



Newsletter

AUTUMN 2017

THE
HOLBURNE
MUSEUM
FRIENDS

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Holburne Friends Committee	back cover
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Front cover:

Rosewater sprinkler,
soda glass, Iran,
probably Shiraz c.1700.
Museum number
C927A136B
Given by Miss EG Tanner
in 1920.
Photograph courtesy of
Tony Gilbert.

The beautiful object
gracing our front cover
is to herald the **Big Give**
Challenge this autumn.
The Holburne needs to
raise money to conserve
and display Miss
Tanner's collection of
over 85 Islamic
artefacts, which she
gave to the Museum.

See page 20-21 for
more information about
how your donations can
be doubled at no extra
cost to you.

Membership Matters

Some of you have been asking why we do not accept payments by Direct Debit rather than Standing Order, so I thought an explanation might be useful. The Friends Committee discussed this at some length last year, when the rise in subscription rates was imminent, and although it would have been a much easier transition to the new rates, we decided against any change.

We are not a large enough organisation to make such a change financially viable, as the set-up and ongoing costs are prohibitive; we also felt that Friends would prefer their contributions to be used for supporting the Museum rather than for administration. Museum support is, after all, the main reason why the Friends charity was set up.

Undine Concannon, Honorary Membership Secretary
Email: holburnefriends@gmail.com

Chairman's letter

Dear Friends

I hope you will enjoy reading this Newsletter, packed as it is with enjoyable times past and prospects for the coming months.

Thanks are due to those committee members who contribute their time and energy to thinking up great places to go, and looking after those who join them on the trips. We are lucky here in the West Country to be in striking distance of fantastic gardens and collections. For those more adventurous we headed to Portugal (in June) and will shortly go to The Netherlands (in December). There are several ideas already in the pipeline for next year.

Then we have music - Richard Frewer will be performing on 1st December, with friends; we have trees - that's me, talking about one of my favourite things, this time immediate to the Museum. How many of you walk through the park and wonder what a particular tree is? There are (again) plans afoot to restore Sydney Gardens for the 21st century, and those of you who know the Gardens will I hope contribute to the public consultation, see page 6.

I should also say thank you to all the kind Friends (unnamed, in this issue, as explained on p.16) who contributed reports of our past events. All copy gratefully received. Do you know how many Friends there are (nearly 1400, at Undine's best approximation)? And how long we have been supporting the Museum? Nearly 65 years! We have one Friend who joined us 60 years ago,



Dr Marianna Clark (see the Spring 2015 Newsletter!), and Betty Cooper signed up in 1974 (see page 15).

The Friends can be proud of our longstanding and ongoing contributions to the Holburne. But we need to keep raising money, keep reminding everyone how wonderful the work the Museum does is, and keep the numbers of Friends up. We are always looking for new people to share the work of our committee, if you have been inspired by an event do get in touch.

Shortly as you will see in the pages that follow we will have a 'Big Give' opportunity this autumn. The Friends have made a pledge but that does not prevent you, as individuals, from chipping in to help conserve and display Miss Tanner's Islamic treasures.

We welcome the appointment of Edward Bayntun-Coward as Chairman of the Board at the Holburne.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the preview of our next special exhibition: *Seurat to Riley: The Art of Perception*.

Antonia Johnson

Friends' Private View

Friends are invited to a Private View of the exhibition

Seurat to Riley: THE ART OF PERCEPTION



Undulation 03,
white stoneware,
underglaze colour,
matt glaze
© Sara Moorhouse

**Friday 20th
October 2017
6:00-7:30pm**
Refreshments in
the Garden Café

Friends' Private View



Georges Seurat, *The Morning Walk*, 1885 © The National Gallery London.
Presented by Heinz Berggruen, 1995

A Tree Walk in Sydney Gardens

Wednesday 1st Nov 2017 2-4pm

A stroll around Sydney Gardens, just behind the Holburne, to admire some of the beautiful trees in their autumnal colours, with our expert dendrologist, Antonia Johnson.

This is an opportunity to learn more about the fascinating subject of trees in general, on a circular walk

with many fine examples of trees to discover.

A £15 donation is suggested for the Tree Walk, but spaces are limited due to park regulations.

This is a 'get yourself there' event. Please apply for your place using the Newsletter booking form.



Sydney Gardens is currently in the 'Development Phase' of a Round 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to secure a £3.6 million grant to improve the historic park. The funding will be used to restore historic buildings, invest in landscaping works, renovate the play area for use by people of all ages and create new gardens, alongside a programme of events and activities.

The project will celebrate the fascinating history of the gardens, with its Cosmorama, Labyrinth, Merlins Swing, Concerts, Public Breakfasts, Galas and Illuminations.

Public consultation day:
Saturday 25th November, 11.30am - 4.30pm at the Gardeners Lodge in Sydney Gardens. Come and see the latest plans, give feedback and share your ideas with the project team. More information can be found on the Bath Council website: www.bathnes.gov.uk

A Tree Walk in Sydney Gardens continued

One of the beautiful specimens of trees in Sydney Gardens, a Coast Redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens*.



Photographs
© Antonia Johnson

Cultural highlights of Cardiff

Wednesday 15th November 2017

A day spent in Cardiff visiting two of its cultural highlights: Cardiff Castle and the National Museum of Wales.

We start at Cardiff Castle, a spectacular Victorian high-Gothic masterpiece which dominates the city centre.

A Norman castle keep survives on a mound but what impresses the visitor most are the later buildings which are the collaborative result of owner the 3rd Marquess of Bute and architect William Burges. As Simon Jenkins observes: *"In the bonding of Bute and Burges, money met art in the most fruitful alliance in Victorian aesthetics. Nowhere was this alliance realised with such brilliance as at Cardiff"*

We will be given an introductory talk by Chief Curator Matthew Williams, the foremost expert on William Burges and Cardiff Castle as well as being shown a short film. Following this, Matthew will then lead the group on a private tour through several rooms within the castle apartments.

From here, it is a very short drive to the National Museum of Wales where we will have a light lunch. Afterwards there will be a private tour, led by Nicholas Thornton, Head of Fine Art at the Museum, of the current exhibition *Bacon to Doig: Modern Masterpieces from a Private Collection*. The exhibition draws from an extensive collection of British art



The Banqueting Hall
at Cardiff Castle.
Photograph courtesy
of Cardiff Castle.

Cultural highlights of Cardiff continued

assembled over several decades and includes work by Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, Anthony Caro, Ben Nicholson, Frank Auerbach, Lucien Freud, David Hockney and of course Francis Bacon and Peter Doig.

Afterwards you will have free time to wander round the main permanent collections at your own pace, perhaps admiring the superb Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, as well as excellent displays of over 500 years of art, furniture, sculpture, silver and ceramics from around the world.

The price will be £70 to include return private coach transport, private tour of

Cardiff Castle apartments, a light lunch, and a private tour of *Bacon to Doig*. Tea, coffee and Welsh cakes on arrival at Cardiff Castle, and 10% discount in the shop and Cafe at the National Museum are included. Please complete and return the booking form in the Newsletter.

Please note that, due to the financial commitments we undertake with third parties, booking cancellations within 7 days can't be refunded except in cases of medical emergencies, unless there is a waiting list and the place can be re-sold. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Mark Hake



Left:
Peter Doig, *Untitled*,
2001-02
© Peter Doig
All Rights Reserved
DAC 2017

An evening with Robert Louis Stevenson

Friday 1st December 2017 7-9pm in the Brownsword Gallery at the Museum

Robert Louis Stevenson: The Wanderer, written by Michael Mackenzie, and compiled by Michael, with Richard and Carolyn Frewer. This performance will bring to life one of the finest poets, essayists and prose writers in words and music - Robert Louis Stevenson. This programme was first presented on a short tour of Scotland two years ago and was warmly received. Frances Hickox wrote: "*An Evening with Robert Louis Stevenson* is a delight. Richard Frewer and Mike Mackenzie have crafted a beautiful programme, and they present it with integrity and affection, and with masterly ability."

Stevenson's output is so wide and varied and his life so rich, it is difficult to find a path that gives an idea of his wanderings and imaginings and does justice to him. Various important points in his life are illustrated through a commentary and through RLS's wonderful prose and poetry. A theme emerging strongly is the duality in his personality and the way it is expressed throughout his life and oeuvres. It is this trait that forms a thread to their offering. To echo these themes, Richard sings Vaughan-Williams's *Songs of Travels*, a cycle of a quality to match the great German lieder. The songs intersperse the story as it develops. Other songs include Aaron Copland

and Stevenson's settings by Scottish composer Ronald Stevenson (no relation). His Robert Louis Stevenson songs evoke the strength and mystery of the Scottish Highlands.

Performers:

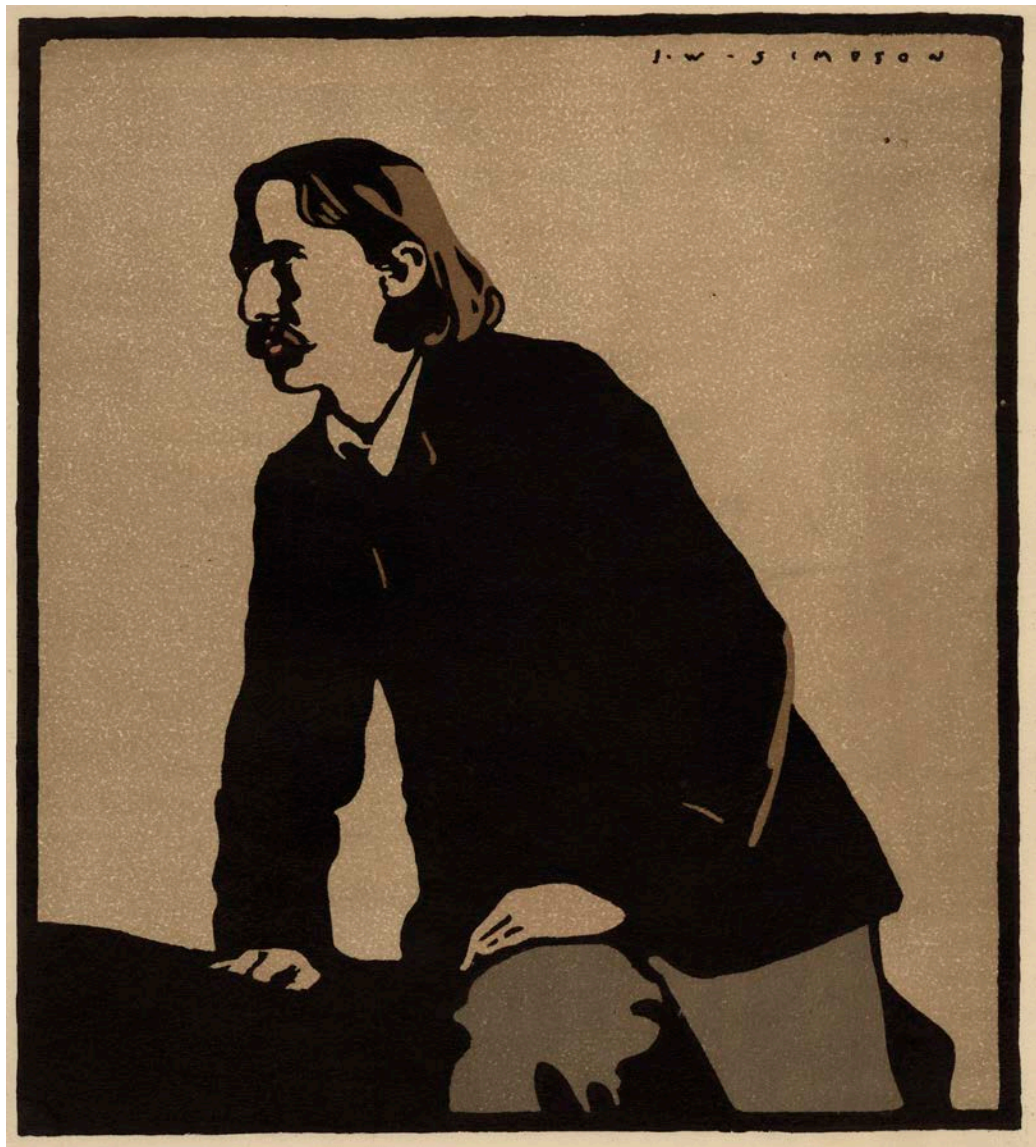
Michael Mackenzie, born in Glasgow, educated in Edinburgh, Nottingham and Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. He has worked for nearly all the Scottish theatre companies; roles include Higgins in *Pygmalion*, Claudius in *Hamlet*, Salieri in *Amadeus* and Lear. TV and film credits include *Ace of Wands*, *Taggart* and *The Railway Man*. He will appear in *Pressure* at the Theatre Royal Bath, in the spring.

Richard Frewer has sung at the Holburne on many occasions, including the Schubert song cycles, and is preparing to record *Winterreise* in the new concert hall at Wells' Cathedral School. Whilst Chair Professor of Architecture at Bath University in the 1990s he was a Holburne Museum Trustee, and is now on the Friends Committee.

John Foster, piano accompanist, has performed with many singers and chamber groups in the UK and Europe. He is an ABRSM grade and diploma examiner, trainer and moderator.

Tickets are £15 each, available at the Holburne Museum in person or online at: **www.holburne.org**

An evening with Robert Louis Stevenson continued



Robert Louis Stevenson, after Joseph Simpson,
lithograph after a woodcut, 1902.
Purchased 1929 by the National Portrait Gallery D9956.
Image © National Portrait Gallery, London



*A Christmas wreath
decoration workshop*

Christmas wreath decoration workshop continued

Tuesday 5th December 2017 2-5pm

In the Gardener's Lodge, which is just beyond the car park at the side of the Holburne Museum.

Come and join expert florist Emma from Crescent Flowers in Bath, to create your own handmade Christmas wreath, ready to grace your home or front door when you've finished your masterpiece!

They will supply the base, pine boughs, mixed foliage, wide wired ribbons, pine

cones and dried fruits. You supply the creativity and lots of Christmas spirit!

Tea, coffee, mince pies and a glass of wine will highlight a great afternoon.

Tickets are £55 each. This event promises to be very popular, and places are limited, so tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis.

Please complete and return the booking form in this Newsletter.



The Holburne Friends Quiz evening is back!

The Holburne Friends' Quiz evening is back by popular demand, after a couple of years off. Simon Johnson will be in charge of questions again, in the Garden Cafe on **Thursday 22nd February 2018**.

The Quiz will be followed by a convivial sit-down supper in the Clore Room.

Gather friends to make teams of 6, ideally; but we can accommodate everyone who wants to have a go. This has always been a popular and successful event, and we do hope you decide to make an evening of it and join us for supper afterwards.

Tickets are £25 each, to include the Quiz with a glass of wine and a two-

course supper afterwards (wine and soft drinks available; voluntary donations for drinks are warmly welcomed). Tickets are £12.50 for just the Quiz without supper.

The Museum doors open at 6:30pm, and the Quiz will begin promptly at 6:45.

For tickets, please complete and return the booking form in this Newsletter.

Small prizes will be given to the winning team: good luck!

If anyone would like to help with catering, please get in touch with Antonia via holburnefriends@gmail.com.



Celebrating long-term Friends: Betty Cooper

Here is the second in our occasional series celebrating Holburne Friends who have supported the Museum for many years. Gifts and legacies, Memberships, Contemporaries, Patrons and the many supporters and volunteers are vital in keeping the Museum and its work going. In this series we pay tribute to those people who have made a real difference and enjoyed a long and rewarding relationship with the Holburne Museum.

Betty Cooper, now in her nineties, has lived in Great Pulteney Street for many years, in easy reach of the Museum. Born in Birmingham she studied social science at Bedford College, London University when the college was evacuated to Cambridge during World War II. Having qualified as a member of the Institute of Personnel Management, her first job was with aircraft manufacturers Handley Page, and in 1945 she joined the Red Cross working as a Service Hospital Welfare Officer in India and later in Singapore, dealing mainly with women and children freed from concentration

camps. She was then posted to Cairo. On returning to England, she worked for the British Council. Married to a Naval Officer, she accompanied him to Athens and the Naval Base at Simonstown before buying a house in Somerset on the edge of the Polden Hills. Finally moving to Bath where amongst other activities she set up the Bath Volunteer Bureau.

Betty has been a Friend of the Holburne since 1974, and also a volunteer, giving much support to the education department. She generously gave a painting by Peter Brown to the Friends' auction to raise funds for the Museum's redevelopment scheme. Through her suggestion, the Holburne held the highly successful exhibition of watercolours by Syd Durston showing life on the Somerset Levels and Polden Hills during World War II.

It was Betty who came to the rescue when *Vanity Fair* was being filmed at the Holburne and outside her door in June 2003. The star, Reese Witherspoon, was feeling unwell and the Museum's Director knew that Betty would be the one person who was certain to have a thermometer for the actor's use. Betty has just completed her travel memories covering the period 1930-1954. The book will be published this month as *A Run Ashore*, a very appropriate title for tales written by an extraordinary naval wife.

Betty Cooper, photographed by Sidney Blackmore



Sidney Blackmore

A round-up of past events

Fourteen Friends joined Antonia Johnson for the **Spring Tree Walk** in Bath's Royal Victoria Park and the Botanical Gardens. Strolling in the sun, Antonia pointed out many features, such as leaf structure, bark formations and trees bearing flowers, all identified and explained to us in great detail. Among the original specimens, there is a spectacular beech tree as well as exotic tulip and ginkgo trees. Around the lake the planting shows off the colourful palette that trees display and emphasises the contribution trees make to our senses and indeed, to our lives.

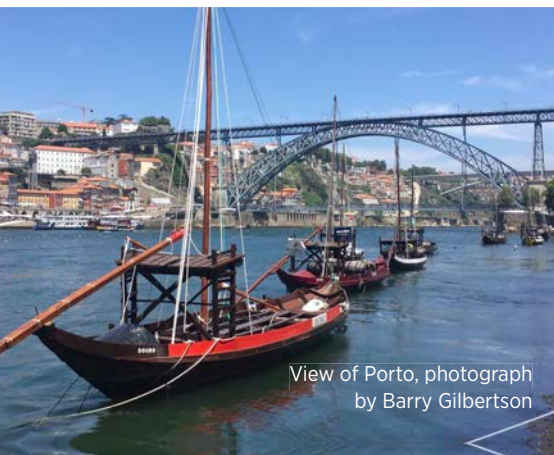
Our group set off in early June for **'A Taste of Portugal'** – based in Lisbon and then Porto. The programme was a mix of guided visits to important historic and cultural sites with free time and the opportunity to enjoy local specialities such as freshly grilled sardines and the famous pastries at Pasteis de Belem. The latter restored us after visiting the Monastery of San Jeronimos and the adjacent church with the tomb of Vasco de Gama, famous in the country's

Editors note: It has been a busy summer...no less than 9 events! Many thanks to all contributors who kindly took the time to write these reports, and apologies that there isn't space to credit everyone.

extraordinary tradition of maritime exploration, leading to astonishing wealth and power from the 15th century. After the 1755 earthquake King Joseph I set up court outside the city. We got a flavour of the countryside visiting the hill town of Sintra, the summer residence of the Moorish kings, where we toured the magnificent 14th century palace. Our return was via Cascais, a 12th century fishing town, but now a popular seaside resort. The highlight of our last day in Lisbon was the Gulbenkian Museum and its collection of magnificent treasures, testimony to the founder's guiding principle: "Only the best will do".

The temperature climbed as we headed north to Porto. An introductory walking tour gave us a good overview of the city's history and variety of cultural influences (the sensational Arabian room in the Stock Exchange being one of the biggest surprises). Lunch at river level meant it was then only a short ferry ride to one of the Port Wine lodges to sample its wares. We then visited Braga, the great religious centre (the Portuguese 'Rome') and on to Guimaraes, declared the nation's capital city when the first King of Portugal defeated the Moors in 1139.

After such a feast of churches, palaces and museums we all felt we had a much firmer grasp of Portuguese history, culture and style as well as a familiarity with the local cuisine, enhanced, during our final dinner together, by impassioned 'fado' singers.



View of Porto, photograph
by Barry Gilbertson

A round-up of past events continued

About sixty people came on a sunny afternoon to admire the two acre garden at Minnie Tatham's home at **Pound Hill** and enjoy homemade tea and cake under the shade of apple trees in the orchard. Antonia ran a wonderful sale of unusual plants in the courtyard. The day raised a substantial contribution for The Friends.



Later in June, Friends visited two private Wiltshire gardens. At **Poulton House** we were guided round the gardens admiring sculpture, including a large circular work by Richard Long. Among other treats was an avenue of holm oaks, a kitchen garden, wild flower meadow, and a wonderful rill.

The afternoon began in front of a fine Inigo Jones house, **West Woodhay**, where we were greeted by Harry Henderson, whose grandfather had acquired the estate in 1920. Harry and his wife Sarah have spent much energy restoring and enlarging the gardens, planting an arboretum, with a detailed catalogue of all the trees, and creating five new lakes. Other projects include a wildflower garden, and an Italian garden in the ruins of a Vanbrugh church. Thanks to Minnie for organising two wonderful days.

One of the quotations in the programme notes for this distinguished and enjoyable **Schubert recital** sum it up beautifully. The great soprano Elisabeth Schwartzkopf once said *"If your singing is 'truthful', its core will move the willing listener anywhere in the world without understanding the text"*. Whilst Richard Frewer would not dream of being in such company, those views are his creed – and the result is extremely pleasing. The rightness of his singing was hugely enhanced by David Price's impeccable accompaniment.

The words of master poet Heinrich Heine, are largely dark, despairing and sad; Schubert welded them, with the lighter tone of Rellstab's poems, into a unified whole. They traverse myriad emotions: the lighthearted *Liebesbotschaft*, with its rippling accompaniment, addresses a murmuring brook, while in the bone-chilling *Der Doppelgänger* the poet is crazed with a nocturnal vision of himself; the final song, the last that Schubert wrote, has a quiet poignancy. A very special occasion.

Photograph © Jonathan Davis



A round-up of past events continued

Our morning visiting the **Laskett Gardens** was full of interest, as there isn't a space that has not been adorned somehow; clipped forms, furniture, sculpture, not to mention a lively planted palette. We were given a device that let us listen to Sir Roy Strong's commentary, but otherwise left to wander at will, and goggle. The design of the garden is tightly turned to fit in its plot, and give long axes where possible, with secret spaces tucked in around and about; a design that has not stood still, but memorialises significant moments both in Sir Roy's and his wife Julia Trevelyan Oman's lives.



In the afternoon we went to **Hellens Manor**, where we were led on a tour and given lots of fascinating background about the collection, the house, and the families who have lived there. There are riches from a great span of history, stories, paintings, tapestries, carvings, furniture and books. Through leaded panes we could see the knot garden and lily ponds that set off the south side of the house, and we could stretch our legs and investigate the sculpture trail in the further grounds before heading home. Many thanks to Minnie Tatham for organising such a brilliant day.

In August a group of Friends headed to **Chavenage House** (photo below). Since we were on a Holburne excursion, we were prepared for erudite guiding, but we had not anticipated such an entertaining one. Caroline Lowsley-Williams, daughter of the owners, guided us through the house while tripping, at times hilariously, through a complex history beginning with the Princess Goda, wife of Edward the Confessor. Carved paneling, 17th century tapestries, winding staircases, and a delicious lunch rounded off the morning.

In contrast, nearby **Rodmorton Manor** is an exercise in restraint. Begun in the early 20th century, it grew from Claud Biddulph's personal commitment to a traditional Cotswold aesthetic. He valued the workers as much as he did their work and engaged the Barnsley brothers, Ernest and Sidney, to help him. Both the house and its furnishings were built with local materials and absolutely minimal machinery. The quality of craftsmanship evident in both the house and its furnishings was singular, reminding us that it is far easier to make something fussy than something plain. With gratitude to Mark Hake for a splendidly planned and executed trip.



A round-up of past events continued

A warm welcome greeted the Friends when visiting **Ablington Manor**. This glorious Grade 1 listed Manor House, dating back to the 12th century is set in an idyllic Cotswold village. Most development was in the 16th century with the wealth of a privileged "wool stapler". The staplers controlled the lucrative wool exports through Calais, and returning wine imports to England.

The present owners Robert and Prudence Cooper, together with Head Gardener Jason Rice, showed us around. The beautifully furnished house was full of wonders - especially the marvellous collection of modern British artwork featuring Mr Cooper's passion for horses. The garden has more than twenty borders; rolling lawns; a river with bridges, swans, and an island; walled gardens; woodland planting and countless unusual roses. Thanks to Minnie Tatham for finding this gem. We were reluctant to leave!

Wormington Grange was indeed a landmark visit: John Evetts, furnishings maestro for the Landmark Trust, introduced the house and workshops with entertaining eloquence. The house, framed by precision-cut yew hedges, was built in the early 18th century and later extensions included an Ionic pillared portico. We took tea amidst a range of intriguing dining room portraits that asked questions of the viewer.

Even more intriguing were the creatively chaotic stable block storage areas (aka Aladdin's cave) offering fascinating insights into the behind-the-scenes work that sustains the Landmark Trust. Bulk purchasing of rugs and materials, done with an eclectic eye, keeps costs down and quality up. John's remarkable mental jigsaw includes all the Trust properties: if there is a piece missing he knows how to find it, whether it be a rug, a sofa, or a made-to-measure porch. Our thanks to Minnie for a super day out.

A 30-strong group of Friends ventured into the rolling hills of the Cotswolds for a private tour of two houses: **Sezincote** and the **Owlpen**. Sezincote's highlights were the gardens in glorious autumn colour as well as the gorgeous opulent bedrooms and dining room, decorated by John Fowler of Colefax and Fowler. The dramatic Indian influence on the architecture of the 200-year old Mogul palace was just exotic and beautiful.

We stopped in Stow-on-Wold for a pub lunch and then off to Owlpen Manor, a Tudor Manor house, with a tour by Sir Nicolas Mander who has owned the house since 1974. Regaled by tales of restoration and ghosts, the group then settled into the restored tithe barn for a delicious cream tea. Thanks to Mark Hake for organising a second successful day in these fascinating places.

The Big Give: introducing Miss Ellen Tanner

An 'interview' with Miss Tanner

Later this autumn the Museum is fundraising to conserve the fascinating collection of Miss Ellen Tanner. An intrepid adventurer, she travelled solo across Persia in 1894-5, buying artefacts along the way. Apart from the Islamic tiles in the Garden Café, most of her collection has never been on display as the items are in urgent need of conservation. Miss Tanner also left her travel diaries behind, allowing us a glimpse into her journey. Here is a short 'interview' with Miss Tanner, inspired by her diaries, as imagined by Ollie Merchant, Development Officer.

Peacock, steel with gold damascened decoration, Iran, probably Isfahan, 19th century. Museum number F131. Given by Miss E. G. Tanner in 1932.

What inspired you to undertake such an intrepid journey?

My father and I lived in a village near Bristol, where I cared for him in his later years. I spent many a day perusing the galleries of Bristol Museum, and regaled him of my finds each evening. I had seen several eastern

treasures there, and yearned to see where they had come from. Then one year a man named Mustafa Ben-Yusuf came to the village and gave an animated talk about his travels in Persia – it was then I knew I must see the East for myself.

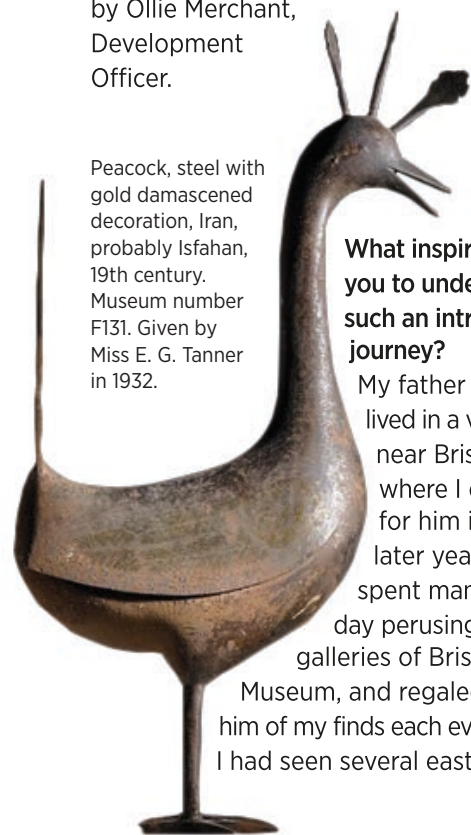
My father passed away in 1885, leaving me the means to travel. Having never gone much further than London in my life, I travelled first in Europe, but always my mind ventured further over the horizon. A few years later, just before Christmas, I left England for my journey to Baghdad.

How did you travel?

I travelled to the Middle East by steamship, then to Baghdad up the Tigris on the river boat '*Comet*'. But my real adventures were all on horse-back. I rode miles and miles with my small retinue between the caravanserais, villages and post stations of Persia.

Did everything go according to plan?

Only once did we experience trouble on the road. When we were travelling between two villages, bandits from the surrounding hills came, bristling with arms and cartridges, and surrounded my carriage. My male servants were rather useless, but I calmly pulled out my pistol and laid it visibly in my lap. I like to think they were intimidated by my steely gaze, but I rather suspect they did not dare attack a European!



The Big Give: introducing Miss Ellen Tanner continued

Did you travel alone?

Throughout my travels, Persian men were astounded at my 'courage in travelling alone', whereas I had only experienced courtesy and kindness on my journey (barring the robbers). I once met the Shah of Persia's son, the Nayebe es Sultan, who asked why I wasn't married. I said, if I were to marry, my husband might dislike travelling, and the pleasure of my life would end. The Nayebe answered that I had spoken well, and sent me on my way with the divine protection of Allah.

You must have attracted attention!

I was often a source of amusement for village children as I passed through! I made attempts to blend in on occasion though. Whilst in Shiraz I and my servant donned native dress to go about the bazaars, as the sellers invariably tried to overcharge me when I wore my European clothes. I suspect they knew I was a foreigner however, as I could never quite master the Persian shuffle.

What were the best sights on your tour?

I saw many wonderful places. From the Persepolis rock carvings (I bought a lovely silver frame decorated with the carvings, which I gave to the Holburne Museum), the ruins of Babylon, the Zagros Mountains, the peaceful summer palaces of the Shah - I loved it all.

You bought some wonderful treasures; are any particularly special to you?

Those who dwell long in Persia become a devotee of carpets, and I bought

several I adore. It was wonderful to see them being handwoven in the villages, a skill being lost to machinery even in my day. Another favourite was a set of hand-lacquered playing cards, used to play a curious game called *As-Nas*, a little like poker. I whiled away many long evenings playing this game with the people I met on my travels.

Miss Ellen Tanner donated 85 objects to the Holburne, from textiles and metalwork to lacquer and glass. The Holburne needs *your* donations so that we can conserve her wonderful collection for display in 2018, and for future generations to benefit from.

The **Big Give Christmas Challenge** is a matched funding campaign. For one week: **28th November - 5th December 2017**, donations will be matched by the Big Give - meaning your donation can be doubled at no extra cost to you!

Please support the conservation and display of this fascinating collection.

You can donate online at:

<https://secure.thebiggive.org.uk/projects/view/28103>

during the Challenge week, or if you don't have the internet at home, do come to the Museum during opening hours between 28th November to 5th December and we'll have everything set up for you in the Café.

Thank you for your generosity.

Profile: Tom Boggis

Here is the latest in our series of profiles of members of the Museum staff:

Tom Boggis who is Senior Curator at the Holburne.

What are your first impressions of Bath and the Holburne?

I first visited the Holburne in around 2003 and I have been coming to Bath since I was a child as I grew up nearby in Dorset. I am glad I knew the Holburne a little prior to the redevelopment project in 2008-11, as it makes me admire what was achieved by that project even more. I think the collections are stylishly displayed: imaginatively presented and thoughtfully interpreted, in galleries designed with flair and bold colours. All within a striking and important historic context, complemented by the Museum's vibrant exhibitions and events programme. So I was delighted when the opportunity arose to work here.

How does the Holburne compare with previous roles you've had?

I have spent the last twelve years working for the National Trust and English Heritage. I have been very lucky to work on various research and display projects at some amazing places including Audley End House near Cambridge, Lyme Park near Manchester, Kingston Lacy in Dorset, Cliveden and Stowe Landscape Garden in Buckinghamshire, The Wyne in Hampshire and Marble Hill House in London. Curatorial roles with the National Trust and English Heritage tend to be quite

broad: you might be working on an important 18th century sculpture collection in a garden one day, and researching and re-furnishing a lost 19th century interior in a house the next! I found it a great way to learn lots over broad time periods and styles: typically, we could be working on any element of British and European architecture and art from the 16th to the 20th century. One of the ways in which my work at the Holburne is different, and which appealed very much about coming to work here, is the opportunity to narrow my focus somewhat. I am particularly interested in 17th and 18th century painting, especially British portraiture, areas in which the Holburne, of course, is very strong. However, we are a small team at the Holburne so that broad background from my previous roles is certainly useful!

Would you like to elaborate about your current research projects?

I am currently working with colleagues on the Holburne's autumn exhibition *Seurat to Riley: The Art of Perception*. The exhibition is about the ways in which artists from the late 19th century to the present day have played with visual effects in art and how these are perceived by the viewer. It is a touring exhibition from Compton Verney in Warwickshire; the Holburne last worked with Compton Verney on the very successful Canaletto exhibition in 2015.

Profile: Tom Boggis continued

We have been working with Compton Verney to select the works which will feature in our exhibition at the Holburne and to write the gallery text.

In 2018, there will be a particular focus at the Holburne on the world of the 18th century theatre. One of the ways we will be marking this is with a display in the Wirth Galley from February of parts of the Somerset Maugham collection of theatrical portraits which are not on permanent display in the Picture Gallery or at the Theatre Royal, Bath. It has been fascinating to learn more about the background to Maugham's collecting and the plans for the display are coming together nicely. Some watercolours have just gone away for mounting and framing and we are about to start working with a designer to create a suitably theatrical feel for the display.

I am also working on a research project, funded by the National Portrait Gallery,

into John Hoppner's portrait of Catherine Cussans in the Picture Gallery (hanging next to Gainsborough's *Byam Family*). The aims of the project are to shed new light on Hoppner's work - he is often described as Thomas Lawrence's less able rival - and to better understand the role that Catherine Cussans played in shaping the future Holburne Museum. She was Sir William Holburne's aunt. Her artistic interests may have influenced the collection he formed and her finances certainly did: it was her money which ultimately purchased the former Sydney Hotel, the Museum's current building.

Do you have a favourite artwork in the collection, or a favourite space in the Museum?

The Entombment by Romanelli in the Ballroom is one of the paintings which most represents to me Sir William's taste and his collection: small, beautiful use of colour, and exquisitely detailed.



Portrait of Tom Boggis
Photograph ©
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Do check the regularly updated pages
on the Holburne website for updates
and news of events and visits etc:

[http://www.holburne.org/support-us/
friends-of-the-holburne-museum/](http://www.holburne.org/support-us/friends-of-the-holburne-museum/)

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

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