Institute, he worked in the Print Room at the Museum of London, then based in Kensington Palace, before taking up posts at Aylesbury Museum, and later the William Morris Gallery at Walthamstow. He left London to become Curator of Paintings at Bristol City Art Gallery, and in 1967 succeeded Hans Schubart as Director.

Although Van Dyck's great painting *The Betrayal of Christ* was allocated to Bristol when accepted in lieu of death duties in 1984, Arnold argued for it to remain in situ at Corsham Court as part of the Methuen collection. It was a view ahead of its time, for today many in lieu items remain in their original settings. When he retired from Bristol, his service was recognised by the purchase of Corot's painting *Fontainebleau - en Forêt*.

Arnold Wilson joined the Friends shortly after moving to live in Bath in the early 1960s. He was a trustee of the Holburne and in the 1980s followed Barbara Robertson as Chairman of the Trustees for a period of six years. During this time the façade was cleaned, a new picture store created, and the Robin Tanner Library established. These achievements were made despite

Celebrating long-term Friends: Arnold Wilson continued

a difficult financial situation which Arnold describes as being desperately poor.

He is full of admiration for the work of directors Christopher Woodward and Alexander Sturgis in the redevelopment and restoration of the Museum, and in the energy and commitment shown by David Posnett, when Chairman of the Trustees, not least in fund-raising. He feels that the new exhibition gallery works perfectly, and considers it quite wonderful that entry to the Museum is now free.

Arnold is a Fellow of the Museums Association and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. He has written dictionaries of marine and military painters, and contributed articles to *Apollo*, *The Burlington Magazine*, *Connoisseur* and other learned journals.

At present he is making good his lack of Greek, and has already mastered enough of the language to tackle Euripides. He has lived on the lower slopes of Bathwick Hill and more recently on

Lansdown, but now lives within sight of the Holburne. This means that he can wander across to the Museum to take coffee in the garden on sunny days, and also get a glimpse of one of his favourite pictures, Thomas Barker's portrait of his wife Priscilla.

Sidney Blackmore

Priscilla Jones
Thomas Barker (1769-1847)
Oil on canvas, about 1802
Presented to the Holburne Museum
by the National Art Collections Fund, 1939



Holburne Insights: a puzzle completed!

A ceramic vessel, with a hole in the base, a missing handle, and signs of old repair. This turned out to be one of the most unusual items in Sir William Holburne's collection: a bourdaloue. Taking its name from a preacher at the French court known for his overly long sermons, a bourdaloue is a distinctive oval-shaped portable chamberpot designed for a lady's convenience. This intriguing object had clearly undergone many transformations, and was too damaged for display.

Described in Chaffers' catalogue of 1887 as '*an oval vessel or Bourdaloue... mounted with ormolu rim and foot, dragon handles*'. At some point since the founding of the Museum, the parts had been separated and the mounts were mislaid, and although of high quality, the piece was consigned to a life in the stores. However, during the collections audit in 2015, an exciting discovery was made: an unusually-shaped metal vessel was discovered in the Archive, which surely could only fit inside this bourdaloue. Even better, it was sitting alongside some dragon handles!

The porcelain bourdaloue itself was made at the Meissen porcelain factory, the great manufactory of Augustus the Strong of Saxony, in about 1740. It is an outstanding example of Meissen's painting and gilding at this period, and features scenes of gallant couples.

The missing handle would originally have featured the mask of a character from the Commedia dell'Arte, as on the other known example of the shape. Inside, a tongue-in-cheek reference to its function: '*Aux Plaisirs des Dames*', in elaborate gold lettering (see photo below). The dragon mounts are of the nineteenth century, and are clearly an example of a dealer giving a new life to a broken pot, adapting and piecing together parts to make a new and extraordinary creation.

It is unlikely that Sir William Holburne ever saw what was beneath the exuberant gilded mounts, so he probably never understood its original purpose. Perhaps he used it as a plant pot – there are certainly examples of people mistaking bourdaloues for gravy boats!

This unusual and intriguing object will finally go on display in all its glory in the Davidson Gallery later this year.

Catrin Jones



Holburne Insights: a puzzle completed! continued



Above, Bortaloue (assembled), and left, its constituent parts

Meissen c.1740
Gilded porcelain, with metal mounts, container and stand
© Holburne Museum

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Do check Tim Locke's refreshed pages
on the Holburne website for updates
and news of events and visits etc:
[http://www.holburne.org/support-us/
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THE HOLBURN 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:
holburnefriends@gmail.com
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Craft beer tasting and cheese pairing

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I/we should like tickets at £25 each

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Please send cheque, payable to the 'Friends of the Holburne Museum' to: **KIM DE MORGAN**,
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NB PLEASE WRITE A *SEPARATE* CHEQUE FOR EACH EVENT, THANK YOU!

Celebrating Frank Brown: the Holburne Ensemble

7:00pm Thursday 27th April 2017

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Day trip to Sezincote & Owlpen

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Spring Tree Walk, Bath

2:00-4:00pm Tuesday 23rd May 2017

I/we should like tickets at £15 each

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Please send cheque, payable to the 'Friends of the Holburne Museum' to: **ANTONIA JOHNSON**,
HOLBURN FRIENDS, c/o THE HOLBURN MUSEUM, GREAT PULTENEY STREET, BATH, BA2 4DB

NB PLEASE WRITE A *SEPARATE* CHEQUE FOR EACH EVENT, THANK YOU!

Garden visits: **Pound Hill House, Wiltshire on Sunday 11th June 2017,**
Poulton House Gardens & West Woodhay House on Thursday 15th June 2017 and
Laskett Gardens and Hellens Manor on Thursday 13th July 2017

See pages 10, 11 and 13 for booking details.

Email Minnie Tatham at minnietatham@hotmail.co.uk to book your place, or
request a booking form by sending a stamped addressed envelope to:
Pound Hill House, Smith Street, West Kingston, Wiltshire SN14 7JG.

If you do not have an email address, please include a **stamped self-addressed envelope** so that your receipt and booking can be acknowledged. Please write a separate cheque for each event, made payable to the 'Friends of the Holburne Museum' All enquiries to holburnefriends@gmail.com