



THE  
HOLBURNE  
MUSEUM  
FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER  
SUMMER 2014

# Chairman's Letter

Dear Friends

You will find in this issue of the Newsletter a loose sheet which is the questionnaire we very much hope many of you will complete (a separate file for e readers). The more we know about who we all are, why we became Friends, and what we hope to find on offer for Friends, the better. You'll see we have offered a small incentive. Past and future events and travels with the Friends are featured as usual in these pages, to remind you of all that goes on.



The Eliots excelled themselves, it seems, organising the trip to Prague in March, and I have not included details of the proposed 'To Russia with Love' herein, as it is fully booked. Plans are brewing for trips in 2015.

We are particularly pleased that the forthcoming Frank Brown celebration (on May 8th) is very nearly sold out – a number of Friends with long memories have told us how glad they are that his great generosity is being recognised. This Newsletter's 'Visit the Vaults' also gives a glimpse of the works Frank Brown bequeathed to the Museum. We will continue to hold regular raffles (tickets £5) for a chance to visit the reserve Collection with one of the curators; it is such a rare treat to see and handle the Museum's other treasures.

By the time you read this, Catrin Jones our new Curator of Decorative Arts will have arrived (see p.22) to take Matthew Winterbottom's place. Since the last Newsletter you will have read of Xa Sturgis's being offered the job as Director of the Ashmolean Gallery, and over the next weeks the selection of his replacement will, we hope, happen. It will be very exciting to see what changes might be wrought by a new leader of the Holburne's team; when I talked to Spencer he said he had really enjoyed working with Xa, and was also thrilled by the prospect of change, which seems entirely right.

Antonia Johnson

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Front Cover: The Prague Loreta, 1626 - present day. Photograph © Sidney Morton

# A Closer Look: Rooth's Picture Framers

Rooth's workshop is in a very old building in Bradford on Avon, so small that the group of Friends intent on finding out the mysteries of restoring and repairing antique picture frames had to be split in two; one visit took place in February, and the second at the end of March.

One of the Friends on the first visit writes:

Welcomed to the workshop by Edward and Julia Rooth, we were taken up a steep staircase to the first tiny room, complete with a hole for a bread oven, and a fireplace (the medieval building backs onto a quarry); intriguing to wonder who lived and worked here over the centuries.

We were split into two groups of four and three. There would not have been room for more! Edward's group were shown the techniques of restoring frames, from simple painted and lacquered ones to elaborate gilded frames. For the latter, individual moulds are made and filled with a composition, made according to a traditional formula – some are very delicate – and when ready the shapes are applied to the damaged frame.

Edward showed us how a diamond cutter is drawn over glass which is cleanly snapped off in the different required shapes – various types of glass are used, including some which cuts out UV light, particularly important to protect watercolours. Acid-free mounts are used to prevent discolouration of works on paper, and Edward can colour-wash these to complement the paintings and prints. Whatever is needed, the workshop can provide the answer, and unsurprisingly it is well known to collectors, the National



One of these 19th-century silhouettes needs to have its domed glass replaced to match the other. The Rooths explained how this is done by heating the glass over a mould to achieve the required shape.

Trust and museums, and is recommended by Christie's.

It was time for a break and Julia produced tea and a wonderful fruit cake. Then the groups changed over and Julia demonstrated the art of painting and gilding frames, both oil- and water-gilding, and showed us gold leaf, which comes in various tints depending on the addition of other metals. We were treated to a flake of gold leaf placed carefully on our fingers, but which sadly had disappeared by the time we left! Julia also makes and gilds exquisite frames using dried twigs, unique to Rooths', and called "fairy frames".

There seem to be no limits to the Rooths' talents for preservation and conservation; thanks to Edward and Julia for revealing the secrets of their work.

Ann Cowan

## The Holburne Quiz

## Friends' Visit to Prague



Two of the buildings to be identified and matched with the right architects...



The Holburne Quiz this year took place in the Garden Café. Six teams fought it out, the Quizmaster having produced a series of searching questions on and around Georgian themes: on paintings featuring pivotal moments of history, on architects and their buildings, on literature and on cartoons. The full quiz is available on our web pages as a downloadable pdf – as are, you will be glad to read, the answers.

The winners were a team led by the Eliots, and they were rewarded by a polyanthus each (after the flowers had done duty as table decorations).

We then progressed to the Clore Room for supper, provided by the Friends. We sat at long tables, mingling convivially.

It is satisfying to report that as hoped – and despite stiff competition from not least the Lit Fest, which whittled away at our usual numbers – we made some £400 for the Friends.

Meeting new Friends is always good, and a happy band of travellers set off for the capital of Bohemia, eagerly anticipating a wealth of magnificent culture, music, art and architecture, with some tantalising modern history; we were not to be disappointed.

Olivia and Simon Eliot, our guides, had already made sure that the group were introduced at an earlier social/information evening, with an excellent lecture. Under their expert preparation, nothing was left to chance.

After a smooth journey the 5-star Hotel Paris welcomed us with a cheering glass of sparkling wine, and over a superb dinner in the hotel's lovely Sarah Bernhardt restaurant we also discovered the delights of the excellent (and cheap) local Czech wines! And so to bed for the weary, but there was a guided night-time walk around Wenceslas Square for the more energetic.

Day 2 began with a splendid breakfast, then we were off on our first adventure, which necessitated a ride on the Prague Metro – not for the faint-hearted. Our next bit of excitement was a ride on the (very fast) tram, to Prague Castle environs, where we visited the Muchas' Private House. Simon rang the door bell of a charming old house in the square which was, amazingly, answered by his friend, John Mucha; grandson, no less, of Alfons Mucha. This had been John's childhood home. We were all terribly impressed by this! John Mucha then gave



## March 2014: The Friends' visit to Prague

us a tour of the house, incorporating many personal family anecdotes, along with the story of his grandfather's multi-faceted life. He showed us into his late mother's living room, which someone likened to Miss Haversham's!, crammed with dramatic memories and faded antique furniture, including a four-poster bed in which, allegedly, Count Wallenstein was murdered in 1634. We were also shown a fine travelling music chest which had been owned by Mozart, and photos of Alfons with his contemporaries in Paris: Gauguin, Rodin and Toulouse-Lautrec.



Alfons Mucha (1860-1939) had his great break when he was living in Paris in 1894 and was prevailed upon to design a decorative advertising poster for the actress Sarah Bernhardt. His Art Nouveau style took off in such a way that Mucha became a rich man. He returned to Bohemia in 1910 to begin work on 20 huge canvases called "The Slav Epic". We saw these amazing masterpieces on permanent exhibition at the Prague Trade Fair Palace. When Mucha died in 1939, soon after the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, a hundred thousand people attended his funeral. DAY 3, and a tour of the beautiful Lobkowicz Palace. Here, as their guide book puts it, is

"...the oldest, largest and most intact private collection in the Czech Republic, reflecting the cultural social, political and economic life of Central Europe, over six centuries". These priceless family treasures had been stolen by the Nazis, "nationalised" by the communists and finally re-claimed by the Lobkowicz family, under the 1993 Restitution Law. (The family had fled to America in 1948 but was able to return to Czechoslovakia after the Velvet Revolution of 1989.) We saw original Haydn manuscripts, Mozart's hand-written re-working of Handel's "Messiah" in which he had doubled the size of the orchestra, and original manuscripts of symphonies by Beethoven.

Sharp intakes of breath were apparent when we suddenly came into the room dedicated to two huge Antonio Canaletto canvases painted in London. Aptly accompanied by Handel's music, especially written for the occasion, one was *River Thames looking towards Westminster from Lambeth Palace, 1746-7*, and the second *The Thames on Lord Mayor's Day, 1748*. Interesting to note the amount of traffic on the water.

Nice to see in a Rococo Room cabinet a small snuff box embellished "A Present from Bath".

As if all that excitement wasn't enough, we were then given a splendid luncheon in a Palace private dining room, with more excellent Czech wines and lots of excited chatter!

The afternoon left the group free to their own devices and for some that meant visiting the nearby St Vitus Cathedral to enjoy the glorious Alfons Mucha stained glass window: most exquisite, vibrant colours.

At the hotel that evening, we heard a lecture by Dr Barbara Day MBE on her experiences of living and working in Czechoslovakia during the Occupation by the Communists, leading up to the Velvet Revolution in 1989. We then repaired to dinner at a local hostelry which had

# March 2014: The Friends' visit to Prague



a jazz band. I think we were all quite weary by then!

DAY 4 – Sunday – was “free” and some took the opportunity to tackle the Metro unassisted to visit the Mucha Museum. Created in 1998, all the works are from the Mucha family collection. As well as stunning decorative panels there were drawings, design sketches and pastels, and an excellent “rolling” sepia video showed Mucha at his home and at work on the Slav Epic.

DAY 5 – A coach ride took us out to the country to visit the Lobkowitz family's Nelahozeves Castle. Here we enjoyed a private guided tour of one of Bohemia's finest Renaissance Castles, built in “castello fortezza” style in 1550. So many paintings and treasures, including Rubens'

1640 *Hygeia*, are part of a grand permanent exhibition called 'Private spaces: A Noble Family at Home'. Add to this a library with 64,000 books, and a telescope ten metres long which is 300 years old. All these treasures were similarly returned to the family in 1993.

Leaving the castle we meandered down the hill into the village to visit the birthplace of Czech composer Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904). It seemed cosy, with his music heard in the background. From playing at the local chapel and pub, the young Dvorak left the village in 1853 to study music under Liehmann, who prepared him for the Organists' Music School in Prague. You know the rest of the story!

During our evenings in Prague some of the Friends enjoyed the Opera. Others enjoyed the smaller chamber groups in local churches or at the Rudolfinum. All superb music.

Thank you Olivia and Simon for such a wonderful trip; taking such good care of us and bringing us home safely. Let's do more of it!

Nola Wright

Photographs © Sidney Morton



# Winner of the Storeroom Visit

When I recently won the visit to the storerooms and with the concert to celebrate the Frank Brown legacy fast approaching, it seemed a good idea to ask Amina Wright to tell me more about Frank Brown, a former trustee of the Holburne, and to show me some of the treasures in his amazing collection (approximately 900 items) bequeathed to the Museum.

Frank Brown (1923-2001) started to collect pictures, prints and drawings relating to the musical life of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Bath. Gradually this expanded into the twentieth century when photographs – many of them signed – were added to the collection. Then, bit by bit, he took his collecting beyond the musical life of Bath and beyond the confines of Bath itself. As a result, there are enchanting drawings of street entertainers and of London theatre audiences. There are portraits of artists and architects as well as both amateur and professional musicians.

As we pored over the pictures, Amina was able to explain different techniques used in print making.



My thanks to Amina for selecting such interesting things for me to see and for giving up the time to enchant me with her knowledge. It was a real treat.

My advice to all Friends of the Holburne: buy a raffle ticket whenever they are offered. If you win, you will have one of the best hours of your life!"

Jane Glaser

## Some treasures from Frank Brown's collection:



William Crotch (1775-1847), *The Circus, Bath* watercolour, September 1791 [left]

William Crotch was a musical prodigy. At Oxford, he was taught drawing by John Malchair, who encouraged his pupils to work outdoors, concentrating on the shade and colour of objects rather than outlines. He also advised taking special note of the weather. Through Crotch, he was to be an important influence on John Constable.

Crotch came to Bath when he was sixteen. His view of the Circus looking down Gay Street is an extraordinary interpretation of architecture, avoiding lines and showing volume alone, to create an atmospheric view of Bath in autumn.



# The Frank Brown Collection

George Dance, *Self-Portrait* c.1800 [right]  
pencil drawing with red chalk

George Dance (1741-1825) was an architect and portraitist. Among his most famous work as an architect was the new Newgate Gaol in London, and Sir John Soane was among his pupils.

From about 1793 he began to make profile drawings of his friends, especially his fellow artists and members of the Royal Academy. Many of these portraits were published as engravings, and there are several examples in Frank Brown's collection.

Amina Wright describes this as 'the gem of the collection'.



John Nixon (1750-1818)  
engraving of Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci (c.1735–1790) [left]

Born in Siena, Tenducci was a male soprano ('castrato') who had a glittering career as an operatic and recital singer first in Italy and then in Britain and Ireland. One of the great stars of the operatic stage, he was a flamboyant character who was surrounded by gossip. Tenducci was a regular visitor to Bath, both as a performer and as a teacher.

## A Special Opportunity, June or July 2014

It is only on very special occasions that members of the public have an opportunity to see – and handle – the reserve Collection. The holder of the winning ticket can choose whether to ask our new Decorative Arts curator Catrin Jones (see p 22) to show you around the objects held in reserve, or to ask Senior Curator Amina Wright to show you pictures or works on paper. We would hope that the winner might write a piece about what they find, or talk about it with the Editor, so that we can include details in the next Newsletter.

Tickets are £5 each, and the winner will be pulled from the hat at the end of May. Two people might go together: perhaps a grandparent might like to give a grandchild an unusual treat. See form in the middle of the Newsletter, or email us.

# Celebrating Frank Brown: An Evening with Dr Haydn!

**Thursday 8th May 7pm**

**The Holburne Museum**

As well as bequeathing his picture collection to the Holburne (see previous pages) Frank Brown was a collector of early keyboard instruments and promoted their use in performance, and when a rare Johann Schantz fortepiano became available, he raised funds enthusiastically to purchase it for the Holburne. He organised many concerts at the Holburne which continued well into the 1990s, and was a Trustee of the museum and of the Bath Festival trust. The Friends wish to honour his generosity to the Holburne by what we hope will be a series of musical evenings.

Our first Frank Brown celebration is a lecture recital given by the distinguished early music specialist Christopher Hogwood who, with the legendary David Munrow, founded the pioneering Early Music Consort in the 1960s, and after David's untimely death founded and led the Academy of Ancient Music for thirty years.

Christopher will be joined by a band of his early music students from the Royal Academy of Music to talk about Haydn's Symphony 104 'the London' (arranged by the the great 18th-century impresario Saloman), putting it into its historical and cultural context. The musicians are to be led by Nathaniel Mander, will be called The Holburne Ensemble, and will continue hopefully as a successful professional group and so will take our name around the world.



Joseph Haydn, 1794  
pencil sketch by George Dance

Haydn visited Bath twice, staying just down the road at No.18 Great Pulteney Street. The dates of his visits (1791 and 1794) neatly coincide with the date of the Schantz piano which will provide continuo for the performance. Tickets (very few left) are £25 each, to include a party with wine, a little food, and a chance to meet the performers.

## **The Holburne Ensemble**

Emma Halnan – flute  
Davina Clarke – violin  
Katie Holmes – violin  
Jordan Bowron – viola  
Lucia Capellaro – 'cello  
Nathaniel Mander – fortepiano

# The Plant Sale

**Sunday 11th May 11am-2pm**

## **The Holburne Museum**

Holding last year's Plant Sale on a Sunday proved so successful that we are repeating the day for 2014.

Many of our regular commercial growers will be participating including Chase Plants, Hilltop Nurseries, Ivy Cottage Nursery, Eric Rambridge, Special Plants, The Mead Nursery and NW Plants, as well as the Friends' own stall offering bargains and choice specimens of shrubs, perennials, vegetable and fruit plants, and colourful annuals. There will also be nearly new gardening and cookery books for sale. Growers and gardening enthusiasts will be on hand to offer lots of useful advice.



To round off the visit, refreshments, home-made cakes and biscuits will be available at the more conveniently located Clore Education Room just inside the entrance to the Museum.

The organiser, Valerie Ferguson, is looking for help from Friends and supporters, either in supplying established plants for sale or making home-made cakes.

For further information or to offer support please email Valerie at [valerie.ferguson123@gmail.com](mailto:valerie.ferguson123@gmail.com).

Left: *Phacelia tanacetifolia*; Above: *Iris sibirica*

## Friends' Preview



**Thursday 22nd May 6.30-8pm**

## PREVIEW

All Friends are invited to a private view of

*Julian Opie: Collected Works*

please rsvp to [holburnefriends@gmail.com](mailto:holburnefriends@gmail.com) by 16th May

(above: Julian Opie *The gallery staff* 2010 vinyl on glass)

## Day Trip to Eton

**Monday 16 June 2014**

I/we should like ..... tickets at £48

Name (s).....

Address .....

.....Telephone.....

Email .....

Please send cheque made payable to the 'Friends of the Holburne Museum' to  
Olivia Eliot, c/o The Holburne Museum, Great Pulteney Street, BA2 4DB .....

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## Visit to the Storeroom

**Date at your discretion**

I/we should like ..... tickets at £5

Name (s).....

Address .....

.....Telephone.....

Email .....

Please send cheque made payable to the 'Friends of the Holburne Museum' to  
Antonia Johnson, c/o The Holburne Museum, Great Pulteney Street, BA2 4DB

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## Art to Wear

**Tuesday 22 July 2014**

I/we should like ..... tickets at £15

Name (s).....

Address .....

.....Telephone.....

Email .....

Please send cheque made payable to the 'Friends of the Holburne Museum' to  
Trish Tassis, c/o The Holburne Museum, Great Pulteney Street, Bath BA2 4DB

**Any enquiries to [holburnefriends@gmail.com](mailto:holburnefriends@gmail.com).  
All bookings to be paid separately.**

**A Day in Cardiff**

**Tuesday 2 September 2014**

I/we should like ..... Tickets at £19

Name (s).....

Address .....

.....Telephone.....

Email .....

Please state whether you will be joining the coach at Bath Coach Station (Avon Street) at 9 am, or would like to be collected at the Balustrade (London Road).

Please send cheque made payable to the 'Friends of the Holburne Museum' to David Millard, c/o The Holburne Museum, Great Pulteney Street, Bath BA2 4DB

**The Robertson Lecture**

**Thursday 25 September 2014**

I/we should like ..... tickets at £10

Name (s).....

Address .....

.....Telephone.....

Email .....

Please send cheque made payable to the 'Friends of the Holburne Museum' and s.a.e. to Antonia Johnson, 40 Bathwick Hill, Bath BA2 6LD

**Any enquiries to [holburnefriends@gmail.com](mailto:holburnefriends@gmail.com).  
All bookings to be paid separately.**

**Bruce Munro, Rachel Podger, Brecon Baroque**

All bookings for the Wiltshire Music Centre's event on 20th September to be made direct. Tel 01225 860100 and say that you are a Friend to receive your discount.

# Day Trip to Eton

## Eton College

**Monday 16th June**

This will be a rather special day, courtesy of the head master Tony Little's wife Jenny. The College is not currently open to public visits.

Eton was founded by Henry VI in 1440 and is probably the most famous school in the world. Its original charitable purpose – free education for 70 boys – has been hugely extended in recent years, something that is sometimes overlooked in the glare of its fabulous buildings and treasures, not to mention its roll-call of famous Old Boys.

Our visit will enable us to get an overview of the fascinating history of the College, its buildings, including the magnificent Chapel with its famous wall-paintings (c.1480) and some recently discovered murals of school scenes, which might be the oldest secular wall-paintings in the UK. The structure of the day will be finalised once we have an idea of numbers and specific timings, but a high point will be a visit to the renowned



College Library with its collection of books and manuscripts of international importance. Other possibilities are chances to see the Macnaghten Library (First World War material); the Verey Gallery (temporary exhibition of work by Hughie O'Donoghue RA); the Museum of Eton Life and, inter alia, some of the amazing collection of paintings, drawings and prints assembled over the centuries.

We plan to leave by coach from the Holburne Museum at 8.30am. On arrival at Eton (10.30/11am depending on the traffic), Jenny Little will give us an introductory talk over coffee. We may then divide into 2 groups for the morning's tour. A light lunch will be provided (in a marquee in the Headmaster's garden), followed by the afternoon's visits and we'll aim to leave c.5pm. The all-inclusive cost is £48 per person.

We are extremely grateful that the Friends of the Holburne are being given this privileged access. I anticipate a lot of interest, so please book early via the application form in the centre of the Newsletter.



# Books Galore

# A Royal Visit

## Saturday 28th June

### The Holburne Museum 11am - 4pm

This year's once more there will be an opportunity to buy books for summer reading and, who knows, you might find that elusive book you've been searching for. There will be books for all tastes, from paperback fiction to scholarly tomes. Chance encounters are always part of the fun of any book sale. Rather than heading for the bestseller list, let serendipity lead you – and support the Friends at the same time.

If you have any books you would like to contribute to the sale, please let David Wiltshire and Sidney Blackmore know. Tel 01985 213195 or email [sidney.blackmore@btinternet.com](mailto:sidney.blackmore@btinternet.com) They are happy to collect books during the period 1-20 June



As the Newsletter was on the point of going to press, the Museum received a visit from HRH the Duke of Gloucester.

Above, a photograph posted by the Western Daily Press online, of the Duke being shown the exterior of the Eric Parry extension by Richard Fleck, Chairman of Trustees, and Xa Sturgis.

The Friends' Committee (ot those who were in the city that day) were in the Brownsword Gallery to be presented, but I am delighted to say that after greeting us all very properly the Duke spent much more time looking at the works of art, with the Director.



Giovanni Crespi *Bookshelves*,  
c 1725, oil on canvas;  
Museo internazionale e biblioteca  
della musica di Bologna



# Art to Wear

## ART TO WEAR

**Tuesday 22nd July  
2 - 4 pm**

If you are at all interested in textiles, you probably already know Carole Waller's work – she paints on silk with wonderful glowing colours to produce unique wearable pieces of art. At any social gathering at the Holburne you are likely to see one or two guests wearing examples of her work, and their originality tends to provide a talking point whenever they are worn.

She produces ready-to-wear clothing and bespoke outfits for special occasions, and also makes large-scale



paintings on cloth to hang on walls or as screens. Her work has sold through Harvey Nichols, Liberty of London, and Bergdorf Goodman in New York, and examples of her clothing and paintings are in the V & A's Clothing Collections. She also teaches, and runs workshops.

Look at her beautifully-illustrated website ([www.carolewaller.co.uk](http://www.carolewaller.co.uk)), and then come on a 'get-yourself-there' visit to her studio in Bathford. Ceramics and glass pieces by Carole and by Gary Wood will also be on display. Refreshments will be provided, and Carole will talk about her work.

The visit costs £15, form in the middle of the Newsletter.

On May 15th Carole Waller and Blue are hosting the 'Walk this Way' fashion show in aid of two of Bath's hospitals (tickets from Bath Box Office).

<http://www.carolewaller.co.uk/preparing-for-the-walk-this-way-fashion-show/>



# Day trip to Cardiff

**Tuesday 2nd September**  
**9 am - 6 pm**

The Friends last went to Cardiff in February 2012. We are organising a return visit to coincide with the important exhibition *Richard Wilson and the Transformation of European Landscape Painting*, which has travelled here from the Yale Center of British Art.

A member of museum staff will give us a talk on Richard Wilson's place and influence on Landscape painting , and then we will view the exhibition unaccompanied.



Richard Wilson, 1714-1782, British, active in Italy 1750-1756, *Italian Landscape (Morning)*, between 1760 and 1765, Oil on canvas, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection



Richard Wilson, 1714-1782, British, active in Italy 1750-1756, *The Arbra Sacra on the Banks of Lake Nemi*, between 1754 and 1756, Black chalk with white chalk on moderately thick, moderately textured, greened white laid paper, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Other exhibitions on at Cardiff Museum then include *Efforts and Ideals: Prints of the First World War*, commissioned by the Ministry of Information in 1917; and we will also have the chance to see Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows* 1831, recently purchased by Tate, with five other institutions. Cardiff is the first place it has been on view to the public. (Find out more via [http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/rhagor/interactive/salisbury\\_cathedral/](http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/rhagor/interactive/salisbury_cathedral/))

# Day trip to Cardiff

The Museum has a café, or there is another at Cardiff Castle (right), just a short walk from the Museum (entrance to the Castle grounds and apartments £12.00, £10.50 for Seniors).

The Castle has a long history. From the arrival of the Romans, through the Norman Conquest to lavish Victorian design – all have left their distinctive mark on the Castle. After WWII the Marquess of Bute donated it to the people of Cardiff.



Cardiff Castle, the Arab Room ceiling, created by William Burges for the Marquess of Bute in the late 19th century [from the Historic Chronicles blog].

Bute Park (right, from the Castle ramparts), is an important green space for the city, 59 hectares in extent. Since 1947 a fine arboretum has been planted, including over 40 'champion' trees. To the West of the Castle, the southern boundary of the Park is the famous Animal Wall, originally designed by William Burges but later moved, when six extra animals were added!

Another possibility is to take the water bus from the Castle to Cardiff Bay.

The coach will leave from the Museum at 16.30 for the return to Bath. Tickets are £19 a head, form in the middle of the Newsletter (does not include entrance to the Castle).



# Bruce Munro

## Rachel Podger and Brecon Baroque

We have a special invitation from the  
Wiltshire Music Centre:



© K. Miura 2014

**SAT 20 SEP 7.30PM**  
**RACHEL PODGER and**  
**BRECON BAROQUE play**

### VIVALDI

L'Estro Armonico Concertos, including:  
Concerto for 4 violins No 1 D major RV 549  
Concerto for 1 violin No 3 G major RV 310  
Concerto for 2 violins No 5 A major RV 519  
Concerto for 4 violins No 7 F major RV 567

### BACH

Art of Fugue Contrapunctus 1, 9, 11 and 4

**Rachel Podger** has established herself as a leading interpreter of the music of the Baroque and Classical periods., and directs her own hand-picked ensemble. Vivaldi's *L'Estro Armonico concertos* contain some of his most sparkling music, and is combined with movements from Bach's *Art of Fugue*.

**6.15pm pre-concert gala party** celebrating the concert season launch and the unveiling of the newly refurbished foyer with **Bruce Munro's** site-specific light art installation 'Rhythm and Blues'.

### Bruce

**Munro** is a renowned British installation artist best known for bespoke lighting sculptures such as 'Field of Light', which was first exhibited at the V&A in 2004 and has



subsequently featured at the Eden Project in Cornwall (Winter 2008 / 2009) and the Holburne Museum in Bath (2011, above).

### Rhythm And Blues

Bruce Munro has been inspired by the physical space that the Centre's foyer offers to conceive a bespoke, site specific suspended light art sculpture linking music and light, and intended to provide an intriguing visual focus during daylight hours, and transform the space in the evening, thus enhancing the atmosphere and sense of place for evening performances. Suspended from the ceiling of the main foyer, the artwork is created from 405 optical fibres, turned aluminium shades, powder-coated mild steel, reflecting mirrors and LED light sources.

**£32** Friends of the Holburne Museum  
(normally £35)

Priority booking: Mon 23 Jun, 01225 860100

# The Robertson Lecture



Thomas Rowlandson (1757-1827) *The Prospect Before us. No.2 Respectfully dedicated to those Singers, Dancers and Musical Professors who are fortunately engaged with the proprietor of the King's Theatre at the Pantheon* 13 Jan 1791; Hand-coloured etching Royal Collection Trust/© Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2014

## Thursday 25th September

### The Holburne Museum 7.30 pm

The Robertson Lecture was established by the Friends to commemorate the contribution made to the Museum over many years by Charles and Barbara Robertson. Previous lecturers have included Neil MacGregor, Director of the British Museum, Ronald de Leeuw, formerly Director General of the Rijksmuseum, Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures, Dame Rosalind Savill, formerly Director of the

Wallace Collection, Dr Nicholas Penny, Director of the National Gallery, Dr Sue Sloman, curator of the Holburne's *Gainsborough's Landscapes* in 2011, and Loyd Grossman, Chairman of the Heritage Alliance and of the Churches Conservation Trust.

This year's lecture will follow the Friends' preview of *High Spirits: the Comic Art of Thomas Rowlandson*; speaker to be confirmed. Please put the date in your diaries (tickets £10).

# Spencer Hancock

When Spencer began work at the Holburne, in an empty building, some 8 weeks before it was due to re-open, he thought he was going to head up a team of 60-odd volunteers. Half of these did not materialise so a rapid recruiting drive followed, and by May 2011 (see right) some 90 were assembled. Spencer has this photo by his desk, to remind himself of that moment poised to launch the new story of the Holburne.

That tension leading up to a moment in the limelight is apt, as Spencer's background is in theatre and dance. If quizzed, he will admit not only to parts in musicals, an 'ill-fated' pop band (his description, not mine), but also to an early addiction to the dance routines on Top of the Pops. As well as the Performing Arts, he studied Theatre and Arts Management (at Dartington), and worked not only in the theatre but also in hospitality and administration, learning quickly that managing a team suited him. To and fro from Australia, where his mother comes from, he arrived back in Bath at the Bath Festival Office in 2003, and while substituting for a manager on leave was able to revise the systems and 'dramatically increase turnover'. Spencer admits to being not given to compromise, to never standing still; he likes to mix things up, and keep developing.

Taking the job as Visitor Services Manager at the Holburne meant many new challenges. He had no visual arts training, but believes he shouldn't ask people to do what he cannot, so has set himself to learn about the Collection, something new each week, ideally.

He was faced with a blank page when it came to how the front of house would look, and given the huge amount of work going on in the re-development, he was allowed to get



on with it, and has both hugely appreciated and indeed been worthy of the trust placed in him by Xa and the staff.

Now, he knows everything. Well, he needs to know everything that is going on, to talk to every department of the Museum, to be up to speed with arrivals or departures of people or objects, musical events, exhibition openings and closings, or any of the other myriad things that go on at the Holburne. Often working months ahead of the present, there is a lot of coordination involved, people to line up, volunteers to keep informed so that they in turn can answer visitors' questions.

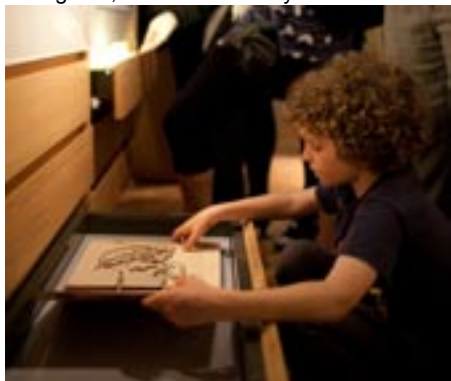
Spencer is responsible, in the most direct way, for the experience that a visitor will get when they come to the Museum.

# Visitor Services Manager

This happens through the services (managing which takes about 20% of his time) and through the team of volunteers, now numbering around 250 (80% of his time).

Spencer has a bit of a party trick. With his memory trained by learning choreography, he now expects to remember each and every one of them, when their shifts are, and whether they need time off for school holidays, or what the new grandchild is called... (goodness gracious). People management, writ large. He takes great pleasure in how much the volunteers gain from their time at the Museum. His permanent staff, the three Duty Managers, Faunsia Tucker, Steven Vodli and Georgie Tomlinson, all began as volunteers, and Faunsia exemplifies how much they can grow within their role at the Holburne, as she is now finishing her curatorial MA while interning at the V&A, and will have been replaced by the time you read this by Joshua Michael.

One module of the Bath Spa Heritage course now takes place entirely at the Museum, and students must not only volunteer regularly throughout, but do so actively.



Spencer developed his own Work Placement Module, to reward the volunteers' engagement with the Museum. This has different elements: researching the Collection (well enough to devise a mini tour); keeping a record, or blog; learning about the balance between visitor access and security; and understanding how to achieve commercial targets and charitable goals. This certificated scheme has been very important particularly in attracting younger volunteers.



Given the dramatic (I use that word advisedly) development over the last three years, do not expect the above to remain a complete and accurate description of Spencer's activities. He loves the busyness of the Museum, the loudness, and though he admits to sometimes feeling as if his brain is going to explode, the balancing of logistics and personalities clearly gives him a buzz. He has truly appreciated being part of the Museum team to date, but saying goodbye to Xa and welcoming a new Director, who no doubt will review everything, gives him not a quailm; he is entirely prepared to tear up what has gone before and draw up new systems that will serve everyone even better. .

Antonia Johnson

# Museum News

## Catrin Jones



Catrin Jones arrives as the Museum's new curator of Decorative Arts, replacing Matthew Winterbottom, on April 28th. Catrin comes from the V&A where she has been an assistant curator for the last three years working on a wide range of projects and exhibitions including the new seventeenth and eighteenth-century continental galleries and an inventive exhibition on trompe l'oeil ceramics. Catrin's particular areas of specialism and interest include French eighteenth-century decoration, ceramics and textiles and in addition to the V&A she has worked at the Geffrye Museum, the Ashmolean and Waddesdon Manor. We very much look forward to welcoming her to our team.

Xa Sturgis



## FoSG

Friends of Sydney Gardens has been working hard, taking part in World Heritage Day in the Gardens on Sunday 13th April, and their website is now up and running.

Lizzie Millne, Secretary of FoSG, says:

World Heritage Day was a great success for FoSG. Check out their website which gives details of how to become a 'Friend':

[www.friendsofsydneygardens.org](http://www.friendsofsydneygardens.org)



# The Committee

Chairman, Newsletter Editor

Antonia Johnson

Hon Treasurer

Sidney Morton

Hon Secretary

Olivia Eliot (foreign tours)

Hon Membership Secretary

Undine Concannon

Committee Members

Jennifer Bereska

Valerie Ferguson (plant sale)

Richard Frewer

Tessa Hayward

Trish Tassis (closer look)

Mary Jane Wilkinson (website)

## Electronic options

Help us make your donation go further: become an on-line newsletter reader. Alternatively, the Newsletter is available as a pdf through the Friends' section of the Holburne's website, under 'Latest News'. Please email [uconcannon@btinternet.com](mailto:uconcannon@btinternet.com) if you prefer to stop receiving the information through the post.

Over the last few months the Museum has introduced a new and sophisticated till system and database, and the Friends' information is now integrated within it. Please let the Membership Secretary know if you encounter any hitches.

[holburnefriends@gmail.com](mailto:holburnefriends@gmail.com)

## AGM

The Friends 63rd Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 15th July, in the Picture Gallery at the Museum. All Friends are welcome. The Minutes of the 2013 AGM are to be found in the middle of the Newsletter (or separately in the e version).

