

A photograph of a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a blue and yellow top, looking intently at a tablet held by another person. The scene is set in a museum, with glass display cases and framed pictures visible in the background. The lighting is warm and focused on the woman and the tablet.

THE
HOLBURNE
MUSEUM

DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT REPORT
2012

A TRANSFORMED MUSEUM

The Holburne's development has at last realised the potential of one of the country's great small museums. A museum, that a little over a decade ago, was threatened with closure, little visited, with dwindling funds and housed in a failing building has seen the transformation of its building, displays and programmes and a remarkable **increase in visitors of over 500%** from before closure in 2008, with more than 120,000 visiting in the first 8 months after re-opening in May 2011.

Eric Parry's beautiful and acclaimed extension and the collection's imaginative and engaging redisplay are inevitably the most conspicuous element of the Holburne's project. However, the development has seen the transformation of every corner of the Museum's operation, revealed most significantly in our becoming free-to-enter, but reflected too in such areas as the quadrupling of our commercial revenues, our ambitious and expanded education and exhibition programmes and our successful recruitment of a new team of over 200 committed and enthusiastic volunteers.

The Building and Site

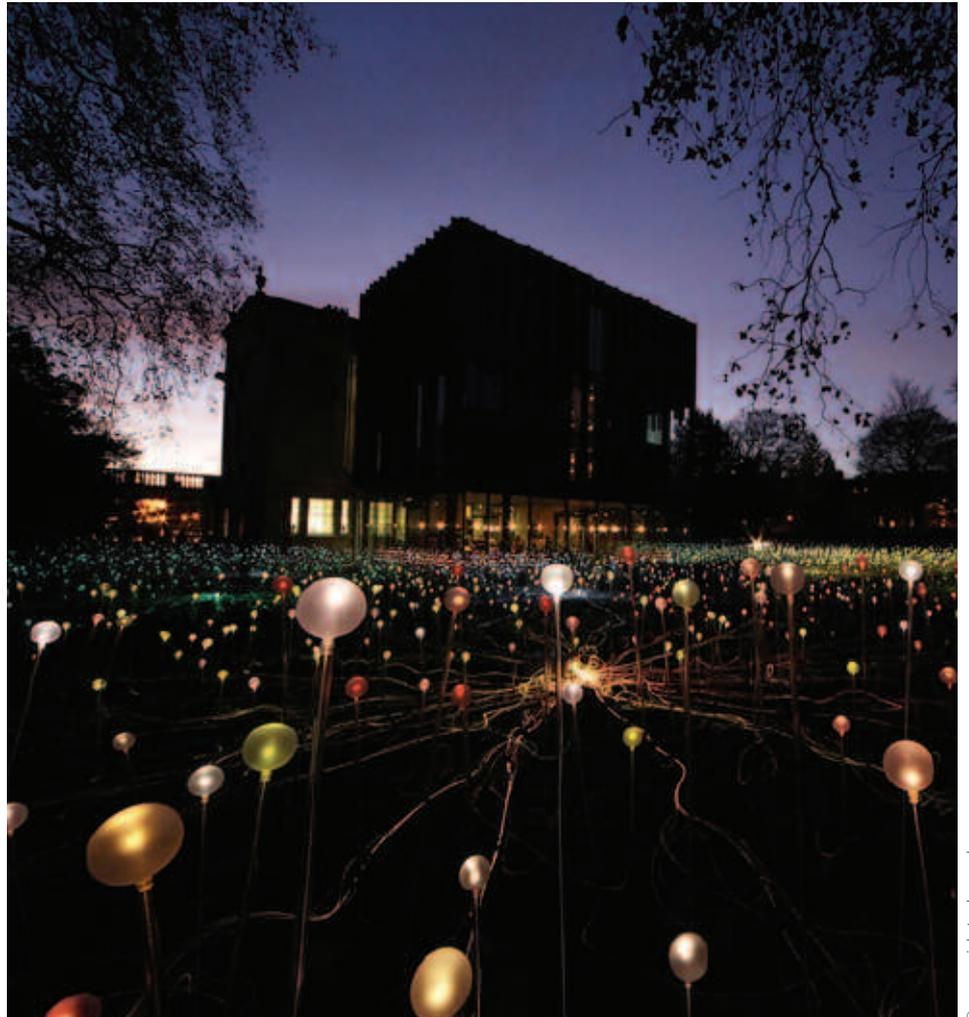
The bold decision to build a contemporary extension to a Grade One listed building in the World Heritage Site of Bath was not taken lightly. It has, however, been triumphantly vindicated by Parry's building which combines intelligence, sensitivity and delight. From the start the extension responded not only to the needs of the Museum, but also to its exceptional setting and the building's original purpose in the 1790s as a gateway between the classical formality of Great Pulteney Street and the lyrical fantasy of Sydney Gardens behind (today a uniquely surviving footprint of an eighteenth-century pleasure garden). This connection had been severed when the building was converted to house the Museum in 1916 by Sir Reginald Blomfield. Parry's extension once again turns a face

towards the park. The inspired, if radical, decision to move Blomfield's staircase re-establishes the historic role of the building as a way into the park and allows for simplicity of plan and the connection between city and garden to be made on every floor. The extension stands as a garden pavilion, its façade of low-iron (colourless) glass and crafted ceramic, with its beautiful mottled green glaze, reflects the trees and sky to become part of its garden setting.

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‘Sensational, an architectural *tour de force* that stands out even in this country, where a new museum renovation or extension seems to open every month.’

Richard Dormant, *The Daily Telegraph*





- Restored the two existing **grand galleries** to their former glory while sensitively installing the necessary environmental controls. Previously blocked windows and obscured skylights have been revealed, inappropriate doors replaced and rooms refurbished.
- Created the new flexible **Clore Learning Space** used for teaching classes of school children, our family workshops, student seminars and symposia and public lectures, with over 4,000 users of the Clore Learning Space since re-opening.
- Created the new **Sackler Discovery Centre** in which visitors can further explore collection and exhibition themes with computer interactive and changing creative art activities for independent learners.
- Provided a **new lift and disabled facilities** making the building fully accessible for the first time. New external surfaces and ramps, handrails, seating and large print label booklets in our galleries.



Parry's building works as pure architecture, but it is what his scheme has delivered for the Holburne, and our visitors, that is its principal achievement. The scheme has:

- Almost **doubled display space** for the Museum's permanent collection including new galleries ideally suited to the collection's domestic scale. 60% of objects now on display were previously in store.



- Created two new purpose-built exhibition galleries (**Roper Exhibition Gallery** and the **Wirth Gallery**) allowing us to mount exhibitions of ambition and quality. Over 18,000 people have visited our acclaimed exhibitions *Peter Blake: a Museum for Myself* and *Gainsborough's Landscapes: Themes and Variations* in the 8 months since re-opening.

- Created a new and popular **Garden Café** opening onto the park. Over 61,000 covers since opening.
- Created a new **Library and Study Centre**. Over 5,000 volumes catalogued and now available online via the University of Bath's library catalogue.
- Created new and **conditioned collection storage**.

In short, although retaining the Holburne's charm and scale the development has successfully and finally given the Museum the opportunity it desperately needed to make the most of its beguiling collection, its unrivalled site and its important building while also providing vital space to mount changing exhibitions and programmes to continue to attract and engage an ever broader audience.

RE-DISPLAYING THE COLLECTION

The impact of the project on the Museum's collection has been as significant and far-reaching as that on its building: 962 decorative art objects, 84 miniatures, 14 works on paper, 34 paintings and 45 frames have been cleaned and conserved while the reassessment of the collection means that it is now better understood and documented than at any time in its history.

The Holburne's new found confidence and ambition has also seen the collection grow in size and quality: the allocation of two important works under the Acceptance in Lieu scheme; the transfer by the National Theatre of the paintings from the Somerset Maugham collection (including five Zoffanys); the gift of one Gainsborough portrait and the new loan of two others have all stemmed directly from the Holburne's project and have seen a remarkable concentration of the quality of its holdings of British paintings.

Building on and responding to the new understanding of the Holburne's collection the spectacular, thoughtful and engaging displays, designed by Metaphor, within the existing and new spaces have transformed the way in which it can be seen, enjoyed and understood. Most of the objects now on display were previously in store. The displays strike a considered balance between spectacle and interpretation, as well as between the impact and excitement of mass display, and the desire to encourage concentrated looking. Above all they provide different 'ways-in' to the collection placing objects and paintings in a variety of contexts and narratives in displays that actively encourage exploration and discovery.



Like many of the best-loved museums the Holburne has an individual's collection at its heart and the displays have successfully brought Sir William Holburne, our Victorian founding collector, into clear focus for the first time. The flamboyant display at the heart of the new first floor galleries evokes the crowded way in which the collection was first displayed in Sir William's Bath townhouse and encapsulates the Museum's personality of pleasurable profusion. Around this central core, display cases adapt the language of the collector's cabinet to suggest the mind of the collector and to display the wealth and variety of the collection.

Sir William's delight in the miniature, the precious and the finely wrought, is challenging to communicate within a Museum display (small things were often meant to be held while lots of them can overwhelm). It is a challenge beautifully met through isolating key objects, and the levels of attention paid to detailed design, from display mounts to the judicious use of theatrical lighting. The integral use of drawers together with magnifying glasses deliberately encourages our visitors to actively look, inviting them to pore over individual objects and to take on the role of the collector in his collection.

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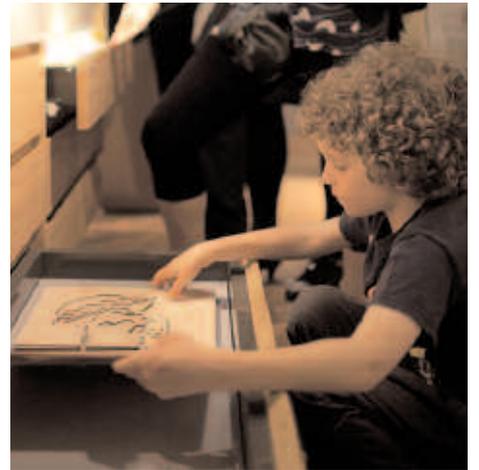
‘The sheer tantalizing array is a browser's delight’

Marina Vaizey, *Arts Desk*



The drawers are also used to extend and vary the interpretation of the collection allowing different stories to be told with a wide variety of approaches. 'Hands-on' drawers allow for active and playful engagement and discovery deliberately appealing to different ages and learning styles. An innovative computer interactive and activities in the Sackler Discovery Centre, family trails and the Museum's full programme of workshops and lectures further extend the ways in which the collection can be explored and investigated.

The displays throughout the building exploit different modes of display and respond to the gallery spaces. In the mezzanine Fletcher Gallery cases explore the tastes, fashions and material culture of the eighteenth-century and the place of Bath within this story. In the original building the top-lit Brownsword Picture Gallery brings together the cream of the Museum's collection of British eighteenth-century portraiture while the first-floor Davidson Ballroom Gallery shows dining and display silver and ceramics in ways that suggest their original use and manner of display.



RESPONSE



The public and critical response to the Holburne's project has been overwhelming, with universally laudatory reviews in the general, architectural and arts press and broadcast media. This positive critical reaction has been mirrored in the public response seen both in online forums such as TripAdvisor, visitor comments and the initial findings of our visitor survey: 99% of visitors describing their visit as enjoyable or very enjoyable and 100% of respondents saying they would recommend a visit to a friend. That they have done so is suggested by our extraordinary visitor figures. Levels of participation are also high and growing: an average of 16.5% of visitors have visited our paying exhibitions with the average for *Gainsborough's Landscapes* being over 20%. Over 10,592 adults and children have participated in our workshops and community activities or attended our varied programme of lectures or concerts. Our Friends organisation, already over 1,000 strong, has recruited a further 200 members since reopening.

LASTING LEGACY

The Holburne's development has transformed a failing museum into one that makes more of its site, building and collection, that has increased and broadened its audience and that works hard to engage and inspire them. As significant as achieving these fundamental goals is the urgent need for the renewed Museum to be able to sustain itself.

The Holburne is an independent charity that has, in recent years, seen its core funding from the Government and local Council almost completely removed. In 2011 our annual grant of £80,000 from the Higher Education Funding Council for England was removed after changes to the criteria for university museum funding. This was doubly disappointing as the grant had been just increased in recognition of the work we do with four universities in Bath and Bristol.

Our endowment was increased as a critical element of the development project. However, to maintain our position as Bath's *Art Museum for Everyone*, and to achieve our vision of becoming one of Europe's leading regional museums, ongoing revenue fundraising and commercial activity remains critical.

The development has provided vital new spaces for income generation including the new Roper Exhibition Gallery, Garden Café, Shop, Clore Learning Space and the facilities to support private and corporate hire. The continued health of the Museum will depend upon achieving the targets in our business plan and of course the vitality of our programme of exhibitions, events, concerts, lectures and workshops, driven by our strong and committed, if small, team.

The Holburne, through its development and its bold decision to become free-to-enter, has fundamentally changed its relationship to its visitors and its site.

It was also always hoped that Parry's extension, in turning a face towards Sydney Gardens, would provide a catalyst for the restoration and reinvigoration of the Park itself. As a uniquely surviving pleasure garden traversed by two masterpieces of nineteenth-century engineering (the Kennet & Avon Canal and Brunel's Great Western Railway) Sydney Gardens is a site of quite exceptional historic interest and considerable future potential. We are happy to say that with the Museum's support Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Park's owner, is submitting an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding towards the restoration of the Gardens in 2012.



FACTS & FIGURES

- **122,603** visitors between 14 May 2011 and 15 January 2012
- **6,035** children and adults have attended art for all events
- **1,737** school children have taken part in museum workshops
- **2,820** people have attend talks, concerts and study days
- **877** people have received guided group tours
- **252** volunteers are manning our information desk, exhibitions, galleries, shop and education events
- **56%** of visitors have never visited the Holburne before
- **99%** of visitors rate their visit to the Holburne as very enjoyable or enjoyable
- **£13.6million** raised for the development project and Endowment fund
- **1,365** different ceramic pieces make up the façade of the new extension
- **1,510** donors to the project
- **1,139** objects conserved
- **60%** of the collection on display after being in storage since World War II

VISITOR COMMENTS

- “ Loved the Peter Blake Show! Nice new art space. Never been before, but will come again. Thank you! ”**
- “ Most interesting. Suitable for children of all ages! Brilliant! ”
- “ Beautifully done! So informative and easy to go through. Impressive collection. Extremely friendly staff. ”**
- “ The Holburne is now excellent. It is a Museum that Bath has needed for a long-time. Well Done. ”
Pauline B
- “ It’s brilliant – and really easy with a pram. Well done, I’ll be back lots! ”**
- “ My first visit – a real delight. A beautiful museum and collection... ”
- “ Absolutely spell binding!! Congratulations to you all – best art gallery I’ve seen outside London. ”**
- “ One of the most user friendly museums I have ever been in – well done. ”
- “ I think this nice museum is one of the best in the world! ”**
Maria N., The Netherlands
- “ The ‘new’ Holburne Museum is a delight...beautiful objects...displayed in an inventive way with lots of hands-on activities to keep smaller visitors satisfied...”
TripAdvisor
- “ ...everything a twenty-first century museum should be. ”**
TripAdvisor



‘... a real delight.
A beautiful museum
and collection...’

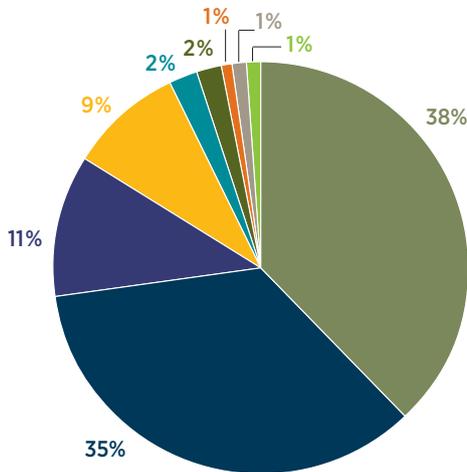
Visitor comment



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

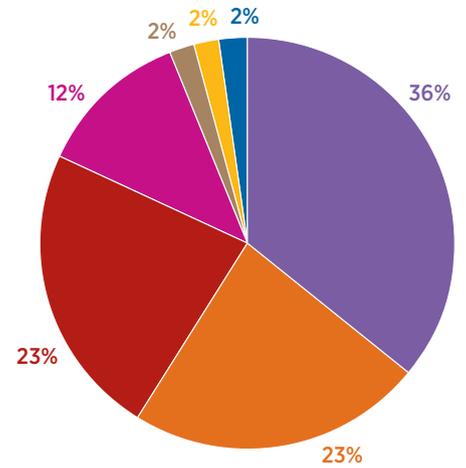
Sources of funding

- Public / Lottery
- Trusts & Foundations
- Individual donors
- Board donations
- Other
- Friends
- Legacy
- Events & Community fundraising
- Businesses



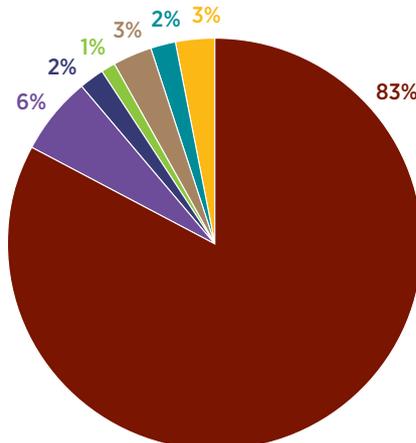
Geographical source of funding

- HLF South West
- London
- Bath
- South West
- Other / Unknown
- Rest of the World
- Rest of UK



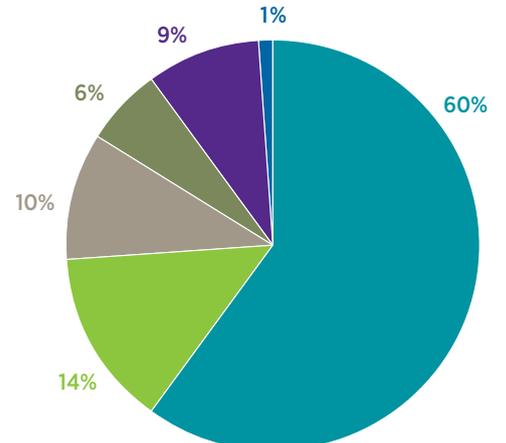
Given in support of

- General donations to the campaign
- Endowment
- Public Appeal
- Legacies
- Educational facilities
- Collection & display
- Construction



Project costs

- Construction
- Professional fees
- Displays & fit out
- Fundraising & communications
- Internal management & supervision
- Non-recoverable VAT



“

‘It is one of the most
delightful pieces of
wrapping any architect
has done anywhere’

Rowan Moore, *The Observer*

DESIGN TEAM

Building design by
Eric Parry Architects

Main construction by
Sir Robert McAlpine

Structural engineering by
Momentum

Mechanical & electrical engineering by
Atelier Ten

Ceramic façade by
Shaws of Darwen, Lancashire

Project management by
Cragg Management Services

Exhibition design by
Metaphor

Displays constructed by
Meyvaert

Graphic design by
Annabel Dalziel

Lighting by
Kevan Shaw Lighting Design

Interactive design by
All of Us

Photography by
Chris Cardwell



THANK YOU TO ALL THE SUPPORTERS OF THE RESTORATION AND EXTENSION OF THE MUSEUM

The Heritage Lottery Fund



The Linbury Trust and The Monument Trust

Bath and North East Somerset Council

The Late Prof. Frank Brown

The Andrew Brownsword Charitable Foundation

The Castletown Trust

The Davidson Family Settlement

David and Karin Embleton

Andrew Fletcher

The Friends of the Holburne Museum

Robert and Chantal Miller

Brian and Margaret Roper

Garfield Weston Foundation

Malcolm and Elizabeth Baldwin

The Clore Duffield Foundation

The Foyle Foundation

The Late Sir Edwin Manton

The Medlock Charitable Trust

The Osborne Charitable Trust

The Late Sylvia Richardson

John and Belle Robinson

The Dr Mortimer and Theresa Sackler Foundation

The MJC Stone Charitable Trust

The Underwood Trust

Sir Siegmund Warburg's Voluntary Settlement

Manuela and Iwan Wirth

The Holburne Museum
Great Pulteney Street
Bath BA2 4DB

www.holburne.org

Registered charity number: 310288

The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
Charmian Adams

The Annett Charitable Trust

Arts & Business

Ian Askew MC

Maurice Avent

The BAND Trust

Bang & Olufsen of Bath

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The Ken Biggs Charitable Trust

The Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust

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Mr and Mrs Michael Briggs

The Sir Robin Buchanan Charitable Trust

Mr and Mrs Richard Burbidge

The Cairns Charitable Trust

The Late Monica Catling

Rosalie Challis

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Dr Marianna Clark

Anthony and Louise Clarke

The Clothworkers' Foundation

Clydesdale Bank

Tessa and Dermot Coleman

The Ernest Cook Trust

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Anthony Fuller

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The Late Miss Eleanor Macnair, OBE

The Michael Marks Charitable Trust

The J P Marland Charitable Trust

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The Mercers' Company Charitable

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Mrs John Posnett

Charles and Tineke Pugh

The Reed Foundation

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The Royal Oak Foundation

The Hon. Emma Russell

Adrian Sassoon

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The Stanley Foundation

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Stone King Sewell

Lady Strasburger

Jonathan Sumption OBE QC

The Swire Charitable Trust

Mrs David Telling

Christopher and Sally Tennant

Matthew and Leigh Thorne

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Utopia Communications

The Vodafone Foundation

The Lord Waldegrave of North Hill

Wessex Water

Marnie Whiting

Anthony Wilkinson

Withy King Solicitors

The Wolfson Foundation

Jonathan and Julia Wyld

Mrs John Yates, OBE

Zenith International

Ann Zwemmer

Donors to the care and conservation of the collection

Association of Independent Museums and

Pilgrim Trust Conservation Award

The Aurelius Charitable Trust

Bath Spa University

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The Professor Geoffrey Butler Memorial

Fund

Mrs Joan Chandler

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The Drapers' Charitable Fund

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Mrs Phillip Farrer

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The Leche Trust

The Late Miss Eleanor Macnair, OBE

The Mercers' Company Charitable

Foundation

The Holburne Music Committee

The Pilgrim Trust

Charlotte Felix Pole

David Posnett, OBE

Hilary Rosser

Mrs Victoria Sharp

The Veneziana Fund

The Woodmansterne Art Conservation

Awards